



Task 5 Final Recommendations White Paper

Baltimore Metropolitan Council Equity Scan

June 30, 2023

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Introduction

To build an understanding of the ways in which the Baltimore Regional Transportation Board (BRTB) and the Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC) address equity in transportation policies, plans, and programs, BMC launched an Equity Scan in the winter of 2022. The project, supported by a consultant team, involved a review of current agency equity practices, interviews with peer agencies regarding notable practices, and facilitated discussions with BMC staff, the Transportation CORE, the BRTB Technical Committee, and the Board. The end products of the study include a prioritized list of recommendations and supporting information BMC can use to advance equity through the four key BRTB planning processes: the unified planning work program (UPWP), the long-range transportation plan (LRTP), the transportation improvement program (TIP), and the public participation plan (PPP).

Research conducted for Task 2 of the Equity Scan involved two core activities:

- 1) An in-depth review of equity components within the four key documents that establish the framework for the BRTB's decisions regarding transportation investments and policies; and
- 2) A series of four interviews with BMC staff teams responsible for developing each of the key planning documents.

The Task 2 white paper summarized the observations and considerations resulting from this research.

The Task 3 white paper was based upon a scan of equity-related initiatives and strategies implemented by peer agencies across the country to gather insights and catalogue notable practices that the BRTB and the BMC could consider implementing to advance their own equity-related practices in planning and decision-making. Building on research completed in prior tasks, the team identified 20 MPOs that have made considerable progress in incorporating equity practices into their transportation planning processes, and whose jurisdictional responsibilities and agency characteristics are comparable to those of BRTB. The team conducted interviews with six of the peer agencies to collect details and insights about practices of particular interest.

To complete Task 4, the project team produced a white paper of draft recommendations that built off the data collected in Tasks 2 and 3. The project team conducted a work session in June 2023 with 16 BMC staff and board members to identify high-priority recommendations and to fine-tune approaches for accomplishing them. This Task 5 white paper provides descriptions and supporting information for the selected set of 20 prioritized recommendations (Table 1).

Table 1. Prioritized Recommendations Based on June 2023 Workshop

Planning Area	Recommendations in Order of Priority
Unified Planning Work Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Establish a BRTB Standing Committee on Transportation Equity* 2. Adopt a Regional Equity Definition and Policy Framework* 3. Establish Equity Training Program 4. Develop a Displacement Risk Analysis Tool 5. Conduct a Historical Assessment of Transportation-Related Inequities
Long-Range Transportation Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluate Expansion of Transit Service in the Region 2. Survey Transportation Needs of Equity Emphasis Populations 3. Enhance Project Prioritization Criteria for Equity in the LRTP** 4. Advance Equitable Accessibility by Coordinating Land Use and Transportation Decisions 5. Analyze Long-Term Scenarios of Equity-Related Risks and Opportunities 6. Identify Potential Biases and Inaccuracies in Analysis Methods 7. Integrate Geographic and Person/Household Models for Environmental Justice Analyses***
Transportation Improvement Program	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Framework for Incorporating Equity Considerations in the TIP Decision-Making Process 2. Leverage Equitable Transportation Investments through Private Development
Public Participation Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Build Agency Capacity for Engagement 2. Make Technical Documents Understandable 3. Create Outreach Strategies for Hard-to-Reach Populations 4. Clarify Messaging About the Planning Process 5. Customize Information for LEP Populations 6. Expand Equity-Related Datasets

*Based on research, it is recommended that the BRTB Standing Committee is formed before finalizing an equity definition for the region. The staff agreed upon a working definition of equity during the June 2023 workshop for the purpose of evaluating and initiating selected recommendations. The Standing Committee can use the working definition as a springboard for conducting an inclusive process with stakeholders and the public to finalize the region's equity definition.

**Recommendations 3, 4, and 5 received the same amount of priority votes at the June 2023 workshop.

***Recommendation 7 was added after the June 2023 workshop, based upon ideas generated during the meeting. Therefore, it was not included in the prioritization exercise.

The remainder of this report provides a working definition of equity and describes the proposed recommendations. Organized by planning product, each recommendation includes a rationale,

potential impacts, estimated timeframe, implementation steps, funding and budgeting considerations, key partners, and (where available) examples of peer agency practices.

Working Definition of Equity

Participants in the June 2023 workshop agreed upon a working definition of equity (Figure 1) for the purpose of “getting everyone on the same page” before prioritizing and implementing recommendations. The first section of the three-part statement is based on a statement developed by the BMC Public Advisory Committee Equity Subcommittee in 2017. The second section was developed by the project team based on national best practices, and the third statement was drawn from socio-economic characteristics listed in *Resilience 2050*.

What is Equity in Transportation? Equity in transportation means **all users** of the transportation network are provided with the **mobility and accessibility** they need to achieve their **full potential**. This means we must:

- Provide equitable safe access to essential destinations;
- Ensure equitable distribution of transportation investment benefits and impacts; and
- Make equitable decisions that promote fair and just outcomes.

How Do We Measure Equity? We measure **barriers and disparities** experienced by different communities and population groups regarding:

- Multimodal access to essential destinations that is safe, affordable, and within consistently reasonable and reliable travel times;
- Health, environmental, and economic impacts associated with transportation infrastructure investments and system operation; and
- Community engagement and representation in the planning and decision-making process

Who Experiences Barriers and Disparities? For decades, Americans within certain socio-economic groups have disproportionately experienced poor access to destinations, high negative impacts of transportation investments and operations, and low representation in decision-making. To correct persistent disparities, BMC/ BRTB will need to prioritize investments in underserved communities for years until parity is achieved. Indicators of “equity emphasis” populations and communities include:

- **Low-income** households;
- **Minority** households or people of color;
- **Limited English Proficiency (LEP)** individuals;
- Persons with **disabilities**;
- **Older** adults;
- **Car-less** individuals (people who cannot own and/or operate an automobile); and
- People who have been **historically underserved**, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.

Figure 1: Working Definition of Equity

Unified Planning Work Program Draft Recommendations

In accordance with the BRTB Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Resolution #2019-03, the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) addendum states the development of the UPWP “promotes equity in the regional transportation planning process” and considers proposed projects that meet the equity policy priorities of the PAC. The following section provides an overview of recommendations for the BMC to address equity within the UPWP.

UPWP - 1: ESTABLISH A BRTB STANDING COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION EQUITY

Recommendation: Establish a Standing Committee on Transportation Equity made up of BRTB Board members and, if desired, additional elected or appointed officials and advisors, to discuss transportation equity policy concerns and develop recommended BRTB actions. The membership and charge of the committee should be determined through a collaborative and inclusive process that considers the unique needs and goals of the BMC and BRTB. Community stakeholders, equity-focused organizations, and community-based groups can provide valuable input on the development of the committee and can help to identify individuals that can support the committee’s work.

Rationale: The BRTB Technical Committee and the Transportation CORE provide forums for agency staff, stakeholders, and civic leaders to discuss issues, opportunities, best practices, and implementation strategies to advance equity in key elements of the planning such as technical analyses and engagement techniques. The Board-level committee will provide a dedicated platform for the Board to develop and lead initiatives for systemic change that ensures consistent integration of equity considerations in MPO policies and decision-making processes.

Potential Impacts: The Equity Committee would enable local leaders from across the region to conduct focused discussions and to develop meaningful policies and agreements that advance transportation equity, starting with an inclusive process to establish a Board-approved statement that fleshes out and customizes the proposed working definition (Figure 1). The regional scope of the committee will allow for a well-rounded viewpoint from all jurisdictions in the region to ensure no community is left out of the equity discussion. Given the importance of buy-in from the entire Board to establish and apply substantive policies, Equity Committee members will provide critical input and advice to staff during development of proposed policies or actions and will serve as champions to help gain full Board approval when proposals are formally presented.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Reach out to elected and empowered BRTB Board members to survey interest in joining a Standing Committee on Transportation Equity.
- Form a working group of interested BRTB representatives to draft the Committee’s structural elements such as a statement of purpose, membership roster, and appointment process, ideally with input from advisors such as the Transportation CORE, Technical Committee, and community organizations.

- Reach out to County staff/offices that lead local equity policies and programs to ensure this is consistent with their efforts.
- If desired, recruit additional members from the community to participate on the Standing Committee.
- Expand upon the list of stakeholder groups in the public participation plan to identify organizations, individuals, and experts that can advise the committee about specific issues, neighborhoods, or concerns.
- Obtain BRTB approval of the committee structure and membership.
- Organize and facilitate regular (quarterly and/or ad hoc) meetings with the committee.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Budgeting for staff time and resources to create the committee and facilitate meetings.

Partners: BRTB Board and additional community members identified by the Board.

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) (San Francisco, CA) – A Regional Equity Working Group was established in 2015 to support social equity planning/analysis during long-range plan development.
- [Wasatch Front Regional Council](#) (Salt Lake City, UT) – The Wasatch Choice Community Advisory Committee was established to enhance community engagement and apply an equity lens to the Wasatch Choice Regional Vision.
- [Metropolitan Council](#) (St. Paul, MN) – The Equity Advisory Committee was established in 2015 to advise the Metropolitan Council in its work to advance equity.
- [Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning](#) (Chicago, IL) - The Community Alliance for Regional Equity is a group of 12 community-based organizations working with CMAP to make investment processes more equitable and strengthen community collaboration.
- [National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board](#) (Washington, DC) – The Chief Equity Officers Committee helps advance racial equity within the MPO's programs and committees.
- [East-West Gateway Council of Governments](#) (St. Louis, MO) – The Equity Advisory Group, comprised of regional stakeholders and community leaders, was established to allow for ongoing engagement to advise on equitable transportation during the update to the MPO's long-range plan.
- [Chittenden County Regional Planning Council](#) (Winooski, VT) – An Equity Advisory Committee was formed in 2022 to help with the MPO's efforts to build its capacity to address systemic racism and inequities.

UPWP - 2: ADOPT A REGIONAL EQUITY DEFINITION AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Description: Establish a BRTB-approved definition of transportation equity for the Baltimore region, supported by a policy framework of principles and goals for promoting equity across all phases of the regional transportation planning and programming process. The Standing Committee on Transportation Equity can lead the process of developing the statement as one of its first actions. The definition should be broad enough to cover all major transportation planning

products and complement, federal, state, and local statements. Figure 1 provides a simple working definition developed at the June 2023 workshop that can serve as a springboard for the process of developing a full, customized statement for the BMC / BRTB region. Appendix A provides examples of equity policy statements and definitions from peer MPOs.

Rationale: A cohesive approach to defining equity considerations will help the agency to establish goals and measure progress toward influencing more equitable outcomes from the investments and initiatives supported by the UPWP, PPP, LRTP, and TIP. BMC currently does not have a consistent definition of transportation equity to weave into its transportation planning practices. For example, the UPWP supports development of a Vulnerable Populations Index (VPI) that assesses conditions for a variety of population groups, while the Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis conducted for the LRTP examines potential impacts of transportation investments on low-income and minority populations but not on other VPI populations. By articulating an equity definition unique to the Baltimore region, BMC can build a policy framework of equity-oriented principles and goals that provides a common foundation for strategies to be implemented through the UPWP, PPP, LRTP, and TIP (e.g., performance measures, project selection criteria, outreach practices).

