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Grand Rapids, Michigan
Defining, aligning and building an equitable city
Mission:
To encourage and support excellence in land use decision making.

“We should all be open-minded and constantly learning.”

--Daniel Rose
Mission:
Helping city leaders build better communities
Mission:
Providing leadership in the responsible use of land and in creating and sustaining thriving communities worldwide
• Policy & Practice Forums
• Education for Public Officials: webinars, workshops, and scholarships to attend ULI conferences
Daniel Rose Fellowship

• Four cities selected for yearlong program of professional development, leadership training, assistance with a local land use challenge

• Mayor selects 3 fellows and team coordinator
Daniel Rose Fellowship: alumni mayors
City Study Visits

• Assemble experts to study land use challenge
• Provides city’s fellowship team with framework and ideas to start addressing their challenge
• Part of yearlong engagement with each city
The Panel
The Panel

- Co-Chair: Antonio Fiol-Silva, SITIO Architecture+Urbanism, Philadelphia, PA
- Co-Chair: Calvin Gladney, Mosaic Urban Partners, LLC, Washington, DC
- Maggie Campbell, Downtown Santa Barbara, CA
- Cristina Garmendia, Center on Law, Inequality and Metropolitan Equity, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ
- Ellen Harpel, Smart Incentives & Business Development Advisors, LLC, Arlington, VA
- Mara Kimmel, Office of the Mayor, Municipality of Anchorage, AK
- Nanci Klein, Office of Economic Development, City of San José, CA
- Christopher Kurz, Linden Associates, Inc., Baltimore, MD
- Troy Russ, Kimley-Horn, Denver, CO
- Eric Shaw, Office of Planning, District of Columbia
How can Grand Rapids align its community & economic development policies, practices and incentives to achieve a more equitable city?
Presentation Outline

1. Why equity?
2. High-level observations
3. Framing equity
4. Aligning policies, practices & incentives
5. Implementation ideas
6. Conclusions + Homework
Why Equity?

Prioritizing equity has a cost, but it also has big benefits:

Equity improves fiscal health
Equity increases city competitiveness
Equity improves pro-formas
Equity (done right) lifts all boats
Equity is risk management
Equity Improves Fiscal Health

• Maximizes income levels across all populations
• Creates greater and more diversified income tax revenue and greater consumer purchasing power
• Maximizes supply of qualified labor to enable business sector growth and keeps businesses in GR
Equity Increases City Competitiveness

- Jobs
- Residents
- Workforce

- Attracts and improves talent, building a qualified work force
- Young people are more choosy about where they live and are choosing diverse cities
- Entrepreneurs look for places where similar entrepreneurs have been successful
- Cultural diversity in corporations is critical to attract and retain top talent
Equity Improves Pro-Formas

• Better income demographics attract retail tenants
• Better income demographics pay your rent
• Millennials want diversity that reflects them
• Equity creates critical mass
• Equity improves your workforce

• The frog and the scorpion
Equity (Done Right) Lifts All Boats

• Increases choices
• Improves neighborhoods
• Increases jobs, small business opportunities and better wages
Equity Is Risk Management

What’s the cost of maintaining the status quo?

• Inequity reduces fiscal health and services
• Inequity suppresses city competitiveness
• Inequity inhibits development opportunities
• Inequity perpetuates economic and social barriers
Presentation Outline
1. Why equity?
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Observations: Equity

- White:
  - Neighborhoods of Focus: 13.2%
  - City of Grand Rapids: 8.6%
  - Kent County: 7.4%

- Black or African American:
  - Neighborhoods of Focus: 26.0%
  - City of Grand Rapids: 25.6%
  - Kent County: 21.6%

- Two or more races:
  - Neighborhoods of Focus: 15.1%
  - City of Grand Rapids: 14.8%
  - Kent County: 12.2%

- Hispanic or Latino origin (of any race):
  - Neighborhoods of Focus: 18.4%
  - City of Grand Rapids: 17.2%
  - Kent County: 14.0%
Observations: Equity

