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Section 1

LOCAL EQUITY PLANNING

GROWTH WITHOUT DISPLACEMENT

A Test for Equity Planning in Portland

Lisa K. Bates

Portland, Oregon, is considered a pioneer of regionalism, integrated land-use and transportation planning, and sustainability as a criterion for planning policy. After four decades of land-use planning, Portland has a national and international reputation for urban livability and climate change mitigation. While these successes are laudable, in the past decade Portland's underrepresented and underserved communities have been raising a voice to demand that planners address issues of income and racial inequality. In response to and in collaboration with communities, over the past five years Portland's Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) has adopted an equity strategy with a racial justice focus.

This chapter traces the evolution of Portland's planning from the Portland Plan—the 2009 citywide strategic plan that first articulated the equity framework—to the ongoing comprehensive land-use plan that addresses equitable development without displacement. These planner-community venues are spaces of both conflict and collaboration. The city's planners and advocates alike recognize the value of this relationship, although it is sometimes challenging. Communities are building their capacity to speak the technical language of planning to demand more from city policymakers and to advocate for equity planning at the planning commission and city council. Planners are gaining the language and analytic approach to develop equity policies. Through relationships with community advocates, planners are more assured of political support for their equity work. The path from setting an equity goal to developing a comprehensive land-use plan and to beginning to implement anti-displacement policies has not been a straight or quick one. However, the learning and reflection that has happened

along the way suggests that while it may not have been an optimal path, it may have been a necessary one.

The experience in Portland suggests roles and possibilities for city planners and community advocates seeking to move toward a more just city. Across the United States, cities are taking on the role of policy innovators, and increasingly, leaders recognize equity as one of the major challenges they must address. Many cities are declaring their intentions to address institutional racism and inequalities—from Seattle to Austin, Philadelphia, and Boston. This Portland case study provides lessons learned in the shift, from developing an understanding of the city government's role in perpetuating and undoing inequity to incorporating equity into the everyday and technical decisions and policymaking of city plans.

Inside, Outside, in Between

Portland's turn to address equitable development has involved inside equity planners in the mold of Krumholz (1982), work by Davidoff's (1965) outside advocacy planners, and strategization from "inside activists" (Olsson and Hyssing 2012). Equity planners working for city government are people who are working with a defined goal to benefit those who are least advantaged. Their work, according to the Krumholz model advanced in Cleveland's Policy Plan, includes conducting policy analysis and evaluation on the basis of achieving more choices for those who have few (Krumholz 1982, 172) and encourages the equity planner to be a political actor as well as a technocrat and to engage not only in the arena of the planning commission but also with elected officials. Davidoff's (1965) advocacy planning model places the broader political arena front and center, suggesting that planners work with communities to develop alternative policies and plans that they can argue for, even if the plans are against status quo interests. Advocacy planners would be outside of government, pushing for change. Along this inside-outside continuum is the concept of the "inside activist" (Olsson and Hyssing 2012), the government staffer who openly maintains ties to community advocates. This model suggests that equity work can be advanced through inside activists' brokering interactions with external groups and pushing agendas inside bureaucracies. In the Portland case, all of these models for urban planning's equity work are recognizable.

I have been involved in this work as a member of advisory bodies to the Portland Bureau of Planning and Sustainability; as a consultant researcher developing frameworks for addressing gentrification; as a member of the board of directors of an advocacy organization; as a leader in advocacy planning for the African American community; and generally as an active participant in the grow-

ing movement for housing justice in Portland. This chapter represents my own perspectives as well as reflections of colleagues from the equity and advocacy planning communities in Portland—public engagement specialists, neighborhood planners, community-based-organization policy staffers, and others who have been part of the work.

The Challenge of Gentrification as a Test for Equity Planning

In examining the evolution of Portland's equity planning, I focus on the issue of gentrification and displacement as a key instance of the real challenges of implementing an equity focus. Portland was recently named the fastest gentrifying city in America by *Governing* magazine due to its rapidly changing neighborhood housing markets and dramatic racial turnover in the core of the city (Maciag 2015). The challenge of equitable revitalization highlights several critical tensions for equity planners, both inside and outside of government.

Gentrification—defined as rapidly changing housing markets that tend to push out long-time neighborhood residents who have a low income and are often people of color—is an issue that not all agree is a problem. In Portland, the influx of higher-income residents to inner city neighborhoods can be seen as a triumph of the reputation for livability and urban amenities, brought by a planning system that limits regional growth. Neighborhoods have been revitalized, and the city has invested heavily in infrastructure and economic development in what were poor and segregated areas. However, this public investment, occurring after a long history of redlining and exclusion, has disproportionately benefited newcomers to the neighborhoods and harmed long-time residents by failing to incorporate sufficient affordable housing and opportunity for inclusion in economic growth. Portland's African American community has experienced the most severe displacement, with about one-third of the region's Black population having been displaced from their historical homes in northeast Portland in ten years (as calculated by the author). Recent urban renewal efforts have compounded a history of harmful planning—once it was segregation; now it is displacement. Planners working on neighborhood development today face intense distrust and anger about past and current practices that spur gentrification, with recent controversies erupting over new bike lanes and a high-end chain grocery store (Lubitow and Miller 2013). As the region's population grows and in-migrants display a clear preference for living in the city, communities observing the rapid changes in northeast Portland recognize that the wave of revitalization and displacement will continue to push eastward.

