

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The development of the Racial Equity Framework for Transportation (REF) reflects both an acknowledgment of all the work ahead of us, as a people and as a City, as it relates to racial inequity, and it also underscores the importance of focusing on and addressing disparate racial outcomes in order to improve the lives of the people who call Minneapolis home. Transportation is a part of everyone's daily life, and we know that current outcomes, as a result of past decisions and practices, have fallen short for many residents of color in Minneapolis. The REF upholds this truth while outlining tangible steps to improve everyday transportation decisions going forward, as well as related health and economic outcomes, for the approximately 175,000 people of color living in Minneapolis.¹

The City of Minneapolis defines equity and racial equity as:

- Equity: fair and just opportunities and outcomes for all people
- Racial equity: the development of policies, practices and strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.²

Work to define equity specific to transportation was advanced through the development of the [20 Year Street Funding Plan](#) (2016) and has been an on-going conversation and guiding force for transportation work in the City since that time. The summer of 2020 underscored the importance of equity, and racial equity in particular, when George Floyd was murdered on a city street and our streets were transformed into important places of community gathering and collective action, during the middle of a global pandemic. The ultimate goal of this work is to use the REF as a catalyst to improve racial equity outcomes in Minneapolis by investing in transportation, elevating existing and forging new partnerships, and uplifting the voices of those who have been historically excluded from decision-making processes.



¹ US Census Bureau Decennial Census, 2020

² City of Minneapolis City Council [definitions](#)

The REF showcases the Department’s existing equity work and introduces new approaches to developing goals, metrics, conducting engagement and evaluation, and brings it all into one framework to support the institutionalization of this knowledge and practice. Existing work that informs the REF includes policy guidance established in the [Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan](#), [Minneapolis 2040](#), the [Blueprint for Equitable Engagement](#), the 20 Year Street Funding Plan, and the [Transportation Action Plan](#) (TAP). [Progress Strategy 1](#) in the TAP calls for the City to implement a Racial Equity Framework for Transportation.

Major elements of the REF

1. An acknowledgment of historic harms and current transportation-related inequities related to transportation in Minneapolis.
2. Four goals that guide the direction of the Framework
 - *Build organizational empathy*
 - *Lead with a racial equity approach*
 - *Build trust, cultivate partnerships, and share power with communities of color*
 - *Hold ourselves accountable to data-driven reporting and adjustments*
3. 24 strategies and 64 actions across the 4 goals to outline how we will make visible, meaningful improvements to how we do transportation work in Minneapolis, and in the outcomes we see for our residents of color
4. The creation of Transportation Equity Priority areas, which replaces the previous use of Areas of Concentrated Poverty (ACP) and Areas of Concentrated Poverty with majority residents of color (ACP50)³ as the standard way to define geography-based equity areas for transportation efforts in Minneapolis
5. A publicly available Minneapolis [Transportation Equity Dashboard](#) that allows people to explore:
 - *Maps and detailed information related to the history of transportation policies and projects in Minneapolis*
 - *Maps of the individual data layers that comprise the Transportation Equity Priority Areas*
 - *Disaggregated data by race relevant to transportation work in Minneapolis*

This framework was developed in partnership with community, and it is a living tool meant to be updated over time as Department staff learn from its application and use. Thank you to all who lent their voice to this process, and for investing in a relationship with City staff as we work to achieve more, together.

³ ACP50s are Areas of Concentrated Poverty with more than 50% residents of color, originally promoted by the Metropolitan Council as a geographic measure of equity. For more on the move away from ACP50s, see [Rethinking Areas of Concentrated Poverty](#) storymap.



INTRODUCTION

The City of Minneapolis works to improve racial equity outcomes by developing and implementing policies, practices, and strategic investments to reverse racial disparity trends, eliminate institutional racism, and ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are no longer predictable by race.

Historic disinvestment, discriminatory policies, and design decisions have had disparate impacts on the people of Minneapolis. Practices such as racial covenants prevented Black, Indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC), in Minneapolis and across the nation, from owning homes and building wealth. Redlining resulted in segregated neighborhoods and stigmatized areas with high populations of immigrants and BIPOC. The construction of I-94 and I-35W displaced thousands of Minneapolis residents, many of whom were residents of color, and tore neighborhoods apart.⁴

These decisions and policies continue to have tangible effects on the socioeconomic, environmental, and public health outcomes of people of color in our city today. We see stark disparities between Black and white⁵ homeownership in Minneapolis and one of the lowest Black homeownership rates in the United States.⁶ Nearly half of the freeway length in Minneapolis passes through areas that were redlined (despite redlined areas making up 17% of the land area in Minneapolis);⁷ disproportionately exposing many communities of color to multiple sources of pollution and higher rates of asthma.