- City/community leadership is working to assess and champion equity (GR Forward)
- Mayor/City recognize ALL need access to economic opportunity for community to succeed
- Broad recognition that inequities exist
- GR has not clearly defined equity goals & agenda; limited alignment between City policies, practices & incentives implementation
- Mobility network is not contributing to equitable outcomes
Observations: Incentives

Revenue Available for Financing Urban Renewal

Revenue Available for Taxing Entities

Begin Redevelopment of Blighted Property

Time

DURA Obligation Re-paid
Observations: Incentives

- Incentives are just one set of tools to achieve equity, GR lacks some tools other communities have.
- City recognizes land use decisions are powerful means to further equity goals.
- City acknowledges public & private investment can be harnessed to provide opportunity for all.
- Developers agree inequities exist—some believe it’s better addressed by other actors using other tools.
- Incentives currently seen as an entitlement, City may not fully perceive their real cost and fiscal impact.
- Some developers say incentives are needed for every project; others question whether that's true today.
- City acknowledges economic development incentives could be retooled to better support equity initiatives.
- GR would benefit from additional financial analysis of incentives to determine success bringing return on investment.
Observations: Partners

• GR blessed with rich portfolio of companies & philanthropic interests

• Will next generation of philanthropic leaders be as engaged, dedicated, giving?

• Alignment between non-profit organizations and philanthropies, developers and non-profits could be better leveraged to achieve equity goals

• Lack of trust from community; some wonder if their voice is being heard & if system is “fixed”
Observations: Other Challenges

• Limited consensus on the aggregate “ROI” of public investment & subsidy

• City is risk averse; taking incremental steps & concerned about interpreting legal strictures on application of incentives

• A perceived “closed” system of developers may limit opportunities for more investment
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A Framework for Equity

Using an inclusive process (e.g., residents, non-profits, philanthropies, businesses, developers, etc.):

• GR has to define its equity priorities
• Turn vision into policies
• Turn policy into actionable steps
• Actions have to be quantifiable and measurable
• Iterative approach to adjust strategies
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Getting to Alignment on Outcomes and Equity

• Reframing outcomes of existing programs through equity lens
• Partnering with affiliate institutions on common outcomes
• Synthesizing stakeholder priorities into program/project outcomes
• Knowing when “shoehorning” alignment on a new/existing outcome that does not really align
Public life profile
Crossing the Street Project Sites
Wards 7 + 8

How do people spend time in this place?
- Standing: 77% (Ward 7), 54% (Ward 8)
- Waiting for Transit: 12% (Ward 7), 16% (Ward 8)
- Bench Seating: 3% (Ward 7), 2% (Ward 8)
- Cafe Seating: 1% (Ward 7), 1% (Ward 8)
- Secondary Seating: 0% (Ward 7), 0% (Ward 8)
- Movable Seating: 0% (Ward 7), 0% (Ward 8)
- Lying Down: 0% (Ward 7), 0% (Ward 8)
- Commercial Activity: 0% (Ward 7), 0% (Ward 8)

How often do people visit?
- 60% visit daily (Ward 7), 138 people (Ward 8)

How do people get to the space?
- Ward 7: 45% walk, 25% bike, 30% drive
- Ward 8: 50% walk, 20% bike, 30% drive

Does this place have the potential to be a gathering space?
- 80% (Ward 7), 4.8 miles

How far are people traveling to get from their home to the site?
- Median distance traveled, Ward 7: 0.9 miles

Do people feel safe in their neighborhoods?
- 75% of respondents in Ward 7 reported feeling safe
- 61% of respondents in Ward 8 reported feeling safe

What would make people want to visit more often?
- Cleaner Stores
- Safer
- Safer Neighborhoods
- Less Littering
- Activities for Kids
- Community Events
- Music
- Police
- Activities
- Seating

*According to respondents at the sites in both wards.
Assessment and Framing

- Performing an assessment of public sector authority
  - What does the city control?
  - What are the levers of influence?
  - Responsibility/authority that comes from managing the public trust

- Establish open ended statement, or policy questions that can actually be addressed using public sector authority
Open/Flat Engagement
Open/Flat Engagement

• Open meeting to jumpstart conversations on the question/ statement
  • Preferably in an immersive environment, where participants actually reference issues in real time

• Flat engagement where participants can share ideas directly with city leaders and one another