Attempts to address gentrification and housing displacement are faced with policy barriers and political challenges. Planners who do want to address equitable development are very limited in their tools. Oregon's land-use planning system embeds goals that include equity considerations in housing and development, other policies, and laws that limit planning responses to inequality. State planning law prohibits unnecessary barriers to housing development, so explicitly exclusionary zoning is not a significant problem. However, planners are hampered by the state's having preempted local governments from using inclusionary zoning tools to require affordable housing in new development—a restriction that was only removed in February 2017. Rent control, which is broadly defined, is prohibited, and that further limits the use of inclusionary housing regulations. These restrictions occurred at the behest of Oregon's real estate industry lobby, which remains powerful in the state legislature. Further policy shortcomings related to housing stability are found in Oregon's and Portland's weak tenant protections. Landlords may evict tenants without cause and with just thirty days' notice to vacate. Changing the context of growth to address development without displacement is also politically difficult. Real estate development interests are a strong political force in cities. Elected leaders who favor Portland's makeover as a hip, sustainable urban mecca are favorable to neighborhood changes; in 2013 the mayor (a former real estate industry lobbyist) commented that he thought gentrification was a "problem of success" and was confronted by community groups over failing to identify any downside to the revitalization of inner Portland (Law 2013).

This legal and policy context explains how the growth pressures in Portland's housing market are resulting in significant housing displacement for low- to moderate-income households, all renters, and communities of color. Planners and policymakers have been limited in what they could do and limited in their focus on the issue, until the work of the Portland Plan—a general plan that created a clear mandate to pursue equity goals, and racial equity in particular. The question of how planners will address gentrification and displacement has become a significant test for whether the equity goal can be made real for communities. The Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS) recognized that its ongoing work needed to address the gentrification issue. BPS adopted several approaches, from trying to bring a technical approach to using an equity lens in development decisions, to a new advisory group system, to working with a community coalition that emerged to take the issue on. Embedding equitable development into planning frameworks has been a long process characterized by both collaboration and conflict between city planning staff and community-based equity planners.

The Equity Turn: Portland Plan Sets New Goals

The adoption of an equity goal for the city of Portland emerged from a planning process that included a collaborative capacity-building effort by city planners and community advocates. Through a planning process, an advisory group worked together to learn and guide the development of the equity goal and work plan. The result of this collaboration was a powerful commitment to equity planning and to the end of racial disparities in particular, including an acknowledgment of the role that the city's planning has played in creating inequitable development outcomes. In doing so, BPS revisited its own historical connections to Norm Krumholz's equity planning model. Ernie Bonner, the first director of planning in Portland, was a protégé of Krumholz's in Cleveland and a key player in the Cleveland Policy Plan.

As of the mid-2000s, despite its increasingly positive national and international reputation for urban planning, Portland's deep inequities were becoming unavoidably obvious. The report, *Communities of Color in Multnomah County: An Unsettling Profile* (Curry-Stevens, Cross-Hemmer, and Coalition of Communities of Color 2010), revealed deep disparities for racial and ethnic minorities in Portland, with gaps in income, education, and health outcomes that are greater than the national average. The city started a major planning process as the discussion about inequality in the region developed. In 2009, Mayor Sam Adams launched a significant series of public events to begin work on a general plan for the city and its local, county, and regional governmental partners. The Portland Plan was led by the BPS, with planners developing the process and guiding the work of prioritizing and strategizing. The Portland Plan process was extensive—two years of participation by Technical Advisory Groups that represented a wide range of stakeholders in each topic area. The Portland Plan was not originally intended to be an equity plan. However, advocates for a new approach leveraged the opportunity of Portland's culture of extensive public participation in planning activities. This plan would ultimately adopt, as its core lens for all goals and strategies, an equity goal that calls for an end to disparities for communities of color in particular.

The Portland Plan vision is stated below:

All Portlanders have access to a high-quality education, living wage jobs, safe neighborhoods, basic services, a healthy natural environment, efficient public transit, parks and green spaces, decent housing and healthy food. . . . The benefits of growth and change are equitably shared across our communities. No one community is overly burdened by the region's growth.

Collaborative Learning and Strategy Building

The Technical Advisory Group on Equity, Civic Engagement, and Quality of Life—colloquially known as the Equity TAG—had a unique mix of members. The Equity TAG was a collaborative space with both government staff and community representatives as members (including this author). On the community side, selected representatives had both grounded knowledge of the concerns, experiences, and needs of underrepresented communities and expertise in policies and processes that could address those needs. The government’s representatives included those working in civil rights and civic engagement and were prepared to bring deep institutional knowledge of the city and its practices. Jointly, the committee conducted research on best practices, investigating most thoroughly the Seattle Race and Social Justice Initiative as the basis for the equity work in the Portland Plan. Through a group learning process, the committee was able to come to an important agreement on a definition for the concept of institutionalized inequities. The group adopted a local foundation’s statement of “systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities” (NWHF n.d.).

Through this process, the TAG built a new expectation of who was responsible for equity work in the Portland Plan. Rather than the Equity TAG being siloed to address all aspects of disparities, separately from “mainstream” goals, each advisory group would be responsible for addressing critical inequities within its purview. For instance, the economic development group was directed to integrate issues of poverty and community development into its policies and strategies, and the environmental sustainability group, to incorporate environmental justice issues. Equity TAG members from the community side repeatedly exhorted city staff to “do the work”—in other words, to build relationships with experts from relevant communities and to learn about what an equity focus would mean in their policy arena. Planners were being called on to deepen their knowledge and skills to develop policies that would reach the least advantaged Portlanders. Discontinuing the practice that “equity people” would handle all policy and programs that addressed income, racial, and other disparities was a major effort of the Equity TAG.

