

FAIR AND INCLUSIVE



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Why are equity and inclusion not cornerstones of the Official Plan?!

The built environment impacts everyone's lived experience of the city. Consequently, city planning needs to apply a strong understanding of social justice in all policies, starting with the Official Plan.

1. We expect the new Official Plan to hold the City accountable to specific, action-oriented equity and inclusion outcomes. To do so, it must embed social and economic justice goals in the plan, accompanied by clear, measurable targets and indicators. For instance, transportation outcomes should be assessed through the lens of access and accessibility for a diversity of resident circumstances.

2. We want the new Official Plan to include equity and inclusion in the cross-cutting issues section of the plan. The current draft rarely references the existing City policy on equity and inclusion. Equity and inclusion issues are inserted only sporadically into the document. Gender equity is mentioned in the draft but the policies do not weave a strong intersectional lens throughout. For example, there is little reference to racial justice, reconciliation with Indigenous peoples or disability rights. There is also very little focus on youth. These issues need to be in the foreground and used to frame the Official Plan in its entirety.

3. We want the Official Plan to focus on social infrastructure, neighbourhoods and communities. This would provide a more holistic and integrative approach to equity and inclusion, as modelled by the City of Barcelona and the concept of "Caring Cities."

4. We want the Official Plan to define the 15-minute neighbourhood inclusively. This means integrating into neighbourhoods urban justice features such as affordable housing, social infrastructure, and access to food and food producing capacities. Food is not simply a retail issue. Gentrified communities are not complete communities.

5. We want the Official Plan to identify municipal land to locate or co-locate affordable housing and social infrastructure, and put in place anti-displacement measures. Without proactive policies to deal with equity and inclusion, "neighbourhood regeneration" will become "real estate regeneration". Letting the "market decide" has produced an affordable housing crisis in Ottawa. We need a different path forward.