

# Parks and Equity Development Planning



SAN FRANCISCO  
STATE UNIVERSITY



## Introduction

Parks are known to provide social and environmental benefits to their communities such as increased health and wellness, community safety and connection, youth engagement, cultural and economic vitality, environmental conservation, climate resilience, and more. Despite all this, public funding for parks and recreational facilities, especially in low-income neighborhoods and communities of color, is frequently limited and has not kept up with demand. The historic inequality that still affects most U.S. cities today has left many communities without the proper resources or access to quality parks or recreation opportunities. The importance of reviewing park development case studies regarding equity, for example, is to explore other models that ensure that everyone has the same opportunity to live near, and have access to, a safe and healthy environment. Seeking to also ensure increased funding in parks and recreation departments throughout the U.S., and justify the need, agencies can turn to previous and ongoing case studies to ensure new parks or redeveloped parks allocate resources in the best manner.

A variety of cities have begun to include equity as the center of their focus when planning and developing parks, including San Francisco's India Basin Initiative (IBI) and the Equity Development Plan (EDP). This document provides IBI leaders with sample case studies from a variety of U.S. cities to use in their planning and development stage. A core vision of the IBI is to ensure the India Basin Shoreline Park will be a safe and thriving space and that existing residents will not be displaced as a result of this new amenity. In another historic moment for environmental justice, the India Basin park redevelopment project will transform a deteriorated relic of the industrial shipwrights' era (e.g., post-industrial brownfield site) into a 21st-century park. The emphasis is on public access, social equity, community building, resiliency, and restoration.

This document consists of ten case studies from previous and ongoing park projects nationwide and can be used for the IBI expansion as well as similar park projects throughout the United States. The population of these cities ranges from 300K to 4.0M ~

1. **Baltimore, MD**
2. **Detroit, MI**
3. **Los Angeles, CA**
4. **Minneapolis, MA**
5. **Oakland, CA**
6. **Pittsburgh, PA**
7. **Portland, OR**
8. **San Diego, CA**
9. **Seattle, WA**
10. **Washington, DC**

Content, broadly, includes what other municipalities are doing/have done for creating an equity plan for their parks, developing measures and metrics (e.g., ways to evaluate and monitor), and implementation or action planning components that agencies consider/use for putting their theories and goals into practice.

## 1. Baltimore, MD

Baltimore Sustainability | *Baltimore Sustainability Plan Guidance for Equitable Implementation* | Estimated City Pop: 609K

Source: *Baltimore Sustainability Plan Guidance for Equitable Implementation*

A **2019 Sustainability Plan**, created and used by the City of Baltimore, integrated social equity, the environment, the economy, resiliency, and regeneration into their city planning. The purpose of this plan is to assist city agencies, including park officials, with the proper framework to incorporate equity considerations during design, planning, decision-making, and implementation processes, and to encourage accountability. Used as an initial framework to inform the Guidance Manual for any new project, are the equity considerations outlined below:

- Defining project purpose and intent
- Budget and work planning
- Relevant data and information gathering
- Inclusive community engagement
- Equitable impacts analysis
- Accountability

These equity considerations are put in place with hopes of helping to eliminate the forces that create and sustain institutional and structural racism. When discussing, creating, and implementing policy, projects, and programs, the City of Baltimore is using this framework as a guide to better assist the needs of Baltimore's community, specifically communities of color, and/or in low-income areas across racial groups.

## 2. Detroit, MI

*Case Studies + Recommendations, City Parks Alliance, | Detroit: Parks and Rec Improvement Plan 2020* | Estimated City Pop: 675K

Sources: *Detroit: Parks and Rec Improvement Plan and 2017 Parks and Recreational Improvement Plan*

In 2015, the City of Detroit Park Planning team was created as a part of the General Services Department (GSD), to develop an equitable vision and draft the first parks and recreation improvement plan. Because a large proportion of Detroit experiences poverty, homelessness, or inadequate housing, the GSD saw the importance of providing proper public space to the residents of Detroit. When planning measurable improvements, there was a local void about thinking of their parks more holistically. Because of this, GSD took the lead and integrated themselves into the space of Detroit to get a grasp of what needed to be accomplished. The Detroit Mayor ran a campaign called *"Every neighborhood has a future"*. The Chief Parks Planner of the Parks and Recreation Division used previous research to show the impact parks and recreation have on public health, neighborhood stabilization, and other quality of life measures.