Potential Impacts: An adopted, region-specific equity definition and policy framework can facilitate clearer communication and direction with the Board, BMC staff, committees, stakeholders, and the public. This will be increasingly important when changes inevitably occur in underlying conditions and the makeup of staff and Board members. By tying evolving plans, studies, and initiatives to a foundational policy, BMC can reduce the potential for confusion and resistance to innovative ideas and practices to be implemented over the coming years.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Facilitate one or more interactive meetings with the BRTB Standing Committee on Equity, the Transportation CORE, and the BRTB Technical Committee to refine and customize the proposed working definition in Appendix A to reflect the context and priorities of the BMC region.
- Finalize a draft equity definition for review by the Technical Committee and the Standing Committee on Equity.
- Present the final draft equity definition and framework to the BRTB for feedback and approval.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Staff time to conduct work sessions with the BRTB Equity Committee, Transportation CORE and Technical Committee and to develop the final document.

Partners: BRTB Equity Committee, Technical Committee, Transportation CORE

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Metropolitan Council](#) (St. Paul, MN) – The Metropolitan Council defined equity in its long-range plan, *Thrive MSP 2040*.
- [Oregon Metro](#) (Portland, OR) – Oregon Metro developed a webpage showing the agency's commitment to Black lives, which includes working with Black-led organizations to advance racial equity.

- [Southern California Association of Governments](#) (Los Angeles, CA) – SCAG’s Regional Council adopted [Resolution 20-623-2](#) to affirm the MPO’s commitment to advancing justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout the region.
- [Mid-Region Council of Governments](#) (Albuquerque, NM) – MRCOG defined equity in its long-range plan, *Connections 2040*.
- [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) (San Francisco, CA) – MTC defined equity in its long-range plan, *Plan Bay Area 2050*.

UPWP- 3: ESTABLISH EQUITY TRAINING PROGRAM

Recommendation: Establish an ongoing, regularly updated program of equity and Title VI training for members of BMC staff, BRTB Technical Committee and Board, Transportation CORE, and the Standing Policy Committee on Transportation Equity. Building upon local programs such as the Government Alliance of Race and Equity (GARE), City of Baltimore’s equity and inclusion agency training, the BMC program will build awareness, knowledge, and capacity for advancing equitable planning and decision-making processes within agency policies and practices. Lastly, consideration of providing this training with the Locally Operated Transit agencies (LOTs).

Rationale: The training will facilitate a shared understanding of equity issues and strategies among staff, board, and committee members and equip the entire organization to address the diverse needs of the communities it serves.

Potential Impacts: By implementing internal equity training, the BMC can position itself as a leader in promoting equitable regional transportation planning and decision-making. It will empower staff, board members, and committee participants to address disparities and improve transportation outcomes for all residents in the Baltimore region. In addition, the practice of ongoing equity education can also promote a more inclusive working environment for staff and volunteers, helping the agency to attract and retain a more diverse workforce and committee participants.

Timeframe: short-term (within 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Gain the support and commitment of the BRTB, including appropriate committee chairs, to develop and implement the training program.
- Conduct a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the specific training needs and gaps related to equity within BMC. It may be helpful to hire an instructional design consultant with expertise in equity, diversity, and inclusion training to conduct the needs assessment.
- Establish clear goals and objectives for the training. These goals should align with BMC’s overall mission and strategic priorities.
- Contract a consultant team and/ or engage subject matter experts to develop a customized curriculum that addresses the specific needs of BMC.

- Work with consultants to determine the most appropriate instructional method(s) and mechanism(s) for delivering the equity training, considering BMC's logistical constraints and participants' availability. Elements of the methodology could include:
 - Develop a Training Schedule and Communication Plan: Create a training schedule that outlines the timeline, dates, and location for the training.
 - Implement the Training Program: Conduct the equity training program according to an established schedule and format.
 - Evaluate and Monitor the Training: Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of the training program through participant feedback, surveys, and assessments.
 - Establish Ongoing Support and Sustainability: To ensure the long-term impact of the equity training, establish mechanisms for ongoing support and sustainability.
- Allocate appropriate resources, including budget, time, and personnel, for the successful implementation of the training.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Funding and staff time to develop and to regularly update the training; staff and committee member time to participate in training sessions.

Partners: GARE, City of Baltimore, and other local or State partners that have developed training programs (via peer exchanges or other technical assistance).

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [City of Baltimore](#) (Baltimore, MD) – The city adopted an Equity Assessment Ordinance in 2018 that included establishing training for city agencies to conduct equity assessments.
- [Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments](#) (Washington, DC) – MWCOG established a resolution for a Board of Directors Racial Equity Training Task Force, which included regional racial equity training for elected officials.

UPWP - 4: DEVELOP A DISPLACEMENT RISK ANALYSIS TOOL

Recommendation: Develop an analysis method and/ or tool to assess the potential for transportation investments to unintentionally foster or exacerbate displacement of low-income populations and businesses due to increased rents, property taxes, and other factors associated with “gentrification.”

Rationale: As noted by the Metropolitan Planning Commission for the San Francisco region, “rising housing costs, combined with a lack of tenant protections, can result in families having to relocate to distant, more affordable communities. Displacement risk [analysis] helps us identify those communities under pressure, providing a barometer over time for this critical issue.” A displacement risk analysis tool could help BMC and its partner agencies to understand the socio-economic patterns that often lead to “gentrification” (e.g., higher property taxes, housing costs, and commercial rents) associated with community development made possible by improved transportation accessibility and to establish strategies (e.g., community benefit agreements, affordable housing policies and incentives) for reducing the risk of displacing existing low-income residents and businesses from communities where investments could lead to this outcome.

Potential Impacts: BMC and, if desired, partner local government planners and private development investors can utilize the displacement risk tool across various planning processes

to identify communities, businesses, and population groups that may be negatively impacted by development associated with transportation investments. This understanding can help to guide BRTB's transportation investment decisions and to help BMC coordinate with local partners to ensure equitable distributions of benefits associated with development around transportation facilities.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Identify funding for the displacement risk analysis tool activity.
- Develop a SOW. Elements could include:
 - Involving key stakeholders in the development and utilization of the risk analysis tool.
 - Conducting pilot tests of the risk analysis tool in real-world scenarios.
 - Selecting representative projects or initiatives and applying the tool to assess risks and vulnerabilities.
 - Evaluating the outcomes and gathering feedback from users to identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas of improvement.
 - Ensuring that training and capacity building is administered to BMC staff on how to effectively use the tool.
 - Establishing a process for continuous improvement of the risk analysis tool.
- Select a consultant team and work with them to develop the tool.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Funding to hire a consultant team.

Partners: Consultant team, local government planners, private development investors.

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) (San Francisco, CA) – MTC's analysis reviewed historical trends contributing to displacement, mapped neighborhoods with a high risk of displacement, compared the region's displacement risk to those peer areas, and incorporated risk considerations into the long range plan project prioritization process.
- [Puget Sound Regional Council](#) (Seattle, WA) – PSRC developed a [displacement risk mapping tool](#) and interactive report to identify areas where residents and businesses are at greater risk of displacement.
- [Equitable Transit-Oriented Development \(E-TOD\) Policy Plan](#) (Chicago, IL) – The City of Chicago's innovative plan, built in part upon a detailed [Health and Racial Equity Impact Assessment](#) of displacement risk and other issues, establishes goals for driving investment near transit in disinvested communities, preventing displacement in communities facing rising housing costs, and promoting affordable housing options near transit in low-affordability communities – all while creating more walkable, people-centered neighborhoods everywhere.¹

¹ The City of Chicago was not one of the peer MPOs studied in the equity scan. This citation is included as relevant additional information.

UPWP - 5: CONDUCT AN EQUITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT OF HISTORIC TRANSPORTATION DECISIONS

Recommendation: Study the effects of past transportation decisions on current inequities in overburdened communities and propose changes in plans, investments, and decision-making processes to encourage more equitable outcomes in the future.² The analysis could build upon quantitative assessments, literature reviews of national and local studies such as *The Third Rail*,³ and qualitative assessments drawn from interviews and discussions with community experts and residents.

Rationale: Understanding the ways in which current regional inequities have been influenced by past transportation investment decisions will help BRTB and BMC to identify strategies for changing planning and decision-making processes that contribute—however unintendedly—to entrenched conditions of poverty, poor health, and other disadvantages experienced by affected communities. This analysis will help BMC, BRTB, and partner agencies to:

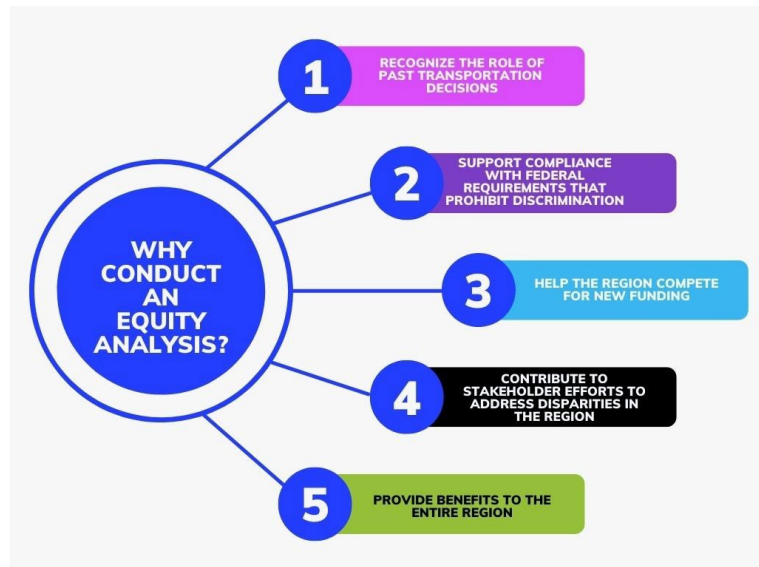
- Better understand how and why regional transportation investments and decisions have affected different population groups;
- Better understand the needs of different communities;
- Develop recommendations for enhancing the transportation planning process to ensure decisions and investments are made in a way that is fair;
- Make transportation investment decisions that provide a better quality of life for all;
- Reveal opportunities to address specific needs of disadvantaged, underserved, or overburdened communities;
- Help address negative impacts of past transportation investment decisions.
- Refine the regional definition of equity and related guiding principles, policies, and evaluation measures;

² This recommendation is consistent with the *Resilience 2050* goal to Promote Prosperity and Economic Opportunity Goal, Strategy F: “Consider the harms and inequities associated with prior transportation investments and seek to ensure that future transportation investments promote equitable access to opportunity for workers and communities underserved by existing transportation systems — low-income and minority households — as well as disabled, elderly, individuals with Limited English Proficiency, and carless individuals.”