Upon reflection, Equity TAG members identified three main elements of the Equity TAG’s success. First, the TAG group was a space of learning as well as critique and debate. For community representatives, it was an important shift that city staffers understood their presence not only as more than just “giving voice” but also as bringing expertise. In one difficult session, I exclaimed, “this is not a bunch of people you pulled off the Number 4 bus!”—meaning that the community representatives were all experienced and knowledgeable policy and program

staff from established organizations, and their knowledge needed to be treated as equally valid to government policy and program staffers' knowledge and not just as part of a general public participation exercise. With TAG members getting onto equal footing in the process of co-creating the equity strategy, we met once a week or more to talk about policy, strategy, and communications. The TAG process of the Portland Plan lasted for well over a year and often involved reiterating and rehashing the goals and strategies.

Second, through the lengthy TAG process, relationships were formed between city staff and community organization staff. Some of the planners working at BPS were emerging as “inside activists”—reliable sources of information and technical assistance for outside advocates. These planners from BPS and related infrastructure bureaus also formed the core of staff who were sharing knowledge and the equity perspective with other planning staff, creating trainings, and trying to build capacity within their planning teams to take up the equity goal. Seeing those staff members take the risk of pushing equity within their institutions built more trust with community members. With frequent contact and relationship building, there emerged a recognition that while city staff and community organizations each face different opportunities and constraints, everyone wanted to do better for the city. The group developed, as one TAG member put it, “a sense of mutual trust that there is a will to do better and a commitment to learning how.”

Finally, the community advocates on the Equity TAG were also well placed to continue their advocacy in political venues. Community representatives came from major organizations with ongoing policy campaigns. One member noted that the community organizations who were represented were not putting all their eggs in the basket of the Portland Plan equity advisory group. Community-based organizations were continually hosting public forums, advocating with elected officials, and pushing in the local media for more attention to the need for government to adopt equity goals. This advocacy kept the issue of racial justice alive, not buried in a “technical advisory group” that was not very visible to the public.

Transitioning the Equity Work from Plan Goal to Everyday Practice

As equity planning work transitioned into the routine of city government activities, it became clear that changing institutional practices would be more difficult. The equity work was being widely discussed and celebrated as the city, county, and metro regional governments began to make commitments to equity. These jurisdictions moved to create offices and staff positions to work on equity policy—including “equity lens” budget procedures—and joined the Governing for Racial Equity (GRE) consortium—even hosting the GRE conference in Portland. The

city created an Office of Equity and Human Rights to provide the kind of technical support to city bureaus that the Equity TAG did to the planning advisory committees. Setting clear goals was a necessary first step. There were still significant issues of implementation to address. The equity goal directed all bureaus to incorporate equity issues into resource allocation decisions, into program design and evaluation, and into service delivery, within a context of truly inclusive public engagement and a partnership between community and the city. In short, it meant changing the institutions of government in fairly fundamental ways, from the technical work of data analysis to policy alternative generation and asset management strategies. “Doing equity” was in the hands of city staff who were charged with changing their institutional practices in tangible ways—while facing high expectations from community members who had participated in advocating for the equity work. As it turned out, while getting elected officials and bureau directors to commit to the equity goal of dismantling institutionalized racism was tough, it was the incorporation of this goal into the routine practices of policymaking and implementation that was more difficult. Addressing gentrification and displacement in the city was an early, major test of the commitment to equity planning.

The Comp Plan: A Test, an Opportunity, a Miss

Soon after the city adopted the racial equity strategy, BPS had to gear up for another major planning process. The bureau was moving the state-mandated long-range comprehensive land-use plan and the associated zoning code updates. The comprehensive plan (colloquially known as the comp plan) is a land-use plan that governs development for twenty-five years, and its process began in earnest in 2013. This process offered another opportunity to implement the equity goal and lay the groundwork for more inclusive growth and development. As the comp plan started, Portland was experiencing a housing boom. Rental vacancy rates were extremely low, and there was a visible increase in homelessness in the central city. Community organizations were protesting urban renewal activities that were adding more fuel to an already hot market. The Portland Plan had recognized gentrification and displacement as major community concerns. Goals in the plan provided new focus on balancing neighborhood revitalization with the ability of residents to stay in place—recognizing that “healthy, connected neighborhoods” were not achieved if they excluded people. Furthermore, the plan’s language acknowledged that gentrification was creating distrust of local government:

Portland Plan: Gentrification and displacement, whether the result of large infrastructure investments or the cumulative effect of smaller investments, have disrupted communities and resulted in serious questions about the motivations behind government investments in Portland. Today's challenge is to figure out how to provide all Portlanders with quality of life and other improvements and programs without the negative consequences of gentrification and displacement, all while improving trust and confidence in local government. (City of Portland, n.d.)

Addressing gentrification and creating a comprehensive plan that addressed housing affordability and community displacement became a moment of opportunity for planners to genuinely address an equity challenge with the traditional tools of planning policy.

