Equitably Developing America's Smaller Legacy Cities

Investing in Residents from South Bend to Worcester

ERICA SPAID PATRAS   ALISON GOEBEL   LINDSEY ELAM

POLICY FOCUS REPORT   LINCOLN INSTITUTE OF LAND POLICY   GREATER OHIO POLICY CENTER

ABOUT THIS REPORT

We live in a unique and tumultuous time when the need to improve equity in America is as clear and important as ever. This report offers an actionable guide and recommendations for local stakeholders and residents interested in community development, revitalization, and economic development to begin equity work in smaller legacy cities, primarily midwestern and northeastern cities with 30,000 to 200,000 residents and economies built around manufacturing.

This report focuses on incorporating equity into revitalization strategies and is not intended to serve as a comprehensive treatise on entirely eradicating racism and injustice from smaller legacy cities.

Building trust within a community is critical to successful equitable development. Improving racial and income inclusion is not only the right thing to do but is also an excellent economic strategy. Developing critical ecosystems and frameworks to sustain equity work and adopting programs and policies appropriate for individual places will help put America's smaller legacy cities on the road to more equitable and inclusive futures.

POLICY FOCUS REPORT SERIES

The Policy Focus Report series is published by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy to address timely public policy issues relating to land use, land markets, and property taxation. Each report is designed to bridge the gap between theory and practice by combining research findings, case studies, and contributions from scholars in a variety of academic disciplines, and information from professional practitioners, local officials, and citizens in diverse communities.

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LINCOLN INSTITUTE
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113 Brattle Street, Cambridge, MA
02138-3400, USA
P (617) 661-3016 or (800) 526-3873
F (617) 661-7235 or (800) 526-3944
help@lincolninst.edu
lincolninst.edu

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Front cover:
The historic Kalamazoo Mall in downtown Kalamazoo, Michigan, draws residents and visitors. *Source: Western Michigan University*

Back cover:
The redevelopment of Jackson Street Pier in Sandusky, Ohio, has helped attract visitors, new investments, and economic activity to downtown. *Source: City of Sandusky, Ohio*

Contents

Executive Summary

Leaders in America's smaller legacy cities can adopt equitable development strategies to meet the need for sound, long-term economic growth; to respond proactively to calls for racial equity; and to remedy the inequities laid bare by the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement. Improving equity broadens everyone's access to opportunity while boosting economic prospects for an entire city.

Business and economic development leaders in smaller legacy cities like Syracuse, New York, work to employ previously unemployed or hard-to-employ residents, among other inclusive strategies. *Source: DenisTangneyJr/E+/Getty Images*

Small and medium-size legacy cities have populations between 30,000 and 200,000 residents, after losing substantial numbers from their peak populations in the mid-20th century. Historically, manufacturing was the core of their employment base and economic output. None of them has been primarily a college town or a suburb of a larger city. Midsize cities often have a defined urban downtown core surrounded by a mix of residential neighborhoods, some stable and some disinvested, as well as extensive suburban and exurban development beyond the city's boundary.

The significant population loss in legacy cities in the second half of the 20th century was accompanied by rising poverty rates and disinvestment in downtown and urban residential neighborhoods. Population loss continued into the 2000s for some of the small legacy cities in the Northeast and Midwest, though this trend reversed in nearly half of them where populations have remained stable or increased since 2000. During the COVID-19 pandemic, however, all of America's smaller legacy cities have experienced job losses, housing instability, reduced city tax revenue, and increased costs associated with mitigating the pandemic.

Throughout this report, we use the term "equity" broadly to refer to an overarching goal: that opportunity is accessible to all, regardless of background and circumstance, with a focus on improving outcomes for low-income populations and communities of color to bring them into parity with other populations. Within this report, we refer to equitable development strategies as the specific interventions used to advance that goal.

This report guides local changemakers in equitably developing their smaller legacy cities. These communities cannot always replicate strategies that have worked in larger legacy cities like Detroit or Baltimore. Practitioners will learn how to avoid pitfalls and seize latent advantages with recommendations tailored to the context of smaller legacy cities.

We detail seven strategies to help establish an equitable development agenda, and we illustrate them with corresponding case studies. Strategies fall into two categories: those that build an ecosystem to foster equitable development and those that directly reduce disparities and increase civic capacity. The first category acknowledges the importance of relationships and trust in sustaining meaningful, equitable development work; the second describes strategies that can reduce disparities in life outcomes for residents and improve economic prospects for the city as a whole.

The following are the seven strategies recommended for smaller legacy cities:

Build an Equitable Development Ecosystem

1. **Build Trust and Repair Strained Relationships**
   Building trust among elected and unelected "grasstops" leaders and with residents is an essential starting point for equitable development. It helps ensure the longevity of support for specific programming, brings diverse voices to the decision-making table, and fosters a crucial sense of common destiny within the city. This work is also a precursor to building formal partnerships that will sustain revitalization in the future.

2. **Build a Layered and Diverse Coalition**
   A broad, multisectoral coalition is essential to advocate for equity goals and ensure a long-term community commitment to those goals. A coalition can carry out an agenda that fosters equity more successfully than an individual organization going it alone. Engaging leaders and stakeholders at both the grassroots and grasstops levels is an essential starting point for building a coalition.

3. **Conduct Strategic Planning and Visioning**
   An up-to-date, data-driven plan helps civic leaders take deliberate and well-informed strategic actions. A good plan provides the basis for an investment strategy, provides measurable milestones for equity goals, and aligns programs to best address the community's needs and opportunities. Planning also provides a vehicle for community outreach and trust building.

Reduce Disparities and Increase Civic Capacity

4. **Utilize Place-Based Investments**
   Strategic real estate investments, such as those that intentionally locate equitable development programming together in one location or that tackle neighborhood disinvestment, can help advance equity. Communities should be realistic, however, and acknowledge that the real estate market alone cannot deliver all the solutions their city needs. Incorporating equity tools into new development requires carefully calibrated strategies that will not further damage already weak markets.

5. **Cultivate Homegrown Talent**
   Cities can unleash unmet potential by extending small business development ecosystems into communities of color, growing community leaders, and training unemployed and underemployed residents for jobs. Programming that supports workforce development also bolsters local businesses, which benefit from a better-trained and more reliable workforce.

6. **Anticipate Neighborhood Change and Plan for Stability**
   Identifying which neighborhoods are likely to attract investment and which are in decline can help communities tailor appropriate tools and programs to these areas. Planners may target concerns about long-term affordability, neighborhood stability, and gentrification.

7. **Recalibrate Existing Operations to Better Yield Equity**
   Local governments, nonprofits, anchor institutions, and businesses can carefully examine their internal budgets and operating procedures to ensure they are not inadvertently perpetuating inequities. Moreover, internal operations such as staffing and project priorities can be modified to better deliver equity.

Smaller legacy cities are well positioned to test, refine, and innovate equitable development practices. Though the full realization of this programming will take time and patience, equitable development offers the promise of more inclusive and economically competitive cities.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Smaller legacy cities, such as Erie, Pennsylvania, are ideal testing grounds for innovating new equitable development strategies. *Source: Keith Mecklem/ Shutterstock*

America's smaller legacy cities—such as Akron, Ohio; Erie, Pennsylvania; Kalamazoo, Michigan; and Worcester, Massachusetts—are well positioned to promote development that includes and benefits all residents while improving economic competitiveness.

In 2020, leaders of smaller legacy cities confronted more than their usual challenges. The COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement laid bare persistent racial and income segregation common in these postindustrial centers. A long history of discriminatory and failed policies contributes to these conditions. This report does not serve as a treatise on eradicating injustice from small legacy cities. Instead, the report focuses on the significant opportunity that these cities now have to combat inequity and increase economic competitiveness by embracing policies that support equitable development.

This report shows local changemakers how to incorporate equity into the traditional suite of revitalization strategies by focusing on both physical development and investment in residents. This report makes a case for why local changemakers should care about equity and offers ways to shape development policies and actions to make them equitable. Most of these strategies are tailored to the unique conditions of smaller, weak-market legacy cities and can, for the most part, be implemented at the local level. Case studies further illustrate each of these strategies.

Revitalizing America's Smaller Legacy Cities, a 2017 Policy Focus Report from the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and Greater Ohio Policy Center, discusses smaller legacy cities and the economic and historical dynamics that shape them, including a detailed analysis of their demographics (Hollingsworth and Goebel 2017). The 2017 report provides a more detailed foundation for the equitable development strategies discussed here, which complement the Legacy Cities Initiative, a program created by the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy for practitioners and researchers (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, legacycities.org).

What Are Equity and Equitable Development?

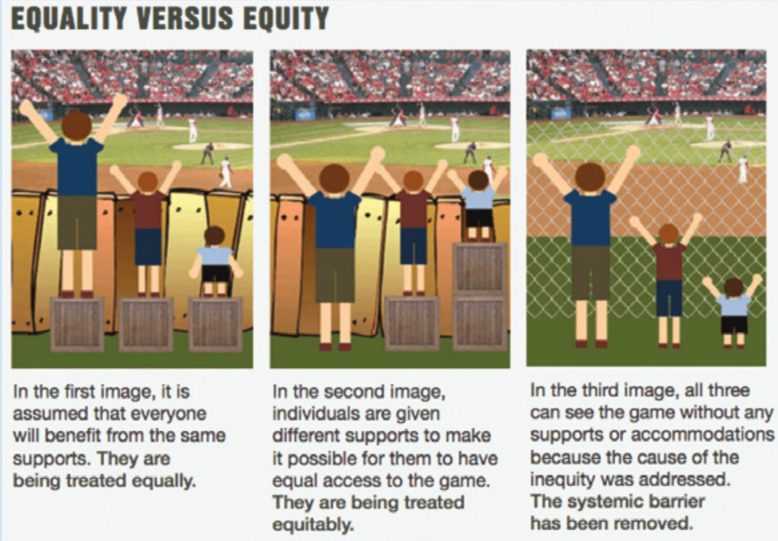
This report uses the term "equity" broadly to refer to an overarching goal: to make opportunity accessible to all, regardless of background and circumstance, and to make a special effort to improve outcomes for low-income populations and communities of color to bring them into parity with other populations. Greater equity is possible when poverty and disparities in wealth, employment, and health shrink as incomes and access to employment increase. In equitable cities, decision makers value the perspectives of all residents and ensure that anyone who wants to participate in civic life can have a seat at the table.

"Equality" and "equity" are not synonymous. Many scholars of equity and inclusion have argued that equality means funding, access to support, and decision-making power are shared equally, and one solution applies to all (Blackwell 2016). But treating all issues equally does not correct underlying inequities and instead perpetuates them because policies and practices impact individuals and communities differently. Committing to equity means tailoring solutions and supports to local needs and circumstances so that everyone thrives, as illustrated in figure 1 (City for All Women Initiative 2015).

The process of equitable development must include diverse stakeholders who provide critical input and take leadership roles. Equitable development must also protect residents from being physically or culturally forced out of their homes while improving market strength and encouraging new market-rate development. Practitioners need to be patient and strategic, understanding that it takes time to realize the desired outcomes. In the meantime, changemakers can track progress with data and make course corrections as needed.

Figure 1

Equitable solutions tailor resources and supports to specific needs and circumstances, ensuring that everyone in a community can thrive.



Source: City for All Women Initiative (2015)

Promising Strategies for Equitable Development in Smaller Legacy Cities

This report outlines strategies to help smaller legacy cities establish an effective equitable development agenda. Some of the strategies acknowledge the importance of relationships and trust in sustaining equitable development work; other strategies directly improve disparities and economic prospects for the city. Building trust with residents and with grasstops leaders is a strategy in its own right, rather than a secondary piece of other efforts. On-the-ground experiences in smaller legacy cities prove the value of building trust to help ensure community support for programming, to bring diverse voices to the decision-making table, and to foster a crucial sense of common destiny within the city. Trust is also a precursor to the formal partnerships needed to sustain equitable development activities over time.

Often, smaller legacy cities engage in efforts such as downtown place-making or market-rate housing construction. These efforts are strategically crucial for building market strength in smaller legacy cities and should continue, albeit with a commitment to ensuring an equitable process and outcomes.

Who Is This Report For?

This report provides a “nuts and bolts” guide for local changemakers who want to improve equity and economic opportunity in their communities. We hope it will guide them in building sustainable frameworks and action plans and to make strong cases for equity to other civic leaders. It also provides tools for community practitioners to generate proactive, positive, and equitable change and to help residents advocate for new policies to address concerns in their neighborhoods.

Downtown place-making efforts, such as the reinvigorated 2nd Street Market in Dayton, Ohio, can support development in smaller legacy cities—but leaders have to work to ensure that development happens equitably. *Source: Rod Berry/Ohio Stock Photography*

Changemakers may include:

- local government officials who want to recalibrate planning and operations to make them more equitable and align physical redevelopment with building human capital;
- philanthropic foundations who want to ensure that their convening and investment power can support equity goals;
- nonprofit leaders looking for real-life examples of successful partnerships and concrete strategies for building coalitions; and
- local institutions looking to engage with partners and build trust in support of the public good.

CHAPTER 2

The Equitable Development Imperative: How Greater Equity Can Support Growth

The Erie Downtown Development Corporation, a nonprofit in Erie, Pennsylvania, has increased Erie's revitalization capacity and redevelopment funding—and also sponsors the annual Celebrate Erie festival, which traditionally includes this community-driven "Chalk Walk." *Source: Robert Frank*

Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor (2012, 2015) assert the economic imperative for addressing long-standing inequality by demonstrating that racial and income inequality are not just the outcomes of a postindustrial world but also drivers of current and future regional economic stagnation. Specifically, they found that "high inequality, measured in a variety of different ways, has a negative impact on growth and that these impacts are in fact stronger in regions with what many in the literature call 'weak market' central cities" (Pastor and Benner 2008, 89).

While this “dragging effect” of inequality on financial strength is concerning, a growing and encouraging body of research offers a path forward, validating the economic advantages of improving equity (Pastor and Benner 2008). Research by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland supports this, finding that “a skilled workforce, high levels of racial inclusion, and progress on income equality correlate strongly and positively with economic growth” (Benner and Pastor 2012, 5; Eberts, Erickcek, and Kleinhenz 2006).

Persistent disparities can depress a city’s economy. Revitalization without a deliberate equity component does little to address underlying injustices. Alan Mallach’s 2014 analysis of traditional legacy city revitalization shows us how development designed for high-income residents in the downtown or central business district alone does not improve inequities citywide. Mallach found that traditional revitalization in some legacy cities failed to improve economic and quality-of-life indicators for the least advantaged residents. “Revitalization, at least at the scale and of the character that is being experienced in these cities, does not confer citywide benefits; if anything, it may even redirect jobs, resources, and wealth away from large parts of the city, concentrating them in a smaller area and leaving the rest worse off than before” (Mallach 2014, 465).

Urban Institute researchers, in their analysis of how larger cities recovered from the Great Recession, concur with Mallach’s finding. They write, “Across all types of cities, local leaders are beginning to recognize that economic growth does not automatically lead to inclusion; rather, intentional strategies are needed” (Poethig et al. 2018, 1). Federal Reserve researchers also weigh in on this, saying: “the pursuit of societal goals, such as racial inclusion and lower income dispersion, are very compatible with economic growth” (Eberts, Erickcek, and Kleinhenz 2006, 42).