In 2017, the Detroit City Council approved an updated **Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan** to work cohesively with the GSD. In 2016, the city invested \$12 million in neighborhood parks and focused their efforts on prioritizing parks in every corner of the city, specifically in areas with youth and seniors. The Parks and Recreation Improvement Plan prioritizes, when possible, four measures when evaluating park systems and in a variety of strategies for improvement:

1. Public health
2. Green infrastructure and natural landscapes
3. Economic development and neighborhood stabilization
4. Park access and connectivity

Long-term resiliency of the parks and recreation system depends on continued engagement across these four priorities. To ensure resiliency, the parks are being maintained consistently, the GSD team meets each year during capital budget development to guarantee that every corner of the city has had infrastructure improvements. Additionally, the city staff takes into consideration which parks/neighborhoods are already receiving special attention from funders, to ensure equal amenities for every part of the city. The staff also works closely with a team of in-house landscape architects on park redesign planning.

### 3. Los Angeles, CA

*Equitable Parks: Case Studies + Recommendations, City Parks Alliance | LA County: Park Needs Assessment | 2020 | Estimated City Pop: 4.0M*

Sources: **Park Needs Assessment** and **Park Proud LA**

In November 2016, the county of Los Angeles engaged local communities in public meetings about the wellbeing of their local city parks. This engagement contributed to the passing of Measure A in 2016, to act as a tax-based parks measure, and is expected to bring in \$94 million annually. The funds are annually allocated on a formula-based system, utilizing both volumes of the square footage of development as well as the density of population. Historically, areas that are highly dense in development and population have received fewer infrastructure investments than other LA areas. The formula-based system used by LA county safeguards that areas considered highly dense in development and population receive the highest allocations and support.

Taking action, the county engaged local communities in public meetings bringing awareness about the status of local parks, park funding, park locations, volume of use, and environmental justice issues. The city used environmental scans to look at air and land pollution/quality data, health and safety data, crime statistics, and places where pedestrian and auto accidents occur most frequently. To properly allocate park funding, the LA county government engaged with an appointed steering committee of 46 members to develop the politics and practices of Measure A. The committee's goal is to lower barriers for allocating funds to the areas of highest need for parks, and to increase and improve parks in areas where resources are limited. This LA county case study shows the importance of park location, population density, communication between community members, and walkable park accessibility. Furthermore, LA strives to make certain that cultural and language sensitivities are being honored and respected throughout community meetings and park implementation planning.

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*True to the very philosophy of public parks and recreation is the idea that all people – no matter the color of their skin, age, income level or ability – have access to programs, facilities, places and spaces that make their lives and communities great. Parks and recreation truly build communities – communities for all.*

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*-National Recreation and Park Association*

The Department of Recreation and Parks created an **Updated Strategic Plan** completed in their 2018-2022 timeframe to present the organizational principles that drive Los Angeles' strategic direction and underpin their dedication to their residents and park users. Its mission is "to provide attractive, safe, and well-maintained parks with diverse recreational opportunities to serve and enrich every community." This Plan affirms their commitment to equity by specifically focusing on investments and strategies to close disparities in park programs and park access. This will be done by measuring, evaluating, and publicly reporting progress on an annual basis. Measuring performance will help aid the decision-making process to achieve a more equitable and accessible park system that better reflects community needs.

### 4. Minneapolis, MN

Metrocouncil.org | *Regional Parks Policy Plan* | Estimated City Pop: 420K

Sources: **Regional Parks Policy Plan Summary** and **Minneapolis 2040 Goals**

**The Twin Cities Regional Parks System**, supported by the Metropolitan Council in partnership with cities, counties, and special park districts has invested more than \$658 million in state and regional funds to help agency partners develop and expand interconnected parks and trails. Critical for the region's current and future livability, sustainability, stewardship, and prosperity, the parks system has used its funds to open 40 regional trails, 340 miles open to the public, and special recreation features. In 2017-2018, the Council conducted additional community engagement approaches to update the plan into **The Minneapolis 2040 Goals**. Using the feedback from the public, the City Council adopted these aims to provide direction to staff in the development stage:

- Affordable and accessible housing
- Creative, cultural, and natural amenities
- Complete neighborhoods
- Climate change resilience
- Clean environment
- Eliminate disparities
- Equitable civic participation system
- Healthy, safe, and connected people
- High-quality physical environment
- History and culture
- Healthy, sustainable, and diverse economy
- Living-wage jobs
- More residents and jobs
- Proactive, accessible, and sustainable government

Prioritizing the unique landscape of Minneapolis, the Council commissioned many local studies to ensure community voices are being heard. One of the findings concluded that walking remains the most frequently mentioned and favorite activity of local residents, which was then used in the equitable planning and development phase. They incorporated this by ensuring safe, high-quality, continuous, barrier-free bicycle and pedestrian facilities to allow equal access for every resident. By focusing on inclusion, equitable measurements, and listening to the community voice, every resident should have equal opportunity to enjoy the physical, social, and cultural benefits, and more, that the parks naturally encompass.

## 5. Oakland, CA

*Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation, | Parks and Equity: The Promise of Oakland's Parks | 2020 | Estimated City Pop: 435K*

Sources: **Parks and Equity: The Promise of Oakland's Parks**

The City of Oakland created the Department of Race and Equity (ODRE) in 2016 “to intentionally integrate the principle of ‘fair and just’ in all the City does in order to achieve equitable opportunities for all people and communities.” The Oakland Parks and Recreation Foundation (OPRF) later completed a 2018 report and, concluded that Oakland’s parks are in a “continuing crisis’ contributing to social and economic inequality, such as parks in certain areas of the city, with the greatest need, were in the worst condition. Survey results also show an overall rating for park conditions of C+, as it was in their prior 2016 report, and noted the “quality parks and infrastructure were not equitably distributed.” In 2018, the new ODRE published its **Equity Indicators Report** to “better understand the impacts of race, measure inequities, and track changes in the disparities for different groups over time.” The City intends for the equity framework that resulted to be used by city staff and community members “to guide and inform policies that address these disparities.” That report required all city departments, including Parks & Recreation, to use the baseline quantitative framework to also guide and inform policies that address these disparities. In 2020, the OPRF completed an updated report that aligns with this equity initiative. Over 1,300 Oaklanders (across race, income, gender, age, and neighborhood) were survey about their experiences and perspectives of Oakland’s parks. Results established a focus on park benefits and the potential for justice including the following key areas of focus:

- **Health and Wellness:** Access to safe and well-maintained parks with green spaces and recreation amenities

- **Community Safety and Connection:** Providing busy, safe, and inclusive green and recreational spaces to increase safety and promote social connection and a deep sense of belonging for people who frequent the parks or live nearby
- **Economic and Cultural Vitality:** Park-generated public savings to bolster municipal revenues and spur private investment and increased local job opportunities
- **Environmental Protection and Climate Resilience:** Provide crucial environmental benefits and protect against the impacts of climate change
- **Youth Opportunity and Positive Alternatives:** Creates positive implications for the health and wellbeing of the youth/young adults

The objective of this study was to create a quantitative and qualitative citywide assessment of Oaklanders’ perspectives, experiences, and use of the city’s municipal parks. Results corroborate with national studies indicating parks can increase health and wellness, community safety and cohesion, cultural and economic vitality, youth engagement, climate resilience, and environmental protection. The findings of this study begin the assessment of the park promise with a look at the love Oaklanders have for their parks. “*When solutions come from a place of love, and its transformational, inspirational, joyful resonance, that they have the most impact. And at the end of the day, transformative and inspiring experiences are what parks are all about.*” The report reinforces why park stewardship and investment are essential to counter historically embedded racial and economic injustices in Oakland in a way that advances environmental justice, equity diversity, and inclusion.