Traditional comprehensive land-use plans have been recognized as a development framework that codifies and maintains segregation and inequality. They are highly technical documents that are guided by legal requirements that are often very obscure for nonplanners. In 1968, the Chicago Urban League evaluated the equity dimensions of that city's comp plan, concluding that "one of its major functions in helping to eradicate racism would be to make a start at unraveling the racial mysteries of urban planning" (Berry and Stafford 1968). The equity planning movement insists that all of the dimensions of land-use and transportation planning covered in a traditional comp plan are part of the planning scope for the least advantaged; this is in direct conflict with other powerful messages that planning can't or shouldn't do anything to stop gentrification. Actors in real estate and economic development prefer a status quo of limited involvement in restraining their redevelopment plans, unless it is to assist with public investments in infrastructure. Organized neighborhood participation often has NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) attitudes toward affordable housing. Planners who want to address equity issues in neighborhood change face these political issues on top of the challenges of addressing affordable housing and community preservation through the specific tools of land use.

Indeed, in the first major draft of Portland's comp plan, the BPS planners didn't manage to incorporate an equity component with respect to gentrification. With a new participation process and little focus on the equity frameworks of the Portland Plan or the Fair Housing Act, policies for housing, neighborhood character, and new development were developed without sufficient attention to racial justice. The draft comp plan reflected a business-as-usual model for market-led development, with no particular attention to the outcomes of housing displacement or evidence that equity impact assessments had been considered. The

equity goal was referenced, but it seemed as if it would not be made real. How did this concept, so recently adopted, get lost? A series of decisions about how to implement the work on housing and neighborhood change led to disappointment for the community.

Research Fails to Provide a Foundation

An early step in this work included fleshing out the concepts described in the Portland Plan. The city contracted with me to develop research on assessing gentrification in Portland's neighborhoods and to propose a framework for addressing the potential for public investments to cause community displacement. As a former TAG co-chair who has experience of a learning collaborative, my focus was on bringing staff in BPS and other city bureaus to a shared understanding of what gentrification is and recommending cross-bureau coordination to avoid unintended consequences of policy. The report also provided vignettes of displacement experiences to describe the city's role in either fomenting or mitigating the potential harms to underserved communities when neighborhoods change rapidly. I argued that the issue of gentrification was a critical challenge for equity, and that planners needed to understand it as highly contentious—taking careful attention of the politics involving real estate interests, racial tensions, and the historical practices of the city's own redevelopment agency. I presented the concept of equitable development as a framework that must include both affordable housing and economic opportunities in neighborhood planning, particularly when we recognize a neighborhood that has been historically underserved. This work was not apolitical—it frames planners as agents with real responsibility for addressing gentrification. However, planning managers ultimately requested that this report remain a technical report that only suggested questions about prioritizing resources; it did not conclude with recommendations for the bureau to take with respect to policy.

While the study at first received fairly substantial interest in the local press and its methodology continues to be utilized by researchers and policymakers in other cities, its ultimate impact in Portland was limited. While it was certainly discussed and distributed, there was limited engagement by bureau staff in the gentrification study and policy tool-kit development. I completed the study working closely with two planners and an intern, ending with a review and discussion with the chief planner. As a new mayor had come into office, priorities turned elsewhere. Internal equity champions among planners were focused on a Climate Action Plan that was also being developed at BPS. Mayor Charlie Hales, while nominally continuing the equity goals of his predecessor, prioritized police relations and “Black male achievement” as equity issues and did not view urban planning as a

key arena for addressing inequitable outcomes in the city. The mayor did not convene the recommended cross-bureau working group to assess how each department contributed to gentrification and to coordinate actions to stem displacement. Indeed, he continued the Portland Development Commission's investment practices that led to increased community conflict. Finally, community groups who had been engaged with the Equity TAG viewed my work as a technical report without clear recommendations and did not pick it up as an advocacy framework. While community advocates protested individual projects—often very vocally—there was little push for an overarching policy framework to address displacement due to growth and development. Without a strong drive to implement overarching anti-gentrification policies, development in the city continued at a rapid pace without including equity provisions like community benefits agreements. Subsidized development in urban renewal areas that did not carry affordable housing requirements, workforce agreements, or other mitigation resources went forward.

New Participation Model Leaves a Vacuum

The comp plan provided a venue to engage with a broader set of planners and to build policy with a legal status under Oregon land-use planning law. The advisory process assembled Policy Expert Groups (PEGs) analogous to the Portland Plan's TAGs, which included staff from planning and other bureaus along with community advocates. These kinds of policy venues, while important for setting the framework for equitable development in Portland, proved more difficult for integrating equity through a collaborative process. The PEG structure proved to be less amenable to foregrounding equity, and community advocates and their planning allies were much less successful in embedding affordable housing and anti-displacement policies in the draft comprehensive plan.

The PEG advisories were differently organized than the single-topic TAGs. The PEGs did not correspond directly to individual policy topics, but were organized around cross-cutting themes, such as Centers and Corridors, Networks, and Health and Environment. There was no specific venue for housing and community development, and gentrification was taken up by several PEGs at different times in the process. While we might have discussed gentrification or affordable housing at any time during the advisory process, those issues were often overshadowed by the other components of the required plan elements.

While the structure of the PEGs in hindsight created difficulty for addressing equitable growth and development, the PEG process was meant to learn from the Equity TAG. The planning managers wanted to build on the Equity TAG experience; it was important to integrate the equity discussion throughout all their work,

making every PEG responsible for addressing equity within its purview. Rather than having a separate Equity PEG to provide oversight, the city staff and community representatives who were known as equity advocates were distributed throughout the PEGs to bring equity perspectives to each work group. The result was a dilution of the equity voice. The equity planning leaders in each group were numerically small compared to the twenty-five to thirty member PEG makeup, and the leaders did not have a venue for easily comparing across PEGs. While the BPS was relatively enthusiastic in adopting the equity goal, most staff planners had not been part of the Equity TAG's relationship building and did not learn about how government could address equity. There was limited support from staff for directing the PEG discussions to consider equity and race at the center of the discussions.