Equitable development offers a new playbook for smaller legacy cities. The case studies highlighted in this report offer examples of how cities have adopted equity as an explicit objective and made it central to revitalization efforts from the outset.

How Can Equitable Development Benefit Smaller Legacy Cities?

Benefits derived through equitable revitalization:

- A community can work to improve existing conditions and set their own agenda, free from external timelines or approvals.
- Reducing entrenched poverty and the incidence of unengaged citizens can improve the community’s long-term financial health.
- Providing better training for workers who already live in a community can help increase household incomes and create more disposable income in the city.
- When businesses can confidently rely on an appropriately trained workforce, they are more likely to stay in the city during expansion.
- Downtown and adjacent residential neighborhoods can support demand for urban lifestyles and attract new residents to create mixed-income neighborhoods.
- Coordinating existing programs can eliminate redundancies, expand services, and free up resources saved by achieving greater efficiencies.

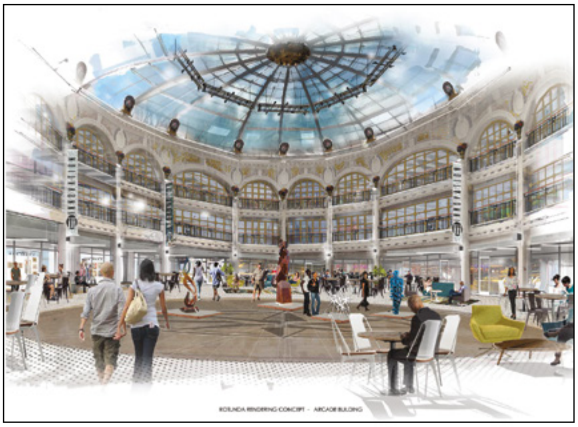
Unique Challenges and Opportunities for Equitable Development in Smaller Legacy Cities

One major advantage that smaller legacy cities have when advancing equitable development is that their leaders often already have meaningful relationships with each other. When intentionally nurtured, these connections can lead to fruitful coalitions. The path to better economic times is through collaboration; this was true in the aftermath of the Great Recession, and it is likely to continue to be true in the pandemic era (Brachman 2020). Conversely, strained or poor relationships resulting from competition over scarce resources or other factors can impede progress for smaller legacy cities. Steps for dealing with these conflicts are addressed later in this report.

Another advantage is that the relative lack of market pressures in smaller legacy cities means leaders can take their time to get plans right without rapid development threatening to get ahead of the planning process. Additionally, the smaller size of these places makes them an ideal environment for testing ideas and changing paradigms, eloquently described in the Ferguson Commission (2015, 20) report as encouraging a "culture of trying." Smaller legacy cities can make course corrections and quick pivots—critical pieces of "trying"—by expeditiously seeking residents' input and regularly checking back in for feedback.

An equity agenda cannot be built entirely on a city's real estate market. This is especially true in smaller legacy cities, which often lack the market strength to support development impact fees or exactions—payments made by developers to local governments to deliver public goods associated with the project, such as infrastructure, open space, or affordable housing. Because those strategies may not be suitable for all smaller legacy cities, this report describes alternative routes to equity that do not require waiting for a strong real estate market. For example, leaders in Dayton, Ohio, co-located a number of similar community programs when they renovated the Dayton Arcade. This facilitated more coordinated, collaborative, and efficient delivery of small business development services.

Because revitalization work must extend beyond the physical environment, many strategies presented in this report seek to increase human capital. Case studies focus on coalition building, planning, and



Though equitable growth requires more than strengthening real estate markets, physical developments like the renovated Dayton Arcade in Dayton, Ohio, can spur improved coordination of small business development and service delivery. *Source: Tom Gilliam/ Cross Street Partners* workforce development. Research supports this need for a breadth of strategies. In an examination of how to improve upward mobility for low-income families and families of color in America's metro areas, researchers from the U.S. Partnership on Mobility from Poverty found, "The evidence suggests that full-scale transformation will result not from any single policy endeavor, but through a long-term process that extends beyond investments in the distressed neighborhoods themselves to also address the economic, political, and social systems that helped create and sustain neighborhood disparities" (Turner et al. 2018, 3).

The case studies included here from larger cities or healthier markets can be adapted for smaller legacy cities. Many of the examples come from Ohio, which is home to 20 smaller legacy cities (a relatively high number for one state), and a state policy environment that is not particularly city friendly. As such, Ohioans have been innovating at the local level for decades. Additionally, this report purposefully prioritizes equitable development strategies that can start at any time, regardless of market strength, and are primarily within the control of local leaders.

Equitable Development in the COVID-19 Context

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has heightened challenges faced by leaders in small legacy cities. Already weak housing markets are further strained as tenants and owners face job losses and increased financial instability. When limited resources force city leaders to make difficult strategic investment decisions, residents may sometimes view these choices as picking favorites. This dynamic erodes trust and underscores how essential it is to develop a defensible plan and an inclusive process to guide decision making.

COVID-19 has also increased food insecurity and presented public health challenges such as caring for sick residents and administering vaccines. These new fiscal demands, along with concurrent or projected declines in local tax revenue, make financing revitalization even more difficult in smaller legacy cities. Yet these challenges often provide the impetus for new partnerships. Constrained resources can motivate committed local leaders to forge a sense of common destiny and develop strategic partnerships. Today's conditions may further broaden awareness about existing challenges and generate momentum for new collaborations, while also encouraging leaders to strategically stretch every dollar to yield the most significant impact.

When the pandemic began, many local governments were already financially fragile. They had not yet recovered from the Great Recession, more than a decade after its official end. Nationally, cities anticipate losing 10 to 15 percent of their revenue in 2021, and the actual amount may be more significant depending on the type of tax revenue cities depend on (Greater Ohio Policy Center 2020; McFarland and Pagano 2020). These revenue challenges are compounded by a dramatic need for initiatives to help support residents and retain small businesses, such as establishing non-congregate shelters, increasing food access, offering small business grants and loans, and expanding internet access. Many local governments have already cut spending by shelving or scaling back scheduled capital projects and laying off staff, actions that then challenge their ability to undertake strategic investments.

COVID-19 has exacerbated racial disparities in both physical health and economic wellbeing. While low- and moderate-income people, many of whom are people of color, have benefitted from various protections against eviction in the short term, renters worry that they may not be able to pay their accumulated debt. Local landlords who are financially dependent on rental income often dominate the rental market in smaller cities, and the pandemic puts their income at risk, too. The long-term consequences for the economies of smaller legacy cities' economies are ultimately unknown—but worrisome.

The COVID-19 pandemic and concurrent growing national focus on racial justice have created new and unique opportunities to prioritize an equity agenda for smaller legacy cities and their residents, including in Grand Rapids, Michigan. *Source: Lennon Cheng on Unsplash*

Nevertheless, leaders of smaller legacy cities consider these challenges a setback, not a death knell. Many of Ohio's smaller legacy cities even report that their traditional economic development efforts have been extraordinarily successful in 2020 despite the effects of the pandemic. Linking these economic development successes to equity goals remains a challenge for some, but more stakeholders are growing aware of the issue thanks to an increasing number of conference panels, training sessions, and informal conversations.

The COVID-19 pandemic also creates a unique opportunity for legacy city leaders to prioritize equity through recovery. A growing national focus on racial justice is underscoring the pandemic's disproportionate impacts on communities of color. Racial justice protests occurred in many smaller legacy cities during the summer of 2020, and many communities have declared racism a public health crisis (Walliser-Wejebe 2020).

Racial justice protests in many smaller legacy cities hold the potential to build dialogue among residents and municipal governments, including police (Frolik 2020; Petersen 2020). Legacy city leaders can seize the moment and fully acknowledge long-standing racial and economic disparities within their cities, as well as the fact that recent economic growth has not benefitted all residents equally (Economic Innovation Group 2020). This increased awareness in an environment of heightened urgency paves the way for a more equitable strategic plan for recovery from a pandemic-driven recession and a more inclusive future for smaller legacy cities.

ADDRESSING CONCERNS ABOUT GENTRIFICATION IN SMALLER LEGACY CITIES

An enduring tension within revitalization efforts is between the need for new market-rate housing and residents' fears of displacement. Declining populations and low incomes in small legacy cities prompt the need to attract new and higher-income residents to approach a healthy bell-curve distribution of incomes (Mallach 2018a). Many smaller legacy cities in the Midwest have weak housing markets that require interventions to strengthen the market. However, city leaders and developers must authentically acknowledge community concerns as they begin to bring investments to these neighborhoods.

Leaders can build trust by bringing a community together to address the need for a mix of incomes, while also acknowledging and mitigating cultural changes and fear of displacement in an open, honest, and transparent way—such as in the case of the Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem in South Bend, Indiana, explored in chapter 4. Physical redevelopment can meet equitable development objectives and maintain a neighborhood's sense of cultural identity by preserving important community assets such as churches, parks, retail corridors and the long-standing merchants within them, and community and recreation centers. More strategies for addressing these dynamics are considered later in this report.

REGIONALISM: A COMPLICATED SOLUTION

Many researchers and equity experts recommend a regional approach in which neighboring jurisdictions work in concert and share programmatic costs to improve equity. However, regional cooperation is not politically realistic in the near term for many smaller legacy cities. This report compiles strategies that can be used at the municipal level to advance equity and encourage participation even absent political appetite for regional collaboration (Ferguson Commission 2015; Giloth and Meier 2012; Thomas 2012; Pacetti, Murray, and Hartman 2016; Zuk et al. 2015).

CHAPTER 3

Strategies That Build an Equitable Development Ecosystem

Staff and residents at a community outreach meeting in Columbus, Ohio, for the 614 for Linden initiative, a program designed to preserve affordable housing, provide rapid rehousing services, support small businesses, and provide supportive social services. *Source: Greater Ohio Policy Center*

The strategies offered here address today's pandemic climate as well as long-standing economic decline. They improve economic prospects more equitably, which will be essential for recovery after COVID-19 is contained. Most of these strategies are cost-effective and prioritize investing time and human capital to build collaborations rather than just spending on new construction projects.

The first three strategies focus on fostering relationships and establishing a common understanding within a community about existing conditions. The first strategy is to build trust among grasstops organizational leaders and between those leaders and residents, as an essential precursor to the other strategies. The second strategy scales up trust-building to form a layered and diverse coalition. The third strategy sets baselines and benchmarks to guide planning, implementation, and evaluation.

Strategy 1: Build Trust and Repair Strained Relationships

Building trust among community actors is essential for achieving anything new and ambitious in smaller legacy cities. Research by Chris Benner and Manuel Pastor (2015) underscores the value of this step. Developing trust, connections, and a "sense of common destiny" (Benner and Pastor 2012, 172) builds resilience and leads to positive economic outcomes. Urban Institute researchers found a similar pattern. Cities that recovered inclusively from the Great Recession demonstrated a shared vision, strong leadership, cross-sector collaborations, and authentic efforts to "build voice and power" of traditionally underrepresented groups (Poethig et al. 2018, 28).

BUILD TRUST AMONG THE GRASSTOPS

Trust building means different things in different contexts. It could mean leaders take the initiative to introduce themselves to new groups or a third party can facilitate these introductions. Groups that already know each other often need to work on repairing some relationships; grudges may exist between local groups that view themselves as having entirely different perspectives or constituencies. For example, an economic development organization may view a community development corporation (CDC) as shortsighted for not advocating for new jobs, while the CDC may think the economic development entity supports only corporate business interests and does not champion existing residents. Years of these patterned responses can result in a lack of trust and familiarity with one another, even when collaboration could enable mutually beneficial results.

Connecting Grasstops Leaders During a Pandemic

During the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, many organizations held weekly video calls with members or constituents to increase communication and strengthen relationships while social distancing. Philanthropy Ohio, the state membership organization for philanthropy and corporate giving, held regular calls that often included an outside speaker with perspectives or insights that might help members develop their philanthropic plans for responding to the pandemic.

By May 2020, Ohio had over 55 philanthropic funds for COVID-19 relief. In several communities, these resources were capitalized by foundations that typically do not collaborate. Thanks to the connections made, even remotely, the foundations figured out how to aggregate their funding for greater impact in a time of crisis. In some communities, philanthropic organizations that had historically experienced tension with each other put aside this friction to respond collaboratively to COVID.

Long-standing rifts are sometimes attributable to individual leadership styles, especially in smaller legacy cities where low turnover and long tenures can influence organizational culture for decades. Both sides must make a good-faith effort to overcome long-standing distrust and work to forge Benner and Pastor's sense of common destiny.

Philanthropic organizations and other entities with convening power can help repair relationships and build new ones. Deliberate, slow-paced outreach campaigns should bring decision makers together with no specific requests on the table. Conveners can do their best to focus on big-picture issues facing the city, rather than the goals of participants' organizations. Once the relationships improve and trust builds, the idea of a formal partnership among parties seems more feasible. In some cases, it might help to hire a third-party facilitator to expedite this process and maximize the productivity of meetings.

Leaders need to prioritize relationships strategically. The form in figure 2, created by The Greater Ohio Policy Center for a partner, is a tool for evaluating potential partners. In this case, leaders from local foundations, the chamber of commerce, the metropolitan planning agency, the economic development entity, and local governments met three times to learn more about each other and to identify how to respond to challenges in their city.

Eager to identify potential collaborators, one attendee used the evaluation form to assess all the participants engaged in the meetings. (Other criteria could be added to the same form to address specific concerns in other places.) After the three meetings, the attendee had a better sense of how to develop a "micropartnership" (as discussed in chapter 3) with one or two other organizations to increase capacity of community development in their city. The participant developed a longer-range plan of regular, informal meetings to cultivate a relationship with a potentially influential but less familiar partner. Working in a deliberate but low-pressure way, the attendee allowed time for trust to develop with leaders of other organizations, which also gave the attendee's board time to get comfortable with the idea of potentially working more closely with these other organizations.

BUILD OR REPAIR TRUST WITH LOCAL RESIDENTS

The critical work of building trust and repairing relationships with residents may mean acknowledging past wrongs. For example, in 2016, planners in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, sought meaningful engagement beginning with an unequivocal apology for past policies that were inequitable or driven by racism, such as redlining and urban renewal. They further acknowledged that Lancaster was still living with and trying to undo the impacts of these flawed programs. The apology, delivered publicly by the Lancaster Equity Community Development Corporation at a community meeting and published in strategic planning documents, read:

> We're sorry for the segregation practices that brought our city to where it is today. We're sorrier still for the racism, classism, NIMBYism, and shortsightedness that keep our city segregated today. Being sorry isn't enough, though. We'll need your help to push back against these philosophies and policies, and set the south side of the city back on a path toward prosperity. Only then can our apology truly be accepted. (Smith and Jurman 2016, 17).

