



General Plan Virtual Events - Racial and Social Equity Sessions Summary

Wednesday, March 17 2:00pm to 3:30pm &
Wednesday, March 24 6:00pm-7:00pm

The San Francisco Planning Department is updating the General Plan and held a series of virtual events from March 15 to March 26, 2021. A 90-minute workshop took place on March 17 and another 60 minute session took place March 24 on the [Racial and Social Equity Action Plan](#).

The SF Planning Commission and Historic Preservation Commissions have directed the department to incorporate equity into the General Plan, along with the development of the Racial & Social Equity Action Plan. These sessions are just the beginning of re-engaging community members on the development of the Department's Racial & Social Equity Action Plan (Phase 2 for external functions that interface with community members). The COVID-19 pandemic interrupted the initial engagement that had launched in late 2019. The department will plan additional activities in 2021, particularly to reach members of the community that do not have access to digital technology or did not have the opportunity to learn about these virtual events. In this session approximately 84 participants learned more about the SF Planning's Action Plan, Equity Resolutions, and the SF Office of Racial Equity. The recording of this presentation can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iWP8dRTU2Kc&t=208s>

Most participants were members of the general public representing themselves, or a community organization. Many were somewhat familiar with the Racial and Social Equity Action Plan, while for the majority of others, it was their first-time hearing about it.

Using an online "board" we shared preliminary information on barriers to equity that community members have helped us identify to-date from prior focus groups, interviews and meetings, and asked participants to:

1. help identify additional disparities,
2. propose solutions to advance equitable planning processes, and
3. elaborate on the City's working definition of racial and social equity

The ideas provided will be analyzed and discussed further in future community discussions to reinforce our understanding of the comments and discuss of how they contribute to racial and social equity. A summary of the key themes gathered at these sessions is below:

Session 1: Defining Equity

Racial Equity (SF ORE): *The systematic fair treatment of people of all races that results in equal outcomes, while recognizing the historical context and systemic harm done to specific racial groups.*

Social Equity: *Social equity is fairness and justice in the management of public institutions, forming of policy and delivery of public services taking into account historical and current inequities among groups, such as along gender identity, sex, religion, and disability status.*

What would you add to these definitions?

Themes from Participants in order of prominence:

- Include reparations, and a reparative framework in the definition, as well as to address economic barriers, income inequality, and the racial wealth gap.
- Involve the community in decision making.
- Integrating generational equity, and anti-blackness into the definition.
- Perform a long-term vs short term equity analysis.

Session 2: Challenges: Community Outreach, Engagement And Communication

This is how the department does notifications, communicates and shares information with the public, and engages community members in our work.

Draft Problem Statement – *Historically, many low-income people, people of color, non-English speakers, and other historically marginalized populations have had and continue to have less access to information, less understanding of some of the legal and technical aspects of our work, and less opportunities for meaningful engagement with the Planning Department.*

Additional Barriers identified by participants in order of prominence:	Potential Solutions identified by participants in order of prominence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough diversity in languages, engagement tools, vocabulary, and writing and communication styles used to make (rapidly changing and complex) information accessible. • Power dynamics among BIPOC communities, politicians, liberals, NYMBI’s, activists, and decision makers. • The lack of going directly to the community for outreach and engagement and prioritizing their input. • Digital divide/equity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finding the balance between virtual and in person tools, in both outreach and engagement, to address the digital divide and get input from various groups or individuals. • Leverage social media, community leaders, other departments, and on the ground community ambassadors to relay messages. • Fund non-profits with expertise in land use to evaluate neighborhood plans. • Self-help guidelines on developing over single-family housing. • Removing inclusionary zoning in lieu-fees • Hire multi-language staff.

Session 3: Policy, Community Plans, and Legislation Development

This is how the department creates, advises on, and amends policy, community plans, and legislation such as the Planning Code, the General Plan, other relevant City or department policy, plans and law.