• Goal is to create shared experience where participant can reference, debate and build upon their input
Enacting the First Fixes

Synthesizing the community feedback
  - Feedback loop with the community
  - Share department heads and implementation agencies

Use feedback to identify underperformance and barriers created by existing policies
  - Housing, small business, incentive programs

Sharing synthesized feedback with affiliate institutions to create common cross-institutional outcomes
Aligning Investments and Equity Outcomes
Aligning Investments and Equity Outcomes

• Establishing an integrated, people equity-forward public investment strategy
  • Implementation/outcomes are realized in the budget of multiple agencies and funding sources
  • Leverage with resources from affiliate institutions with common outcome

• Last step is gap analysis of program/funding, and establishment of gap financing
Other Examples

• Salt Lake City - *Can we get more out of what we are doing with new transportation infrastructure?*

• Washington DC - *Can we dispose of public lands in a manner that better serves the public?*
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Implementation Ideas

1. Mobility
2. Engagement Process
3. Incentives
4. Workforce Development
5. Disposition Process
How does mobility relate to equity?

Household expenditures in Tampa, FL

- Shelter: 19%
- Transportation: 17.9%
- Food: 13.7%
- Insurance & Pensions: 9.6%
- Other Household: 7.5%
- Utilities: 6.8%
- Health Care: 5.4%
- Entertainment: 5.0%
- Apparel & Services: 4.8%
- Education: 2.1%
- Misc.: 8.2%
What is mobility?

It’s more than parking and buses

• Multimodal
• Connected
• Efficient
Mobility is multimodal

Pedestrians, bikes, transit and cars all have to be:
• Safe
• Accessible
• Affordable
Mobility is connected

All modes have to provide access to:
• Housing options
• Food, goods, and services
• Employment opportunities
• Education and community resources
• Parks, recreation, open spaces
Mobility is efficient

All modes have to be:
• Reliable
• Convenient (15 minute headways for transit)
Parking is a tool, NOT a problem
You can utilize revenues to better manage parking resources and improve equity

- Understand the situation
- Maximize resources
- Manage parking demand
- Shift demand
- Expand supply
Parking is a tool, NOT a problem
You can utilize revenues to better manage parking resources and improve equity

- Understand the situation
- Maximize resources
  - Extend the reach of pedestrians, bicyclists, transit
- Manage parking demand
  - Duration and pricing
- Shift demand
  - Transit
  - TDM measures (Trip reduction commitments)
  - Update land development regulations
- Expand supply
Implementation Ideas

1. Mobility
2. Engagement Process
3. Incentives
4. Workforce Development
5. Disposition Process
Engagement is a “Full Contact Sport”
Engagement is a “Full Contact Sport”

- It is messy and mistakes will be made
- It is uncomfortable
- It is a long-term commitment
- It requires acknowledging the past to overcome distrust to make meaningful change
Engagement is Essential to Equity
Engagement is Essential to Equity

• Bridges understanding of different perspectives and needs
• Remedies distrust and historic government programs that failed to address and sometimes exacerbated inequity
• Informs development of equity-based policies and practices that reflect and support community needs, including strategic public investment
• Provides process for meaningful participation in development projects
• Gives voice to those most disadvantaged
• Cultivates future diverse leadership
Structuring Engagement to Create Equity: Frameworks and Organizations
Structuring Engagement to Create Equity: Frameworks and Organizations

- Act with intention and begin now
- Shift from public input to public engagement process
- Meet residents where they are
- Build neighborhood capacity
Structuring Engagement to Create Equity: People and Places
Structuring Engagement to Create Equity: People and Places

• Make meetings “user friendly”
  • Offer food and child care, provide stipends
  • Have nonprofits and City department representatives at every public meeting provide wraparound services
  • Consider transportation support and access

• Design additional public gathering spaces that engage residents
  • Reflects community character and history
  • Welcomes people with free, regular programming
It Takes All of Us: Partnering to Create Equity
It Takes All of Us: Partnering to Create Equity

- Partner with trusted neighborhood advocates and organizations to improve engagement and communication between the City and residents
  - Philanthropies
  - Social, legal, and medical service providers
  - Ecumenical councils and churches
  - Schools, teachers, PTAs

- Work with business organizations to educate their members on importance of equity and engagement
Implementation Ideas

1. Mobility
2. Engagement Process
3. Incentives
4. Workforce Development
5. Disposition Process
Why do we use incentives?

