Equity scorecards are a way for communities and developers to assess if they are meeting their priorities, goals, and values related to equitable development. Through a series of questions, prompts, and self-assessments, scorecards can serve as an accountability check on decision-makers through reflection and documentation of their process. Sometimes scorecards are used in anticipation of future development but without any particular project in mind, setting preemptive parameters around what equity metrics developers should consider before breaking ground. In this way they are a tool for communities to build a shared understanding of what they want their neighborhoods to look like, and to increase participation around who decides what counts as an important consideration when it comes to development.

**HOW EQUITY SCORECARDS WORK**

Equity scorecards are crafted collaboratively between community residents, organizations, and other local stakeholders. While a scorecard template may be written as a general tool, users may add or tweak elements to make it more relevant to a particular context.

City agencies, development teams, and/or neighborhood associations may choose to use an equity scorecard in the development process.

Much like a report card, these evaluations are broken into sections to assess how well an organization is doing on a given issue area. For each section, scorecards present a series of questions or statements to which stakeholders are asked to rank themselves, often on a scale of one to five. After stakeholders discuss and agree on subscores for each category they tally up the total to complete the equity scorecard.

These cards do not provide an optimal score, nor do they prescribe how to proceed upon completion. Still, once the scorecard is complete an organization or development team may choose to make changes to address areas where they fall short on meeting equity goals.

**WHAT AN EQUITY SCORECARD INCLUDES**

Equity scorecards are composed of a series of prompts. They ask developers and communities to examine areas of potential growth and stretch their equity commitments. When used to evaluate development processes, equity scorecards typically include (but are not limited to) the following categories:

- **Community Engagement**
  Eg. Are community members engaged within the first six months of the planning process?

- **Equitable Housing**
  Eg. Are at least 20% of the project’s units are affordable to current residents at or below 50% Area Median Income?

- **Environment/ Sustainability**
  Eg. Are all new houses built with energy efficiency to reduce utility bills for residents?

- **Economic Development/ Land Use**
  Eg. Do lease agreements give priority to neighborhood business opportunities?

- **Transportation Access**
  Eg. Does the project increase connections to all modes of public transit and make walking, biking, and public transit an easy choice?
CONSIDERATIONS

Spotlight on: Trust for Public Land Community Capacity-Building Scorecard

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) is a national land stewardship organization that primarily works in the acquisition and development of new green spaces. While a long-time advocate of participatory planning processes, TPL has recently recognized a need to consider a broader suite of social implications in its green space advocacy work. In particular, how does a park interact with its neighborhood after the planning and construction is done?

In order to bring these considerations into the planning process, TPL created a scorecard for equitable green space development through community capacity-building. Some of these capacity-building metrics include leadership development, collaboration between nonprofits, cities, and developers, and elevating community voices.

The goal of the scorecard is to build parks with community longevity, where parks can be sites of agency, stewardship, and neighborhood connection beyond the participatory planning process alone. The capacity-building scorecard pushes TPL park planners to reframe community engagement through a new set of considerations.

No Regulatory Mandate

A scorecard is not a regulatory tool. It is a facilitation guide for examining equitable development. Although scorecards enable people in power to have tough conversations about policy topics, they don't require those conversations to turn into action.

Community Burden

The responsibility to create equity scorecards typically falls on a combination of local non-profits and community residents that are often already under-resourced and overburdened. Communities may feel obligated to create these scorecards in order to highlight inequities that they already know to be true from experience. While community truth-telling is valuable in itself, it is a tool with limited capacity to address underlying power imbalances that make equity scorecards relevant in the first place.

Self-Reported

All of the scores on equity scorecards are self-reported. This means that developers or cities may grade themselves differently than community members who actually live in the neighborhood would.