³ As cited in the December 2017 BRTB Public Advisory Committee (PAC) Equity Subcommittee report *Defining Equity*: “A 2016 journal entry by Baltimore resident Alec MacGillis writing for the online journal *Places* provides an excellent introduction to the history of inequity and segregation in Baltimore through the lens of transportation. The article traces the developments in transportation and its relationship to accessible jobs, white flight, and housing segregation from the early days of street cars that gave rise to the, then, leafy suburban developments in Forest Park and Roland Park, to the recent cancellation of the East-West Red Line by our Republican governor, Hogan—a line that would have connected low income, Black residents from both East and West sides of the city to twin hubs of employment at Social Security and Johns Hopkins Bayview.” www.placesjournal.org/article/the-third-rail last accessed June 20, 2023. Another resource listed in the PAC report is the Legal Defense Fund case study of the Baltimore Red Line Title VI Complaint: “The factual narrative and consultant report prepared by EcoNorthwest provide an illustration of historic and more recent inequity in Baltimore transportation planning. A transportation economist, using Maryland’s own travel model, found that whites will receive 228 percent of the net benefit from the decision, while African Americans will receive -124 percent.” <https://www.naacpldf.org/case-issue/baltimore-red-line/> last accessed June 20, 2023

Figure 2: Rationale for Historical Assessment of Equity Impacts

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- Refine the identification of geographic areas and population groups for equity analyses and project prioritization processes; and
- Customize contextual data and information for the proposed Equity Training and other resources that help to advance the region’s understanding of the systemic issues and specific concerns affecting population groups and communities that experience transportation-related barriers and inequities.



Potential Impacts: Understanding the relationship between past transportation decisions and current inequities can help BMC/BRTB identify key areas where investment is needed in the region. It can also help BMC/BRTB connect with the public, showing that the MPO understands the legacy of transportation decisions and the agency’s role in resolving inequitable outcomes stemming from transportation investment decisions. As stated by Oregon Metro: “The trauma of historical and contemporary abuse, neglect, and exclusion of people of color and others in our region is very real, and improved community outcomes are ultimately the purpose of Metro’s equity work. To succeed, Metro must commit to making internal and institutional changes that reduce these disparities, where Metro has the authority and influence to do so, as quickly as possible.”⁴

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Develop a purpose statement, desired outcomes, and proposed framework for a historical transportation equity assessment.
 - The final report should not simply document historical events. It should clarify relationships between past transportation decisions and ongoing inequitable conditions, identify elements of current planning decision-making processes that may be contributing to patterns of persistent inequities, and provide suggestions to replace them with approaches and practices that could encourage more equitable outcomes.

⁴ Ibid

- Hire a consultant to conduct quantitative and qualitative research, facilitate interviews and engagement with community residents and organizations, and prepare the assessment.
 - The consultant team could include and/ or be supported by academic experts such as Morgan State University professors and students and subject matter experts from historical societies and community organizations.
- Guide the selected consultant during the project performance period, in coordination with the Transportation CORE, Technical Committee, and the proposed Equity Standing Committee.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Funding for consultant team and community engagement.

Partners: Consultant team, local subject matter experts and community organizations

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [East-West Gateway Council of Governments](#) (St. Louis, MO) – East-West Gateway COG conducted a transportation equity assessment in 2022 that included a historical analysis of investments and policies to better understand past decisions affecting the region over the past hundred years.
- [Oregon Metro](#) (Portland, OR) – Oregon Metro completed an Equity Baseline Report in 2015 that includes a section on historical background and context dating back to the 1800s.

Long-Range Transportation Plan Draft Recommendations

Transportation decisions ideally are inclusive and should consider DEI priority populations, including the identification of potential impacts from planned transportation projects. Impacts resulting from transportation projects can be addressed early, resulting in greater multimodal regional accessibility and solutions that are embraced by the public with minimal burdens.

The following section provides an overview of recommendations for the BMC to address equity within the LRTP. Each recommendation includes a rationale, potential impacts, estimated time, implementation steps, funding and budgeting considerations, key partners, and (where available) examples of peer agency practices. ***Recommendation 7 was added after the June 2023 workshop, based upon ideas generated during the meeting. Therefore, it was not included in the prioritization exercise.***

LRTP - 1: EVALUATE EXPANSION OF TRANSIT SERVICE IN THE REGION

Recommendation: Evaluate the recent regional transit developments, infrastructure investments, regional coordination, and land use policies needed to expand transit services.

Rationale: Transit service is vital to ensure all residents in the region have equitable access to jobs, healthcare, and other essential destinations. Expansion of transit systems was a frequently

cited concern expressed during the equity scan process by the BRTB Technical Committee and Transportation CORE. The Mass Transit Administration (MTA) is operated and governed under the Maryland Department of Transportation. The public transportation agency has no oversight by local jurisdictions, which results in making the delivery of major transit projects challenging, and operations and maintenance inefficient to respond to increased demand. Although BMC's role is not specific to delivering transit services, the agency can help bring public transportation needs to the forefront by evaluating infrastructure investments and land use policies needed to expand transit services in the region.

Potential Impacts: Evaluating transit service expansion can guide long-term transit infrastructure investment throughout the region and can help build trust between BMC and residents that advocate for and/ or need improved transit options.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Conduct an evaluation of infrastructure investments and land use policies in the region as part of the next LRTP update.
- Include a section on this evaluation in the LRTP and/or weave in goals or strategies that can help prioritize transit service expansion.
- Coordinate and discuss opportunities with MTA officials' methods and delivery of public transportation service expansion strategies to meet the need of DEI priority transit populations.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Budgeting for staff time and resources.

Partners: MTA, local transit providers, local land use planners

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Southeast Michigan Council of Governments](#) (Detroit, MI) – SEMCOG developed a "Improving Transit in Southeast Michigan: A Framework for Action" to guide the transit system in the region.

LRTP - 2: SURVEY TRANSPORTATION NEEDS OF EQUITY EMPHASIS POPULATIONS

Recommendation: Conduct a large-scale survey of transportation needs among Equity Emphasis⁵ populations.

Rationale: Conducting a large-scale survey of transportation needs among Equity Emphasis populations will help to inform and deepen the needs assessment upon which the LRTP is based. By broadening and diversifying the perspectives and viewpoints reflected in the LRTP needs assessment, BMC can adjust analysis methods, project evaluation criteria, and recommendations to address more meaningfully the needs of historically under-represented communities.

⁵ For the purpose of this report, the phrase "Equity Emphasis" is a collective moniker for populations or communities associated with the socio-economic characteristics listed in the working definition of equity (Figure 1).

Potential Impacts: Understanding the priority transportation needs of underserved communities/vulnerable populations in the region can help BMC make more intentional, equitable decisions in its planning processes. This would further provide data that would impact transportation project selection and redefine the regional transportation need compared to project selections. This effort can also build community trust by demonstrating BMC's interest in understanding the lived experience of Equity Emphasis populations and tailoring the agency's approaches accordingly.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Assemble a team of advisors from the Transportation CORE, BRTB Technical Committee, and partner agency representatives such as human service providers, housing agencies and equity-focused organizations.
- Procure a highly experienced survey developer.
- With input from the advisory group, develop a survey instrument, distribution method(s), and opportunities for targeted outreach to encourage input from Equity Emphasis populations.
- Administer the survey using the methods identified.
- Incorporate survey feedback into the LRTP needs assessment and BMC's other key planning documents (e.g., goals, strategies, project scoring criteria, performance measures).
- Develop and incorporate specific Equity Emphasis indicators and metrics. These metrics can include measures of accessibility, affordability, travel times, transportation cost burdens, safety, air quality, health indicators, and proximity to essential services.
- Establish baseline data and track progress over time to evaluate the effectiveness of transportation investments in reducing disparities and improving equitable outcomes.
- Engage communities directly, particularly those that are most impacted by equity concerns, in the development and refinement of the DEI metrics.
- Collaborate with the Transportation Equity Standing Committee, the Transportation CORE, academic institutions, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, and public health agencies to leverage their expertise in developing and refining Equity Emphasis metrics.
- Foster partnerships to share data, conduct research and build capacity for Equity Emphasis analysis.
- Ensure transparency in reporting Equity Emphasis metrics, methodologies, and findings to build trust and accountability.
- Continually evaluate and refine Equity Emphasis metrics based on feedback, new research, and emerging best practices.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Budgeting for staff time and resources to develop and conduct the survey, or funding for a consultant to implement this effort. It may also be possible to collaborate financially and/ or in-kind with partner agencies and organizations that conduct similarly targeted surveys or research.

Partners: Local and regional advisors from relevant agencies and organizations.

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board](#) (Washington, DC) – TPB conducted public engagement outreach, called ‘Voices of the Region’, that utilized surveys, focus groups, and a regional virtual activity to gather public input, with an emphasis on highlighting voices that have been underrepresented in the past.

LRTP - 3: ENHANCE PROJECT PRIORITIZATION CRITERIA FOR EQUITY IN THE LONG-RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Recommendation: Enhance the existing BRTB Environmental Justice (EJ) criteria for LRTP project selection and prioritization to reflect a broader array of needs and concerns among Equity Emphasis populations. See **Appendix B** for specific BRTB recommendations on existing criteria from the *Resilience 2050* Plan.

Rationale: *Resilience 2050* incorporates the anticipated impacts of projects on EJ populations into five of the eight criteria categories. Weaving EJ considerations throughout criteria areas helps ensure project sponsors and BMC are incorporating equity throughout all practices. However, project scoring criteria could be strengthened by having some targeted equity criteria that go beyond general anticipated impacts. Including equity-specific criteria can help BMC better understand specific impacts a project may have on Equity Emphasis populations.

Potential Impacts: As noted by business expert Marcus Buckingham: “In most cases, no matter what it is, if you measure it and reward it, people will try to excel at it.” Requiring project sponsors to discuss potential equity impacts of proposed investments can help to elevate consideration of equity from the start of project idea through its development. If sponsors know BMC has a strong preference for projects that advance equity goals and policies, they will begin to focus on transportation solutions that meet those goals.

Timeframe: mid-term (3-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Integrate equity considerations into the existing prioritization point system.
- Assign points to projects based on their potential to improve transportation access, connectivity, and mobility, for disadvantaged communities.
- Consider including points for projects that directly address transportation gaps and provide equitable benefits to underserved populations.
- Expand the existing project categories to explicitly include equity-focused projects.
- Examples include projects that enhance access to essential services, improve transit connectivity in low-income neighborhoods, and promote active transportation options in underserved areas. These categories should align with the identified equity needs in the region.
- Work through potential scoring methods and processes for each criterion.
- Discard or back-burner criteria that are unwieldy, duplicative, or otherwise not ideal for project scoring and selection.
- Update existing project scoring methods and processes with the selected criteria.
- Provide project sponsors with updated criteria and access to relevant data and tools (e.g., BMC’s displacement risk assessment tool) to use for project proposals.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Consultant and staff resources to identify, test, and select additional criteria.

Partners: Consultant team (for UPWP tool), local agencies/project sponsors

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) (San Francisco, CA) – MTC includes a quantitative equity score in the performance report appendix of *Plan Bay Area 2050*. The scoring focuses on if the project would provide a greater share of accessibility benefits to low-income populations.
- [Brunswick Area Transportation Study MPO](#) (Glynn County, GA) – BATS 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan includes an equity and livability prioritization factor based on distance from defined public facilities or destinations and the project's ability to improve access, connectivity, and mobility for non-auto modes of travel.
- [Broward MPO](#) (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) – Broward MPO's includes an equity planning factor in *Commitment 2045* to help prioritize Roadway and Transit funding programs.
- Other MPO examples are provided in **Appendix C**.