Draft Problem Statement – *Historically, the equity impacts, unintended consequences, and legacies of discrimination have not been fully considered and addressed in policy and plan development and analysis, which can result in furthering systemic injustices and disparities for people of color, low-income communities and other marginalized groups.*

Additional Barriers identified by participants in order of prominence:	Potential Solutions identified by participants in order of prominence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displacement, redlining, segregation, exclusionary zoning, and other systemic injustices that have contributed to income inequality and the racial wealth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplify everything. • Modify or replace rent control with an income-based voucher system.

<p>gap, and still exists in some forms (appraisals, mortgages, etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repetitive outreach strategies and findings. • Power dynamics among community activists, the state, homeowners, and the city. • Transportation access throughout developments or zoning changes. • Lack of trust between community and the Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weight input of different stakeholders equitably. • Change zoning surgically and only with community approval. • Center race in policies. • Develop social housing on approved projects that take too long to build. • Use a restorative legislation policy framework. • Create policies that lower income requirements and result in more affordable housing.
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Session 4: Permit Review

This includes our role in reviewing and enforcing changes to a property and its compliance with: the General Plan's vision for San Francisco's future and its associated policies; Planning Code or the uses, sizes, and shape (how tall, how big) adopted in regulations (zoning); Design guidelines or its compatibility with neighborhood context (historic preservation, architecture, etc.); and Environmental laws such as the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Draft Problem Statement - *Historically, low-income, people of color, and non-English speaking residents are excluded, ignored, or not prioritized in decisions that affect the future of San Francisco resulting in disproportionate negative impacts on these communities.*

Additional Barriers identified by participants in order of prominence:	Potential Solutions identified by participants in order of prominence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving the community and seeking their expertise on this issue. • Discretionary permit process and the need for a permit expediter can be barriers. • It is a long, costly, subjective, and complicated process. • How CEQA is used to stop projects. • Prioritization of aesthetics. • Code compliance is hard to enforce. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining permitting. • Use online zoom meetings for plan check and digital PDF submittals. • Improve/update CEQA. • Measure impact on low-income families.

Other comments from the reflection, Q&A, and chat:

- Housing
 - There is a need for consensus on the impacts of market rate housing on equity.
 - How the Housing Element is enforced is unclear.
 - There are several barriers to obtaining affordable housing, including narrow definitions and long wait lists (as opposed to market-rate housing).
 - Increase housing voucher programs.
 - Need for incentives for affordable housing.
 - More multifamily housing where it is not allowed.
 - Housing development is broadly at the root of all inequities.

- Single family housing is rooted in racism.
- Foreign ownership and vacancies need to be addressed.
- People with special needs must be afforded exceptions or augmentations, as appropriate.
- BMR's have existing inequities (moving within building, Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions/CC&Rs, monthly fees).
- Income disparities are worsening.
- Tax the rich.
- More research on subsidies for seniors and those with disabilities.
- General Plan
 - Include accurate American Indian data in your General Plan reports, presentations and internal and external documents (1.1% of the population/9,887 not 0.3%).
 - The General Plan should include SB18 Tribal consultation with the Association of Ramaytush Ohlone as part of their requirements to make sure zoning and planned projects are being done in a manner that respects sacred sites and Tribal Cultural Resources

Comments as questions (for exploration/research and discussion through this process in future community discussions and in collaboration with other relevant agencies):

- Through this process, determine how past wrongs can be rectified (such as those mentioned The Color of Law)
- What role could the Planning Department play in establishing a Black Land Trust?
- If the SF Black population is 5% in SF, why is it that they are amongst the highest not receiving housing?
- On inclusionary BMRs, are there limits on what the HOA board can assess on those units to keep them affordable?
- Can we change how we weigh community input such that historically marginalized voices are given more weight in the planning process?
- How does Planning justify market-rate housing without any data-driven explanation as to how this is equitable or will address displacement?