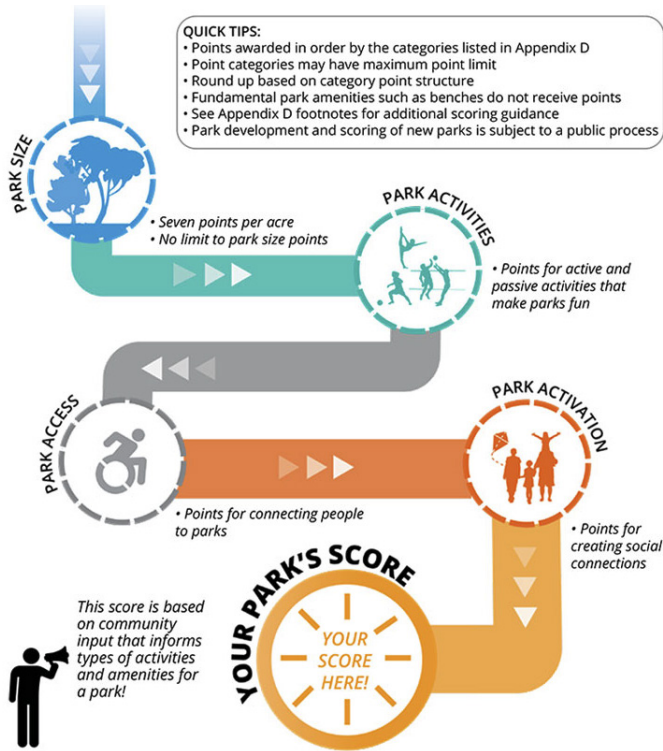
## 6. San Diego, CA

San Diego.gov | *Parks Master Plan* | Estimated City Pop: 1.4M

Sources: **Parks for Everyone 2.0;** and **Parks Master Plan, City of San Diego**

“Communities of concern”, also identified as communities of color and low-income households, have been affected by the lack of funding tools and land constraints that have widened park shortfalls in typically older, more densely populated neighborhoods. The City of San Diego created a **Parks Master Plan Equity Goals** to address the long-standing inequalities experienced by people in communities of concern and other marginalized populations. This plan will allow everyone to fairly share the same benefits from parks and attain full and equal access to recreational opportunities regardless of one’s background, identity, ability, and location. The Master Plan has a value-based park standard, which determines park value on features related to park size, recreation opportunities, access, amenities, activations, and overall value delivered. Focusing on accessibility, the City

# SCORING GUIDE: City of San Diego



**NOTE:** The Park Score for individual park projects shows incremental progress toward increased recreational opportunities throughout the City; it does not determine individual park project prioritization.

officials and government agencies of San Diego set a “10-20-30-40 Minute Access Goal” to ensure every resident can access a park in under 40 minutes.

Addressing the current and ongoing inequitable park system, the City of San Diego’s plan makes it accessible to walk, bike, or take public transit to a park or recreational space, through their 10-20-30-40 Minute Access Goal. Creating a plan for meaningful, successful, and interconnected park systems that prioritize the park’s overall recreational value, the city has created a travel time goal, that ensures residents the accessibility to a recreational park in 40 minutes or less:

- 10-minute walk and roll
- 20-minute bike ride or micro-mobility ride
- 30-minute transit access to increase ways for everyone to gain a more diverse range of recreational experiences throughout the city

To ensure longevity and success, the city measures value on a recreational value-based standard scoring guide. The main points of success include park size, park activities, park access, and park activation. These main points are from community input that informs the types of activities and amenities for a park. The totals are added up to give the park a score of incremental progress toward increased recreational opportunities throughout the city. The detailed guide is shown in the infographic displayed above and can be found in **the Parks Master Plan**.

Additionally, the San Diego Foundation’s **Parks for Everyone 2.0 Report** provides a detailed analysis including the following: Benefits of green space; defining access (i.e., physical, functional); equity barriers (i.e., safety, walkability, transportation, cultural inclusion, fees/permits/expenses); measurable impacts; and next steps for prioritizing grantmaking and programs that address inequities and meet community needs/desires.

While the City of San Diego’s park system has created many beautiful and enjoyable parks for some, the same system has resulted in corresponding disinvestments for many; this, overall, has resulted in an inequitable park system. Because of this, the Parks Master Plan was created to address these inequities to ensure everyone has equal access to safe, clean, and thriving park spaces. These initiatives will create a new system for all that prioritizes the greatest needs and allows for a holistic future.