The apology from civic leaders helped earn community trust and demonstrated a commitment to developing a new plan with residents to undo past ills. As a result, new groups committed to joining the planning process. Unfortunately, the September 2020 police killing of Ricardo Munoz, a mentally ill Latino man in Lancaster, and the responding protests were a raw reminder that even in places committed to trust building, those efforts can be fragile and will be tested. Lancaster's experience demonstrates that trust must be continually earned and never taken for granted.

Figure 2

Potential Partner Evaluation Form

Date: ______________________________

Name of Organization: ______________________ Name of Presenter: ______________________

Organizational Focus/Capacity	Personalities	Financial Strength	Communication
The organization's main focus aligns well with my organization's focus. Strong, Medium, Low	This organization is open-minded and would consider new partnerships. Yes No I don't know	This organization is financially strong enough to consider new endeavors. Yes No I don't know	I personally interact with this organization monthly. Yes No I don't know
Notes:	*Notes:*	*Notes:*	*Notes:*
This organization has a program area that I can imagine partnering with them on. What is it?	There is at least one senior person at this organization that would make a good partner. Yes No I don't know	This organization has flexible enough funding to respond to emerging needs. Yes No I don't know	I typically have positive interactions with people from this organization. Yes No I don't know
Notes:	*Notes:*	*Notes:*	*Notes:*
This organization understands the big picture even when it falls outside its service area. Yes No I don't know	This organization has a strong or emerging #2. Yes No I don't know		
Notes:	*Notes:*		
This organization is effective in delivering on its mission. Yes No I don't know			
This organization has a race, equity, and inclusion mindset. Yes No I don't know			

Other Notes:

Source: Greater Ohio Policy Center in collaboration with the Raymond John Wean Foundation

One equitable development goal is to create pathways for residents to become collaborators in the redevelopment process. Extensive and ongoing outreach to residents is imperative to building trust. Engagement with typically underrepresented groups—communities of color, new Americans, seniors, formerly imprisoned returning citizens, and low-income residents—must be genuine and occur frequently and consistently. Despite widespread agreement on this point, too often, planners and organizers cursorily address resident engagement or overlook it altogether for lack of time and other understandable reasons. But even well-funded, well-intended plans can fall apart if they don't reflect residents' desires and seem imposed on them.

Acknowledgments by leaders in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, of past policies driven by racism, helped pave the way for more equitable programming and community partnerships, such as Lancaster Equity Community Development Corporation's block-level work with residents. *Source: Community Action Partnership Lancaster and Lancaster Equity CDC*

Successful resident engagement, such as block-by-block canvassing to ask residents what they want to change in the neighborhood, is often time consuming. In the case of the Lancaster Equity Community Development Corporation, organizers triaged interventions in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and unemployment. Genuine conversations with residents about their ideas for their neighborhoods allowed outreach workers to faithfully incorporate residents' input and ideas into the design and implementation phases of local redevelopment. When policy makers propose a change at the city level, they should contact the groups potentially affected by the change. For example, if transit leaders consider a change in service, they should consult with bus riders.

Best Practices for Outreach Strategies

Groups committed to deep, equity-minded outreach suggest incorporating the following best practices into outreach strategies:

- Set regular meetings to occur multiple times a month on a variety of topics to keep conversations fresh and interesting.
- When seeking input on specific plans, meet at least monthly. Advertise the meetings well and make meeting minutes public and easily accessible to boost transparency and trust.
- Design meetings around participants' multifaceted needs. For example, provide childcare, meet outside business hours, meet in transit-accessible locations, and offer stipends to compensate for missed income.
- Frame conversations by asking, "If we were to take away the negatives (for example, crime, trash, and abandonment), what would you want to see?"
- Organize meetings in conjunction with community-based allies to expand outreach to include more people.
- "Park" topics that are off-topic and may derail the meeting.
- Identify early followers or engaged residents and ask them to invite their networks into the conversation.
- Invest in door-to-door canvassing to increase attendance at meetings and to reach residents who do not engage with community organizations or use social media.
- Consider hiring a trusted local partner to help facilitate outreach, such as a settlement house, CDC, church, or individual. But do not outsource the responsibility for explaining the plan or listening to residents and stakeholders.
- Be self-critical and periodically evaluate how the process is going.
- Establish a regular way to get feedback from residents and make changes in response. Big projects may benefit from an external evaluation to ensure this is happening.

Virtual Outreach During a Pandemic

In Columbus, Ohio, a multimillion-dollar redevelopment effort in one of the city's most disinvested neighborhoods engaged a local faith-based community development organization to assist with resident outreach. Four community development financial institutions partnered with numerous nonprofits and a local hospital to build and redevelop affordable housing options in the neighborhood, bring technical assistance and risk-tolerant business loans to local entrepreneurs, increase access to healthy food by developing a food mart, and improve well-being through expanded child and maternal health services (614 for Linden, n.d.).

In January and February 2020, the New Salem Church's Community of Caring Foundation organized monthly open houses on Saturday mornings. Partners staffed tables and answered questions from community members. The foundation intended to hold monthly open houses from January to June 2020. Because of the pandemic, the effort went virtual in April 2020. Through a website and monthly video calls, the development team continued to provide updates to a neighborhood advisory committee composed of local business groups, civic leaders, and elected area commissioners, who in Columbus are akin to city ward representatives.

The Community of Caring Foundation now structures its virtual monthly meetings so that development partners provide project updates and each neighborhood advisory committee member can pose questions or offer input. This careful attention to creating space for neighborhood leaders ensures that the virtual meetings are active collaborations that foster meaningful conversation.

Through its other outreach programs, the foundation continues to identify potential leaders among neighborhood residents and works to incorporate them into the redevelopment effort.

Virtual community outreach remains a challenge because internet connectivity and computer literacy are below average in the neighborhood. For now, the foundation builds on its pre-pandemic relationships in the neighborhood while continuing to identify other ways to educate community members on the redevelopment project.

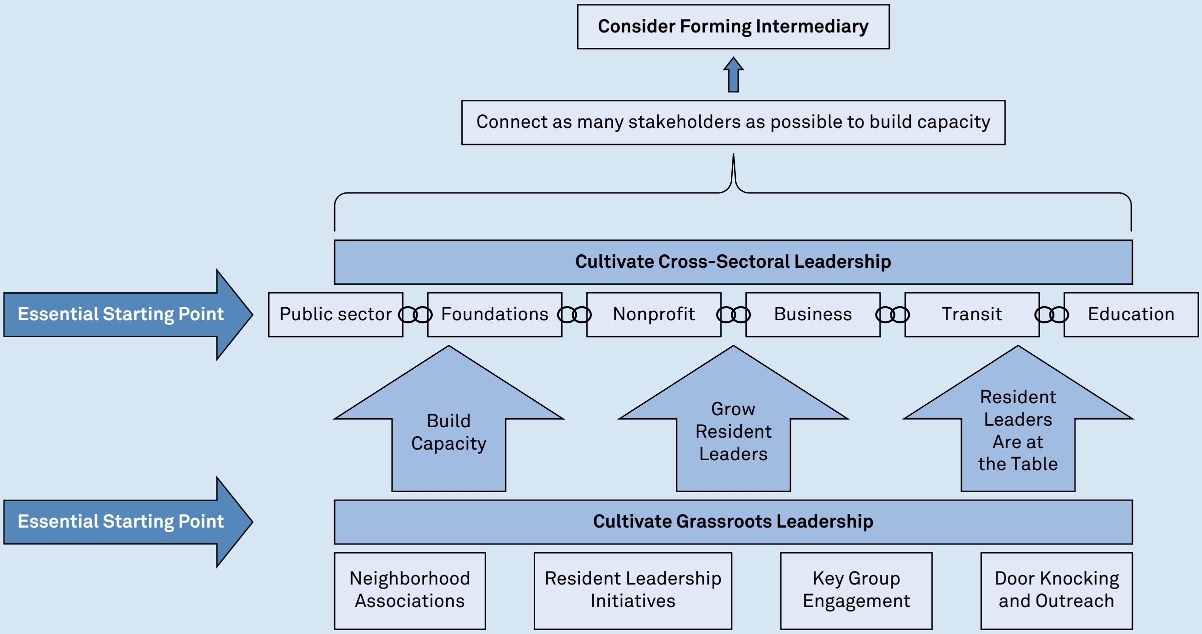
Strategy 2: Build a Layered and Diverse Coalition

Once trust has improved and processes to nurture that trust are established, equitable development practitioners can take more concrete steps to form a coalition. Coalitions have two essential starting points: recruit residents at the grassroots level and enlist grasstops leaders from across sectors. Figure 3 illustrates the components of successful coalitions, including engaging support from civic leaders, embedding that support into operations, and wielding leaders' power for broad change. Residents should be able to inform policy choices, hold leaders accountable, organize in support of the plan, and ascend into the leadership ranks of the coalition and other city groups. When convening formal coalitions, all members—residents and grasstops leaders alike—should attend planning and program development meetings from the very beginning.

Residents are critical members of such coalitions. Benner and Pastor (2015) discuss the benefits of the knowledge-sharing process that occurs when all of these groups are in the room together and note, "Certain types of knowledge are actually dependent on the full and equal participation of non-'expert' stakeholders in the earliest stages of issue framing

Figure 3

Potential Structure of a Layered and Diverse Coalition



and agenda setting" (15). Coalitions that pull from a wide variety of groups may be even more effective in improving economic conditions: "The findings do suggest support for the idea that building bridges between constituencies might actually be productive for sustaining economic vitality" (50). They additionally underscore the value of addressing community issues together, writing, "There was something about knowing together that seemed to promote growing together" (vii).

A coalition of coalitions assembled in Indianapolis, Indiana, to support the equitable redesign of the city's transit system is one example of an effective, multisector, sustained organizing effort that yielded significant results. As will be discussed in subsequent sections, this coalition deftly used data to make its case and garner broad-based support throughout the city.

START SMALL WITH A MICROPARTNERSHIP

Equitable development advocates should not be deterred if a vast coalition of like-minded people does not yet exist in their city. Developing a micropartnership is a viable start and can be accomplished by consistently and deliberately fanning sparks of interest among a few key dynamic people or organizations. The original momentum for Lancaster Equity, for example, began with a few individuals committing to conversations over coffee. The mostly unstructured but regular meetings served as a venue for building trust and camaraderie, exchanging ideas, and establishing a vision. The number of participants at individual events fluctuated but eventually grew over time.

Once a micropartnership solidifies its vision, partners may begin a concerted effort to create a "coalition of the willing" and advance a citywide equity agenda. With more formal conversations and deliberate outreach, partners can appeal to Rotary Clubs, foundations, chambers of commerce, community organizations, anchor institutions, major employers, and other targeted groups.

EMPHASIZE BENEFITS OF EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT TO THE BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Some business community members already understand how prevailing societal conditions can affect profits, so they may be receptive to adopting equitable development strategies to address their own challenges. For these stakeholders, the potential benefits of working to improve equity outcomes include:

- a local workforce with skills matching company needs;
- a more reliable workforce, supported by wraparound services—such as childcare, financial counseling, legal aid, and substance abuse counseling—that help employees become more dependable; and
- more disposable income in the community, which strengthens local businesses by stimulating local spending and demand for goods.

Case Study: Indianapolis Fields a Winning Coalition of Business and Community Groups to Support Transit Improvements

Indianapolis achieved long-standing, broad-based community support to equitably expand and redesign the city's transit system. The initiative is a model for inclusive coalition-building and the effective use of data to make the case to voters.

Aiming to support renewed investment in public transit, the Indy Chamber, the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, and the Central Indiana Community Foundation created and promoted an extensive legislative effort, later formalized as the Transit Drives Indy (TDI) Coalition. TDI was in fact a coalition of coalitions from across Marion County, Indiana, that included nonprofits, national experts, regional mayors, anchor institutions, advocacy groups, realtors, CDCs, organizations representing minority populations, and labor groups. Later, the Indy Chamber also created a political action committee called Keep Indy Moving Forward, comprising the chamber and the Metropolitan Indianapolis Board of Realtors, which was instrumental in the effort's political success.

From 2011 to 2014, TDI worked to pass enabling state legislation to allow select central Indiana counties to dedicate an income tax of up to 0.25 percent for mass transit. The assembled coalition's breadth and reach proved critical in getting the necessary legislation passed. Following changes to state law, a bipartisan group of sponsors introduced a proposal to the Indianapolis City-County Council to allow a referendum so the public could vote on whether to approve the tax increase. Following that approval, protransit groups launched a "Vote Yes" campaign to support expanding mass transit in Marion County. The referendum specifically asked voters to approve a 0.25 percent income tax increase (i.e., 25 cents for every $100 of taxable income) to fund the five-year Marion County Transit Plan, which extended all-day, high-frequency bus service across the city to reduce wait and travel times through expanded and more convenient routes. It also added three rapid-transit routes. In all, the planned system was projected to triple the population and double the jobs connected by frequent or rapid transit service.

Indianapolis Transit Case Study, continued

To support referendum efforts, Keep Indy Moving Forward and TDI strategically divided up key campaign operations. Keep Indy Moving Forward oversaw the political strategy and paid for materials, T-shirts, and signs, while TDI's diverse coalition conducted vast outreach and education to reach a large range of constituencies. This division of labor allowed nonprofits that were restricted from engaging in political advocacy to avoid direct political action while still conducting outreach. It also allowed for a focused and contained political strategy.

The Central Indiana Community Foundation provided seed funding for TDI, allowing it to hire staff and provide operating space. TDI was governed by a committee, which included the Indy Chamber, and was charged with conducting grassroots education and speakers' series, coordinating messaging, strategically responding to media inquiries, and providing standardized talking points to community groups.

TDI staff created a slide deck with strategic messaging for members to use while conducting outreach across the city. Stakeholders could tailor the slides to address issues of importance to specific audiences and thus help build broad support for the referendum.

The Transit Drives Indy Coalition united stakeholders and community members in support of renewed investment in public transit, including a "Car Free Day" on September 20, 2019. *Source: Indianapolis Public Transportation Corporation.*

The coalition based its messaging strategy on the slide deck and outreach meetings. The data helped make a case for reliable public transit as a way to provide residents with access to jobs, education, health care, and amenities. The slides described how poverty costs the region and shared startling statistics about incomes, crime, and segregation in Indianapolis. They also illustrated the dramatic exodus of manufacturing from the city's urban core, helping to frame transit as a way to improve quality of life in Indianapolis.

The campaign to support the referendum was the largest the region had ever seen, with hundreds of public meetings attended by thousands of people; 300,000 unique visits to the campaign's website; thousands of collected comments; 150,000 residents reached during local events; and 75,000 visitors at Indy Connect Day at the Indiana State Fair. Some 30 to 40 TDI constituent organizations met monthly to discuss what improving transit meant for Indianapolis and deliberately made space for residents and bus riders to join their conversations. TDI also welcomed and addressed concerns about the plan, such as the loss of parking for businesses. Thanks to this intentional community outreach, Marion County residents voted to support the tax to improve the city's transit system in 2016.

The Marion County Transit Plan is in the implementation phase, and construction of a 13-mile rapid-transit bus line is already under way. Located within a quarter mile of more than 50,000 residents and nearly 150,000 jobs, this line will run 20 hours a day, seven days a week, with station arrivals every 10 to 20 minutes.

