

## Equitable Engagement Guidelines for Transit Oriented Development

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Equitable engagement is a critical component of the transit oriented development work undertaken by Sound Transit's Office of Land Use Planning and Development (OLUPD). Communities inform transit oriented development in a number of ways, and may shape a number of specific aspects of a particular project including the preferred development outcomes for a site (e.g., senior housing, space for community businesses, affordable homeownership); the density, site planning, massing or housing typology on a site (e.g., family-sized units, open space); the timing and prioritization for a set of sites (e.g., the site to the north of the Columbia City station should be developed before the one to the south); and desired amenities as part of a redevelopment (e.g., public plazas, childcare).

Several of Sound Transit's existing policies and plans provide some guidance on equitable engagement, including:

- Inclusive Public Participation and Outreach Policy (2011)
- Real Property Excess, Surplus and Disposition Policy (2013)
- Sound Transit 3 Regional Transit System Plan (2016)
- Equitable Transit-Oriented Development Policy (2018)
- Washington State Statute RCW 81.112.350

This guidelines document provides an overview of the principles and framework associated with an equitable engagement approach for transit oriented development.

### Principles

OLUPD will adhere to a set of principles that reflect the best practices outlined in the leading resources on equitable engagement on both the local and national level, as well as Sound Transit's existing policies. Those principles are as follows:

- Sound Transit commits to equitable, inclusive, accessible and transparent engagement.
- Sound Transit fosters relationships with local and regional stakeholders, including but not limited to, jurisdictions, community organizations, property owners, partners, local communities and the public.
- Sound Transit will complement locally adopted plans and policies with equitable engagement that shapes community vision for agency-owned property.
- Sound Transit appropriately resources engagement efforts to be equitable in opportunity and access, including addressing factors that may otherwise prevent participation.
- Sound Transit strives to identify, be inclusive of and empower underrepresented and vulnerable communities.
- Sound Transit ensures equitable engagement with communities of color, immigrants, refugees, and low-income populations by utilizing a variety of strategies, technology, processes and tools.
- Sound Transit strives to identify and pursue creative development delivery strategies that minimize displacement of existing individuals and businesses, consider community and mission-based development, build local wealth and support existing populations, and incorporate locally identified community needs that may include space for small businesses, childcare and healthcare services, and cultural and community institutions.

## Framework

OLUPD will follow a five step framework when engaging with communities, as follows:

1. **Defining the development opportunity**, which includes, but is not limited to, gathering information about the development opportunities, the prior decisions, agreements, structural constraints, policies, and plans that may play a role in shaping outcomes for a given TOD project.
2. **Organizing internally for participation**, which includes identifying and assembling the people and resources that will be needed to equitably engage with the community, including skill sets, relationships and cultural fluencies.
3. **Identifying and getting to know communities by defining equity in the context of the development opportunity**, which includes conducting a situation assessment and developing a demographics dashboard, identifying key stakeholders, systems of power, and political influences, and documenting the ways in which equitable opportunity and access will be facilitated.
4. **Determining the appropriate level of public participation**, which includes determining the highest level of influence that public participation can have on the TOD opportunity, preparing a clear promise to stakeholders about their potential for influence, determining how to integrate engagement outcomes into decision-making, transparently sharing information about the TOD opportunity, and developing systems to keep community members informed throughout the process
5. **Matching public participation tools to objectives throughout the process**, including setting specific goals for the engagement effort, employing appropriate tools to achieve those goals, and assembling metrics that assess the success of the effort

Using this basic framework, every OLUPD equitable engagement effort will strive to:

- Engage underrepresented communities
- Put in place the supports necessary to achieve equitable engagement, including as appropriate, scheduling meetings at times that work for community members, offering childcare, translation or interpretation services, compensating community groups for time and facilitation, etc.
- Employ tools (meetings, surveys, notices, emails, phone calls, etc.) that are shown to reach the specific communities with which we seek to engage
- Measure input against engagement goals, and readjust strategies along the way if some communities aren't being reached
- Report back to communities so that participants know what we heard and how input will influence decision making