## 7. Pittsburgh, PA

Equitable Parks: Case Studies + Recommendations, City Parks Alliance | *Pittsburgh: Parks For All | 2020* | Estimated City Pop: 300K

Sources: **Pittsburgh Parks For All**, **Parks Listening Tour Phase II** and **Pittsburgh equity indicators a baseline measurement for enhancing equity in Pittsburgh**

The City of Pittsburgh created a 100-page annual report (2017) titled “**Pittsburgh equity indicators a baseline measurement for enhancing equity in Pittsburgh.**” Within this report are key equity indicators: The result of the equity indicators effort is a set of scores that will allow the city to measure change, either toward or away from the concept of equality, in four key domains, each with five topics per domain, and four indicators per topic. The four domains of Pittsburgh’s Equity Indicators are:

1. Health, Food, and Safety
2. Education, Workforce Development, and Entrepreneurship
3. Housing, Transportation, Infrastructure, and Environment
4. Civic Engagement and Communications

The Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the City of Pittsburgh established a goal the following year, 2018, to bring all parks in all city neighborhoods up to a higher level of quality. They accomplished this by developing a data-driven methodology coupled with residents’ input and priorities on maintenance, rehabilitation, capital improvements, and programming. They collected data and received feedback from over 10,000 residents, they then used the feedback to create their **Parks Listening Tour Phase II**, focusing on:

- **Generating new resources for parks**
  - Up to \$20 million a year in new funds plus sustained investment by the city
- **Spending equitably across the city**
  - Prioritizing the parks and communities that need it most and responding to public input
- **Committing to transparency**
  - Clear and open budgeting, so residents and business owners know how and why funds are being spent
- **Citizen input and guidance**
  - Public accountability to make sure goals are accomplished, together

Prompted by their community engagement, voters passed a parks tax referendum in 2019 which acted as the baseline funding to implement the parks plan. The parks plan and the tax referendum provide an equitable investment strategy that has the expectation to generate \$10 million annually. To track progress, the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy and the Pittsburgh Parks Department staff update the park planning aspects as needed, and a community-based rating system is used annually to collect feedback from local residents, ensuring the parks and communities with the greatest needs are met.

During development of the parks plan, the Conservancy ran into three main obstacles including community will, political will, and making sure people understand that equitable funding needs to be addressed. To help overcome these constraints, the Conservancy's key ingredients include: educating city leaders, community members, the Conservancy, city staff at all levels, and gaining buy-in from citizens as well as the mayor's office. The equity indicators (noted above) and this park model, broadly, can be used by similar cities, partially in post-industrial areas that have struggled to obtain sustainable park funding.

## 8. Portland, OR

Portland.gov | *Climate Action Through Equity* | July 12, 2016  
| Estimated City Pop: 664K

Sources: ***Climate Action Through Equity and Climate Action Plan and Parks & Recreation Dept. Five Year Racial Equity Plan***

The City of Portland has linked the connection between climate action and social equity and has incorporated a “targeted universalism approach”, where solutions begin with addressing the needs of those who are most vulnerable to climate change. According to a 2016 report commissioned by the city, ***Climate Action through Equity***, “Low-income populations and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by climate change.” While all of us are contributors

to increasing adverse effects of climate change in some capacity, low-income populations are disproportionately impacted the most by climate consequences of climate change. One reason goes back to disinvestment in communities of color, racism, and the policies and regulations created by the system (e.g., decision makers). This injustice often occurs because low-income populations and communities of color tend to live in areas with less green space and are more vulnerable to heat-related and respiratory illnesses, for example. Because of this, it is imperative that climate and equity planning (broadly) are not mutually exclusive. In 2012, ***Portland's Climate Action Plan*** aimed to establish an overarching equity framework that articulated the citywide need to prioritize racial equity and established an intentional action plan to promote equity throughout Portland, including parks. This plan included three primary goals and deliverables:

1. An updated Climate Action Plan that better integrates equity to maximize benefits and reduce barriers for communities of color and low-income populations.
2. A set of climate equity metrics that can be used and refined to track progress on ensuring Portland's climate actions are more equitable, and furthering equity goals as defined in the Portland Plan through climate actions.
3. A plan to continue to build relationships with diverse communities, and diverse membership within these communities, around climate change.