With the passage of the referendum, TDI's mission has evolved. Today, the coalition's purpose is "to educate citizens and visitors in Marion County on the benefits of public transportation and to monitor the implementation of the Marion County Transit Plan" (Transit Drives Indy, n.d.).

The State University of New York Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) offer the ProTrain Manufacturing Career Readiness Program, a six-week course that prepares graduates like Trey McDonald for employment in local manufacturing businesses. *Source: CenterState Corporation for Economic Opportunity*

MAKE A CASE FOR EQUITY WITH DATA

Using data to describe a city's existing conditions and to quantify its long-term forecasts can help make the case for equity to the business community. Advocates can create materials that demonstrate how inequity is costly and ethically unjust to the region. Compelling data can help advocates and prospective partners achieve a common understanding of local conditions so all parties are working from the same key facts.

In the case of the Transit Drives Indy Coalition, partners created a data-driven slide deck to help spokespeople advocate for the equitable redesign of Indianapolis's transit system (Indy Chamber 2018). Compelling data include:

Past Employment Changes and Forecasts for the Future

Longitudinal data on historic economic shifts in the local economy, such as the loss of manufacturing jobs, are a compelling starting point for explaining existing conditions in a city. Maps can illustrate how these shifts disproportionately impact specific neighborhoods. Reports from employers on their workforce needs and challenges often resonate strongly with business-based organizations like chambers of commerce and economic development agencies because they understand that an inability to attract workers threatens the long-term health of businesses. Reports from employers can also help identify skill gaps in the existing workforce and determine the training or programming needed to address them.

In Indianapolis, TDI supporters created maps showing the former locations of manufacturing plants in the city and tracked the decline of these neighborhoods over time once a plant closed. These visuals helped drive home the point that the decline of some Indianapolis neighborhoods was directly tied to changes in the global economy.

The Cost of Poverty

For audiences who may only understand poverty abstractly, it can help quantify how little disposable income the working poor have to contribute to the overall economy. In Indianapolis, transit advocates did this simply but effectively by calculating the wages of low- and moderate-income workers in the city, the cost of living, and how much people need to earn to cover their costs, as shown in figure 4.

Figure 4

Wages Needed to Sustain Monthly Cost of Living

MONTHLY COST OF LIVING FOR MARION COUNTY FAMILIES

(1 adult, 1 preschooler, and 1 school-age child)

Housing:	$781
Food:	$526
Childcare:	$1,160
Health Care:	$503
Transportation:	$255
Taxes:	$527
Other Necessities:	$322
Total Expenses:	**$4,074**
Annual Salary:	**$48,900**
Wage Needed:	**$23.15/hr**

Source: Indiana Institute for Working Families

The Greater Ohio Policy Center regularly compares a community's housing wage—necessary to afford a two-bedroom apartment at fair market rent without paying more than 30 percent monthly household income for rent—to wages of the top 10 jobs with the most projected annual openings in the next decade. These calculations demonstrate existing and projected housing cost burdens among residents, and contrast the wages of the most available jobs with the necessary housing wage. These data come from a database maintained by the National Low Income Housing Coalition, the Ohio Bureau of Labor Market Information (housed at the state's Department of Jobs and Family Services), state-collected surveys, and the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics.

A coalition could also include national research, such as data from Opportunity Insights that show that, when people are born poor, they are likely to stay poor (Chetty et al. 2018). Characterizing how well some neighborhoods provide opportunities for their residents can demonstrate that existing conditions will not improve without deliberate action. The Center for Community Solutions, an Ohio-based think tank focused on health care in Ohio, for example, quantified the economic costs of carrying "disengaged youth" via missed wages, lost tax revenue, and potential need for public assistance (Campbell 2018). Such data illustrate how addressing symptoms of poverty can unlock hidden potential in smaller legacy cities. Data on physical health, COVID-19 infections, and mental health outcomes related to poverty may illustrate that high rates of intergenerational poverty cost a city in many ways.

Racial Inequities

Race-related disparities in income, homeownership, education, opportunity, and COVID-19 infections can help reveal injustice by quantifying it. National data from PolicyLink and the University of Southern California, for example, enumerate potential increases in gross domestic product generated by achieving more significant racial equity. These data are available on the National Equity Atlas (n.d.) and can show how greater equity improves the overall economy. PolicyLink further argues that deliberate efforts to address existing inequities can have a "trickle-up" impact on local economic growth, increasing prosperity for everyone as outcomes for the most disadvantaged populations improve (Treuhaft, Scoggins, and Tran 2014).

The Urban Institute (Acs et al. 2017) has also quantified the costs of segregation in the country's 100 most populous commuting zones, including some smaller legacy cities. The data show that segregation has a discernable cost, which financially impacts the whole community.

Strategy 3: Conduct Strategic Planning and Visioning

Strategic planning establishes baselines and benchmarks that support a shared understanding of key issues, guide implementation efforts, and allow for periodic progress evaluations. Plans also identify actors responsible for implementation and may point to the need for a new organization to coordinate parts of the work.

CREATE A DATA-DRIVEN LONG-RANGE PLAN

An up-to-date, data-driven plan allows a city to act deliberately and take advantage of opportunities. A robust long-range plan helps ensure that investments are strategically rooted in sound rationale to address a city's challenges and opportunities.

Important components of a strong, data-driven plan include the following:

Qualitative and Quantitative Data and Analysis

A high-quality plan drives constructive outcomes, keeps efforts coordinated, and maintains long-term viability as a guiding document. The planning process should inventory and quantify opportunities and threats both at the local level and within the broader economy. Data, described in more detail here, should be used to characterize existing conditions, anticipate future trends, set goals, and inform appropriate strategies. Analyses should always include race to determine the extent and scale of existing inequities, which helps planners set race-conscious goals and track progress toward delivering outcomes.

Realistic Benchmarks for Tracking the Impacts of New Development and Programming

A robust plan will establish baseline data for tracking future changes and identify goals for planning and policies. The goals should be race conscious and developed in concert with historically underrepresented people and those most affected by proposed policies.

When establishing goals, expect that few quantitative results will occur in the first three to five years while leaders are making large systemic changes to the outreach process, implementation framework, and programming structures. Additionally, broad data categories, such as area median income, rarely show immediate change. Major data aggregators, such as the U.S. Census Bureau or Esri, are simply not sensitive enough to reflect short-term progress in outreach, input gathering, and decision making. In some cases, different sources of quantitative data that are more timely, such as police data on crimes, can help demonstrate that incremental change is occurring.

A qualitative narrative describing how practitioners engage in systems change and what results they anticipate can also demonstrate progress. For example, reporting on changes in who is sitting at the decision-making table can illustrate short-term progress. This type of reporting may be particularly pertinent to funders who want to see program impacts sustained even after funding expires or diminishes.

Property Value Forecasts

Analyzing housing market data on sales, rents, and prices, and demographic data over time can illustrate how a neighborhood may be likely to change in the future. In smaller legacy cities, increased property values, displacement, new residents, and culture change typically threaten only a few census tracts in the city; most other areas usually remain stable or decline in projections. Determining the likely economic trajectories of specific neighborhoods can better target appropriate strategies to the locations where they can yield the most significant impact.

Employment Forecasts

Understanding the local economy and forecasts for jobs and industries is essential to planning. Knowing which types of jobs and industries are likely to grow and which may contract helps workforce development programs know where to direct resources for effective training and skill building.

Employment forecasts also help city leaders plan for the spatial requirements and infrastructure needs of new industries and anticipate where vacancies may occur.

Expectations That Development Will Advance Community Goals and Be Monitored

The plan should establish a protocol for developers to consistently explain how proposed projects will benefit residents and to track development impacts over time. Asserting this new procedure will reinforce agreed-on expectations rooted in community needs as documented in the plan. This procedure can help developers anticipate questions during the review process. City leaders should consider how well developers respond to community needs when awarding development incentives like subsidies or beneficial zoning changes.

In addition to ensuring that privately funded projects meet equity goals, plans should also identify publicly supported projects that advance equitable development goals. The plans should further specify a system of tracking progress toward these goals.

Clear Roles and Responsibilities for Implementation
The implementation strategy should outline who will do what, including whether a new nonprofit or intermediary is needed to connect and elevate existing efforts. The goals and strategies should be specific so that the implementation partners know who is responsible for which actions and what the time frame is.

In some instances, a new entity may be needed to build capacity and coordinate equity efforts. A new group specifically chartered for this purpose can adapt to new opportunities and challenges in a way that existing groups cannot. The presence of one coordinating entity, such as an intermediary, can also reassure funders that efforts are coordinated and that funding requests are not duplicated. For example, in Erie, Pennsylvania, the need to revitalize downtown, combined with a lack of high-capacity nonprofit developers, motivated a group of private-sector CEOs to create a nonprofit called the Erie Downtown Development Corporation (EDDC). EDDC purchases, lends, and provides technical assistance on downtown redevelopment projects; advises on policy that could affect downtown; and increases Erie's revitalization capacity through its concentrated focus on downtown. As of 2019, EDDC also successfully raised $27.5 million to support downtown redevelopment through a revolving loan fund (EDDC, n.d.).

Cleveland Neighborhood Progress, in Ohio, is another effective example of an intermediary serving in this role. The high-capacity community development intermediary was formed in the 1980s by philanthropic, civic, and corporate leaders to support the 12 to 20 CDCs that historically have worked in the city's neighborhoods. Cleveland Neighborhood Progress coordinates local CDC funding to build their capacities and undertakes initiatives to support catalytic development.

The Lancaster Equity Community Development Corporation (LECDC) is another important example of how an intermediary can work in a smaller legacy city. Created to specialize in equity-related issues, LECDC cultivates an ecosystem that supports equitable development, grassroots organizing, and grasstops coordination.

Case Study: Lancaster Equity Community Development Corporation

In Lancaster, Pennsylvania, an intermediary CDC called the Lancaster Equity Community Development Corporation (LECDC) oversees activity designed to increase equity outcomes and reduce poverty in Lancaster. It was formed during a time when the community was concerned about inequitable incomes, and Lancaster's mayor ordered a commission on poverty to elevate the topic and create a coalition of aligned nonprofit and for-profit leaders. Serving on the commission allowed participants to build mutual trust, identify shared interests, and strengthen the commitment to advancing equity.

When the poverty commission started to wind down, members explored how to continue implementing their equity agenda. The local Community Action Agency, which was already working to alleviate poverty, discovered a surplus of money in a dormant subsidiary called CAP Housing, which maintained a subsidized housing complex called Duke Manor. After considerable stakeholder outreach and discussion, the Community Action Agency used the money and the subsidiary's 501(c)(3) designation to establish LECDC to better coordinate equity in community and economic development and to fill the gaps between existing service providers. LECDC continues to hold Duke Manor and uses the property to generate revenue for developing other properties in Lancaster (Lancaster Equity, n.d.).

LECDC began with a highly focused, block-level intervention. In coordination with the Community Action Agency and the City of Lancaster, LECDC staff knocked on doors and interviewed residents about what they would like to see in their neighborhood. Hoping to facilitate open-ended discussions, they asked questions, such as "What would you like us to focus on?" and "What are your major concerns?" This approach solicited genuine input and positioned residents to lead change in their neighborhood.

The organization's initial goal was to use this information to empower residents by stating, "This was your idea, and we will help you implement it, but you are the leaders." LECDC believes this type of intensive community outreach helps build residents' confidence in the system, and it fosters deep relationships that support a long-term vision for the neighborhood.

LECDC now has a countywide service area with a strategic focus on Lancaster's South Side neighborhood, where it conducts extensive grassroots outreach and facilitates ongoing capacity-building programming, particularly around Beaver Street Park. A macrocollaborative CDC, LECDC does not compete with other community organizations or economic development groups; rather, it coordinates with entities working in the neighborhood.

A notable example of LECDC's facilitation is Beaver Street Park, which was once a troublesome vacant lot. Through community outreach, LECDC developed a viable vision for transforming the abandoned site into a neighborhood park and playground. Residents began investing sweat equity by cleaning up trash in the lot. LECDC learned from the local redevelopment authority about a competing $13,000 bid from a developer who wanted to turn the site into a parking lot. When residents spoke out to support the park project, the city awarded LECDC the bid to build a park for $1. Since then, LECDC has worked with consultants and residents to create a site design aligned with the community's vision. Through subsequent canvassing efforts, the plan has evolved to include parking, green features, and public art. LECDC is now helping to raise $250,000 for the park's construction.

Since its founding in 2017, LECDC has focused on strengthening its organization through strategic planning to ensure its work complements broader community plans and leverages the unique skills of each partner agency. For example, LECDC rehabilitates blighted houses with the Community Action Partnership of Lancaster County's social enterprise construction crew, "comprised of individuals with barriers to employment," who are paid a livable wage and taught the skills needed to secure a construction job. LECDC then sells the rehabilitated properties to low- and moderate-income homebuyers through other partners like the Lancaster Housing Opportunity Partnership and Tabor Community Services, or to partners that agree to retain the properties as affordable rentals. When necessary, LECDC also acts as a landlord (Lancaster Equity, n.d.).

The flexibility inherent in forming a new organization with a mission dedicated to equity has allowed LECDC to take risks that existing social service nonprofits may not have been able to. For example, LECDC's flexible charter allows it to strategically engage in new lines of work, such as entering the development sphere to raise proceeds for its mission-driven work. Under the LECDC banner, the regular convening of housing and community development-related organizations has fostered greater collaboration and idea sharing that has improved a variety of interagency projects.

LECDC's formation was driven by a coalition at the grasstops level, but its work in Lancaster's South Side neighborhood is effective because of its extensive grassroots outreach and capacity building.

CHAPTER 4

Strategies That Reduce Disparities and Increase Civic Capacity

The Genesee County Land Bank Clean & Green program supports innovative community groups in cleaning, maintaining, and beautifying vacant properties in the county. *Source: Genesee County Land Bank Authority*

While chapter 3 focused on building the ecosystem to support equitable development, this chapter offers programmatic suggestions that, over time, can yield measurable outcomes that address inequities. The strategies fall into four categories: utilizing place, cultivating homegrown talent, aligning similar programs and recalibrating existing operations for equity, and planning for neighborhood change.

Strategy 4: Utilize Place-Based Investments

Strengthening the market is imperative in America's smaller legacy cities (Mallach 2017), yet a city-wide equitable development strategy should not be based primarily on real estate solutions. Rather, strategic use of place-based strategies should be one part of any equitable development toolkit.

STRATEGICALLY TARGET AREAS FOR CONCERTED INTERVENTION AND FOCUS

Earlier sections described the power of block-level outreach. The two tools described here are typically deployed citywide but can increase impact in targeted areas by helping practitioners build on outreach efforts and physically improve neighborhoods:

Land Banks

A response to the growing trend of vacancy and abandonment, "land banks are governmental entities or nonprofit corporations that convert vacant, abandoned, and tax-delinquent properties into productive use" (Grounded Solutions, n.d.). Land banks acquire titles to problem properties, eliminate liabilities associated with the sites, and then transfer the properties to responsible owners. This process is done strategically with community-based plans. Land banks are widely used across the country. Michigan's Genesee County Land Bank, for instance, was created in 2004 and has been a national leader in guiding this type of community development (Genesee County Land Bank, n.d.). Other land banks, such as Ohio's Hamilton County Land Bank, have robust residential rehab programs that focus on stabilizing and strengthening neighborhoods one block at a time (Hamilton County Land Bank, n.d.).

Vacant Property Registration Ordinances

To manage the high rates of vacancy that have plagued many cities since the foreclosure crisis, many municipalities have enacted vacant property registration ordinances. They have three main objectives: (1) to ensure that the city and other interested parties can reach owners of vacant properties; (2) to ensure owners of vacant properties are aware of their obligations of ownership under relevant city codes and regulations; and (3) to ensure owners meet minimum maintenance standards. Funds generated through registration fees and penalties typically cover the costs of staff or consultants needed to visit properties and confirm compliance with health, safety, and building codes. Staff also manage paperwork, data entry, and the registry database.

Real estate redevelopment efforts, such as the renovation of Eddie Jones's house in Flint, Michigan, managed by the Genesee County Land Bank, enhance local equitable development work by improving physical conditions in city neighborhoods. *Source: Genesee County Land Bank Authority*

USE REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT TO HELP ALIGN KEY SECTORS

The Dayton Arcade is a prime example of how real estate can deliver more than physical redevelopment. This renovation project reactivated a large swath of Dayton's central business district. What's more, the physical space hosts several small business development and innovation entities, facilitating coordination to help the organizations eliminate service redundancies and diagnose community needs.

Case Study: Dayton Arcade Redevelopment

The historic Dayton Arcade is a collection of nine buildings in the central business district of Dayton, Ohio. As part of the City of Dayton's broader plan to draw residents, jobs, and visitors back to downtown, the Arcade is being restored to its original use—a mix of retail, offices, public space, and housing. The project has also helped centralize much of the city's business development and innovation programming, exemplifying how strategic real estate development can spur equitable outcomes.

Built in 1902, the Arcade is a spectacular building on the National Register of Historic Places since 1974. In the late 1970s, investors restored the site, and the newly refurbished Arcade reopened in the 1980s as a retail shopping and food center. Reflecting the general decline of downtown retail, the restored Arcade did not succeed for long. Closed in 1990, the site sat vacant and unmaintained for 25 years, while Dayton's downtown experienced disinvestment as employers left for the suburbs or destinations even farther away. By the 2000s, the city had one of Ohio's highest commercial vacancy rates, excess parking, and neglected surface lots (Arcade, n.d.).

Nearly a dozen funding sources, including millions of dollars in tax credits, contributed to the Arcade's rehab. Dayton city commissioners approved several related ordinances and resolutions, including an $11 million loan agreement, a community reinvestment area tax abatement agreement, a bond ordinance, an energy improvement district resolution, and a new community authority petition (Frolik 2019).

The city also secured a community benefits agreement to ensure that positive impacts from the Arcade's innovation hub would extend into Dayton's neighborhoods. The investment ultimately benefits the entire city with programming that is culturally specific and appropriately tailored to residents.

When complete, the Arcade will consist of an innovation hub, with the University of Dayton (UD) and the Entrepreneurs Center (TEC) as partners; 102 affordable workspaces for artists and creative entrepreneurs; an additional 24 market-rate units available to anyone; a culinary and kitchen incubator program with retail and restaurant space for incubator participants; and creative coworking space (Arcade, n.d.). UD and TEC will bring "hundreds of UD faculty, staff, and students; comprehensive entrepreneurial support services; and thousands of square feet of working space for local startups" (University of Dayton 2019). In addition to major mission-driven anchors, the Arcade will also house private commercial tenants.

UD's L. William Crotty Center for Entrepreneurial Leadership and its GEMnasium—a "transdisciplinary incubator for social innovation" where students and educators can gather—will be located in the innovation hub (UD, n.d.). In this space, faculty, students, and residents will work together to address the city's critical challenges, including the opioid crisis and food insecurity. The hub will also be TEC's central location and the site for its Business Development Center, where TEC will provide business and

Dayton Arcade Redevelopment Case Study, continued

commercialization services to entrepreneurs, start-ups, and early-stage companies. UD and TEC further "plan to invest more than $10 million over 10 years to cover rents, operating expenses, upfront costs for furnishing and equipping the space, and other equity support for the project at closing" (UD 2019).

Restoration of the Dayton Arcade is part of the city's larger plan to attract people back to downtown. A Facebook page provides progress updates and maintains a "Humans of the Arcade" series; this social media presence and photo-heavy content generates attention and increases pride among residents. The Dayton Arcade is an excellent example of how a real estate project can motivate workforce and economic development partnerships in the city's downtown. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, developers of the Arcade are pushing to complete the building's residential units and anchor tenant space by the end of 2020 (Bush 2020).

STRATEGICALLY EMPLOY DEVELOPER EXACTIONS AND IMPACT FEES AND ADOPT COMMUNITY BENEFITS AGREEMENTS

Because of their typically weak housing markets, smaller legacy cities cannot predicate an equity agenda on new development, and equitable tools associated with physical development need to be carefully calibrated. In particular, real estate incentives and exactions—requiring developers to build infrastructure or pay for capital improvements of public facilities—will vary across smaller legacy cities based on the market conditions of each place, and require a strategic hand. All legacy cities should work to strengthen the market by using an equitable process and equitable goals for individual projects. In lieu of exactions, which can dampen market demand or drive development outside of the city, developer incentives can be effective alternatives.

City leaders should carefully consider whether to use inclusionary housing policies—such as developer exactions, inclusionary zoning, or developer fees—and design them with the good intention of leveraging the real estate market to deliver more significant equity. In many smaller legacy cities, the nascent or delicate real estate market means that the relatively few units of affordable housing that an inclusionary housing policy can deliver may not outweigh the political cost to execute it. Enacting an inclusionary policy too early also risks jeopardizing market strength in the core city by stopping development or driving it to the suburbs.

An economic feasibility study can help cities to identify which neighborhoods might be subject to exaction policies and to determine the appropriate moment to institute inclusionary policies. For example, the city of Cleveland has five "hot" neighborhoods, and stakeholders wondered in 2019 and early 2020 whether the city could reduce developer incentives in these areas to encourage development in weaker areas instead. An analysis of the housing market revealed that even these hot neighborhoods were still relatively fragile and could not support reduced developer incentives—but large multifamily projects could likely support community benefits agreements. The analysis recommended that the city should plan to reduce hot neighborhood incentives and introduce new exactions in the future, when certain market conditions are met within the neighborhoods and citywide (Norton et al. 2020).

In places that anticipate a strengthening real estate market, adopting an inclusionary policy may help capture benefits from the anticipated market growth. The Grounded Solutions Network offers an inclusionary housing calculator to help communities think through details of creating a new policy (Inclusionary Housing, n.d.), such as identifying what percentage of affordable units is feasible; understanding the impacts of other incentives such as density bonuses, tax abatements, or parking requirements on feasibility; and setting affordability levels.

In cities with weaker markets, where little development is occurring or expected to occur, the relatively small number of affordable units produced may not warrant the political effort of enacting an inclusionary policy. Instead, a comprehensive strategy that focuses on improving and protecting naturally occurring affordable housing is likely to benefit far more people in such places. Communities can consider retooling existing public assistance for developers—such as tax abatements, below-market-rate land, or zoning variances—to incentivize support for neighborhood needs documented in a city planning process, which could include long-term affordable housing or maintained greenspace.

Community benefits agreements may be a useful development requirement in some smaller legacy cities. Communities can adopt parameters and expectations that specify which types of development projects must include a community benefits agreement and which types of benefits would be recognized by the signing parties. Without severely curtailing market potential, communities can ensure that new projects address identified community needs and reflect resident input. Local governments and neighborhood residents should think creatively about the benefits that new development could bring to the area. The high cost of local hiring requirements might turn away some developers, but they may be willing to incorporate green infrastructure and rainwater management systems instead, or build bike lockers and reduce parking. Community benefits agreements should address community concerns and specify how to monitor the project's impacts over time.

FACTOR TRANSIT INTO DEVELOPMENT PLANS

Some smaller legacy cities have fixed-route bus systems with a high-frequency corridor. In these places, developing real estate projects around transit routes can support the transit system and help residents access jobs and services. At the most basic level, this can be done by prioritizing new development near high-frequency transit stops. Land held by public agencies like the city or its transit authority could be identified for these projects. The equally crucial flipside of this strategy is to discourage new development—particularly new employment centers—on sites not served by transit or located on the urban fringe. Such locations can exacerbate the challenge of reliably transporting workers to job sites.

If sprawling economic development patterns are an issue in the city, the trust-building work described previously should focus on convening transit and economic development so that each is familiar with the other entity's goals, strengths, and limitations. Working together in good faith, all parties can better spur new jobs and economic development in the future.

Advocates in Cleveland, Ohio, and other legacy cities want to locate new development near frequent and affordable bus corridors to help residents access jobs and services. *Source: Dennis MacDonald/agefotostock/Alamy Stock Photo*

Strategy 5: Cultivate Homegrown Talent

Smaller legacy cities can support leaders from underrepresented communities, grow small-business ecosystems to consciously include low-income groups and communities of color, and support workforce development efforts that connect workers with good jobs.

BUILD THE LEADERSHIP PIPELINE AND CIVIC CAPACITY OF UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Because leadership is a key driver of change and equitable development, programs that create pathways to leadership for more people can uplift the whole city. These programs feed the city's leadership pipeline and elevate voices not historically heard at the decision-making table. Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and Springfield, Ohio, both have notable programs addressing this goal in different ways. In Fitchburg, city leaders created two interconnected programs designed to increase diversity in the decision-making process. One program recruits established professionals and prepares them to serve on boards and in other leadership positions; the other program provides leadership training opportunities for residents and youths. Springfield's program, begun in 2016, is hosted by the local chamber of commerce, which curates guest speakers who train prospective elected officials on the principles of good government and election procedures.

Case Study: Building a Pipeline of Resident Leadership in Fitchburg

The Reimagine North of Main initiative—a partnership of business, government, and nonprofits—focuses on efforts to revitalize a neighborhood in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, where resident representation on community boards is lacking. To correct this, the partnership developed two distinct but interconnected leadership training opportunities for residents in 2018.

Resident Leadership Institute

The goal of the Resident Leadership Institute, housed at Fitchburg State University, is to foster community-based leaders who reflect the demographics of the city. The program works with existing professionals to develop more nuanced leadership skills and facilitate their connections to decision-making opportunities. Participants receive instruction on topics that strengthen their résumés, including an introduction to the community's needs and assets, relationship building, strength-based leadership, communication approaches across cultures, power of community and power mapping, and the mechanics of governance and group dynamics. At the end of the program, participants receive a certificate from the university and access to specific leadership opportunities, such as appointments to municipal and nonprofit boards or committees. The graduates then become mentors for incoming classes.

Community Stewards Training Program

The complementary Community Stewards Training Program is more grassroots and focused on community organizing, with a concentration on youths, arts, health, and public education. NewVue Communities, a local CDC, is the main organizing entity for this program. Participants receive training on community organizing, asset mapping, voting and electoral participation, health care topics like nutrition and cancer prevention, and other efforts. A specific unit of the program is geared to youths aged 14 to 25, and operates in partnership with the local YMCA. Efforts are also under way to formally link the Community Stewards Training Program to the Resident Leadership Institute to create an even more robust pipeline for developing neighborhood leaders.

Outreach with residents also provides an opportunity to cultivate new community leaders. Organizers can recruit standout residents for governance teams or budget committees. Gwinnett SToPP—an effort to organize parents in the Georgia county against school-to-prison pipeline practices—built leadership development programming into its core functions for parents, accomplishing advocacy and capacity building simultaneously.

Case Study: Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline (Gwinnett SToPP)

In 2007, Gwinnett SToPP formed as a response to parents' growing frustration with the number of Gwinnett County, Georgia, schools relying on harsh punishment and law enforcement officers to address minor school misconduct. Today, the parent-organized group builds and strengthens community relationships with advocacy training, and facilitates policy change.

Gwinnett SToPP also establishes and maintains relationships with local, state, and national organizations to provide school-to-prison pipeline awareness. The group provides advocacy training to community stakeholders across the state and promotes local, state, and national policy changes. Gwinnett SToPP's partner organizations have included the American Civil Liberties Union of Georgia, the Georgia Council on Developmental Disabilities, the Interfaith Children's Movement, the Dignity in Schools Campaign, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

Gwinnett SToPP and its partners' successes include eliminating the contact quota for Gwinnett County's school resource officers, which previously set goals to increase the number of interactions between law enforcement and students in school settings; developing a community-based review of the disciplinary code of conduct; including school discipline rates in state report cards; and reviewing and rewriting the Georgia Department of Education's alternative school rules (Gwinnett SToPP, n.d.).

The Gwinnett Parent Coalition to Dismantle the School to Prison Pipeline, or Gwinnett SToPP, shows how community organizers can build civic capacity while advocating for change. *Source: Eric Stirgus/*Atlanta Journal-Constitution *via AP*

Case Study: The Chamber of Greater Springfield's Candidates College

The Chamber of Greater Springfield, Ohio, hosts an annual program called the Candidates College for local individuals considering a run for local office in Springfield. The award-winning program consists of three two-hour sessions, during which participants meet with civic leaders to learn how to run a campaign. The nonpartisan chamber does not endorse or support candidates running for office, but it strives to increase the number of qualified candidates committed to advancing the city and region through the principles of good government. Several graduates have chosen to run for city council and county offices; two Candidates College participants now serve on city council and two serve on the school board.

SUPPORT WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Programming to train, retain, and support residents seeking employment can be a centerpiece of a city's efforts to build greater equity. Federal Reserve Bank research into the economies of 118 metropolitan areas notes that "a skilled workforce topped the list of indicators [for regional growth]" (Eberts, Erickcek, and Kleinhenz 2006, 41). Successful workforce development efforts should identify and address the skills gap in an existing workforce to better meet the needs of employers. In some cases, county workforce boards can provide job training on location at employers' facilities to prepare specific employees. The value of such services stood out in a 2013 analysis of the cost of low-skilled workers to the economy in Baltimore, Maryland. The study calculated that, if conditions persisted, Baltimore's 90,000 working-age adults lacking a high school diploma "would produce a net drain on local, state, and federal resources of somewhere around $3 billion in lost revenues, increased service costs, and institutionalization costs over their lifetimes" (Baltimore Integration Partnership 2018, 27).

The business community is generally receptive to strategies that match workers with employers. In Syracuse, New York, CenterState CEO is a business-led organization that has adopted inclusion as a strategic priority and works to employ previously unemployed or hard-to-employ residents.

In addition to providing worker training, employers can adjust their traditional requirements and expectations to better accommodate the potential workforce. Adjustments can include reevaluating the level of education required for certain jobs, allowing training or experience in place of formal education requirements, adjusting drug-testing rules, and reframing issues like employee tardiness to better understand the reasons behind it, including problems with childcare or transportation (Lloyd 2017).

Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a global manufacturing firm and designated benefit corporation—a traditional corporation committed to creating public benefit and sustainable value in addition to generating profit. Cascade requires its managers to participate in a poverty simulation training to help them understand the real difficulties employees may face in supporting their families on a welfare stipend. As a result, managers are collaborating more constructively with the workforce to address these hurdles.

Comprehensive workforce development programs also identify unemployed residents' barriers to employment and help them work through such challenges. Successful programs often provide wraparound services that help an employee maintain employment. Beacon of Hope Business Alliance, a nonprofit in Cincinnati, Ohio, has developed a proven model of providing support services and training for hard-to-employ and formerly incarcerated workers.

Cascade Engineering in Grand Rapids, Michigan, requires its managers to participate in poverty simulation training that helps them understand difficulties employees may face and collaborate with workers to address challenges that may arise. *Source: Cascade Engineering*

Case Study: CenterState CEO

CenterState CEO is an economic development organization and chamber of commerce dedicated to the prosperity of central New York. In 2016, its board identified inclusion as a priority, asserting through the strategic planning process that everyone needed access to opportunities for the region to experience real economic growth. As a result of the strategic plan, CenterState CEO established the Economic Inclusion Division.

Today, CenterState CEO offers accessible education programs on sales, customer service, leadership, and business management. Most noteworthy is its Work Train initiative, which is dedicated to addressing regional unemployment and underemployment by developing strategies to benefit both businesses and job seekers. Work Train assists businesses in recruiting, training, and retaining skilled employees while also partnering with community organizations to help residents access job training and obtain careers that pay family-sustaining wages (CenterState CEOa, n.d.).

Work Train's strategy starts by collaborating with employers, who typically need specific talents and historically have had difficulty attracting and retaining that talent. CenterState CEO learns about these employers, their workplace culture, and the positions they aim to fill. Then, it compiles a candidate profile with criteria explaining what would

CenterState CEO Case Study, continued

make someone successful in that position, and works with community and educational partners to engage in targeted recruitment and training of existing workers to match them with available jobs. Program participant Maud Dadzie said, “As soon as they see where your interest is, that is where they are going to focus, and they’ll prepare you toward that and make sure you reach the goal that you set for yourself. They’re in it with you. They don’t just leave you. They check on you. They make sure you are on track. They walk you through your journey” (CenterState CEOb, n.d.).

CenterState CEO works with partners such as the Syracuse SUNY Educational Opportunity Center to provide tailored training for available positions. The organization also works with local credit unions to provide education on financial empowerment, family budgeting, and opening a bank account. Additionally, the credit unions offer a tool, similar to a rental lease, to help participants access a vehicle in order to commute to a job. This support includes significantly discounted monthly payments, providing an inexpensive way for participants to obtain a car. After program participants are placed in a job, they receive one-on-one career coaching focused on retention and advancement. Program participant Marina Burgos noted, “Being able to complete the program was a great accomplishment. It makes a difference. Having a full-time job makes a difference. It also gave me the ability to tell others about the program so they can do the same” (CenterState CEOb, n.d.). Work Train mainly focuses on three industries: health care, manufacturing, and construction.

Case Study: Nehemiah Manufacturing and Beacon of Hope Business Alliance

Nehemiah Manufacturing Company is a for-profit manufacturing plant in Cincinnati, Ohio, that has been in business since 2009. It owns several brands, including Boogie Wipes, Kandoo, and Sun and Earth, and it packages and manufactures several lines for Procter & Gamble, such as Downy, Dreft, and Febreze. From its inception, Nehemiah has practiced “second chance” hiring of hard-to-hire and formerly incarcerated individuals and provides a social support team to help employees succeed. Today, Nehemiah employs 150 to 180 individuals; about 80 to 85 percent of its workforce is considered “second chance.”

Nehemiah’s success hinges on providing social services and support to individuals returning from incarceration. In addition to employing a full-time social service team of three, the company partners with a host of social service agencies in the Cincinnati area, including Cincinnati Works, a career coaching and support services nonprofit; the City Link Center, a social services coordinator and provider; the Life Learning Center, a supportive services provider for at-risk individuals; and City Gospel Mission/Jobs Plus, which provides homelessness services. The social support team meets with each new employee to conduct a full assessment of the individual’s immediate barriers to employment. Together, they evaluate housing stability, available transportation, drug and alcohol issues, mental health issues, and outstanding fees and fines. Then they develop a plan to remove barriers that have historically kept that individual from holding a job.

In 10 years of operations, Nehemiah has maintained a 15 percent turnover rate, low enough to help justify the company’s mission-driven focus. Nehemiah attests that its hard-to-hire employees, who appreciate the second chance, become its most loyal and hardworking staff.

Nehemiah Case Study, continued

By 2015, Nehemiah was receiving more applicants than it could hire, so it created a nonprofit called Beacon of Hope Business Alliance to bring together other companies interested in practicing second-chance hiring. In August 2019, Beacon of Hope merged with Cincinnati Works to further scale up the initiative. Today, more than 80 companies participate in the Beacon of Hope Business Alliance, including Kroger Manufacturing, JBM Packaging, Holland Roofing, Foxtail Foods, Batesville Products, and others. Cincinnati Works annually places more than 400 people in manufacturing, construction, and cleaning jobs.

Nehemiah Manufacturing Company in Cincinnati, Ohio, practices “second chance” hiring of hard-to-hire and formerly incarcerated people, including supervisor Rayshun Holt, and provides a social support team to help employees succeed in their jobs and society. *Source: Hartong Digital Media*

DELIBERATELY DIRECT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS TO UNDERREPRESENTED GROUPS

Retooling small business development efforts to support women and people of color can improve equity and economic engagement in these groups, which represent high percentages of the population of smaller legacy cities. The Dayton Arcade, profiled previously, is becoming the centerpiece for physical revitalization and human capacity development in its city. In addition to central downtown offices for city entrepreneurship programs, staff will geographically extend programming into several Dayton neighborhoods. They will deploy culturally sensitive material, such as multilingual brochures, to existing populations and offer business development programs geared toward community needs with the goal of engaging a diverse clientele that reflects the city’s population.

Another Ohio-based effort to grow minority businesses is the pioneering development of minority contractor loan programs by three community development financial institutions. These programs provide gap financing and technical support to minority contractors.

Case Studies: Minority Contractor Loan Programs

For decades, equitable participation of minority business enterprises (MBEs) in the construction industry and allied fields has been a challenge. One issue is that start-up contractors are less able to withstand delays on payments for completed jobs, which creates a cash-flow gap and challenges contractors' ability to bid on new contracts without the needed resources. This gap is a significant barrier for minority contractors' who are historically underrepresented in the industry, and inhibits their ability to sustain and grow their businesses. This instability has put many minority contractors out of business and has led to an overall reduction in the number of minority-owned firms participating in the market.

The Economic and Community Development Institute (ECDI) in Columbus, Ohio, is helping address this inequity by providing bridge funding to MBEs across Ohio. To address cash-flow gaps and improve MBE contractors' prospects for market sustainability, ECDI launched the Minority Business Enterprise Capital for Construction (CfC) program in 2017. The program provides industry-specific business development support and capital to small, minority-owned subcontracting firms in the construction industry and allied fields with the goal of leveling the playing field for MBEs.

Today, CfC provides high-caliber, industry-specific training and access to flexible, affordable, short-term capital. CfC's short-term, low-interest loans—which range from $5,000 to $150,000—are available to Ohio MBE contractors. These loans can be used for payroll, insurance costs, vendors, subcontractors, materials, suppliers, and equipment costs. CfC participants also receive one-on-one technical assistance, including loan packaging, mentorship, loan management support, and access to industry-specific group training, such as construction estimating. Upon completing the program, participants can expand their businesses with additional long-term capitalization loans through ECDI.

CfC is funded in part by JPMorgan Chase, Wells Fargo, United Way of Central Ohio, and the Small Business Administration. The demand for CfC's services and products is evidenced by high rates of participation in training events and loan applications received. In its first three years, CfC served more than 350 small, minority-owned construction subcontracting firms, and it disbursed more than $2.5 million in loan capital to support the stability and growth of these firms.

In Cleveland, Ohio, the Village Capital Corporation has a similar program called Contractors on the Rise that helps underrepresented populations get a foothold in the region's construction industry. The program works with cohorts of minority and female real estate contractors—who already do rehabilitation, new construction, or subcontracting work—to expand their portfolio, increase their operational capacity, and improve their cash flow and bankability. Each participant receives a suite of financial and business support services, including credit repair, coaching, and training in everyday business activities (for example, bookkeeping and free legal and accounting services). The Village Capital Corporation uses an evidence-based implementation model to ensure that participants are given all the tools they need to overcome structural barriers to growth.

After confirming a participant's readiness, the Village Capital Corporation issues a revolving line of credit based on the contractor's current capacity and experience. That line of credit can go up to $200,000, though few contractors have been awarded so much. This low-interest construction loan can be used toward property acquisition, hard construction costs like the purchase of construction materials and labor, and associated soft costs such as permits. The program aims to enhance the business capacity of historically marginalized contractors, including female and Black contractors, to increase homeownership in target neighborhoods, and to remove blight.

The Western Reserve Community Fund, another community development financial institution serving northeastern Ohio, also started a minority contractor loan program in 2020, based on the CfC and Contractors on the Rise programs.

Strategy 6: Anticipate Neighborhood Change and Plan for Stability

Communities can improve their strategies by anticipating stability, decline, fluctuating property values, and other changing conditions in particular neighborhoods. Some geographic areas may need to focus explicitly on protecting existing residents from displacement due to increased rents or property taxes. Others may need interventions to maintain economic stability and prevent decline. For example, "middle neighborhoods" are important bulwarks against citywide decline and may require customized interventions (Mallach 2018b). First developed around the middle of the 19th century to house the country's growing middle class, middle neighborhoods—despite suburbanization and deindustrialization—have higher-than-expected rates of homeownership given residents' modest incomes. A variety of strategies that account for different neighborhood contexts follow.

Hamilton, Ohio, redeveloped a brownfield site that once housed a vacant hospital building into the award-winning Marcum Park, which was dedicated in 2017. *Source: SAI Fountains*

ADDRESS GENTRIFICATION CONCERNS AND ELEVATE STRATEGIES THAT PROTECT NEIGHBORHOOD IDENTITY

Data that forecast change in various parts of the city can facilitate neighborhood-level discussions about desired outcomes, and justify policies and development strategies for each area. Residents should be consulted during this data collection, as they have knowledge of the place that may not be captured by quantitative research efforts. Armed with data, advocates for equity can attempt to reframe conversations about neighborhood change caused by financial pressures, often characterized as gentrification and displacement—the dynamic wherein long-term residents are forced to leave a neighborhood because an influx of higher-income residents drives up property values, resulting in a neighborhood that is no longer affordable for many original residents. Informed by data, the discussion can instead emphasize why development may be necessary to support neighborhood-led initiatives to preserve cultural assets, neighborhood amenities, and community identity. Walking this tightrope is never easy, but several approaches can make the process more transparent.

Research and lived experience suggest that conversations about gentrification are more productive when the planning and outreach process around development is equitable. Building a community's capacity to solve problems, ensuring an inclusive decision-making process, and regularly positioning the "equity question" at the center of discussions can help allay concerns about gentrification (American Planning Association 2019; Funders Network for Smart Growth and Livable Communities and Federal Reserve Banks 2017; Hollingsworth and Goebel 2017; Treuhaft 2016).

As discussed in earlier sections, a transparent outreach effort is critical to helping residents understand that revitalization will benefit them and that the city and other leaders will seriously address and mitigate their concerns. Organizers must reliably communicate objectives, listen with respect and open minds, and sincerely act on residents' input and directions. Outreach may require tactful education as well as careful listening. For example, the Bowman Creek Educational Ecosystem (BCe2) in South Bend, Indiana, maintains an internship program that encourages high school and college students to work with neighborhood residents toward positive change. BCe2 believes that bringing back the middle class is not gentrification but rather a necessary step to restoring a truly mixed-income neighborhood. By making this assertion up front, explaining the rationale behind it, and not unexpectedly revealing new objectives at a later point, BCe2 has successfully built trust with neighborhood residents.

BCe2, a partnership between educational institutions and community leaders, maintains an internship program that brings together students and residents to restore local and mixed-income neighborhoods for everyone's benefit. *Source: Barbara Johnston/ University of Notre Dame*

Dynamics of physical displacement and gentrification may not be as demonstrable in smaller legacy cities as in other places because of a lack of both market activity and population growth, but concerns about cultural displacement are still valid. As community advocates know, fear of gentrification is not only about housing displacement; it also encompasses concerns about the cultural fabric of neighborhoods. Once the organizers in South Bend established that bringing back the middle class could help restore a neighborhood, it helped residents discuss what they needed to preserve to prevent neighborhood change from overwhelming the local culture. Planning to protect or renovate beloved community or cultural assets can make long-term residents feel they still belong in the neighborhood. A mix of approaches to plan proactively for neighborhood change can be led by local governments, nonprofits, or, in some cases, philanthropy.

PRESERVE LONG-TERM AFFORDABILITY IN RENTS AND MORTGAGE PAYMENTS

Community Land Trusts

A community land trust (CLT) is a shared equity homeownership model operated by a nonprofit entity that acquires property, builds on it, and then sells homes at an affordable price while retaining the deed for the land. While on a long-term lease from the CLT, the program allows prospective buyers to own affordable homes and earn equity from their purchases. Should the homeowner decide to sell, CLT resale formulas keep the place affordable while allowing homeowners to realize appreciation from improvements they made while living there. Homeowners on CLT land pay all taxes and insurance on the house, and they assume all the rights and responsibilities of homeownership (Walliser-Wejebe 2019a). CLT housing provides residents with shelter, tenure security, and an opportunity to build credit and create wealth, among other benefits. The Champlain Housing Trust in Vermont is the largest CLT in the country, with over 2,000 residents housed in rental apartments, cooperatives, and shared-appreciation single-family homes and condominiums (Community-Wealth, n.d.).

Housing Trust Funds, Real Estate Transfer Tax, and Conveyance Fees

Some communities have housing trust funds, which finance the development and preservation of affordable and workforce housing. Housing trust funds are often funded through taxes, fees, or annual budget allocations.

Housing trust funds often receive a portion of real estate transfer taxes or conveyance fees, which are assessed at the city, county, or state level (depending on state policies). The tax is usually based on a percentage of a property's sale price, and conveyance fees are typically a set charge per transaction or a formulaic cost. The tax or fee discourages investors from buying and reselling the property for a significant profit without improving it. The money collected from these taxes can be directed into a fund to raise financial resources for affordable housing or offset rising property tax rates for targeted residents to prevent displacement. In some cities, trust funds collect the tax increment increase generated by redeveloped properties; other cities make general fund allocations to their housing trust fund.

In 2019, Franklin County, Ohio, raised its locally permitted portion of the state conveyance fee charged to property sellers. The increased price will generate an estimated $6.5 million annually and be used by the county to help establish 200 or more affordable housing units each year for the next 10 years, with targeted tax breaks and incentives (Kovac 2019).