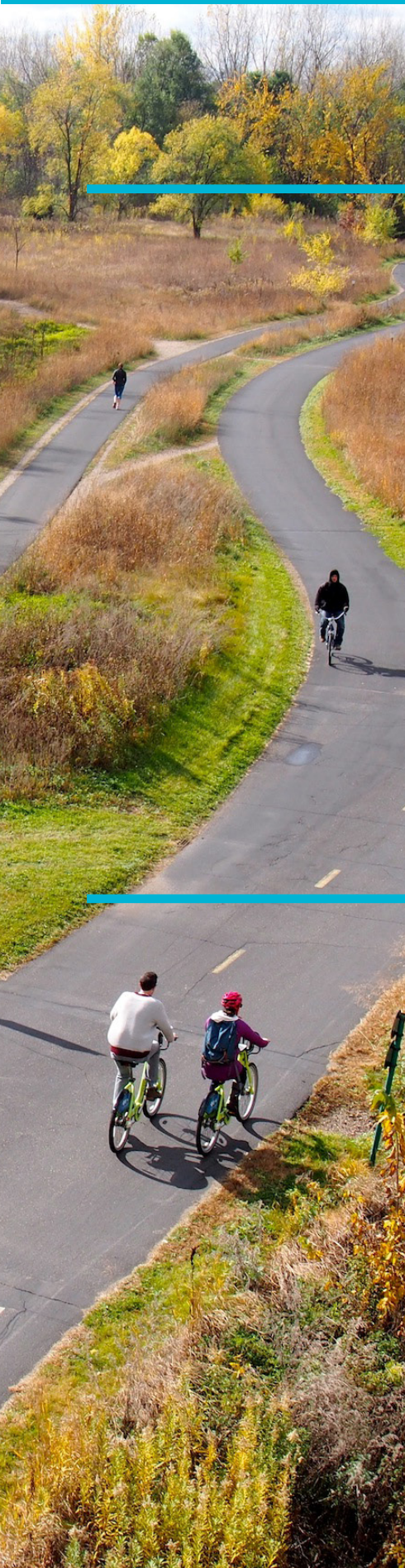
In summer of 2020, in the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, the City's Department of Public Works staff examined our own practices through a racial equity lens as the Department was completing the [Transportation Action Plan](#) (TAP). The TAP is the 10-year action plan to guide future planning, design, and implementation of transportation projects for all people however they choose to move around. Through the TAP, a clear path to implement the Racial Equity Framework for Transportation (REF) (see TAP [Progress Strategy 1](#)) was identified, moving the Department forward to envision and work to use transportation as a lever to create a city where racial disparities cease to exist. The REF serves as our guide to create transportation policies, practices, and systems that benefit all people.

⁴ Human Toll Exhibit, Hennepin History Museum, [Fair Compensation?](#) Greg Donofrio, August 17, 2020.

⁵ In the REF Black is capitalized while white is not. This approach is consistent with and rationale detailed in the [AP Style Guide](#), [Columbia Journalism Review](#), the [New York Times](#) and explained in The Atlantic article "[The Case for Capitalizing the 'B' in Black](#)".

⁶ National Public Radio, [Minneapolis Ranks Near The Bottom For Racial Equality](#) Greg Rosalsky, June 2, 2020.

⁷ University of Minnesota Law School Institute on Metropolitan Opportunity, [Redlining in the Twin Cities in 1934: 1960's and Today](#)



What is the Racial Equity Framework for Transportation?

The REF is a document that identifies community-informed racial equity strategies and actions to implement through 2030, aligning with the time frame established in the TAP. It is the culmination of work that began in the summer of 2020 during the drafting of the TAP. In July 2020, the Minneapolis City Council declared racism a public health emergency.⁸ This [resolution](#) outlines citywide goals related to reversing the legacy of racist policies and practices in the city. The work to incorporate this in planning, designing, building and maintaining street and other transportation projects is a part of building an active, anti-racist culture in the City of Minneapolis.

Transportation equity commitment

Minneapolis is committed to creating an equitable transportation system for all people.

Transportation equity means the benefits and burdens of transportation systems, services and spending are fair and just, which historically has not been the case. Transportation equity requires ensuring underserved communities, especially Black, Indigenous and People of Color, share in the power of decision making.⁹

⁸ City of Minneapolis Legislative Information Management System, Racism as a public health emergency ([2020-00717](#)).

⁹ This equity commitment is adapted from MnDOT's definition of transportation equity found in their [Statewide Multimodal Transportation Plan](#) (Appendix H, pg. 3).