Portland's Climate Action Plan soon developed into a Portland Parks & Recreation ***Five Year Racial Equity Plan***, which serves as a companion to the original Climate Action Plan, and helps capture the specific recommendations as well as an overall approach, working as a tool for city planners and developers. This plan was adopted in 2015 and is still being used in group meetings and has given a platform for community members to express their concerns. The City of Portland believes their findings and model used to engage residents can be replicated in other city park programs, to integrate equitable measurements and foster mutual learning.

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*“Climate equity ensures the just distribution of the benefits of climate protection efforts and alleviates unequal burdens created by climate change. This requires intentional policies and projects that simultaneously address the effects of and the systems that perpetuate both climate change and inequity”.*

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~ 2015 City of Portland and Multnomah County  
*Climate Action Plan*

## 9. Seattle, WA

Office of Planning and Community Development | *Equitable Development Implementation* | April 2016 | Estimated City Pop: 776K

Sources: *Equitable Development Plan and Comprehensive Plan*

Since 1994, Seattle's Comprehensive Plan has "guided growth in Seattle with the goal of fostering a healthy and vibrant city for years to come." The next Seattle 2016 **Comprehensive Plan** made race and social equity a central value and, in 2020, was amended including a Director's Report and Analysis. This updated Plan seeks to end racial disparities experienced by their residents of color and provides an extraordinary opportunity to elevate Seattle's national leadership abilities. Their process includes providing plans for how and where the city will invest to ensure their communities continue to thrive as well as create a plan for growth in jobs as they plan for growth in population. That 2016 Equitable Development Implementation Plan addresses how to properly implement equitable development across the City of Seattle. This Plan, and the amended 2020 details, serve as a different approach to reach equitable goals and restructure the city government to meet the needs of Seattle residents. In 2020, Seattle incorporated race and social equity as a core value in that **Equitable Development Implementation Plan** which seeks to end racial disparities experienced by their residents of color.

By doing so, Seattle ultimately intends to create the proper structure and expertise to accommodate growth, integrate race and social equity goals and policies into departmental work plans and division priorities, including parks. It will create strong communities and people, and great places with equitable access to housing, jobs, and neighborhood services and amenities. The equity analysis will also inform city policies, programs, and investments, and ultimately make race and social equity a major reason for systemic change. Seattle hopes to achieve this by providing plans for how the city will invest to ensure the community can continue to thrive, and also plan for growth in jobs and a growing population.

Their parks policy components are prevalent in their planning and include "developing partnerships with organizations that include race and social justice as fundamental to their operations and business practices." Intended outcomes are as follows:

- Accommodate growth by placing without displacing lower-income residents
- Fully integrate race and social equity goals and policies into departmental work plans and priorities

- Use equity analysis to inform city policy, programs, investments
- Create strong communities and people, and great places with equitable access to housing, jobs, and neighborhood services and amenities
- Use race and social equity lens to drive systemic change
- Make targeted place-based community-driven investments to support community stability and economic mobility in high displacement risk, low access to opportunity areas
- Create the structures and expertise needed to hold this work as a priority now and into the future
- Expand the city's park holdings and open space opportunities, with special emphasis on serving urban centers and urban villages that are home to marginalized populations and areas that have been traditionally underserved

Our SF State academic advisory team believes this is truly wonderful regarding what they are working towards, very well done; these efforts could also provide ideas for the SF India Basin project.

## 10. Washington, DC

Building Bridges Across the River | *11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan* | Estimated City Pop: 690K

Sources: *11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan*

Started in 2005, the Building Bridges Across the River (BBAR) has sought to improve the quality of life of residents. The goal of the 11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan is to ensure that the park is a driver of inclusive development—a development that provides opportunities for all residents regardless of income and

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*"The ability for marginalized people and communities to thrive is dependent on their ability to live in healthy and safe neighborhoods where they can meet basic needs. Create neighborhoods that enhance community health through access to public amenities (schools, economic opportunity, civic infrastructure, transportation, parks, open space, health care, and other services), affordable and culturally relevant food, and safe and healthy environments for everyone."*

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~ City of Seattle, *Equitable Development Implementation Plan*

demography. By following a community-driven and vetted process, it is their hope that other cities can look to the Bridge Park as a prime example of how the public and private sectors can invest in and create world-class public space in an equitable manner. Aiming to be more than a park, the Bridge Park has the potential to symbolize unity and connection between a booming area of the city and one that has long been excluded from the city's economic progress.