At first, community equity advocates who had built relationships during the Portland Plan tried to convene on the side, but it was challenging to take time away from their regular work. After a multiyear process for the Portland Plan, continuing to be involved in the comprehensive plan was draining nonprofit capacity, and advocates could not be certain about the results in an unfamiliar policy system. As the comp plan work went deeper into land-use regulation and zoning, many of the Equity TAG members found themselves out of their depths in this rather esoteric policy system. Community-based organization representatives who had ably served on the Equity TAG were not versed in the specifics of Oregon land-use law and zoning code development. The technical and legal matters of Oregon land-use law and code writing were opaque to many who had been able to contribute effectively in the broader strategic plan conversation—we went from having a conversation about transit dependent immigrant communities' mobility needs to looking at multiple versions of results from the Land Use, Transportation, and Air Quality model LUTRAQ; and from talking about root shock and community displacement to buildable lands inventories. Indeed, as the comp plan process wore on, many community-based advocates questioned whether this was a useful vehicle for making change in the city, compared to engaging in the work of other bureaus making investments in the present day. For instance, African American-representing organizations doubted what a future-oriented plan could do to address the already occurring housing displacement and chose to put most of their attention into resource allocations from the Housing Bureau, which directly subsidizes affordable housing.

In contrast, community representatives from the official Neighborhood Association (NA) system have had extensive land-use expertise. Planning bureau staff had the responsibility to respond to the NA community representatives on the PEGs who did not have equity in mind, because the NAs are an officially recognized part of Portland's government. As PEG meetings were open to the

public, many residents brought their concerns to meetings. The tone of these meetings was very different from the cooperative learning venue of the Equity TAG. The PEGs for Centers and Corridors and for Residential Compatibility were most involved with discussions on housing—the former on larger scale, multi-family development, and the latter on infill and single-family housing neighborhoods. These meetings were often attended by residents expressing NIMBY (Not in My Backyard) sentiments about new multifamily apartment buildings and rental housing. For these more affluent homeowners, “preserving community character” meant architecture and urban design, not communities of color or displacement prevention. Residents were staking out positions on development, and meetings were more about debating than developing a shared analysis. For low-income and people-of-color advocates, it was difficult to engage communities in attending these meetings due to lack of understanding about the land-use plan.

It is perhaps no surprise then that the draft comprehensive plan did not address housing affordability in the context of displacement and neighborhood change in a very direct way; it also did not strongly link to fair housing, the framework proposed by my study of gentrification and displacement in Portland, or affordable housing plans of the Portland Housing Bureau. The draft was not void of equity issues, but its policy statements and goals were not as focused as the Portland Plan had been. The BPS had made many adaptations to its practices and process in the course of the land-use plan advisory period, but the question of whether it was adapting to deeply embed equity into its bread-and-butter planning work remained open. Internally and in its “expert groups,” equity seemed to be getting lost as one among many values. For the community advocates who had worked with planners, the land-use plan remained mystifying, and their advocacy was refocusing on other issues where policy concepts and processes were more legible.

Responding to the Plan Draft: An Opportunity for a Do-Over

As the Portland economy returned to full swing, it became increasingly clear that real estate market pressures were becoming intense in many areas of the city. Gentrification and housing affordability and stability generally became the focus of many community-based organizations, but it wasn’t clearly stated in the comprehensive land-use plan draft that was released by BPS. One community organization, Living Cully, produced its own “Not in Cully” advocacy plan to address potential gentrification in Portland’s most multicultural neighborhood. Living Cully put together comments on the comprehensive plan draft but had difficulty

gaining traction on it as a target. Other community-of-color serving organizations were not engaging with the comp plan.

However, the issue of housing affordability began to be raised as a reason to expand Portland's Urban Growth Boundary, triggering the attention of 1000 Friends of Oregon. The state's land-use advocacy organization, 1000 Friends has been a long-time advocate for more effective planning for affordable housing that is necessary in a system of regional growth controls. They hired an organizer to help build a coalition of community organizations around the issue of housing displacement and provided the legal and policy expertise to bolster proposals. This engagement brought focus to the work of community-based organizations that were fighting redevelopment in their individual neighborhoods, turning to the comp plan as a way to create legal frameworks for equitable development. The coalition, ADPDX (Anti-Displacement Portland), works an inside-outside strategy to develop stronger policy in the comprehensive plan and to build a larger social movement to boost equity planning with political support.

Rebooting Equity Planning through Advocacy

Seizing the opportunity of the public plan draft review period and playing on the history of equity planning at BPS, the ADPDX coalition took on the comp plan to substantially revise the city's approach to population growth and housing development. Their inside-outside game includes elements of equity planning and advocacy planning, with support by inside activists. ADPDX coalition leaders are working intensively with planners and are creating visible moments of advocacy for key decision points in the plan. ADPDX organizations have been able to put their goals into the terms of a land-use plan with the technical assistance of 1000 Friends' staff attorneys, who have extensive experience with Oregon land-use law. ADPDX leaders' and 1000 Friends' attorneys worked with staff planners to redraft major sections of the plan, reiterating questions of legality and of the appropriate boundaries of a comprehensive plan in Oregon. ADPDX has successfully advocated for the plan to take a more aspirational tone in its policy justifications, including more of the vision language from the Portland Plan. The plan had contained clear statements about inclusion and equity in neighborhoods and ensured that the least advantaged communities did not bear burdens without enjoying the benefits of revitalization. Their wins can be attributed to their inside work to bolster equity planning implementation at BPS and to outside advocacy in the political arenas of decisions about the land-use plan. ADPDX has become

a successful advocacy planning example, where the community brought its own plan to the table and negotiated its inclusion into official planning documents.