Informed by community

Community input played a central and crucial role in the development of the REF. We partnered with the [Cultural Wellness Center](#) (CWC) to form and facilitate a Community Equity Workgroup (CEW) who served as important collaborators in developing this framework. Members represented a diverse cross section of residents and people with ties to various cultural communities in Minneapolis. The CEW members were compensated for their time and expertise via a grant through the American Cities Climate Challenge administered through the Cultural Wellness Center (see Appendix A for more details).

The CEW met in-person six times over a six-month period in 2022 to discuss, review, and refine key components of the REF. We began each convening with a meal provided by the CWC, allowing members to meet with one another and build connections outside of the prepared agenda. Members shared personal experiences as well as direct feedback that resulted in a stronger REF.

Meeting month	Discussion topics
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft components of the REF • Report back
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategies and actions in the REF
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity dashboard • ACP50 replacement¹⁰
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data and metrics
May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • REF purpose and goals
April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why a racial equity framework? • Historic and current inequities

¹⁰ Areas of concentrated poverty with more than 50% residents of color.

Ties to existing efforts

Existing City policies and plans laid the groundwork for the REF. The City's TAP establishes goals to guide transportation decisions within a 10-year horizon. The TAP called for the creation of the REF in [Progress Strategy 1](#) to tie the transportation work of the Department to citywide efforts to eliminate racism and achieve racial equity. The REF also complements and builds on other TAP strategies, including [Progress Strategy 2](#) "build trust and achieve greater outcomes through equitable engagement" and [Progress Strategy 3](#) "create transparent and accountable measures for evaluation of plans, programs, and projects."

Other citywide plans such as the comprehensive plan [Minneapolis 2040](#) set goals to eliminate socioeconomic and racial disparities and to create an equitable civic participation system. The [Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan](#), which built on Minneapolis 2040, established priorities that focus on the City's internal processes and how departments function. The Racial Equity Impact Analysis (REIA), created by the then Division of Race and Equity, helps City staff, departments, elected officials, and community members consider racial equity outcomes in the development of programs, policies, and processes. The REF builds from the goals of the REIA to provide racial equity guidance specifically for transportation plans, programs and projects within Public Works.

The Transportation Equity Priority (TEP) score was developed as a part of the REF, which replaces the use of ACP50 as the equity metric for transportation plans, programs and projects in Public Works. This score will be included in the forthcoming update to the 20 Year Streets Funding Plan and will impact how we develop our [Capital Improvement Program](#), which defines which projects the City will construct in the coming years.





Goals to guide the REF

The REF represents a commitment on the part of Public Works to support the City's vision of eliminating racism and achieving racial equity. The REF is guided by four goals with associated strategies and actions that we will pursue to advance racial equity in transportation.

1. **Build organizational empathy** – Develop shared language and understanding among Public Works staff on the importance of racial equity and how that focus impacts all parts of transportation work – from budgeting to planning, design, construction, operations, and maintenance.
2. **Lead with a racial equity approach** – Guide the engagement, evaluation, and implementation work of transportation plans, programs and projects.
3. **Build trust, cultivate partnerships, and share power with communities of color** – Clearly define strategies and processes to engage diverse communities, increase collaboration, and identify ways to measure positive change and impact.
4. **Hold ourselves accountable to data-driven reporting and adjustments** – Use data that shows results by race in transportation planning, projects, prioritization, and evaluation, tracking and sharing results with community and partners along the way.

These goals are rooted in the Transportation Action Plan, refined by Public Works staff, and affirmed and improved by the Community Equity Workgroup (CEW). Goal 1 was drafted through conversations within the REF project team as a needed internal component to complement the other three goals. Goals 2 through 4 align with the actions and strategies outlined in the Progress section of the TAP. During the CEW meetings, Public Works staff presented drafts of these goals and received feedback from the work group members, which then informed the final version of the goals.



GOALS

Goal 1: Build organizational empathy



Working towards equity requires a shared understanding among staff on the importance of racial equity. We cannot assume that we are using the same terms to refer to the same issues. Developing a shared language allows Public Works staff to be able to comfortably and directly speak about topics concerning race and equity, and to understand how Public Works' actions directly impact racial equity. Building organizational empathy requires action and transformation across all parts of transportation work and it requires us to have a deep understanding of our communities' needs.

Goal 2: Lead with a racial equity approach



Goal 2 is guided by Progress Strategy 1 of the TAP, which calls for Public Works to collaborate with the community and other City stakeholders to develop a racial equity approach and to institutionalize it while working on plans, programs and projects. A racial equity approach includes acknowledgment of past and current harms of governmental actions on communities of color, including direct harm from transportation projects and indirect harm through affordability, displacement and opportunities for wealth building. Leading with this approach means intentionally crafting strategies and actions to rectify these harms so that these communities can thrive. It also ensures that racial equity is considered from the start and throughout each step of a plan, program or project as it progresses in and with the community.