

EAST SIDE TRANSIT EQUITY COMMUNITY COVENANT

FOSTERING EAST SIDE TRANSIT EQUITY CONVERSATION

12/12/2013

Introduction:

In 2013, District Councils and allies on the East Side of St. Paul came together with a strategy to engage the changing community in conversations about transit plans for the community. Their strategy included partnering with the Organizing Apprenticeship Project to create an organizing apprenticeship class, provide ongoing training and create opportunities to engage East Siders' ideas and priorities for transit development. Fostering East Side Transit Equity Conversations (FESTEC) was created with a team of ten organizers, nine from communities of color, immigrants and indigenous communities. The goals of the team are to (1) engage underrepresented voices around transit development; (2) develop a set of Transit Equity ideas and priorities and (3) create a plan to sustain community engagement as transit development is planned on the East Side. Beginning with National Night Out events on the East Side, this team has engaged hundreds of East Siders through surveys, Focus Groups, community group meetings at high schools, senior residences, marketplaces and playgrounds.

On November 7, close to 100 East Siders came together for Transit Equity Café Conversations and shared their ideas, priorities and concerns about transit development on the East Side. The ideas that sprung from the conversations were split into two “working documents.” The first is the East Side Transit Equity Community Covenant, which lists the principles that are intended to “Guide transit development in an equitable manner ensuring all shares in the benefits and burdens with transit development on the East Side.” The second document is the East Side Transit Equity Community Recommendations, which serves as a supplemental document to the East Side Transit Equity Community Covenant.

Defining Transit Equity:

According to a paper presented at The State of Environmental Justice in America 2007 Conference, Thomas Sanchez, PhD (Urban Affairs and Planning Program – Virginia Tech) and Marc Brenman Executive Director Washington State Human Rights Commission... define Transit Equity as the following...

Transit Equity System:

- Ensure opportunities for meaningful public involvement in the transportation planning process, particularly for those communities that most directly feel the impact of projects and funding choices
- Be held to a high standard of public accountability and financial transparency
- Distribute the benefits and burdens from transportation projects equally across all income levels and communities
- Provide high quality services – emphasizing access to economic opportunity and basic mobility – to all communities but with an emphasis on transit dependent populations
- Equally prioritize efforts both to revitalize poor and minority communities and to expand transportation infrastructure

Race Equity Impact Analysis

What is it?

A Racial Impact Analysis is a careful examination of the likely impacts of a policy proposal in order to minimize disparities and foster racial equity and inclusion. The Racial Impact Analysis is a vital tool for facilitating race-conscious remedies for long-standing institutional inequities. A Racial Impact Analysis can be conducted on existing or proposed policies, practices or programs.

Why is it needed?

The aim is to reduce, eliminate or prevent racial inequities and access barriers. The persistence of deep racial disparities and divisions in our society is evidence of institutional racism – the routine, often invisible and unintentional, production of inequitable social opportunities and outcomes. A Racial Impact Analysis helps maximize the potential for a policy to increase equity, while minimizing unanticipated and unintended consequences that would perpetuate inequities. What guiding principles underlie the commitment to using a Racial Justice

Analysis?

- A commitment to fairness, inclusiveness, equal opportunity and protection;
- A commitment to racial equity in social opportunities and outcomes;
- A commitment to uphold and enforce anti-bias and discrimination measures;
- A commitment to remedy historic and cumulative institutional bias.

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Equity Principles

- 1. Everybody Benefits**
- 2. Race Equity Assessment**
- 3. Safety**
- 4. Accessibility**
- 5. Community Involvement**
- 6. Sustain Equity Organizing**

Equity Principle 1: Everybody benefits

With the expected multi-billion dollar investment in transit, equity calls for all to share in the benefits and burdens in terms of training and jobs, mitigations and mediation, and affordable housing, to name a few.

Equity Principle 2: Race Equity Impact Assessment

To advance equity in transit planning on the East Side, we strongly recommend that a race equity impact assessment be conducted on all proposed policies and practices in addendum to environmental justice requirements.