Working Inside to Build Equity

In some ways, the ad hoc working groups that have emerged between ADPDX leaders and city staff are similar to the Equity TAG. ADPDX participants bring policy ideas and practices from other cities; planners try to be transparent about the potential for these strategies in the Portland context and share information about relevant projects outside of the comp plan. There is mutual learning and trust building when staff make information available and the coalition is transparent about their advocacy, and the expertise on both sides is respected. This format of collaboration does include debate and pushback from both sides, but in a tone that is very different from the PEG process—it is oriented toward problem solving, even when there is disagreement about the role of planning regulation in requiring development to address community benefits and burdens. One key strategic decision that helped build the coalition and clarify the equity planning issues was to reframe the discussion from gentrification to displacement. While gentrification is a serious issue in the city, there are many neighborhoods of poor people, renters, and communities of color that are not “hot markets” but simply are underserved by public goods. Of course, these communities are still very vulnerable to housing displacement due to the shortage of affordable units, lack of tenant protections, and unstable employment in a difficult economy. By focusing on displacement and not only gentrification, ADPDX has built a coalition that includes organizations from nongentrifying neighborhoods who were opposed to the gentrification framework on grounds that their low-income neighborhoods would not receive attention. That was a real political challenge for planners who cared about low-income people and communities of color, as equity advocacy seemed to point to two very different kinds of policies and resource allocations. The ADPDX coalition organizer worked to strengthen this cross-racial, multi-neighborhood alliance around issues of housing instability and displacement. With a lens on displacement, the coalition was able to flourish and the city planners were and are better able to reconcile the common issues of a stable affordable housing supply as the city grows.

Planning staff who were identified as “inside activists” have been open with the coalition’s citizen planners, explaining both the process and substance of their decision making on up-zoning, mixed-use zones, and how the plan and future implementation projects will relate to one another. The staff who are officially assigned to liaison with the Neighborhood Association (NA) system recognize the inequities of working with residents who are almost uniformly homeowners

with the time and education to engage in the NA. They were often able to provide additional time and information to the organizations representing low-income households and people of color.

Community-based organizations representing disadvantaged and underserved populations grew in their capacity for engaging their issues through the language of planning. In these meetings, community experiences were related in order to discover the possible planning regulatory structures that could address them. The ADPDX organizer has a professional master's degree in urban and regional planning and has served as a sort of interpreter from the everyday language of advocates to the jargon of land use. ADPDX organizations brought policy ideas they were learning about from allies in other cities, and 1000 Friends' attorneys helped to create the Oregon-specific legal language that could implement them. This aspect of the work looked like the classic advocacy planning model—outsiders bringing in policy alternatives with the analysis and legal work to back them up and proposing these plans as substitutes for the existing draft.

Indeed, the six months of renegotiation over the comp plan draft was a space of advocacy that sometimes verged on being antagonistic. I describe this space as a tough collaboration with critical friends. Staff planners sat for many hours with ADPDX member representatives and both city and 1000 Friends' attorneys, hashing out acceptable compromises for this document. These sessions debated questions of how to define "community benefits," how to determine what demands could be considered binding policies as compared to "aspirations," and precisely what the city's obligations are under fair housing law. Finally, the inside work of equity planning was happening in policy development.

Outside Advocacy Persists

At the same time, ADPDX is also deploying an outside strategy of visible advocacy. All of the community's desired changes did not occur through the process of revising policies with planning staff. The coalition was aware that the mayor put little priority on addressing displacement and gentrification and that the Planning and Sustainability Commission (PSC) had heard little about the issue. The coalition strategized to bring attention to the work in order to bolster planners' revisions and seek additional policies. ADPDX targeted individual planning commissioners who are allies on equity, asking them to introduce amendments to the plan when they felt the staff's versions were unsatisfactory. The coalition organizations brought community members to PSC hearings and wore hot pink and party hats to celebrate when those amendments were passed by the commission. As the commission approved the final ADPDX additions to the plan, ADPDX

members unveiled a cake and held a public celebration. These events garnered media attention, and housing affordability became the hot topic of the plan.

The activities of ADPDX to build a social movement about housing and displacement have resulted in planning policy changes; however, they have also been met with mixed reactions by planners. After planning staff worked with the coalition on changing the plan policies' language, some were surprised and bothered that coalition members also publicly advocated at the commission. The continued calls to do more could feel like a rebuke after working together to revise policy language, even when staff continued to meet with ADPDX after their internal deadlines for the revised plan. Staff planners also questioned the addition of some specific provisions—particularly those involving extractions from developers such as community benefits agreements—that push at the boundaries of planning law and might be difficult to implement. ADPDX organizers view their public actions as building more political support for planners to do equity work by creating pressure on the elected officials who ultimately determine the direction of the bureau. They argue that planners haven't focused enough on equity goal implementation because they are being diverted to other priorities by the mayor's desire to respond to other constituencies on neighborhood issues, so they need to target his commission and elected officials on city council. They are pressuring planners, but also providing them political support and cover for their equity work. Planners do not necessarily feel this as support.

