

## APPENDIX E: EQUITY FRAMEWORK

Preparation of this plan followed an equity framework based on guidance from Montgomery Planning's internal Equity Peer Review Group (EPRG), which is a part of the department's Equity Agenda for Planning initiative. The EPRG is a group of staff that stays informed of equity best practices to provide feedback on staff recommendations, planning policies, and community engagement strategies. The EPRG applies an equity tool to its review of ongoing master and sector plans based on recommendations from Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE). The tool involves working through a series of steps and answering questions, including an analysis and evaluation of:

- Desired Results
- Analysis of Data
- Community Engagement.
- Strategies
- Implementation
- Communication and Accountability

These steps are critical to ensuring that the growth and development in the Sector Plan Area are inclusive and benefit historically underrepresented communities.

### 1. Desired Results

#### ***Vision for Equity and Inclusive Growth***

The primary vision of the Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan is to create a more complete, connected community, and equity is central to this sense of connectedness. An equitable community where all residents—regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, geography, income, or immigrant status—can thrive is dependent upon factors such as: access to affordable housing, transportation, services, and green spaces. Desired outcomes to realize this vision include:

- Increased housing diversity, including affordable & attainable housing, to accommodate residents of all income levels.
- Improved transportation access through facilitating future Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and multimodal networks, ensuring equitable mobility for all residents.
- Enhanced environmental sustainability, addressing urban heat islands, and increasing access to green spaces in concurrence with the County's Climate Action Plan.
- This vision ensures that historically disadvantaged communities are included and acknowledges in the planning and decision-making processes.

## 2. Analysis of Data

### ***Who is Most Impacted?***

To achieve equity in the Sector Plan, it is essential to understand who is most negatively affected by current conditions and development trends. While there are limits to collecting and analyzing data on race, ethnicity, gender, geography, income, and immigrant status (REGGIIA), staff worked to reach out to the community during the plan's preparation through various means. Disaggregated data from a questionnaire and door-to-door interviews indicate that the outreach efforts have successfully reached a relatively representative sample of the population. (see Appendix X: Community Feedback Report)

- In the last 20 years, the Clarksburg community shifted from majority non-Hispanic White to a far more racially diverse community. In 2023, Asian residents comprised the largest racial group in Clarksburg, accounting for 40 percent of area residents, compared with 15 percent for the county's Asian population
- With large household sizes, incomes on a per capita-basis lag countywide per capita income.
- Certain neighborhoods in the Sector Plan Area face limited access to essential amenities, including parks and retail establishments. This geographic disparity is exacerbated by a reliance on public transportation, particularly among lower-income residents. The impact is notably more severe for individuals with disabilities, such as those who use wheelchairs for mobility.

## 3. Community Engagement

### ***Inclusive and Intentional Engagement***

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan's equity approach is grounded in meaningful and continuous community engagement, ensuring that those most affected by development decisions are actively involved in shaping the plan. The outreach and engagement efforts included in-person meetings and workshops held in the community and virtual meetings, as well as attendance at community events organized by others to 'get the word out'. Between June and August 2023, the planning team collaborated with the non-profit organization Everyday Canvassing to interview the community to gain an understanding of what the people of Clarksburg think about their community today and what they would like to see in the future. Everyday Canvassing attempted to knock on every door within the five large residential neighborhoods within the Sector Plan Area and a random sampling of residences surrounding the plan boundary.

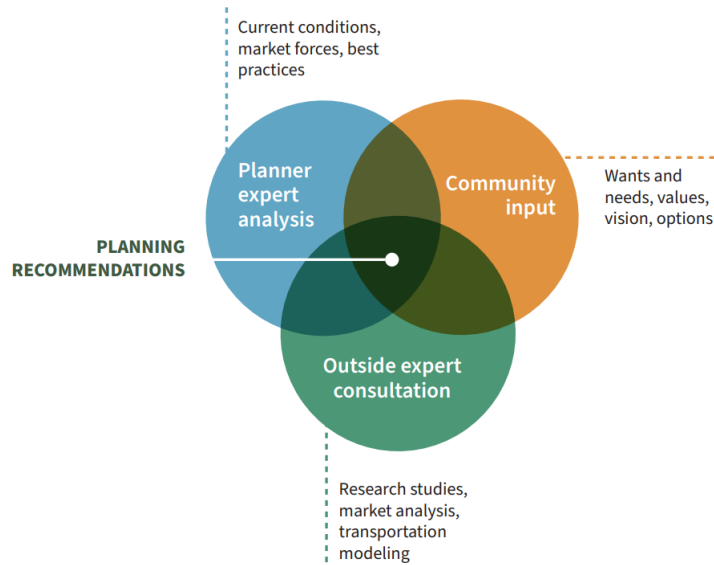


Figure 1: Community Input as a crucial piece along with Expert Consultation and Planner expertise.