LRTP - 4: ADVANCE EQUITABLE ACCESSIBILITY BY COORDINATING LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION DECISIONS

Recommendation: Prioritize policies and projects that improve equitable multimodal transportation access to essential destinations by bridging the gap between development patterns and transportation options that generate disparities (e.g., retail jobs located in suburban areas that do not pay well enough for employees to live in those areas).

Rationale: BMC's "Improve Accessibility" goal for Resilience 2050 includes strategies that promote equity and connectivity among transportation options, while the agency's ongoing Transportation and Land Use technical assistance program funded by the UPWP provides a foundation of resources and techniques for improving the coordination of local land use plans with regional transportation investments. Building upon the momentum established by these policies and programs, the agency can develop policies, performance measures, and project selection criteria that prioritize equitable accessibility through coordinated land use and transportation decisions.

Potential Impacts: Emphasizing the importance of achieving equitable accessibility by linking land use and transportation in the LRTP can help guide BMC and local agencies toward making more seamless, interwoven decisions around land use and transportation that improve access to opportunities for everyone in the region.

Timeframe: long-term (5+ years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of existing transportation infrastructure, land use patterns, and demographic data to identify areas with accessibility challenges and disparities.
- Gather input from the Transportation Standing Equity Committee and the Transportation CORE, diverse stakeholders, community organizations and residents to assess transportation needs and concerns.

- Foster collaboration between the BMC, transportation agencies, local governments, and community stakeholders to ensure coordination between land use and transportation planning efforts.
- Establish joint committees or task forces that include representatives from various sectors to facilitate meaningful engagement and decision-making processes.
- Research and develop performance measure(s), analysis tools, policy(ies), and strategies for advancing equitable accessibility through LRTP policies and project selection criteria.
- Coordinate with local land use planning and transportation planning to develop concurrent plans to promote coordination and accessibility.
- Enhance transit service frequency, reliability, and coverage to connect residents to essential destinations, such as jobs, schools, healthcare, and recreation centers.
- Provide affordable and accessible options for residents to access transit, specifically in areas with little or no access to public transportation.
- Adopt and implement Complete Streets policies that prioritize the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit users alongside motor vehicles.
- Establish an aggressive monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of strategies and ensure progress towards equitable accessibility goals.
- Periodically review and update land use and transportation policies to reflect changing demographics, technological advancements, and evolving community needs.
- Present recommendations to the Transportation CORE and Technical Committee to solicit feedback.
- Incorporate the recommendations into the next LRTP update.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Potential funding will be needed for additional resources to track a performance measure around land use and transportation connections.

Partners: Local land use planning staff, Transportation CORE, Technical Committee

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Metropolitan Area Planning Council](#) (Boston, MA) – This member agency of the Boston MPO promotes smart growth and regional collaboration on its website. They have 15 [smart growth principles](#) that guide their work.
- [Greater Madison MPO](#) (Madison, WI) – Chapter 4 of Connect Greater Madison 2050 includes a section on Land Use and Transportation Integration. This section highlights recommendations and supporting actions around the topic.

LRTP - 5: ANALYZE LONG-TERM SCENARIOS OF EQUITY-RELATED RISKS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Recommendation: Analyze scenarios of potential impacts of long-term transportation, socio-economic, and environmental trends on vulnerable populations and identify strategies to mitigate potential risks of negative impacts and to optimize potential benefits of positive impacts.

Rationale: BMC has led long-range scenario planning initiatives and conducts a routine assessment of potential environmental justice impacts of proposed LRTP investments. By weaving together these processes and analysis methods, BMC can refine its understanding of

potential EJ impacts given potential changes in underlying future conditions. For example, the agency can study variations of the LRTP EJ analysis given alternative future transportation conditions such as widescale adoption of electric vehicles or automated shared ride services, as well as alternative environmental conditions such as increased flooding from sea level rise. The resulting findings can help to inform LRTP policies and strategies for avoiding or mitigating risks of negative impacts on Equity Emphasis populations as well as identifying strategies that advance equitable outcomes work well under a variety of conditions.

Potential Impacts: Scenario planning and analysis focused on long-term impacts to Equity Emphasis populations can help guide BMCs' long-range vision and goals for the region.

Timeframe: mid-term (3-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Identify and define the Equity Emphasis populations of interest.
- Building from white papers developed for Resilience 2050 and other processes, develop a set of scenarios that reflect different futures for the region, such as changes in land use patterns, transportation investments, demographics, and policy changes.
- Determine relevant indicators to measure impacts of each scenario on Equity Emphasis populations. These indicators could include access to transportation, affordable housing, healthcare services, etc.
- Utilize existing data sources, such as census data, transportation data, socioeconomic data, health records, to assess baseline conditions and model potential impacts.
- Apply the identified indicators and data to assess the potential impacts of each scenario on Equity Emphasis populations.
- Analyze how each scenario may affect the quality of life for Equity Emphasis populations.
- Engage with the Standing Equity Committee, Transportation CORE, stakeholders, community organizations, and local agencies to gather input on the scenarios and potential impacts.
- Conduct scenario planning workshops in every jurisdiction, with the Technical Committee, Transportation CORE, and the public to get their feedback on potential strategies that will not impact Equity Emphasis populations.
- Evaluate the trade-offs associated with each scenario, considering their potential benefits and drawbacks for Equity Emphasis populations.
- Utilize the results of the scenario analysis to inform transportation decision-making, policy formulation, and investment prioritization.
- Include the results and recommended strategies in the next LRTP update.
- Continuously monitor and evaluate the implementation of chosen scenarios and their impacts on Equity Emphasis populations.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Identify funding in the UPWP for conducting scenario planning workshops.

Partners: Transportation CORE, Technical Committee

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Broward MPO](#) (Ft. Lauderdale, FL) – In *Commitment 2045*, Broward MPO developed an equity assessment process that includes a scenario development step. This step uses selected performance measures and outputs from a regional planning model to evaluate the performance of the 2045 Needs Plan compared to the 2015 baseline network in equity areas versus non-equity areas.
- [Wasatch Front Regional Council](#) (Salt Lake City, UT) – In the 2023-2050 Regional Transportation Plan, WFRC incorporated equity into scenario analyses and project prioritization processes.

L RTP - 6: IDENTIFY POTENTIAL BIASES AND INACCURACIES IN ANALYSIS METHODS

Recommendation: Scrutinize the analysis methods and data used to identify transportation needs and identify solutions to identify potential implicit biases (e.g., does the travel demand model assume all populations are driving cars?) and / or inaccuracies (e.g., does the analysis assume all older persons are disabled?)

Rationale: BMC's current data sources and analysis methods may be inaccurately showing data on transportation needs, especially those of equity priority populations. BMC has a travel demand model and activity-based model that can be used for EJ analysis. However, staff noted that the travel demand model does not account for socio-economic shifts in the region and the activity-based model relies on a complex array of assumptions. A review of this data and methods can help ensure data analysis used in the L RTP and planning processes are more effectively showing the transportation needs of all populations in the region.

Potential Impacts: By ensuring data analysis methods are accurately representing the region's needs, BMC can better identify goals and strategies that will improve transportation needs – particularly for equity priority populations.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Conduct an internal review of current travel models and data analysis methods utilized by BMC, with a focus on the L RTP, to identify ways to improve these methods.
 - To assist with the internal review, BMC staff facilitate a brainstorming session with the Transportation CORE or the BRTB Technical Committee to obtain feedback on potential biases.
 - Staff can further the research by interviewing outside partners with access and expertise in spotting bias within data sets (e.g., state DOT and academic research analysts)

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: If improvements to analysis methods are identified, funding would be needed to make improvements in the data methodology.

Partners: Transportation CORE, Technical Committee, Research Experts

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Opportunities and Potential Bias in New Transportation Data](#) – This article discusses potential biases embedded in data from private companies (e.g., Uber and Google) that

is becoming available to the public sector. For example, data from ride-hailing companies whose drivers often choose not to serve low-income neighborhoods can falsely imply a lack of demand for ride-hailing services in those neighborhoods.

Transportation Improvement Program Draft Recommendations

The BMC has a rich history of performance driven planning and decision making. To further BMC's state of the practice and help demonstrate progress towards meeting equity, the TIP project solicitation process represents a key decision point within the transportation planning framework. The TIP project selection process aims to minimize burdens and enhance benefits for DEI priority communities. Most projects in the TIP also go through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, which includes an EJ evaluation.

The following section provides an overview of recommendations for the BMC, specifically addressing equity within the TIP. These recommendations were formulated because of the BMC interviews with TIP Planning Staff, Best Practice research, Peer interviews, and feedback from the BRTB Technical Committee and the Transportation CORE. Additionally, rationale, steps for implementation of each recommendation and examples of Best Practices are contained herein.

TIP - 1: DEVELOP A FRAMEWORK FOR INCORPORATING EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS INTO THE TIP DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Recommendation: Determine meaningful, actionable ways to incorporate quantitative and/ or qualitative equity measures and considerations into the TIP decision-making process. Since the TIP decision-making process involves a complex array of local and state agency partners, BMC could utilize the proposed Equity Standing Committee (UPWP recommendation) to lead the development of equity-related measures and decision-making processes.

Rationale: Currently, the TIP includes a range of criteria that project sponsors must address when submitting a proposed project. Some TIP criteria address concerns important to vulnerable populations, such as bicycle / pedestrian safety or access to transit, but there is not an explicit process in place for prioritizing investments that could advance equitable outcomes. For example, a step could be added to identify project locations in relation to EJ or VPI areas, which would serve as a screening criterion for more in-depth consideration of potential positive and negative impacts. If a project has the potential to boost pedestrian safety or transit accessibility for equity priority populations, for example, it could be advanced more quickly than similar projects that don't provide substantive benefits to equity-priority communities or populations.

Potential Impacts: While BMC/BRTB does not have a direct role in project prioritization or selection or transportation projects in the TIP, incorporating equity criteria into the selection process can encourage partners and agencies to consider equity impacts when submitting projects. This could lead to more projects being submitted that have a potential equity benefit to DEI priority communities in the region. In addition, the BMC can encourage the MDOT to prioritize regional coordination of equity as part of the CTP. Through collaboration, advocacy,

and evidence-based approaches, BMC and BRTB can help shape transportation policies and practices that address unique needs and promote equity across the Baltimore region.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Meet internally to discuss options for incorporating equity into the TIP.
- Facilitate a series of meetings with the Equity Standing Committee to refine and decide on appropriate criteria for the selection of projects for the TIP.
- Present the equity considerations/measures to the Transportation CORE and the BMC Housing Policy Coordinator.
- Develop a Regional Equity Criteria Framework. Work with stakeholders within the BRTB to develop a regional equity framework that outlines the principles, goals, and strategies for promoting equity in transportation planning. This framework should highlight the importance of regional coordination and emphasize the need for equity considerations across all phases of the planning process. Meet with the BRTB Board for final feedback and approval.
- Initiate dialogue with MDOT representatives to discuss the importance of regional coordination of equity in the Capital Transportation outreach process. Advocate for the inclusion of regional equity considerations as a priority for transportation projects. Highlight the benefits of regional equity, such as improved access, reduced disparities, and enhanced social and economic opportunities.
- Collaborate with MDOT and other relevant agencies to establish collaborative partnerships focused on equity in transportation planning. Jointly develop initiatives, projects, or working groups that address regional equity challenges and foster coordinated decision-making process. By working together, BMC, BRTB and MDOT can leverage their respective expertise and resources to advance regional equity goals.
- Prepare policy recommendations that outline specific criteria for integrating regional equity considerations into the Capital Transportation Planning process. Share recommendations with MDOT and advocate for their adoption in their CPT process and engagement.
- Add the approved considerations/measures to the TIP project call to jurisdictions and agencies.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Budget for staff time and resources to collect input from the Equity Standing Committee, Transportation CORE, and the BRTB Board.