Affordable Housing in Stable and Improving Neighborhoods

Permanent affordable housing should be targeted to neighborhoods with projected increases in value. Using publicly held land, CLTs, and timely property acquisitions, developers can help ensure long-term affordability in mixed-income neighborhoods of choice.

PROVIDE RELIEF FROM INCREASED PROPERTY TAXES

Property Tax Circuit Breakers

A property tax circuit breaker is a widespread, long-standing, and targeted practice to reduce individual property tax burden (Bowman et al. 2009). Called "circuit breakers" because they protect taxpayers from a property tax "overload"—similar to an electric circuit breaker—many such programs have income ceilings that vary depending on the number of people living in a household (Walliser-Wejebe 2019b). Taxpayers earning below the designated income ceiling are given relief when their property taxes exceed a certain percentage of their income.

Because property taxes can be particularly burdensome for low- and moderate-income families, the best circuit breakers provide direct relief that increases as household income declines for a given property tax bill. The defining feature of a property tax circuit breaker that determines the benefits provided is the relationship between household income and the size of a property tax bill. Many states have adopted property tax circuit breakers in the last 40 years, though elements like the maximum allowable benefit, eligibility criteria, and program administration vary by state. Most circuit breaker programs are administered and funded at the state level.

Long-Term Owner Occupants Program

The Long-Term Owner Occupants Program (LOOP), a real estate tax relief program enacted in 2014 by the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, assists property owners who experience a significant increase in their property's assessed value over one year and meet eligibility requirements. To be eligible, applicants must own their homes for at least 10 years, be current on all property tax payments, earn up to 150 percent of the area median income for their family size, and experience at least a 50 percent increase in their property's assessed value. The city then credits the homeowner for the excess property taxes due, wherein homeowners see savings for each dollar above the 50 percent increase. LOOP is paid for entirely from the City of Philadelphia's General Fund.

In nearly every state, the homestead exemption reduces a portion of a property's assessed value before taxes are calculated. In Philadelphia, all homeowners are eligible for a homestead exemption; other states may place additional requirements for a homeowner to use a homestead exemption. Though the homestead exemption is considered when calculating whether a homeowner has met the assessment increase necessary to qualify for LOOP, a homeowner cannot be enrolled in or receive reductions from both programs simultaneously. LOOP is designed to assist longtime owners who have seen a substantial increase in property values. By limiting a home's assessment increase and locking in that assessment value for as long as a homeowner remains eligible, the program helps prevent displacement and keep people in their homes (City of Philadelphia 2020). Because LOOP is less than a decade old, it is still being tested for efficacy.

Antidisplacement Tax Fund Program

The Westside Future Fund, a nonprofit in Atlanta, coordinates an antidisplacement tax fund program that serves the English Avenue, Vine City, Ashview Heights, and Atlanta University Center neighborhoods. Made possible through philanthropic donations, the fund pays for homeowners' property tax increases in designated areas, beginning the year of application approval, without requiring participants to pay back any funds received. The program started making payments in 2018 and is designed to last 20 years, after which it will be reevaluated.

To be eligible, participants must have owned and occupied the property as a primary residence for at least one year before applying. Applicants must reside within the designated neighborhood boundaries and make less than 100 percent of the area median income

LOOP assists homeowners in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, by limiting increases in a property's assessed value to prevent displacement of homeowners who cannot afford to pay the increase. *Source: pwbaker/Flickr, CC BY-NC 2.0*

for their respective household sizes. Finally, applicants must receive a homestead exemption to be eligible for the program (Westside Future Fund, n.d.).

Assessment Freezes for Senior Citizens

Assessment programs freeze a qualifying senior citizen's property value at the base year value for as long as the homeowner lives there. Even as property values rise, the senior's taxes are determined by the base year valuation. The assessment freeze protects seniors against real estate tax increases due to increasing property values, although state policy determines whether a freeze exemption also protects against increased taxes due to changes in local tax rates. In certain states, a qualifying homeowner's property tax bill can increase if taxing districts increase their levies, even if they receive the freeze. This program is only for seniors and also has household income requirements. At least 13 states administer an assessment freeze program for seniors, and the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy maintains a searchable database with these locations cataloged (Lincoln Institute of Land Policy and George Washington Institute of Public Policy, n.d.).

STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR RENTERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

The COVID-19 pandemic spurred historic, temporary legal protections for renters as local jurisdictions passed eviction moratoria en masse. The 2020 federal CARES Act afforded some protections to residents living in federally subsidized housing. Then in early September 2020, the Centers for Disease Control boosted these efforts by imposing its federal eviction moratorium. The moratorium applies to tenants living in both publicly and privately owned rental properties who are demonstrably experiencing a financial burden from the COVID-19 pandemic. When these temporary protections expire, however, the issue of rental protections will be more significant and urgent than ever.

Pay to Stay

The Village of Yellow Springs, Ohio, pioneered novel renter protection legislation during the state's declared COVID-19 state of emergency. Pay to Stay is an eviction protection policy that requires landlords to accept late rent payments so that tenants may remain in their residences. Under current law in Ohio, landlords do not need to accept rent payments after the due date or after a grace period outlined in the lease agreement. Landlords can then refuse payment and proceed with an eviction, even if the tenant can pay their rent arrears. This inflexibility can be particularly burdensome for renters whose incomes have decreased because of the pandemic and who may not be able to access emergency rent assistance or unemployment benefits before the deadline to pay their rent.

Pay to Stay only protects renters under threat of eviction for nonpayment of rent. By requiring a landlord to accept late payments, plus the cost of reasonable late fees and any court costs, municipalities can support renters and prevent displacement. Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia all have state laws that allow renters to avoid eviction by paying owed rent. These policies are sometimes called "Pay and Stay" or "Right of Redemption." Currently, the Village of Yellow Springs is the only municipality in the state of Ohio that has passed a Pay to Stay ordinance (Village of Yellow Springs 2020).

Just Cause Eviction Ordinances

Just cause eviction ordinances are a form of tenant protection designed to prevent arbitrary, retaliatory, or discriminatory evictions by establishing that landlords must have specific reasons to evict renters, such as failure to pay rent or intentionally damaging the unit. These ordinances also protect renters who face retaliatory evictions for reporting inadequate housing conditions or requesting repairs. Strong just cause eviction ordinances require strong enforcement mechanisms and are often coupled with rent control laws. Cities such as Boston, Chicago, New Orleans, and Seattle have created or amended long-standing just cause eviction ordinances in the past 20 years, albeit with varying protections or requirements before an eviction can be justly ordered against a tenant (Kansas City, Missouri Health Department Community Engagement, Policy, and Accountability 2019).

Rental Property Registry

Municipalities often create rental property registries to gather accurate contact information on all rental properties. The registry allows code enforcement departments to respond to nuisance complaints and hold landlords accountable for property maintenance. Registration fees are typically associated with registries but are not required to establish or maintain them. As part of the registration process, some cities also require property inspections to ensure compliance with building code and safety and health standards. The City of Minneapolis, Minnesota, requires rental properties to be licensed to promote health and safety, preserve the city's existing housing supply, maintain property values, work toward eliminating substandard and deteriorating rentals, and maintain a healthy living environment for individuals and families. Exterior property inspections and, in some cases, interior inspections determine whether a landlord is compliant. In such programs, compliant landlords may be subjected to less frequent inspections or lower fees.

MAINTAIN NEIGHBORHOOD STABILITY

Redirect Homeownership Development Dollars to Rental Rehab and Preservation

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recession, low-income families are less likely to purchase new homes. Homeownership programs can still serve their target populations and protect housing affordability during this time by temporarily redirecting funds toward rental rehabilitation and preservation if the funder allows. The results will help keep residents in their homes and continue to maintain and improve neighborhood quality.

Educate Existing Elderly Homeowners on Heirship Process

In many middle neighborhoods in legacy cities, housing may fall into disrepair when the original owner dies and a disengaged heir inherits the property. The Greater Chatham Initiative, based on the South Side of Chicago, has found that heirship counseling can help homeowners think through who will inherit their homes and ensure they leave their property to an heir who will maintain the property.

Develop Programs That Help Long-Term Residents Maintain Homes

Grants or low-interest loan programs that help pay for regular maintenance, such as roof repair or other major improvements, can help long-term residents stay in their homes safely, protect the homeowner's equity, and maintain neighborhood housing stock.

Case Study: Milo-Grogan Homeowner Repair Grants

Located in Columbus, Ohio, Milo-Grogan is a historically Black, working-class neighborhood with a roughly 30 percent homeownership rate. It is currently experiencing a wave of external interest and investment after decades of stagnation and decline. The neighborhood has a history of lower housing values, but it is now poised to experience dramatic changes resulting from an influx of new businesses, infrastructure improvements, and new market-rate and affordable housing developments.

Despite these positive gains, many Milo-Grogan residents continue to struggle financially; many homes require significant repairs. The Columbus Foundation and a church-sponsored CDC are working to stabilize homes owned by successive generations of one family and to provide legacy residents with support for home repairs. Ensuring revitalization in these ways benefits the entire Milo-Grogan neighborhood. In 2018, 17 homes received a total of $170,000 in repairs paid for by Fifth Third Bank and provided through work contracted by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission and Habitat for Humanity. Five locally owned businesses also received grant funds from the Ohio Capital Corporation for Housing to improve their signage, roofs, and exterior paint. Today, home upgrades continue in the neighborhood, made possible by a $100,000 grant from the Columbus Foundation and $25,000 from NiSource Charitable Foundation (Homeport 2019; Greater Ohio Policy Center 2018).

The LECDC of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, rehabilitates once-blighted houses like this one for sale to low- and moderate-income homebuyers through its Community Action Partnership. *Source: Dan Marschka/LNP via Associated Press*

Strategy 7: Recalibrate Existing Operations to Better Yield Equity

Brand new programming is not the only way to increase equity in smaller legacy cities. It's equally important to recalibrate the existing operations of cities, community-based nonprofits, anchor institutions, and other entities to explicitly deliver equity and avoid perpetuating inequities.

ALIGN SIMILAR PROGRAMS

By strategically aligning existing programs, leaders can promote collaboration, eliminate redundancies, save money, and create opportunities for scaling up programs to be even more influential and effective.

Local Government as a Convener

The City of Dayton has successfully convened various stakeholders to coordinate business support services, even though it does not directly control some programming, particularly workforce boards, which operate at the county level in Ohio. As the convener, the city has encouraged workforce programs to coordinate and coalesce around common goals. It has also recruited the school district and union locals, trade unions, and community colleges to join this conversation, strengthening the pipeline to recruit young people into apprenticeship programs.

Philanthropy as a Convener

Philanthropy is well-suited to support equitable development planning and implementation, given that funders can wait longer than traditional entities to realize intended outcomes or returns on investment and their established sectoral role as conveners. In Ohio, for example, the Cleveland Foundation helps align a variety of workforce development programs to ensure they complement each other, develops apprentice-style pilots to support workforce training, and engages employers to build a pipeline for residents to fill jobs at major city employers. As the convener, the foundation acts as the linchpin among social service agencies, employers, and workforce organizations to help strategically align and coordinate these efforts. Like the City of Dayton, the Cleveland Foundation also helps coordinate meetings and agendas.

Employers as Program Facilitators

Employers can take the lead in aligning workforce efforts by creating employer resource networks (Derr and Holcomb 2010). In Grand Rapids, Michigan, employers funded a program called Southwest Organizations Unifying Resources for Community and Employees, or the SOURCE. Mutually beneficial to workers and employees, the program has succeeded by strategically aligning workforce training, wraparound services, and employers' needs. In many ways, the SOURCE is like CenterState CEO's Economic Inclusion Division in that it is "a not-for-profit employee support organization designed to help employees keep their jobs, receive training to enhance their employment, and help them move into better positions within or across companies" (SOURCE, n.d.). The SOURCE is employer led (versus CenterState CEO, which is led by the local chamber of commerce) and uses a "cross-system collaborative model" to provide comprehensive support to employers and employees through its partnerships in education and training, economic development, and social services. The SOURCE has operated since 2003, and its employer members fully fund its operations and staff, which include an executive director, a managing director, a director of outcomes, five resource navigators, and an office manager.

Regular Zoom Meetings Help Align County Business Response to COVID-19

Before COVID-19, many manufacturing businesses in Richland County, Ohio, were already connected through the Regional Manufacturers Coalition, which serves the small legacy city of Mansfield and surrounding towns. The coalition provided opportunities for local business leaders to network and share information. After the pandemic struck, the Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development organization instituted weekly (and sometimes biweekly) virtual meetings with business leaders in this established group to discuss recovery-related issues, such as how to apply for federal Paycheck Protection Program loans. Held on Zoom, these conversations ensured the region's crucial businesses were kept abreast of state orders and procedures related to COVID-19. The calls also became a forum for business leaders to talk through and coordinate their response strategies and to share best practices. The virtual meetings allowed the chamber to stay updated on the needs of its members. As COVID-19 presented challenges the county had not faced previously, these weekly Zoom meetings allowed business leaders to work through solutions together. For instance, businesses shared best practices related to social distancing within their workplaces and discussed how to maintain operations by adding physical barriers.

Because the manufacturers were some of the only businesses that stayed open at the beginning of the COVID-19 crisis, they had a head start on other businesses and organizations that reopened later. The chamber expanded its weekly calls to include other businesses working to establish their own reopening strategies. Ultimately the calls included education leaders who were planning to reopen local K–12 institutions. This expansion of the Regional Manufacturers Coalition to weekly Zoom conversations has greatly benefited Richland County businesses and government leaders, and effectively aligned the county's COVID-19 response across sectors.

The Richland Area Chamber & Economic Development organization in Richland County, Ohio, instituted regular virtual meetings with manufacturing and other local businesses to help leaders share strategies for recovery, safety, and reopening. *Source: The Gorman-Rupp Company*

BREAK DOWN STRUCTURES PERPETUATING RACISM

Critically Assess and Modify Organizational Operations

Daily operations at both the city and organizational levels have the potential to perpetuate racial disparities. For example, policies that strive to equally spread Community Development Block Grant dollars throughout the city often reinforce the status quo, perpetuating systemic inequities rather than driving structural change (see figure 1). Racial equity analyses can ensure that existing arrangements are actively improving equity and not perpetuating racism. The Government Alliance on Race and Equity, for example, has developed a nationally recognized racial equity assessment for local governments (Bernabei 2017). The Government Alliance on Race and Equity's assessments and its technical assistance focus on improving individual local government programs and reversing policies that drive inequities, "despite the lack of explicit intention" (Nelson and Brooks 2015, 4).

The Government Alliance on Race and Equity framework includes accountability for change and clear action plans. It also provides tools and resources for integrating racial equity into routine decision making, including policies, practices, programs, and budgets. The tools provide a structure for institutionalizing racial equity, helping communities develop strategies to reduce racial inequities, and collecting data to monitor progress.

This type of audit is not limited to local governments. In 2020, the Affordable Housing Trust for Columbus and Franklin County evaluated their internal procedures to identify ways to improve measures of equity. At the direction of the board and senior staff, the nonprofit low-income housing lender adopted new policies that require developers to pay employees a housing wage and prevent them from denying housing based on a tenant's source of income (Mallory 2021).