Efforts were made to engage underrepresented communities through public meetings, surveys, and workshops. The recommendations that follow, reflect this engagement effort since community input is foundational to the planning practice in Montgomery Planning.

#### 4. Strategies for Advancing Equity

##### ***Recommendations to Mitigate Burdens and Maximize Benefits***

The Clarksburg Gateway Sector Plan outlines recommendations that are directly informed by the desired results, data analysis, and community engagement. These recommendations are designed to ensure that the community benefits from the plan while minimizing potential negative impacts. While plan's recommendations provide more detailed descriptions and explanations the text below highlights equity implications of key recommendations:

- Land Use and Zoning: Rezone residential properties to facilitate mixed-use development with varying densities and heights. This approach ensures that existing zoning regulations do not hinder the development of affordable and attainable housing, while also promoting mixed-use projects that can drive economic growth.
- Urban Design: Provide design guidance for the Sector Plan Area that builds on its unique residential, institutional, and commercial context. Higher design standards will also make multimodal access to existing facilities more likely. The plan's Community Design recommendations are geared towards fostering a sense of place and connectedness by encouraging vibrant and engaging spaces for community interactions.
- Housing: Provide for a mix of housing options to accommodate households with differing income levels, family compositions, and accessibility needs. Plan

recommendations also include promoting inclusive communities by removing barriers that restrict access to housing and opportunities based on protected characteristics, supporting equity by ensuring all residents have fair access to affordable, attainable, and diverse housing options in the area.

- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space: Create new parks and open spaces with redevelopment and enhance connections to existing parks to promote a livable environment. Retain current parks and explore the potential for their expansion and improvement to add more recreational amenities. These actions support equity goals by ensuring accessible shared spaces for all residents fostering inclusion and overall well-being.
- Environmental Sustainability: Protect and expand the tree canopy with native species, protect water quality by minimizing impervious surfaces and implementing innovative and effective stormwater management, and create a 'green', 'cool' built environment with sustainable features. These recommendations support equity by ensuring all communities benefit from environmental sustainability, improved walkability, and access to shaded comfortable public spaces that enhance quality of life.
- Transportation: Provide guidance for the Sector Plan Area as a multimodal corridor with bus rapid transit. Additionally, advance Complete Streets and Vision Zero principles to create safe, walkable, and accessible environments for users of all ages and abilities. Equitable access to safe crossings, micro-mobility, and low stress bicycle and pedestrian facilities ensures meaningful transportation equity.
- Community Facilities: Promote co-location of community facilities to reduce costs and use land efficiently, ensuring equitable access to essential services.

## 5. Implementation

### ***Communities in Implementation***

The implementation of the Sector Plan's equity objectives focuses on embedding racial equity into all aspects of planning. It also outlines the key strategies and action steps required to ensure equitable outcomes in all future initiatives. The aim is to mitigate historical inequities in the recommendations. Also, the planning process tried to ensure inclusive participation for all residents. Finally, the goal is to ensure greater accessibility and benefits for all residents (current and future) in the Plan Area.

Key to accomplishing this is ensuring that the recommendations mentioned above see meaningful action. However, plans do not directly lead to development or specify all development possibilities. Plans make development possible by managing regulations, envisioning a better future, and providing guidance.

Montgomery Planning offers consultation and research support to county agencies responsible for executing plans. However, Montgomery Planning does not implement these plans. Once a plan is adopted, the Montgomery County government coordinates its

implementation with relevant county agencies, partners, community members, and developers as needed.

## **6. Communication and Accountability**

### ***Tracking Progress***

The sector plan relies on systems of accountability to ensure that the goals of racial equity and social justice are advanced through the planning and any future development process.

As mentioned earlier, Montgomery Planning does not implement the plan, however it can play a crucial role in monitoring progress, coordinating stakeholders, and fostering transparency in any future decision making. To this end assessments about whether policies and projects align with equity goals can be led by Montgomery planning in the future.

Publicly available reports on these assessments foster transparency and provide opportunities for communities to hold decision makers accountable. Additionally, Montgomery planning frequently collaborates with various county agencies, private developers, and community organizations; these collaborations and relationships can be used to track progress and outcomes.