

WHAT IS “EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT” IN DETROIT? PERSPECTIVES FROM THE “BUILDING THE ENGINE” KITCHEN CABINETS....AT THE 2017 BECDD SUMMIT

“Equitable Development is smart growth that meets the needs of underserved communities through projects, programs and policies that reduce disparities, retain spaces that belong to low income people; and through inclusive language and storytelling that keeps everyone in a community engaged. Equitable Development = Residential Involvement.....”

....Statement on Equitable Development from the Grass Roots Organization Kitchen Cabinet

BECDD created affinity group meetings in 2016, called “Kitchen Cabinets.” These discussion groups created space for community development stakeholders of “like kind” to meet together regularly and discuss challenges in community development. Perspectives from these discussions were **compiled and shared as anonymous thoughts, with the other Kitchen Cabinets**. That cross-sharing aided in the process of identifying and acknowledging the gaps and problems within the current Detroit community development system.

At the December 5, 2017 Summit the Kitchen Cabinets were convened and given two questions to discuss. The responses to the first question (What does “Equitable Development” mean to us?) are summarized below:

From the Grass Roots Organization Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means....

- ✓ Equitable Development is “smart growth” that meets the needs of underserved communities through projects, programs and policies that reduce disparities, retain spaces that belong to low income people; and through inclusive language and storytelling that keeps everyone in a community engaged. Equitable Development = Residential Involvement.
- ✓ Problems we are seeing now:
 - Local residents are being priced out of some of the neighborhoods – it’s a form of gentrification
 - Entities come into the community and make decisions without consulting with existing residents.
- ✓ How do we respond?
 - Create strong policies with developers that are enforceable, favoring communities
 - Create a holistic approach to community life, focusing on quality of life for the citizens of the community
 - When making plans and developments, strategize around the most consistent complaints from residents because they will identify the biggest problems
 - Do surveys to find out what is most important to the community

From the Philanthropy Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means.....

- ✓ Philanthropy is still unclear about what it is, but we know it is critical for community development organizations; strong CDOs can and should make sure there is vigorous discussion around this question. Sometimes philanthropy thinks we are the “champions” of Equitable Development. But its hard to define partially because it’s hard to find many examples. It has to include sustainability

strategies, harnessing the resources of the planet, the people and the economy. City and state government that looks at quality of life issues: where should the roads and parks go? The sewer lines and the lighting? Equitable development is a human right.

- ✓ How do we respond?
 - Includes developing an equity statement as part of each development project
 - Includes taking the time to think about what structures are in place that prevent equitable development, while acknowledging the power relationships between the developer and the community, and the biases that exist on both sides
 - We have to ask: who has the decision-making power over the development? It means asking where do the resources flow from the development. Are both the developer and the workers involved in it? Who is ultimately benefitting?

From the Practitioners Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means....

- ✓ Creating real communities by accounting for the systemic inequalities that exist in high poverty communities. Where everyone benefits – developments are equitable for all, and all stakeholders' priorities and outcomes are accommodated in the development plan. Where “common sense” ideas are put in practice. Where the fundamental belief is that all families at all income levels deserve healthy and safe communities. Where projects are adjusted to touch the hardest hit, highest poverty communities. Where everyone is engaged with the vision and implementation process of the development
- ✓ How do we get there?
 - By creating a space for candid conversations with developers to collectively discuss what it means to a community – but this is difficult and time consuming (cannot be done in one day) and requires specific resources.
 - By funding residents and compensating CDOs who help do the work of coordinating these conversations and getting residents' perspectives
 - Where developers can show that they are matching resources to the “talking points” of a proposed development

From the Intermediaries Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means....

- ✓ It means building community capacity, not just creating jobs; and its why we do this work – being responsible to do things in a better way and being more vocal on behalf of residents....it means development where we think deeply about the systems that stop equitable development and development that decreases inequalities.....and influencing policies that affect development including census policy and voter engagement policy.
- ✓ What does the process look like?
 - Neighborhood residents and members are involved in decision making in the development; youth are at the table and have a voice
 - Residents having equity in a development ID being able to save through IDAs
 - Having everyone at the table
 - Making sure we ask how is the developer getting feedback?

From the Government Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means.....

- ✓ Development without displacement, including policies that include an equity lens. Opportunities for everyone affected by the development, from the development.
- ✓ How does government and community development facilitate equitable development?
 - Listening to community – the activists and those who live and work there
 - Getting the organizations in the community involved, although some don't know how
 - The role of the CDO is to help facilitate opportunities for those who live where development is happening; to identify the “common points” of the community's advocacy

From the Academia Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means.....

- ✓ Developing people/residents through high quality education that focuses on all ages, and looking at what the student's aspirations are. We need more apprenticeships and mentoring, and credit transfers among institutions. We need opportunities to employ residents to be engaged in the community – this has to be a conscious effort. We need success metrics. And to help CDOs become better at developing people, we need “helping hands” or Success Coaches along the way.

From the Civic Organizations/Social Entrepreneurs Kitchen Cabinet. Equitable Development means.....

- ✓ Equitable development goes beyond traditional development. It includes equal access for local entrepreneurs, democratizing the business capitalization process. It means understanding the unique “eco-environment” and culture in every community and capturing that community's image and priorities first, then focusing on the economics of the project. It means giving access to all the necessary information on a project: the market analysis, the sources of funding, etc.
- ✓ What does an equitable development process look like?
 - Intentionally acknowledging and addressing inequities across the spectrum, for housing development or any other new development that hadn't previously existed
 - Calling out all the elements where inequities exist
 - Providing exposure to the opportunities that are out there
 - People/residents are part of the development process; there is discussion with all the stakeholders in the room to remove “segregated” views or definitions of development

MAIN THEMES ACROSS ALL THE KITCHEN CABINETS

- **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLIES A PROCESS IS BEING USED, WHERE THE RIGHT CONVERSATIONS AND ANALYSIS ARE OCCURRING WITH EACH DEVELOPMENT, AND THEY ARE INVOLVING RESIDENTS IN CANDID DISCUSSION, PLANNING AND DECISION MAKING**
- **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT DELIBERATELY AND SPECIFICALLY TACKLES THE RACIAL AND ECONOMIC DISPARITIES THAT HAVE EXISTED**
- **“QUALITY OF LIFE” AND “BUILDING REAL COMMUNITIES” ARE GOALS THAT ARE EQUALLY IMPORTANT TO THE FINANCIAL GOALS OF A DEVELOPMENT, FOR IT TO BE SUSTAINABLE**
- **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT INCLUDES DEVELOPMENT WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT, AND LOCAL EXISTING RESIDENTS AND NEIGHBORHOODS AFFECTED BY A DEVELOPMENT MUST BENEFIT.**
- **EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT IS SUPPORTED BY GOVERNMENT POLICIES THAT REQUIRE IT**