Set Expectations for Philanthropic Grantees

Philanthropic organizations can help disseminate expectations of racial equity to their grantees, leading by example and thoroughly reviewing their own existing operations to ensure they help improve racial equity. This work includes ensuring that the foundation's board, staff, consultants, and contractors reflect the diversity of the communities they serve. Some foundations offer racial equity training to help grantees understand how existing systems may perpetuate inequality.

Many foundations and grantors also issue annual surveys to their grantees to establish expectations for board and staff diversity. In 2019, the United Way of Central Ohio notified grantees that board diversity and board-approved plans for achieving diversity would factor into future funding decisions. The United Way of Central Ohio focuses on racial diversity as well as income diversity (Price 2020).

Invest in the Community Through the Purchasing Power of the City, Anchors, and Private Sector

A city, its anchor institutions, and the private sector can all take steps to ensure that their collective purchasing power benefits residents and the local economy. In Cincinnati, Ohio, the chamber of commerce houses the Minority Business Accelerator, a unique and multifaceted program designed to grow local minority-owned businesses. To achieve its mission, the accelerator offers tailored advisory support and connections to the region's corporate giants, such as Proctor & Gamble and Kroger. Though most smaller legacy cities lack Cincinnati's large corporations and anchor institutions, they can still leverage existing anchors to increase equity impacts.

Even without major corporations to engage, nonprofit and corporate boards can set goals to spend a percentage of their operational budgets on minority-, woman-, and veteran-owned businesses. They can report quarterly updates to the board and staff on progress toward these spending targets and maintain them for the future. These efforts help build an expectation that the organization is "walking the talk."

Case Study: Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber's Minority Business Accelerator

The Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber adopted the nickname "the Inclusive Chamber." Its leaders determined that equity was vital to the region and deliberately embedded it into the chamber's work.

The Minority Business Accelerator, for example, speeds the development of sizable minority-owned businesses and strengthens the region's minority entrepreneurial community. "The Accelerator provides individually tailored advisory support and coaching to help Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) acquire the things they need to excel: a strong business strategy, access to capital, and connections within corporate organizations" (Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber, n.d.). Independent of the Accelerator, the chamber also connects MBEs to corporate leaders for business opportunities. Partnering with MBEs helps the region's large corporations meet their own goal for diversity and inclusion; these corporations are increasingly motivated to integrate inclusion in their business practices because of shifting demographics and the growing diversity of their customer bases. Corporate leaders who work with the Accelerator are praised publicly and celebrated by the chamber.

In 2019, the Accelerator served 35 MBEs representing a variety of industries, including construction, facilities management, packaging, and consulting.

Cincinnati Case Study, continued

Currently, those firms employ over 3,500 workers (50 percent of these workers are minorities and 40 percent of them are women). Many studies confirm that MBEs hire more minority workers, delivering additional equity benefits.

To qualify, firms must be owned by Black and Hispanic entrepreneurs. They must also have (1) an annual revenue of $1 million or more; (2) a business plan that demonstrates strong growth potential in the next two to five years; (3) MBE certification through a third-party agency; and (4) headquarters or a significant presence in the Cincinnati region.

The accelerator began work in 2003, recommended by the Cincinnati Community Action Now Commission, which the mayor formed following an intense period of civil unrest and sustained calls for racial justice (Better Together Cincinnati 2007).

Design City Matching Programs to Address Residents' Concerns

A city can foster trust with residents and address community concerns by ensuring that city programs are accessible to low-income populations.

The BCe2 community organizing effort in South Bend, Indiana, canvassed neighborhoods and surveyed residents on the area's most pressing issues. Feedback determined that poor street lighting was a significant community concern, so BCe2 worked with the city and homeowners to pilot a lighting program. The program allowed homeowners to pay a portion of the lighting installation, and the city would cover the rest. The initial cost to homeowners was $250, and the resulting matching program succeeded in South Bend's affluent and middle-income neighborhoods, but not in lower-income neighborhoods. So BCe2 convinced the city to lower the program's match ratio from $250 to $80 for low-income neighborhoods, and BCe2 paid homeowners' $80 installation fees. This change made the program more equitable, rather than equal—resulting in a victory for low-income residents and high subscription to the program.

Leverage Transit Systems to Improve Mobility for Low-Income Workers

There's often a mismatch between where workers live and where jobs are located in smaller legacy cities, and transit agencies should prioritize mobility and accessibility for low-income workers. Cities can partner with major employers to develop employee shuttle systems, and transit routes can link significant employment centers to high-density residential areas. For example, the Rickenbacker area of Groveport, Ohio, is a major logistics hub that struggled to attract sufficient workers because many had no way to get there. So in 2015, the city established the Groveport Rickenbacker Employee Access Transit Workforce Transportation service. Funded and operated by the city, the service now provides fixed-route shuttles that transport workers from existing city bus stops to their jobs. The program provided 25,000 rides in 2019 (Dowler 2020).

Actively Incorporate New Americans into Revitalization Strategies

In smaller legacy cities that have lost population, embracing immigration and refugee resettlement can help increase in-migration and stave off popula-

The Groveport Rickenbacker Employee Access Transit program improves transportation access for workers by providing a last-mile shuttle service from existing bus stops to employers in the Rickenbacker area, a major central Ohio hub. This arrangement helps workers reach jobs and helps employers hire and retain workers at desirable levels. *Source: City of Groveport, Ohio*

tion decline. Even in areas with stable populations, younger immigrants can help fill labor markets and lessen the looming threat that significant portions of the workforce will retire at once. Any programming to help immigrants access the broader economy should be expanded to reach nonimmigrant residents as well; practitioners report that such expanded programming tends to benefit existing underserved residents at least as much as new Americans.

Cities adopting immigrant-driven policies can pass resolutions and receive certification from Welcoming America, a nonprofit that advocates for inclusive communities. The "Certified Welcoming" designation grants cities access to peer-to-peer learning exchanges, technical assistance, publicity, and research tools. Welcoming America helps communities build policies that link new immigrants to the broader economy by deeply engaging residents, generating trust, and learning more about the programs and policies that immigrants want and need. Programming should be offered in the language most appropriate for the immigrant population, and some may require a culturally appropriate environment, such as a setting for women only (Welcoming America 2018). Programs may need to reinvent the service delivery model after investigating whether social, geographic, or economic barriers might make the program inaccessible to target audiences.

Maintain Best Practices in City Service Delivery

All residents should receive high-quality services, but often they don't. Certain neighborhoods may receive better park maintenance or more frequent trash pickup than others, for example. Cities need to deliver equitable services citywide for everything from parks and police to safety and health code enforcement, sanitation, and other day-to-day city functions. Executing this vision effectively may mean addressing service gaps and focusing extra resources in areas that need more help to achieve parity.

Cities can also use publicly owned land to develop and preserve cultural assets, such as community gardens, sports and recreation centers, and art installations, to ensure that these projects benefit all residents.

Case Study: Municipal Code Enforcement Solutions Before and During COVID-19

In late 2019, Springfield, Ohio, sought to improve housing conditions in southside neighborhoods by directing city staff to uphold property maintenance standards. While more stringent code enforcement was needed to motivate inattentive landlords, the city worried that increased enforcement would burden private homeowners, many of whom were Black, with unaffordable repairs or fines. In early 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic, the city established the Housing Supplies Working Group to help low- and moderate-income homeowners fix code violations and avoid financial penalties. The working group is a collaboration between the city and the local NeighborWorks affiliate, Neighborhood Housing Partnership of Greater Springfield (NHP).

If a homeowner is cited and tells the city he or she will struggle financially to rectify the violation, the city refers the homeowner to NHP. NHP then works with the homeowner to establish a plan to address the violation, referring the homeowner to an appropriate nonprofit to help fix the problem.

Compassionate code enforcement and patience with homeowners will accelerate efforts to bring disinvested city neighborhoods up to code. For example, NHP facilitated an agreement between the city and one homeowner so the resident could buy paint one paycheck at a time to slowly repaint their house.

While COVID-19 has pulled city code enforcement inspectors onto emergency response teams unrelated to this work, the Housing Supplies Working Group program continues, as does the commitment to enforce codes with solutions-oriented compassion.

The city of Springfield, Ohio, partners with its local NeighborWorks affiliate, the Neighborhood Housing Partnership of Greater Springfield, to help low- and moderate-income homeowners keep properties up to code and provide volunteers to assist with civic beautification projects. *Source: NeighborWorks America*

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions and Recommendations

Like many other areas, the North Hill neighborhood in Akron, Ohio, has grown thanks to an influx of new Americans and investments from community development corporations, foundations, and other partners. *Source: Shane Wynn/ Akronstock.com*

Today, smaller legacy cities continue to lose major employers, jobs, and in some cases residents. These trends are exacerbating long-standing racial and income disparities, which have been deepened by 2020's COVID-19 infection rates and economic impacts. The need to address the persistent racial and income segregation common in smaller legacy cities is more urgent than ever. Equitable development offers a new playbook to address inequality while increasing economic competitiveness.

Researchers have demonstrated that racial and income inequities, long considered outcomes of a postindustrial world, are drivers of current and future economic stagnation (Pastor and Benner 2008; Benner and Pastor 2012, 2015). Strategic work to improve these indicators will provide more opportunities for many residents and will increase potential for broader economic recovery. New investment needs to include deliberate interventions to correct these damaging inequalities. Some smaller legacy cities are experiencing revitalization, but the investments typically do not benefit the city as a whole (Mallach 2014). To reach everyone, revitalization strategies need to be deliberately designed to improve equity outcomes.

This report offers numerous examples of how smaller legacy cities can enhance equitable development and set the stage for healthy, sustainable economic recovery. Our strategies acknowledge the importance of relationships and trust in sustaining meaningful, equitable development work. This work can lead to a sense of common destiny among diverse groups and help improve disparities and economic prospects for the whole city. The case studies show that equitable development is most effective when equity is a central economic development objective from the outset.

BUILD TRUST AND REPAIR STRAINED RELATIONSHIPS

- Building trust among community actors is an essential starting point for equitable development. Leaders should deliberately foster trust among elected and unelected grasstops leaders and with residents to help ensure ongoing support for specific programming, bring diverse voices to the decision-making table, and foster a crucial sense of common destiny within the city.

- Trust building means different things in different contexts. It could mean leaders take the initiative to introduce themselves to new groups, or a third party can facilitate these introductions. Groups that already know each other may need to repair relationships.

- One important equitable development goal is to create pathways for residents to collaborate in the redevelopment process. Building trust among residents requires successful engagement, such as block-by-block canvassing and genuine conversations about their ideas for their neighborhoods. It may also mean acknowledging past wrongs, like racist policies and practices.

BUILD A LAYERED AND DIVERSE COALITION

- A broad coalition is necessary to ensure long-term community commitment to equity goals; such a group can implement an agenda more successfully than an individual or organization working alone. Residents have unique knowledge of their communities and should thus be involved early in forming the coalition.

- The absence of a vast coalition of like-minded people should not deter equitable development advocates. Developing and nurturing a micropartnership among a few key dynamic people or organizations is a viable start.

- Data should be used to characterize existing conditions, anticipate future trends, set goals, and inform appropriate strategies. This can help make the case for equity to businesses and other groups.

CONDUCT STRATEGIC PLANNING AND VISIONING

- An updated, data-driven plan helps civic leaders take well-informed actions, provides the basis for an investment strategy, sets measurable milestones for equity goals, and aligns programs to best address the community's needs and opportunities. Strategic planning also provides a vehicle for community outreach and building trust by promoting a shared understanding of key issues.

UTILIZE PLACE-BASED INVESTMENTS

- Strategic real estate investments—such as those that physically co-locate equitable development programming, promote neighborhood stability, tackle neighborhood disinvestment, or plan new development close to transit—can help advance equity. Communities should be realistic, however, and acknowledge that the real estate market alone cannot deliver every solution. Incorporating equity tools, such as inclusionary housing and community benefits agreements, into new development requires careful calibration to avoid further damaging already weak markets.

CULTIVATE HOMEGROWN TALENT

- Cities can unleash unmet potential by extending small business development ecosystems into communities of color, growing community leaders, and training unemployed and underemployed residents for jobs.

- Programming to train, retain, and support residents seeking employment can be a centerpiece of a city's efforts to build greater equity. Successful workforce development efforts should identify and address the skills gap in an existing workforce to better meet the needs of employers.

- Programs that create pathways to leadership for more people can result in more diverse decision making and greater measures of equity citywide. These programs feed the city's leadership pipeline and elevate voices not historically heard at the decision-making table.

ANTICIPATE NEIGHBORHOOD CHANGE AND PLAN FOR STABILITY

- Identifying which neighborhoods are likely to attract investment and which are in decline can help cities tailor appropriate tools and programs to these areas. A few key areas may need to focus explicitly on protecting existing residents from displacement due to increased rents or property taxes. Others may need interventions to maintain economic stability and prevent decline.

- City leaders should address gentrification concerns directly. Conversations about gentrification are more productive when the planning and outreach process around development is inclusive from the beginning. Transparent outreach efforts can help residents understand how revitalization will benefit them and that the city and other leaders will seriously address and mitigate their concerns. The discussion can also explain how development can support neighborhood-led initiatives to preserve cultural assets, neighborhood amenities, and community identity.

RECALIBRATE EXISTING OPERATIONS TO BETTER YIELD EQUITY

- New programming is not the only way to increase equity in smaller legacy cities. It is equally important for organizations (such as cities, community-based nonprofits, anchor institutions, and businesses) to examine their internal budgets and conduct self-audits to ensure they are not inadvertently perpetuating inequities. A city, its anchor institutions, and the private sector can take steps to ensure that their collective purchasing power benefits residents and the local economy. Philanthropic organizations can establish expectations of racial equity for their grantees and thoroughly review their own existing operations.

Equitable development tools offer city leaders new and timely ways to address long-standing challenges that benefit all residents. Overcoming decades of inequitable public policies and private actions will take time and dedication. Leaders in America's smaller legacy cities are uniquely positioned to test, refine, and innovate equitable development practices. A robust commitment to equity is a powerful tool that can lead to a brighter future for these communities.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Erica Spaid Patras is the senior manager of special projects at the Greater Ohio Policy Center. She studies the impact of potential public policy changes on the real estate market, manages a community of practice focused on expanding access to capital in underinvested neighborhoods and communities across Ohio, and evaluates the impact of transportation policy in Ohio. She holds a master of city planning degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a B.A. from Macalester College in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Alison Goebel is the executive director at the Greater Ohio Policy Center. She is responsible for charting the center's strategic direction; directing the research, advocacy, and outreach teams; and securing resources for this work. She is the author of numerous research reports and policy briefs on the revitalization of weak-market cities, transportation funding, and local governance structures in Ohio. She holds a Ph.D. and M.A. in anthropology from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, and a B.A. from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio.

Lindsey Elam is the manager of research at the Greater Ohio Policy Center. She has a master's degree in city and regional planning and a B.S. in social work, both from the Ohio State University. She is a certified planner (AICP) with the American Planning Association and a LEED Green Associate through the U.S. Green Building Council, and she has completed trainings through the Form-Based Codes Institute.

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