Partners: BMC Housing Policy Coordinator, Equity Standing Committee

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Boston Region MPO](#) (Boston, MA) – The FY 2023-27 TIP includes transportation equity-specific scoring criteria, which are used to evaluate potential projects. The criteria provide up to 12 points to projects that serve one or more transportation equity demographics.
- [Greater Madison MPO](#) (Madison, WI) – The 2023-2027 TIP includes equity considerations in its TIP scoring criteria. Equity accounts for 10 out of 100 points for Roadway and Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) projects and 15 out of 100 for Transit and Bike projects.

- [Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission](#) (Philadelphia, PA) – DVRPC compiles two TIP documents, one for [New Jersey](#) and one for [Pennsylvania](#). Both TIP documents list equity as a main criterion with a 12% prioritization for the region.
- [Mid-Region COG](#) (Albuquerque, NM) – The 2020-2025 TIP uses EJ criteria as a scoring factor by awarding points to projects located within or adjacent to identified EJ communities.

TIP - 2: LEVERAGE EQUITABLE TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENTS THROUGH PRIVATE DEVELOPMENT

Recommendation: Leverage transportation investment funds from private development projects and hold developers accountable for making improvements by methods like community benefits agreements (CBAs).

Rationale: BMC does not have a direct role in the negotiation process between local governments, community representatives, and private sector development investors. However, many of these projects have the potential to impact transportation accessibility for DEI priority populations, such as increasing affordable housing near transit or improving pedestrian and bicycle connectivity. Additionally, successful development projects in DEI priority communities can generate risks of displacement. BMC can collaborate with local government staff and representatives from community organizations to ensure they are aware of processes, like CBAs, that they can leverage to increase transportation equity in their communities and to ensure VPI areas are not negatively impacted by private development. BMC's active role in supporting the recently funded West Baltimore United Reconnecting Communities Planning Study could provide an opportunity for staff to further their knowledge of the redevelopment process.

Potential Impacts: Leveraging funds from private development projects provides additional opportunity to improve the region's transportation infrastructure, while reducing potential negative impacts of some private development projects.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Work internally with the BMC Housing Policy Coordinator to identify private development projects that impact communities with vulnerable populations and/ or with high risks of displacement.
- Provide technical assistance to local government staff and community-based organizations (CBOs) to come up with ideas they can present to private developers to leverage funds to improve transportation in the community.
- Continue to aid CBOs for any help they may need while negotiating and working with the private developers.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: No additional funding would be needed for capital investments by private developers, but the initiative would require staff time and resources to conduct research and provide technical assistance. Longer-term, the program could potentially include incentives such as a TIP set-aside for matching private investment funds.

Partners: BMC Housing Policy Coordinator, Local governments, community-based organizations, private developers

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- No MPO programs exactly matching this concept were identified in the research, but an example of a local government initiative that can have a similar impact is the [District of Columbia Great Streets](#) program. This commercial revitalization grant program is designed to help small businesses and create new job opportunities.

Public Participation Plan Draft Recommendations

BMC/BRTB has taken a number of steps recently to prioritize equity elements in their PPP and rework/organize content to make it more reader friendly and intuitive for the public. The following proposed recommendations build upon recent PPP updates and complement the *Resilience 2050* revisions to the goal “Foster Participation and Cooperation Among All Stakeholders,” and the new goal “Promote Informed Decision Making: Pursue a comprehensive approach to advancing equity for all, including people of color and others who have been historically underserved, marginalized, and adversely affected by persistent poverty and inequality.”

PPP - 1: BUILD AGENCY CAPACITY FOR ENGAGEMENT

Recommendation: As currently staffed/budgeted, BMC/BRTB does not have the resources to implement all the tools and techniques available to ensure equitable engagement in all its jurisdictions. Potential solutions even if additional funding and staffing are not available include understanding the skills and capabilities of BMC/BRTB team members; hiring consultants; relying on partnerships with jurisdictions, agencies, and CBOs; and using Transportation CORE volunteer members to assist with distribution and outreach to promote PPP awareness.

Rationale: The more resources (staff, volunteers, funding for communications and outreach, funding for consultant support) that BMC/BRTB has available to design and implement communications and outreach activities, the more people they can reach across all their jurisdictions using tailored and meaningful tools and tactics.

Potential Impacts: The more resources available to conduct communications and outreach activities for BMC/BRTB, the more people they can reach using inclusive and meaningful tools and tactics, which could increase engagement and participation from new and diverse audiences.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Identify current staff who have an interest and the skills/capabilities to assist with engagement work.
- Hold internal retreat to provide training/cross training opportunities.
- Align community and organizational events to “piggy back” outreach efforts to limit BMC/BRTB expenses when possible.

- Draft a plan for what is needed to engage in all seven (7) BMC/BRTB member jurisdictions.
- Research other MPO staffing structures and budgets.
- Develop staffing/work needs, plan, and budget.
- Find funding opportunities and make requests.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: This recommendation could take some time to implement fully. As an interim step, BMC could consider using funded on-call procurement vehicles for consultant assistance and asking Transportation CORE volunteers to assist with 1-3 events or communications/outreach activities per year so that BMC/BRTB can have the staff and assistance they need to engage with all jurisdictions and communities for projects and initiatives.

Partners: Federal, state, and local agencies that can provide funding sources; Transportation CORE volunteers

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach: N/A

PPP - 2: MAKE TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS UNDERSTANDABLE

Recommendation: Make a practice of developing an Executive Summary that scores high on readability to serve as the main document shared with the public, and to move required technical, policy, background, etc. information that is difficult for lay readers to understand (and perhaps not necessary for the public to know) to appendices.

Rationale: MPO plans and reports (including the PPP) typically contain a lot of dense documentation and jargon about technical analyses, procedural steps, and legal requirements. Publishing reports in which major portions are edited to a reading level between 8th and 11th grade is an inclusive approach that makes it easier for the public (particularly those with low literacy levels) to absorb and understand. Using graphics to convey information instead of text can also help.

Potential Impacts: By making reports less technical and more easily understood by the public and those with low literacy levels, BMC/BRTB could see an increase in engagement and participation from new and diverse audiences.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Decide how best to break up and rearrange the document or what to feature in an Executive Summary, including developing infographics/graphics.
- Use Microsoft Word to score the document for readability and reading level.
- Test document readability with lay audiences before publishing - non-planning partners, Transportation CORE members, etc.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: In-house staff time and resources.

Partners: N/A

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach: N/A

PPP - 3: CREATE OUTREACH STRATEGIES FOR HARD-TO-REACH POPULATIONS

Recommendation: Identify and develop strategies to outreach to traditionally hard to reach populations. These strategies should include a sustainable and genuine effort to build relationships, trust, and understanding with hard-to-reach populations.

Rationale: Engagement with hard-to-reach populations will contribute to a more inclusive and meaningful long-range transportation planning outcomes.

Potential Impacts: The more resources available to conduct communications and outreach activities for BMC/BRTB, the more people they can reach using inclusive and meaningful tools and tactics, which could increase engagement and participation from new and diverse audiences.

Timeframe: mid-term (1-5 years)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Identify the specific hard-to-reach populations to be engaged.
- Develop staffing/work needs, plan, and budget.
- Tailor outreach efforts to address unique needs and preferences.
- Establish paid partnerships with community-based organizations, local advocacy groups, faith-based organizations, and social service agencies that have existing relationships within the targeted communities.
- Collaborate with these organizations to co-host community events, workshops or focus groups to gather input and provide information about the long-range transportation planning process.
- Recognize that traditional public meetings or surveys may not effectively reach hard-to-reach populations. Explore alternative methods such as mobile outreach units, pop-up events at community gathering places, door-to-door canvassing, or community festivals to engage with residents on their own terms.
- Engage community leaders, influencers, and trusted individuals including emergency preparedness, housing and others who can help disseminate information and encourage participation.
- Provide regular updates and feedback on how the input received from hard-to-reach populations is being incorporated into the long-range transportation planning process.
- Establish a feedback loop to demonstrate transparency and accountability.
- Continue and expand the use of print, online and digital media among focused audiences.
- Find funding opportunities and make requests.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: This recommendation could take some time to implement fully. As an interim step, BMC could consider using funded on-call procurement vehicles for consultant assistance and asking Transportation CORE volunteers to assist with 1-3 events or communications/outreach activities per year so that BMC/BRTB can have the staff and assistance they need to engage with all jurisdictions and communities for projects and initiatives.

Partners: Federal, state, and local agencies that can provide funding sources; Transportation CORE volunteers

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [North Jersey Transportation Planning Authority](#) (Newark, NJ) – NJTPA developed a Public Engagement Toolkit to help users plan and execute public involvement activities. Strategies can be filtered by audience (e.g., low-income, senior citizens, immigrants).
- [Albany Area MPO](#) (Albany, OR) – For some of the public involvement tools highlighted in the PPP, Albany Area MPO used “Number of attendees from hard to reach and historically underrepresented communities” as an evaluation criterion.

PPP - 4: CLARIFY MESSAGING ABOUT THE PLANNING PROCESS

Recommendation: Create and provide messaging that simply and clearly explains to members of the public why they should participate in BMC/BRTB community engagement efforts, the importance of their participation, and how the feedback/input they provide will be used/considered. Provide more lay information and messaging about processes so the public understands how far out projects are, who is responsible, etc. (via simple infographics, charts, etc.) Describe processes and elements for developing project-specific public involvement plans and for tailoring outreach to community demographics.

Once messaging is developed, develop social media posts and content for BMC/BRTB posting during various project and initiative phases, that can be shared on social media by partners, stakeholders, and influencers.

Rationale: The public need guidance and applicable reasons for becoming involved and understanding the impacts that transportation projects can and do have on their lives. Messaging that explains why it's important to participate and what happens when you do may encourage interest and more participation. Explaining the process, timeline/timeframe, and the role BMC/BRTB plays in projects and community engagement will also help the public understand their role/participation better.

Potential Impacts: By making the PPP more educational and tailored to the public, BMC/BRTB could see an increase in engagement and participation from new and diverse audiences.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Develop a new section of the PPP with key message points and infographics, charts, etc. (1-2 pages)
- Develop related social media content that can be shared with jurisdictions and other partners.
- Identify key influencers who can also share content via social media.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: In-house staff time and resources.

Partners: N/A

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Maricopa Association of Governments](#) (Phoenix, AZ) – MAG’s PPP includes clear messaging on one the public should participate and what happens to their input.

PPP - 5: CUSTOMIZE INFORMATION FOR LEP POPULATIONS

Recommendation: Further engage limited English proficiency (LEP) populations by preparing an executive summary of the PPP in the most spoken languages of LEP populations in the region. In addition, consider translating additional sections of the PPP and posting them to the BMC/BRTB website as requested by the public based upon review of the executive summary in non-English languages.