The BBAR leadership team talked to like-minded park managers across the country to learn from their work. They then analyzed data—existing property values and change over time, renters vs. homeowners, demographics, poverty levels, and the Area Median Income (AMI)—before trying to create specific recommendations. Next, they embed equity and inclusivity in all of their work. They held a series of brainstorm sessions with key stakeholders from diverse backgrounds and posted a draft version online for public comments. Taking a multi-sector approach, they began focusing on affordable, safe, and secure housing options for the community. They worked with senior researchers at the Urban Institute to develop clear measurable goals for each recommendation, and receive constant feedback from the Institute to ensure they are meeting their goals. The BBAR leadership listened to community members and incorporated their input into the planning phase consisting of four main components:

- **Workforce development:** Prioritize the hiring of neighborhood residents for job opportunities on Bridge Park
- **Small business enterprises:** Supporting new and existing local small businesses surrounding the Bridge Park both directly and through partnerships with economic development organizations and others
- **Housing:** Working with partners and stakeholders to ensure that existing residents surrounding the Bridge Park can continue to afford to live in their neighborhood once the park is built and that affordable homeownership and rental opportunities exist nearby
- **Arts and culture:** Serve as a platform to celebrate the history and culture of communities on both sides of the Anacostia River and in particular, to amplify the stories, culture, and heritage of neighboring African American residents

From these initiatives, the BBAR strives to combat systemic inequity facing Black residents in Southeast D.C. with a multi-sector approach to address significant social, health, environmental, and economic disparities in Washington, D.C.







Photograph courtesy of SF Recreation & Parks Department archives and Nina S. Roberts, SF State University.

## Conclusion

Well developed parks should be the center of resilient and equitable cities. The benefits of parks are endless (e.g., NRPA development of ‘benefits’). For example, recreational opportunities, improvement to physical and mental health, economic and environmental wellbeing, etc. Unfortunately, public funding for equitable parks and recreational features is often limited, as previously mentioned, especially in areas with people of color or low-income communities. Instead of continuing the cycle of oppression, parks throughout the United States have recognized the presence and causes of inequality, and have created plans to ensure equitable improvement. In San Francisco, the India Basin initiative leadership teams can review and extract many key ideas as well as obtain suggestions for equitable measures/measurements from these case studies. This would ensure the most effective and efficient results in park development planning and implementation.

In the process of creating their plans, it was common for these agencies to update or modify their documents to keep up with current events/activities, changing demographics (e.g., population density and composition) in communities of interest (e.g., evolves over time). It can take many years to establish a plan given many reasons (e.g., communication challenges, cultural nuances, historical considerations). Opportunity must involve community members; not one plan is established to solve all answers, and all agencies reviewed other case studies. The following seven most common themes throughout these ten case studies are as follows:

1. Prioritize community values and diverse cultures
2. Preserve open space for public enjoyment
3. Ensure the ease in accessibility for every resident and in every part of the city (e.g., public transit, walkability, bike paths)
4. Prioritize affordable housing options, specifically for low-income families and residents of color
5. Maintain project sustainability/longevity (e.g., conducting surveys and holding community forums)
6. Incorporate local community members in decision-making
7. Educate and inform residents and community members about the importance of inclusion and equality in relation to park values as well as spark passion and ownership

The case studies in this paper provide evidence that park and recreation programs are a positive anchor for equitable community development and an opportunity to reduce many local concerns about others priorities (e.g., homelessness, healthcare, education issues). Replicating some of the practices in these case studies could provide social, economic, environmental, health, and cultural benefits to the community as a whole. Ultimately, messaging to residents and business owners about the value of the new India Basin Shoreline Park and knowing what’s feasible over time, and with their timely input and active involvement, is vital. By reviewing and analyzing past case studies, agencies can identify replicable bright spots to incorporate in other fundraising and resource allocation strategies that generate success.