Finally, an Equity Plan: What Mattered?

The Portland comprehensive plan, as adopted in 2016, contains many of the proposals of the Anti-Displacement coalition. The comp plan policies relating to displacement, housing, and neighborhood development are now significantly stronger for implementing the equity goal. Policies include several areas of work. First, the public participation requirements are deepened to commit to “meaningful participation” by communities most likely to be negatively impacted by development pressures. This targeting of engagement aims to ensure that processes like the Equity TAG get embedded into policymaking so that equity remains at the forefront of new work. Second, the plan states that major investments and development changes require impact assessments on the most vulnerable communities—people of color, low-income households, and renters—that go beyond environmental and traffic studies to describe economic and social impacts for these specific groups. These impact assessments will determine appropriate mitigation efforts to be made by developers or the city.

The ADPDX coalition advocacy has pushed the plan dimensions beyond what planning staff initially felt was appropriate for a land-use plan, by pointing to the expansiveness of Oregon's planning requirements and by arguing that the plan needs to provide a foundation for a long period of time. For example, the proposed plan policies now include statements that the city will pursue regulatory solutions to inclusionary housing at such time as they are permitted by state law, in order to be prepared for changes in statute. By working together with staff planners, the fair housing experts in the coalition have been able to provide education on how fair housing law relates to land-use and infrastructure planning, requiring additional equity analysis and resource allocations that "affirmatively further" desegregation and access to opportunity.

This set of policies reinforces the planners' responsibility of doing technical analysis of equity impacts and allows planners to develop a wider range of programmatic responses to new development code changes and infrastructure investments. These responses include the city's creating community benefits agreements or acting to support community organizations that are pursuing CBAs with private market actors. The broader concept of impact assessment also recognizes that "neighborhood character" is more than historic architecture; it also includes community cohesion, history, and culture for those communities that have experienced segregation and discrimination. Additionally, this new version of the plan prepares Portland to develop and implement policies such as inclusionary zoning and rent control that are preempted by state law. Having an affirmative statement of pursuit of these remedies created a foundation for planners to move quickly with Portland's Housing Bureau to build an industrial zoning policy as soon as the state allowed. ADPDX coalition leaders are continuing to meet with city planners on issues of community benefits agreements, mixed-use zoning, and incentives for affordable housing; they are also advocating for broader changes to the city's housing related policies, such as the end to no-cause evictions.

Through what was like an externally imposed working advisory group between ADPDX and staff planners, both community organizations' and city planners' capacity and technical knowledge to do equity planning has been increased. With the comp plan as guidance, city planners are directed to continue to ask the question of equity through a legally recognized document, which goes beyond the Portland Plan's goal. Krumholz's lesson that planners must always analyze who benefits and who is burdened and must always assess how to provide the greatest opportunity for those who have the least is embedded into the comp plan for housing and neighborhood development issues. Planning bureau staff started to institutionalize this practice in a difficult process—of not just rewriting the plan

draft but really rethinking its foundation as an equity document—while under time pressure to complete and adopt the plan and under political pressure from ADPDX. While the path to an equity comprehensive plan was not a smooth or a straight one, it was a trek with significant learning along the way.

The Equity Goal Matters

Obviously, setting equity goals isn't sufficient in and of itself—even when they are announced with great fanfare and political support. Indeed, the Portland experience with equity planning suggests that an external goal announcement that is not built up through the work of planners can even impede the institutional change needed to implement equity plans. During Krumholz's time in Cleveland, staff planners who were already engaged in equity and civil rights built up equity planning work around their technical expertise and values, creating a simply stated goal that encompassed the work to which they had already committed. Planners then disseminated this work into other departments and built organically on opportunities that emerged in policymaking. In Portland, the comprehensive plan process rolled out in a business-as-usual way, with advisory groups that did not reflect the new equity orientation and limited technical assistance for using an equity lens in the work. Community equity advocates realized that political lip service to equity was not the same as real political support for implementing equity goals when real contention over neighborhoods and development was at stake.

Having the equity goal was a critical first step. However, to really do the equity work in an area, there needs to be a constituency that is holding planners accountable and pushing the elected officials to enact new programs and policies. As the city of Portland has already adopted a very clear goal of equity with a lens of racial justice, the coalition was able to present their ideas as emerging from an established consensus. The equity goals and language of the Portland Plan could be repeated as a promise made, with a reminder that the “north star” was racial justice.

It has been important to the equity planning work in Portland for planners not only to recognize that the city's planning has not always supported equitable outcomes but also to commit to the goals of equity and racial justice. There remain challenges with consistently implementing the policy development and analysis practices that center equity questions, and community advocates continue to remind planners of their responsibilities in this area. The leadership in the planning bureau recognizes the need to insist that the equity work gets done internally and also to build the technical knowledge of existing staff, while ensuring

that new hires are committed to and knowledgeable about equity planning. New projects implementing aspects of the comp plan, such as new transit line planning and infill housing zoning codes, have equity tasks as key components of the work plans.