Rationale: Currently, BMC/BRTB will translate the PPP and other documents if an individual request is received. To be more proactive in engaging LEP populations, the agency can create an easily accessible executive summary of the plan that is translated into the most frequently spoken native languages of LEP communities.

Potential Impacts: By being initiative-taking in having materials ready and available in common languages used in the region, BMC/BRTB can create a more inclusive environment for LEP populations and make it easier to participate in agency public engagement activities.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Identify the most frequently spoken native languages of LEP communities in the metropolitan Baltimore region.
- Use an internal language translator or hire a translation service to convert the PPP executive summary to the identified languages in PDF format.
- Advertise and post the translated PDFs on BMC/BRTB's website and social media.
- Prepare a list of documents that have been translated in visible location on the BMC/BRTB in the translated language.
- If successful, this process can be replicated for the LRTP, TIP, and UPWP

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: Funding may be needed to hire a translation service.

Partners: Translation services agency

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization](#) (Austin, TX) – CAMPO's PPP notes the MPO places notifications and advertisements in languages other than English in publications and on social media.
- [San Diego Association of Governments](#) (San Diego, CA) – SANDAG's PPP references its Language Assistance Plan to address LEP needs.

PPP - 6: EXPAND EQUITY-RELATED DATASETS

Recommendation: Add a Title VI questionnaire or elements from one to comment cards/forms, surveys, and other BMC/BRTB documents and materials to regularly collect and track demographic information and participation Review requirements and examples from state and federal agencies to design and implement.

Rationale: Demographic data collected will help BMC/BRTB identify who they are and are not reaching, and develop new targets and tools/tactics for future communications and outreach activities to ensure they are reaching being inclusive and reaching not only diverse audiences,

but people that are reflective of the communities and neighborhoods that BMC/BRTB does work in.

Potential Impacts: Knowing who is being reached and who is not can help BMC/BRTB better target outreach to specific audiences and populations to make sure they are being included in projects and initiatives.

Timeframe: short-term (less than 1 year)

Steps Needed for Implementation:

- Review current data collection tools (BMC Vulnerable Population Index (VPI), Public Input) to determine if they can be better used to collect and analyze this data rather than starting from scratch.
- Decide on data to collect and how best to collect and analyze it.

Funding/Budgeting Considerations: In-house staff time and resources.

Partners: N/A

Notable Practice Agencies Utilizing Approach:

- [DC Department of Transportation](#) (Washington, DC) – DDOT created a strategy to develop an equity assessment tool for projects.
- [National Capital Region Transportation Planning Board](#) (Washington, DC) – TPB conducted a public opinion survey and weighted the results to form a regionally representative dataset.

Appendix A: Example Equity Definitions

Appendix A provides examples of equity definitions developed by peer MPOs and a synthesis of themes drawn from equity discussions with agency staff, the Transportation CORE, and the BRTB Technical Committee during the Equity Scan process.

EQUITY DEFINITIONS FROM EQUITY SCAN PEER MPOS

Metropolitan Council (St. Paul, MN) – The LRTP Thrive MSP 2040 states: “Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation, and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all residents must access opportunity. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to success, prosperity, and quality of life opportunities.”⁶ The Council committed to exploring its authority to use its resources and roles to mitigate the place-based dimension of racial, ethnic and income-based disparities.

Oregon Metro (Portland, OR) – The Oregon Metro TSMO Equity Decision Tree includes the following definitions of terms:

⁶ Metropolitan Council. 2020. *Thrive MSP Transportation Policy Plan 2020 Update*. [https://metro council.org/Transportation/Publications-And-Resources/Planning/2040-TRANSPORTATION-POLICY-PLAN-\(2020-version\)/Chapters/Overview.aspx](https://metro council.org/Transportation/Publications-And-Resources/Planning/2040-TRANSPORTATION-POLICY-PLAN-(2020-version)/Chapters/Overview.aspx)

- **Transportation Equity:** The removal of barriers to eliminate transportation-related disparities faced by, and improve equitable outcomes for, historically marginalized communities, especially communities of color.
- **Racial Equity:** The removal of barriers with a specific focus on eliminating disparities faced by, and improving outcomes for, communities of color. Race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved.
- **People of Color and Communities of Color:** For the purposes of this plan, communities of color are Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Latinos or Hispanics, and immigrants and refugees who do not speak English well, including African immigrants, Slavic and Russian speaking communities, and people from the Middle East.⁷

The agency's 2015 Equity Framework Baseline Report includes the following definition of Safe and Reliable Transportation: "A safe, reliable, and equitable transportation system goes where people need it to go (work, play, learn) without a disproportionate cost burden relative to wages. It is a system that provides choices for driving, taking transit, biking, and walking that work in people's everyday lives, offering efficient and timely connections. It is also a system that is responsive to the needs of all users, including the perspectives of families, professionals, youth, and those with low-incomes or disabilities in decision making about the system." The Equity Framework also asserts: "Transportation equity requires the fair distribution of transportation benefits and burdens and rejects the disproportionate investment in infrastructure that promotes dependency on private automobiles." Transportation equity recognizes that mobility is also an important civil and human right, because of racial and economic disparities in access to private vehicles and the relative cost burdens of vehicle ownership.⁸

The baseline report includes the following discussion of potential equity-related transportation performance indicators:

- **Public transit reliability:** Percent on-time. Reliability of trips is difficult to measure because percent on-time does not address connectivity/transfer concerns — i.e., how easy it is to get from one place to another via the transit lines that are available at a given transit stop at a given time.
- **Public transit service span:** Days/time. The time that transit service starts/stops throughout the day/week varies widely from line to line, and the effect on connectivity/transfer concerns (see above) is difficult to capture.
- **Public transit frequency:** The frequency of transit service varies widely from line to line, and throughout the day, that this effect on connectivity/transfer concerns (see above) is difficult to capture.
- **Households within ¼ mile of frequent public transit service:** While these data measure the frequency of trips through transit stops, they do not measure connectivity.

⁷ Oregon Metro. March 11, 2022. *Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSMO) Strategy Equity Decision Tree*.

www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2022/03/11/TSMO%20Equity%20Overview%202022.pdf last accessed June 20, 2023

⁸ Oregon Metro. January 2015. *Equity Baseline Report Part 1: A Framework for Regional Equity*. <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/sites/default/files/2015/02/11/Equity%20Baseline%20Report%2002-10-2015%20small.pdf>

- Schools within ¼ mile of frequent public transit service: While these data could measure the frequency of trips through transit stops near schools, they would not measure connectivity – i.e., how easy it is for students/ others to get to the transit line that serve the school.
- Jobs within ¼ mile of frequent public transit service: Defining and identifying “jobs” is crucial to this dataset. Are we looking at all jobs or jobs with living wage pay? Determining average pay by industry can be done, but it is a bit tricky. It would require additional analysis on top of the identification of jobs location.
- Location of curbcuts: Uncertain if these data are available for entire region. The city of Portland may be the only jurisdiction that has these data. If available, additional questions arise regarding how a “curbcut” is defined and measured as well as the date the data were updated. In terms of definition and measurement, for example, a curbcut that does not meet ADA regulations might not meet the standards that define an accessible curbcut.
- Sidewalk network/connectivity: The presence of sidewalks in only one component of walkability. The data layers do not provide any detail about the condition of the sidewalk or whether there are any impediments (such as low hanging tree branches or lack of curbcuts). They also do not provide any indication of traffic volume, the presence of crosswalks, and other factors that facilitate pedestrian access. Sidewalk data are often not completely up to date because the information changes on an ongoing basis. The accuracy of sidewalk data varies. The data for the city of Portland is generally quite accurate but is less accurate for areas outside of Portland and is nonexistent for many rural areas. Care should be taken in interpreting sidewalk coverage in outlying areas as accuracy is severely diminished.
- Bike network/connectivity: When assessing bicycle networks, there needs to be a shared definition of what constitutes various levels of connectivity. Without such definition, an assessment will be extremely difficult to complete.
- Location of unpaved roads: Uncertain if these data are available for jurisdictions outside of Portland.
- Transportation cost as a percent of income: It appears that “transportation costs as a percent of income” would come from the Consumer Expenditure Survey <http://www.bls.gov/cex/home.htm>. The surveys are sample surveys and are subject to two types of errors, nonsampling and sampling. Nonsampling errors can be attributed to many sources, such as differences in the interpretation of questions, inability or unwillingness of the respondent to provide correct information, mistakes in recording or coding the data obtained, and other errors of collection, response, processing, coverage, and estimation for missing data. The full extent of nonsampling error is unknown. Sampling errors occur because the survey data are collected from a sample and not from the entire population. Tables with standard errors and other reliability statistics are available by request on the Consumer Expenditure Survey website; these tables are classified by the same demographic characteristics found in the 10 “standard” tables published for the survey, except for the classification by region. Caution should be used in interpreting the expenditure data, especially when relating averages to individual circumstances. The data shown in the published tables are averages for demographic groups of consumer units. Expenditures by individual consumer units may differ from the average even if the characteristics of the group are similar to those of the individual consumer unit. Income, family size, age of family members, geographic location, and individual tastes and preferences all influence expenditures.

- Pedestrian-vehicle crashes: Oregon’s Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) has set threshold limits for crash reporting based on estimated property damage and personal injury. Oregon law requires that any crash on a public roadway resulting in a fatality, bodily injury or damage to one person’s property over \$1,000 must be reported to the DMV. Submittal of these crash reports is the responsibility of the individual, which results in undercounting. Approximately 33% of all reported crashes are also investigated by a police officer, who also files a report to the DMV. With regard to fatalities, detail is not provided on who was killed (e.g., the pedestrian, bicyclist or driver) or how many fatalities occurred.
- Vehicle-vehicle crashes: See a Pedestrian-vehicle crashes above.⁹

In addition, Oregon Metro’s commitment to Black lives states: “Metro is committed to working with Reimagine Oregon, a coalition of Black-led organizations and community members, to take action to improve the lives, health, and well-being of Black community members. Reimagine Oregon is a newly formed coalition of Black-led organizations, leaders, activists, and organizers that partners with Metro to define a clearer path to advancing racial justice. Reimagine Oregon has worked with Metro to identify specific actions across Metro’s portfolio in areas critical to the health and well-being of the region’s Black communities: housing, transportation, community safety, and economic development.”¹⁰

Southern California Association of Governments (Los Angeles, CA) - SCAG collaboratively developed an equity definition to guide practices of the agency and all transportation planning programs and activities. By forming a Special Committee on Equity and Social Justice, agency staff and key stakeholders together created this regional definition of racial equity: “... actions, policies, and practices that eliminate bias and barriers that have marginalized communities of color historically and systemically, to ensure all people can be healthy, prosperous, and participate fully in civic life.”¹¹

Mid-Region Council of Governments (Albuquerque, NM) - MRCOG’s LRTP includes a brief section that defines transportation equity and discusses some equity-related transportation data, including means of transportation to work by poverty level. MRCOG defines transportation equity as: “Ensuring that there are affordable, reliable, and safe means of travel available for those who need it to reach their jobs, healthcare services, and perform routine errands.” The equity analysis notes “When compared with the nation, the Albuquerque Metropolitan Planning Area (AMPA) has higher poverty, lower incomes, and a greater share of disabilities. The disproportionate need in our region underscores the importance of addressing equity issues as it applies to transportation access throughout the metropolitan area.”¹²

Metropolitan Transportation Commission (San Francisco, CA) - MTC’s LRTP strongly emphasizes equity throughout the plan. For Plan Bay Area 2050, MTC defines equity as “just inclusion in a Bay Area where everyone can participate, prosper and reach their full potential.”¹³

⁹ Ibid

¹⁰ Oregon Metro. 2020. *Metro’s Commitment to Black Lives*. www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/metros-commitment-black-lives

¹¹ For more information related to SCAG’s equity definition, [click here](#).