Equity Principle 3: Safety

This issue must be addressed through various strategies including aesthetics, safety authority, and emergency services, to name a few.

Equity Principle 4: Accessibility

With the existing need to implement relevant changes to transit systems, it is a priority to be inclusive of all diversity and demographics. This includes aspects of affordability, accessibility, and availability.

Equity Principle 5: Community Involvement

By involving the community in transit decision making early and often, transit systems can better cater to the consumers. A consumer driven transit system will result in more support for public transit. This can also create community building opportunities to lessen safety concerns.

Equity Principle 6: Sustain Equity Organizing

Equity Organizing must be retained and sustained in order to advance the East Side Transit Equity Covenant through funding and coordinated efforts in the community particularly through the crucial upcoming public outreach efforts associated with major potential transit investments.

EAST SIDE COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRANSIT

FOSTERING EAST SIDE TRANSIT EQUITY CONVERSATION

12/12/2013

Introduction:

This is a supplemental document to the East Side Transit Equity Community Covenant. These are community recommendations that have been discussed with the with members of the community during the Transit Equity Town Hall on November 7th, 2013 and the Transit Equity Summit on December 5th, 2013. The East Side Community Recommendations for Transit are to be employed when making strides towards Transit Equity.

Everybody Benefits

- If transit proposals move forward, it will result in less need for road repair, less congestion, less need for fossil fuels which will in turn result in a better environmental standards.

Economic Development

- Pre-planned mitigation budgets to prevent displacement and loss of business.
- More incentives for small business start-ups.
- Small businesses to support local hiring.
- Access to jobs and market places.
 - Better job retention
- Local contracting of East Side businesses.
- Promoting people in business development before profits.
- Create alternative parking spaces to prevent parking loss.

Race Equity Impact Assessment

- Create an awareness of why a Racial Impact Assessment is relevant and crucial to the neighborhood.

Safety

- Open transit job opportunities for the Metro Transit Police.
- Bus drivers training for safety and relevance to dealing with diverse populations
- Involve the youth by creating bus/driver/transit operator assistance programs.
- Implement walkability study and complete street design for pedestrian and biker safety.
- Create an emergency button/phone line for shelters and stops.
- Install cameras, heaters, and adequate lighting on all shelters and stops.
- Banning guns on all buses
- Public campaign for a good behavior
- Creating safe spaces for people to gather and travel
- Vandalism prevention hotline or app.

- Respectful behavior guidelines on transit modes
- Create reliable system procedures
- Create environments for comfort and safety

Accessibility

- Access to access, more transit options to get to major transit routes
- Access to schools, libraries, recreation centers, and other places of education.
- Access to health care centers
- Access to Senior residential complexes
- 24 hour services to serve all aspects of living
- Affordable services for youth and seniors at all locations.
 - One ticket for transfers between all modes of transit
- Add efficient timed intersections to shorten trip duration.
- Clear hours of operations and bus routes at shelters, stops, and transit systems.
- Having bike racks at stop to allow bus takers to get to other bus stops quicker
- Include translations on all announcements, bus schedules, and others.
- Symbolic visual signs instead of words
- Smart travel technology imbedded into transit systems
 - Add wifi connections
 - Add electrical outlets

Community Involvement

- Create a consumer/transit review committee for the East Side
- Create a Transit Safety review committee for the East Side
- Create a program to fund shelter design by the community
- Provide opportunity for the community to be involved in the earliest stages of the decision making process.
 - Form community partnerships
 - Consumer driven plans equal better product
 - Community involvement in transit mapping and route design.
- Create space for youth to voice concerns and opinion regarding transit.
- Create and build public awareness of public transportation
- Study impacts of Metro-Mobility on users.

Sustain Equity Organizing

- Organizers are to help keep the conversations inclusive and build community power and identity.
- Organizers are to continue community relationships and engagement to facilitate discuss transit.