Advocacy Planning Matters

Community representatives spent enormous amounts of time in advisory groups and working with planners. However, these processes have not always resulted in strong equity planning work. This mix of inside and outside activities is resulting in a plan development that does more than pay lip service to equity goals; the plan development starts to establish them further into policies. The Anti-Displacement Portland coalition strategized to ensure that inside, collaborative work was bolstered and furthered by outside activism and movement building. Responding to Krumholz's 1982 retrospective on the challenges of Cleveland's plan, Davidoff (1982) suggested that politics be engaged by a coalition that is cross-racial and engages multiple housing equity stakeholders—fair housing, tenants' rights, and neighborhood community development advocates. This coalition is precisely what ADPDX has developed. Through the advocacy work, new communities are connected to the policy systems and language of planning and seeing it as a viable venue for getting equity impacts. This increased engagement from usually underrepresented communities in urban planning is pushing the BPS to develop work that really responds to the most critical issues for underserved communities, rather than one that responds just to the typical growth machine actors and boosters. The coalition is building a much-needed reply to the strong real estate industry lobby that has already so seriously curtailed the ability of planners to make housing policies. It was critical that a mainstream planning advocacy organization like 1000 Friends—best known for its work on farmland and forest protection—stepped up in recognition of affordable housing as a fundamental issue of land-use planning. Realizing that inequity threatens all the region's goals for compact development and climate change mitigation, 1000 Friends brought resources and technical assistance and extended its political influence to a social justice cause. Its involvement amplified the work and built the policy advocacy capacity of smaller, community-based organizations.

The visible public advocacy by grassroots activists connected with equity policy leaders counters the city's more entrenched interests in real estate development. The outside pressure for equity is important for overcoming political inertia. Recognizing that advocates' public displays and actions are part of a productive political process may take time for planners who believe they are already working on equity. City staff have to come to realize that the advocacy was not

distracting from the comp plan but was calling attention to how important it is as a policy framework. Staff planners in leadership roles came to the eventual realization that having an outside group calling for and celebrating equity policies provided them with political backing for their work implementing the equity goal. Again, referring to Portland's history was important for accepting this—after all, Portland is the city whose neighborhood activists stopped a freeway in 1974 as part of its grassroots-supported push for planning. That much-celebrated action was crucial to the livability of the city today—and ADPDX advocates argue that their loud calls for equity in 2016 will be viewed as equally important in the future. ADPDX and other community advocacy coalitions continue to keep alive the issues of growth without displacement and racial justice in a redeveloping city. The city's leaders know that there are organizations ready to bring publicity and strong outside advocacy to questions of housing and neighborhood policy. The rise of anti-displacement activism is a visible counterpoint to the lobbying and issue framing of real estate interests. With continual reference to the commitments of the city to “make equity real,” community advocates will try to ensure that equity planning is the standard operating procedure in Portland, regardless of national-level politics.

Next Moves for Equity Planning: Cities Lead the Way

As planners who take a long-range view, we know that we are building our cities and regions not only for this moment, but for the long term. Although we are trying to remedy past decisions that led to sprawl, segregation, and unequal investments in communities, we also must address acute problems of housing needs and make sure that our long-term development moves toward greater equity. The case of Portland's evolution toward equity planning from a broad goal to the specifics of a comp plan provides lessons about the challenges and opportunities for building internal and external capacity to address urban growth. Portland's major issues are addressing uneven distributions of costs and benefits from population and economic growth, and the policy details of its comprehensive plan are particularly useful for similar cities. The work of ADPDX and planners to craft a land-use framework that tackles displacement and community cohesion provides ideas for how to bring equity into this arena of planning policy. It also points to methods for discovering “what's the downside” to a booming city by engaging more effectively with external advocates. These process lessons about how to collaborate to learn and shift practices are valuable for planners in a much broader set of urban contexts. Whether the equity challenges

arise from growth or decline, planners can develop the processes for those with inside and outside expertise to have the tough collaboration dialogue from which emerges better work.

Municipal planners have to bring the equity goal into all of their routine work of analysis and policy formulation. Equity planning has to become an everyday practice that is always asking who benefits and who is burdened. This work requires forming new habits of inquiry; developing and maintaining data about race, class, and other important factors; and seriously weighting equity outcomes as part of policy formulation and evaluation. Planners also need to be attuned to the advocates representing historically underserved and underrepresented groups so they are aware of persistent and emerging issues. Planning agency staff have to be prepared to translate the sometimes arcane language and process of land use into everyday terms and explain the on-the-ground consequences of plans and regulations.

At the same time, it will be important for cities to institutionalize equity work as standard practice, without as much attention from advocacy groups. These communities of low-income renters, people of color, and immigrants face increasing pressure from the retrenchment of federal funds supporting poor people's needs, intense scrutiny from immigration officials, and other instability brought on by the current political climate. An important way to ensure that these issues are live in planning and policy discussions is to build diverse staffs of planners with a broad range of experiences and identities. City staff who have professional ties to community-based organizations can flag problem areas and provide input from the advocacy perspective. A savvy planning director would seek out staff who can play these roles and value a staff that represents the full range of community experiences. While planners from all backgrounds have a role in equity planning, the lived experience and knowledge of outside organization perspectives of the insider activist staff planner should be viewed as an especial asset. Having an overarching equity goal set from the top is an important feature in supporting a culture of openness that questions dominant paradigms from inside and outside a department; having staff who can forward the case on their own is also important for embedding equity into the technical work of planning.

Addressing the long history of inequality in our cities and regions remains a critical issue for planning, just as it was in Cleveland in 1974. As more urban centers become hot markets with new residents, planners will need to understand how a just city is threatened by gentrification. Taking on the fundamental questions of racial justice and housing and community displacement will require multiple strategies for change and persistence in the face of our past and present contexts. In order to maintain cities as the places where policy innovation can

lead to social change, city planners need to continue to build their knowledge, technical capabilities, and political skills.

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