¹² Mid-Region Council of Governments. April 2020. *Connections 2040*. <https://www.mrcog-nm.gov/264/Metropolitan-Transportation-Plan>

¹³ Metropolitan Transportation Commission. October 2021. *Plan Bay Area 2050*. <https://mtc.ca.gov/planning/long-range-planning/plan-bay-area-2050>

MTC makes a point to discuss the specific terminology it uses in the plan that relates to equity: populations of interest are classified as Indigenous, Black, Hispanic, and Latino people as well as communities of color and people with disabilities.¹⁴ The plan pays particular attention to the needs of people living in Equity Priority Communities, which are mapped as locations with the following combinations of characteristics:

- Concentrations of residents with low incomes and residents of color (must contain both)
- Concentrations of residents with low incomes and three or more of the following factors:
 - People with limited English proficiency
 - Zero-vehicle households
 - Seniors aged 75 years and over
 - People with one or more disability
 - Single parent families
 - Renters spending more than 50% of their household income on housing.¹⁵

ADDITIONAL EQUITY DEFINITIONS

To supplement the assortment of peer agency statements, this section provides a synthesis of equity definitions and policy statements collected by BMC staff and the project team.

Equity Assessment Ordinance (selected elements) – City of Baltimore Article 1 39-1

“Established in September 2018 by the City of Baltimore, the Equity Assessment Program is used to proactively develop policies, practices, and strategic investments to reverse disparity trends, act to eliminate structural and institutional racism and discrimination and implement an equity action plan to incorporate equity principles into City actions, policies, and capital and operating budgets... As our society changes and evolves, the demand for equity and fairness becomes increasingly evident and we are collectively working to identify challenges, increase the transparency of operations, monitor funding allocations, track outcomes and results, promote accountability, and seek new opportunities to collaborate. The result of these efforts is a renewed challenge to take action to remedy inequality and injustice.”¹⁶

“**Equity** means closing the gaps in policy, practice and allocation of City resources so that race, gender, religion, sexual orientations, income [and other immutable characteristics] do not predict one's success, while also improving outcomes for all.

Gender means actual or perceived sex and includes a person's gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression, whether or not that gender identity, self-image, appearance, behavior, or expression is different from that traditionally associated with the sex assigned to that person at birth.

Equity assessment means a systematic process of identifying policies and practices that may be implemented to identify and redress disparate outcomes on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, or income... [Each Department will] act to eliminate structural and institutional

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ City of Baltimore Office of Equity and Civil Rights. 2020 Baltimore City Annual Equity Report. <https://civilrights.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/2020%20Equity%20Report.pdf> last accessed June 20, 2023

racism and discrimination of all kinds based on immutable characteristics to ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable based on those characteristics.”¹⁷

Equity in Planning - Baltimore City Department of Planning

Defining Equity: An equitable Baltimore addresses the needs and aspirations of its diverse population and meaningfully engages residents through inclusive and collaborative processes to expand access to power and resources.¹⁸

Our Equity Lens: The Equity in Planning Committee (EIPC) promotes the use of an “equity lens” for planning. An equity lens is a tool used to improve planning, decision-making, and resource allocation leading to more racially equitable policies and programs. Drawing from the Urban Sustainability Directors Network, the EIPC’s recommended equity lens considers four overarching areas of equity. For any policy or project, decision-makers could consider:

1. **Structural Equity:** What historic advantages or disadvantages have affected residents in the given community?
2. **Procedural Equity:** How are residents historically excluded from planning processes authentically included in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the proposed policy or project?
3. **Distributional Equity:** Does the distribution of civic resources and investment explicitly account for potential racially disparate outcomes?
4. **Transgenerational Equity:** Does the policy or project result in unfair burdens on future generations?

Baltimore Sustainability Plan (2019)

Equity Lens: Using an equity lens acknowledges societal inequities that are long-standing and that have their roots in generations of these unfair structural barriers. An equity lens-- unlike a universalist lens, which focuses on sameness-- acknowledges that ...different communities, and hence, the individuals that comprise those communities, are situated differently relative to each other.... It recognizes that universalist policies which treat everyone the same continue inequities.

Equity Considerations: An equity lens “leads” with an analysis of racial equity because race is a predominant, but under-acknowledged, determinant of outcomes. Still, decisions regarding the development of policies, procedures, regulations, and plans, or issuance of permits, must consider the impact on all under-represented communities. An equity lens is not intended to be a checklist. Rather, it’s a guide to inform project management decision-making, and a facilitation tool to support iterative learning and process improvement throughout the development and implementation of an initiative. The following equity considerations were identified as critical opportunities to advance equity through the Sustainability Plan.

¹⁷ Baltimore City Code. Article 1 Subtitle 39: Equity Assessment Program.

<https://civilrights.baltimorecity.gov/sites/default/files/Art.%201%2039-1.pdf> last accessed June 20, 2023

¹⁸ This definition was developed through a collaborative process by staff at the Baltimore City Department of Planning; it reflects the perspective and input of internal staff. The idea was to build a shared language for the Department. A separate Citywide definition is articulated in Article 1 39-1.

MWCOG

<https://www.mwcog.org/newsroom/2021/11/03/cog-adopts-new-transit-and-equity-planning-principles-for-2030-announces-housing-affordability-planning-program-with-amazon-transit-equity/>

Boston Region MPO Transportation Equity Program

The MPO is committed to ensuring that traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities receive a fair share of the regional transportation system's benefits, and are not subject to undue burdens. The MPO considers the needs and views of these populations as it develops its plans, programs, and projects. As such, transportation equity is an important part of the MPO's vision, and is reflected in its goals and objectives.

The MPO's Transportation Equity (TE) program fulfills this vision by ensuring that federally protected populations are not discriminated against in MPO activities, including the programming and planning of transportation projects and studies. The MPO provides outreach opportunities for these populations to participate in its transportation-planning and decision-making processes.

Puget Sound Regional Council (Seattle MPO)

Equity, Opportunity, and Sustainability in the Central Puget Sound Region - Social equity means that all people, regardless of where they live, have access to the resources and opportunities that improve their quality of life and let them reach their full potential. Social equity also requires that low-income communities, communities of color and other historically underrepresented populations are active participants in planning and policy making by having the knowledge and other tools required for full participation. A social equity framework:

- Ensures that current residents, businesses and other community members benefit as their communities change and grow, rather than being displaced to areas that offer fewer opportunities.
- Seeks to ensure that new growth and development create housing choices affordable to socially and economically diverse populations, as well as opportunities for community businesses and institutions to thrive, and employment opportunities that pay a living wage.
- Empowers communities to actively participate in planning and policy-making processes and structures planning processes for meaningful community engagement.

Presidential Executive Order 13985

The term "equity" means the consistent and systematic fair, just, and impartial treatment of all individuals, including individuals who belong to underserved communities that have been denied such treatment, such as

- Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color;
- members of religious minorities;
- lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons;
- persons with disabilities;

- persons who live in rural areas; and
- persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

The term “underserved communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life, as exemplified by the list in the preceding definition of “equity.”

USDOT - Transportation Equity

Negative health effects related to the transportation system can fall hardest on vulnerable members of the community, such as low-income residents, minorities, children, persons with disabilities, and older adults. Households in low-income areas typically own fewer vehicles, have longer commutes, and have higher transportation costs.

Inadequate or substandard infrastructure in low-income and minority communities can prevent people from using active transportation. It can also make walking and bicycling unsafe for those who do rely on these modes to get around, leading to higher incidences of collisions involving pedestrians and cyclists.

Low-income and minority communities are more likely to be located near highways and other transportation facilities that produce local reduced air quality, and to suffer from negative health effects such as asthma. These communities are also less likely to have convenient access to parks, healthcare, and healthy food.

USDOT Access and Equity Policy Statement

<https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/civil-rights-library/equity-and-access-policy-statement>

OMB Memo, July 2021

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/M-21-28.pdf>

Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing

https://www.hud.gov/program_offices/fair_housing_equal_opp/affh

This definition could be useful for context. In addition, the last sentence makes clear that it applies to all state and local government programs related to housing and urban development, which is generally acknowledged to include transportation:

“Affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions, in addition to combating discrimination, that overcome patterns of segregation and foster inclusive communities free from barriers that restrict access to opportunity based on protected characteristics. Specifically, affirmatively furthering fair housing means taking meaningful actions that, taken together, address significant disparities in housing needs and in access to opportunity, replacing segregated living patterns with truly integrated and balanced living patterns, transforming racially or ethnically concentrated areas of poverty into areas of opportunity, and fostering and maintaining compliance with civil rights and fair housing laws. The duty to affirmatively further fair housing extends to all of a program participant’s activities and programs relating to housing and urban development.”

Federal Emergency Management Agency

At FEMA, our definition of equity is: “The consistent and systematic fair, just and impartial treatment of all individuals.”

Appendix B: LRTP Project Evaluation Criteria

SUGGESTED MODIFICATIONS TO *RESILIENCE 2050* CRITERIA

Figure 3 presents potential modifications and enhancements to current BRTB LRTP criteria in six of the eight LRTP project prioritization categories. The suggestions propose tweaks to the existing point system but not wholesale changes. Equity-related criteria within the other two categories would remain as they are now.

To develop the recommendations for this updated process, the ICF team conducted:

- A review of the current *Resilience 2050* White Paper on the project evaluation/prioritization process including the structure, points, and assigned criteria for each project category;
- A review of the project evaluation and prioritization processes used by other MPO LRTPs to identify best practices and lessons from other regions; and
- An assessment of how each revised criterion could be addressed in the process and development recommendations by identifying proposed criteria for project evaluation and a potential scoring approach.

**Long Range Planning Project Prioritization
for Equity**

CATEGORY	TRANSIT	HIGHWAYS
SAFETY	<p>SAFETY: Projects that are anticipated to improve transit safety within or adjacent to EEA priority populations will receive 5 Points.</p> <p>SECURITY: Projects specifically designed to improve the security of transit riders and serving transit dependent patrons particularly in EEAs, will receive a maximum of 5 points.</p>	<p>SAFETY: If a project is located within a corridor with a high number of EEA fatalities due to pedestrian crashes will receive 3 Points.</p>
ACCESSIBILITY COMPLETE STREETS	<p>Projects expected to improve complete streets accessibility in and adjacent to EEAs will receive 2 more points.</p>	<p>Projects expected to improve complete streets accessibility in and adjacent to EEAs will receive 2 more points.</p>
ACCESSIBILITY ACCESS TO JOBS	<p>Projects that improve access to jobs within a 45-minute travel time from geographic locations of EEAs and transit dependent populations will receive 4 points.</p>	<p>Projects that improve access to jobs from geographic locations of EEA dependent locations will receive 2 additional points.</p>
MOBILITY	<p>Walk Access (2 points) Projects that increase ridership the most for those that walk to transit including projects that improve transit/bus stops, i.e., shelters, lighting, benches, and other amenities within or close proximity to high transit dependent populations will receive 2 points.</p>	<p>Projects that reduce Bus Transit Vehicle hours of delay will receive 2 points. Projects will be evaluated based on transit vehicle hours of delay during the morning and afternoon rush hours. Projects without transit or in the middle will receive 1 point.</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL- ECOLOGICAL CULTURAL	<p>Two (2) Points for projects that are anticipated to benefit environmental resources for EEAs, will receive an additional 2 points.</p>	<p>Two (2) Points for projects that are anticipated to benefit environmental resources for EEAs will receive an additional 2 points.</p>
ENVIRONMENTAL GHG EMISSIONS	<p>Projects can also receive 1, 2, 3, or 4 points based on the degree to which the project is anticipated to reduce impact of GHG emissions particularly in and around EEAs.</p>	<p>Projects can also receive 1, 2, 3, or 4 points based on the degree to which the project is anticipated to reduce impact of GHG emissions particularly in and around EEAs.</p>

Figure 3. Suggested Equity-Related Enhancements to *Resilience 2050* L RTP Project Prioritization Criteria

PEER MPO EXAMPLES

For this White Paper, a review of three MPO LRTP project prioritization processes were conducted that integrate equity. Highlights of the processes are provided below.

Broward MPO: Equity As A Stand-Alone Category¹⁹

For project prioritization at the Broward MPO in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, projects are separated into six funding programs established for the LRTP: Roadway, Transit, Systems Management/Safety, Complete Streets and Localized Initiatives, Complete Streets Master Plan, and Mobility Hubs. However, a majority of these funding programs have their own prioritization criteria that is developed on an annual or periodic basis. So, the prioritization process described in the LRTP is just for projects assigned to the Roadway and Transit funding programs. For these programs, criteria are based on LRTP goals and objectives, along with relevant required performance measures identified in the FAST Act and measures used in the MPO's scenario planning process.

The method allocates 21 criteria across six planning factors Broward MPO uses for its scenario evaluation: mobility, accessibility, safety, equity, environmental stewardship, and economic vitality. Each of the six planning factors has a weighted value that aligns with its importance to the community. These values were determined through interactive polling with various committees (e.g., Technical Advisory Committee) and the MPO Board, and are as follows:

- Mobility – 20.5
- Accessibility – 20.8
- Safety – 18.7
- Equity – 14.3
- Environmental Stewardship – 12.8
- Economic Vitality – 13.0

Figure 4 shows the 21 criteria grouped under each planning factor.

¹⁹ Broward MPO. December 2019. *Commitment 2045*.
https://www.browardmpo.org/images/News_Updates/MTP_Final_Report_Amend_02_03102022.pdf

Planning Factor	Criteria
Mobility	Impact on Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV) Travel
	Impact on Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)
	Impact on Person Capacity
	Impact on Peak Period Delay/Transit Travel Time
Accessibility	Impact on Transit Ridership
	Activity Center Access and Reliability (measured by peak-hour travel time or transit frequency to key activity centers)
	Impact on Multimodal Connectivity
Safety	Safety Improvements at High-Crash Locations
	Safety Improvements at Non-High-Crash Locations
	Multimodal Safety (measured by safety improvements at identified pedestrian and bicycle crash hot spots and/or within key activity centers)
Equity	Impact on Transit Service Frequency
	Impact on Transit Services (Frequency and Connectivity) within Equity Areas
	Impact on Travel Time Savings within Equity Areas
	Improvements to Multimodal Safety within Equity Areas
	Community Impacts (measured by potential for impacts to existing residences and businesses)
Environmental Stewardship	Improvements Related to Sea-Level Rise Mitigation/Extreme Weather Resiliency
	Impact on Greenhouse Gas and Precursor Emissions
	Potential for Impacts to Wetlands, Floodplains, and Natural and Historic Resources
Economic Vitality	Freight and Goods Movement (measured by impact on travel time reliability or operations on corridor identified on National Highway Freight Network or corridor with truck percentage of 5% or more)
	State of Good Repair (measured by impacts on infrastructure rated as fair or poor condition)
	Economic Development (measured by impact on access to key activity centers)

Figure 4. Broward MPO LRTP Project Prioritization Criteria

Scores are "normalized by dividing the resulting number by the total points possible for each factor." Next, the weight is applied, and each planning factor score is totaled to determine the final score for each project. Figure 5 shows an example of a project's prioritization scoring and ranking. For ranking, projects are given an ordinal rank based on their total score. After scoring projects, they are separated into two funding programs: roadway and transit. Roadway projects are divided further by facility ownership and transit projects are reviewed to see if operating and maintenance funding is available. Any transit projects without commitment for operating and maintenance funding are removed from the Cost Feasible Plan. Once this allocation is complete, projects are re-ranked within the funding programs based on their overall score.

Project Name & Limits	Hypothetical Avenue (Here to There)				Project Name	Weighted Score	Rank
Description:	Widen from 2 to 4 Lanes				Transit Project A	45.551	1
Planning Factor	Raw Score / Max Score	Normalized Score	Weighting	Weighted Score	Transit Project B	40.111	2
Mobility	6 / 8	0.750	20.5	15.375	Hypothetical Avenue	35.801	3
Accessibility	2 / 6	0.333	20.8	6.933	Theoretical Avenue	35.801	3
Safety	2 / 5	0.400	18.7	7.480	Railroad Crossing 1	32.356	5
Equity	-1 / 8	-0.125	14.3	-1.787	Railroad Crossing 2	32.356	5
Environment	0 / 4	0.000	12.8	0.000	Railroad Crossing 3	32.356	5
Economy	3 / 5	0.600	13.0	7.8000	Local Road A	30.857	8
Total Weighted Score				35.801			

Figure 5. Broward MPO Project Prioritization Scoring & Ranking Examples

For more information:

https://browardmpo.org/images/WhatWeDo/2045_MTP/Final_Technical_Reports/20190806-TR4-ProjectPrioritizationProcess-FINAL.pdf

Forward Pinellas: Equity And Health Category

The Forward Pinellas MPO in Clearwater, Florida has an established LRTP policy to fund 10 active transportation corridor projects, four trail overpasses, \$1M annually for complete streets, \$1.5M annually for transit capital, and \$500k each for regional transit capital and technology projects. The active transportation projects are prioritized separately; Forward Pinellas feeds them into the LRTP priority list in order as other projects come off. Other projects are added to the top of the priority list each year based on local government project applications.

The major roadway projects in the LRTP typically do not have a technical scoring process. However, there are criteria for multimodal prioritization. Based on various criteria, multimodal prioritization projects can receive 60 points. Projects can get up to 40 points for the project's ability to meet the program's principles, eight points for the project being of countywide significance, five points for project readiness, and seven points for coordination and support. Under each of these categories, there are various questions/subcategories to place points under, some of which address equity (Figure 6).

Ability of the project to meet the principles of the program	Max Points: 40
Improve Safety	
Does the project provide a safety benefit to the general public?	6
Any improvement on an uncontrolled access facility where speed limit is 35 mph or less, that includes safety benefits for nonmotorized users. Or, if the project includes physical separation for non-motorized users on any facility with a speed limit of 35 mph or greater.	4
Improve Equity and Health	
Does the project improve mobility to or within an EJ area, as identified by Forward Pinellas?	3
Does the project support access to workforce/educational facilities (PTEC, St. Petersburg College, etc.)	2
Does the jurisdiction within which the project is located have a commitment to support the Countywide Affordable Housing Strategy?	1
Does the project support an affordable, workforce, senior or low income housing strategy adopted by a local government?	1
Does the project improve mobility to a USDA-designated low income and local access census tract?	1
Is the project within a quarter of a mile of PSTA route with Passengers per Revenue hour above the median for 2019	1
Improve Mobility	
Does the project intend to improve traffic flow? This could include providing an alternative to SOV modes.	2
Does the project provide a new service or facility that does not currently exist? This could include transit services above/beyond what is currently existing. Not a 1-for-1 transit vehicle replacement.	1
Does the project complete a gap in the network (any mode)?	1
Is the project supportive of the designated investment corridors, as identified in Advantage Pinellas?	3
Foster Economic Growth	
Does the project improve mobility to and within the Gateway area, as defined in the Gateway Master Plan?	1
Does the project improve mobility in the US 19 corridor?	1
Does the project enhance access and mobility to or within Activity Centers or Target Employment Areas, as identified on the Countywide Plan Map?	1
Does the project support the maintenance the transportation network in a state of good repair?	1
Does the project improve the movement of tourists through and to Pinellas County?	1
Project improves access to the beaches?	1
Protect the Environment	
Does the project intend to improve air quality through less vehicle idling or encourage alternatives to SOV?	2
Does the project include drainage improvements that would enhance the quality of stormwater runoff?	1
Will the project avoid and minimize wetland and surface water impacts to the maximum extent practicable?	1
Improve Resiliency	
Does the project improve mobility on a designated evacuation route?	1
Does the project include consideration of impacts of sea level rise and inundation?	1
Commitment to design to 100 year flood??	1
Project applicant has signed on to the Tampa Bay RPC Climate Compact.	1

Figure 6. Forward Pinellas Scoring Categories and Points for Principles of the Program

The multimodal priority list is prioritized according to the MPO's six overarching goals: improve safety, enhance equitable outcomes, improve mobility, foster economic growth, protect the environment, and improve resiliency.

Overall, "projects are prioritized based on their ability to provide the greatest transportation benefit and performance for the countywide network in Pinellas County." Projects are scored against the scoring matrix criteria and grouped into categories based on the total number of points received. Projects are chosen by the Forward Pinellas Board and consider project scoring, modal and geographic diversity, and other factors.

Source: Information received from an email and attached documents provided by Forward Pinellas to the ICF team upon request.

Metropolitan Council: Equity And Housing Category

The Metropolitan Council in Minneapolis / St. Paul only highlights prioritization criteria for projects funded through the Regional Solicitation in its LRTP. LRTP goals are reflected in the prioritization criteria for selecting these projects. Criteria categories include: role in the regional transportation system and economy; usage; equity and housing performance; infrastructure age; congestion reduction/air quality; safety; multimodal facilities and existing connections; risk assessment; and cost effectiveness. Figure 7 shows the connections between Regional Solicitation project criteria and LRTP goals.

Prioritizing Criteria	Thrive Outcomes	TPP Goals
Role in the Regional Transportation System and Economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Competitive Economy
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livability Prosperity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Competitive Economy
Equity and Housing Performance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Leveraging Transportation Investments to Guide Land Use
Infrastructure Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship
Congestion Reduction/Air Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Livability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Healthy Environment Competitive Economy
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livability Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety and Security
Multimodal Facilities and Existing Connections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prosperity Equity Livability Sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to Destinations Transportation and Land Use Competitive Economy
Risk Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship
Cost Effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transportation System Stewardship

Figure 7. Metropolitan Council's Regional Solicitation Connection to Regional Policy

For more information: [https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Planning-Process/Metropolitan-Planning-Organization-\(MPO\).aspx](https://metro council.org/Transportation/Planning-2/Transportation-Planning-Process/Metropolitan-Planning-Organization-(MPO).aspx).