- To achieve our community’s economic development goals
  - Jobs
  - Business Development
  - Investment
  - Downtown revitalization
  - Brownfield redevelopment
  - Quality of life and quality of place
  - Strengthen tax base

- Incentives are not just about winning a deal. Smart incentive use is always connected to a larger economic development strategy.
Grand Rapids Brownfield Redevelopment

• Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) can provide tax increment financing to help pay for certain eligible costs associated with a redevelopment project for:
  • Demolition
  • Asbestos abatement
  • Due care and environmental response activities
  • Site preparation
  • Public infrastructure improvements
  • Ramped and underground parking
  • Urban stormwater management systems
The Grand Rapids Brownfield Redevelopment Authority (BRA) was established in 1996 to assist with the redevelopment of blighted or contaminated properties in the City.

$77m TIF (est. annual cost of 2016 projects $7.6m)
$476m announced investments for 2016
Incentive/Investment ratio: 16%
Brownfield Plan Project Summary – City of Grand Rapids
Connecting Incentives to Equity Goals

Be intentional

• Recipient: RFQ
• Deal: Upfront project review
  • Scorecard – Austin example
  • Prioritize – should all eligible projects be funded?
• Compliance: Performance agreement
  • Could be difficult given Brownfield program rules
• Effectiveness: Outcomes evaluation
Outcome Evaluation: Equity

Match the outcomes with your policies (e.g.):
• Number/character of housing units
• Employment characteristics (local residents, by race/ethnicity, by city zipcode)
• Wages paid to employees at incentivized projects
• Construction employment characteristics
• Construction subcontractor characteristics
• Public benefit in neighborhood: amenities, infrastructure, community facilities
• Mobility metrics
• Use of city-based workforce training/placement resources
Responsibilities of Cities: Communication

- Communicating Expectations
  - Consistent, sustained language on what the city is trying to achieve
  - City as an investment partner, not a project supplicant – define equity objectives from your investment

- Communicating Results
  - Transparent data on program usage
  - Reporting equity outcomes

- Bonus thought: Program Design
  - Is the current slate of incentives sufficient to meet equity objectives?
Implementation Ideas

1. Mobility
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Workforce Development Is Critical To Equity

- A robust equity policy must include workforce development throughout the economy
- Racial and geographic income & employment disparities seem to indicate need for progress
- Workforce development solutions cannot occur in a vacuum--connect transportation & housing
- Workforce development must include a full spectrum of jobs--not just construction
Workforce Development: Initial Recommendations

- Human resources professionals at key employers must be collaborative partners
- Local non-profits and philanthropic community must be investors and partners
- Create inter-departmental working group (coordinate workforce development, mobility & housing decisions & investments)
Implementation Ideas

1. Mobility
2. Engagement Process
3. Incentives
4. Workforce Development
5. Disposition Process
Embed equity into every stage of the disposition process:
Embed equity into every stage of the disposition process:

1. **Pre-document:**
   - internal assessment + stakeholder input

2. **Document:**
   - quantification of equity goals for scoring

3. **Decision:**
   - equity goals impact scoring and decision

4. **Negotiate + Contract:**
   - contract includes measurable requirements

5. **Tracking:**
   - track requirements and empower an enforcement party
What Would This Mean for 201 Market?
Presentation Outline
1. Why equity?
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Conclusions

• Equity is an investment with a positive value proposition for everyone
• Equity goals need to be clearly defined and measurable
• Align policy, practice and partnerships
• Neighborhood engagement is critical
• Incentives are only tools if they support strategy
• Achieving equity is an economic imperative
Homework

1. Identify your top three equity priorities
2. Come up with examples that align policy with practice in the five implementation areas
3. Explore how you can embed equity into the current solicitation process for 201 Market

Next check-in:
Rose Fellowship Retreat
Seattle, May 2
Thank you to the following people; their assistance was essential to the panel’s work: