**AT-A-GLANCE: Fundamentals of Equity in the Sustainable Built Environment**

This summary document introduces students to key concepts regarding equity as a core component of the sustainable built environment. It is excerpted from the [*SLS Teaching Tool: Fundamentals of Equity in the Sustainable Built Environment*](https://sls.gatech.edu/fundamentals-equity-sustainable-built-environment)*,* which lays out class activities and assignments to help students consider equity more deeply and comprehensively as a foundational component of sustainability. The key concepts and the tool are grounded in the following three core documents: [Inclusion by Design (Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment [CABE])](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/inclusion-by-design.pdf), [NAACP Getting Beyond Green Report (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People)](https://mcgrawimages.buildingmedia.com/CE/CE_images/2020/oct/CESBS_Equity_Baseline_for_Building_Standards_July_2019.pdf), and the [SLS Teaching Tool: Introduction to Equitable and Sustainable Development](https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/introduction-equitable-and-sustainable-development).

**The Equity Fundamentals**

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| *Equity Fundamentals* | *Key Ideas from 3 Core Documents* | *Explanation* |
| **Culture: A Right to Belong** | *Access with dignity; Treatment with respect; Flexible, convenient, and accommodating; Universal access* | People must feel they have the right to be inside of and use a building. All equitable buildings, at the bare minimum, must be physically and economically accessible. They must be structured to honor and further local culture, activities, and values. Management must focus on using design, staff, and furnishings to foster a sense of belonging (diverse management helps significantly here). No equitable building will hold an offensive name or offensive statues, or other decorations or commemorations. |
| **Community Engagement** | *Relevant services; Inclusion; Health-promotion for at-risk groups; Your voice is a powerful and necessary tool in assuring that large development projects benefit existing communities and benefit nature; Infrastructure development impacts different communities in different ways; Values influence development decisions.* | The community and/or its leaders must be actively engaged throughout the building life cycle (design, construction, use). The building must seize every opportunity to engage and teach its local community. There must be a strong track record of involvement and listening. Training in design and planning can encourage people to act as ambassadors for the communities in the design process (IBD). Creating a balance between privacy and community vigilance is extremely important and requires thorough community engagement. Proposal must be communicated with the community effectively, using accessible, plain language. |
| **Enhance the Local Environment** | *Equitable emergency response; Infrastructure serves multiple purposes; Development decisions impact both human and non-human life.* | At the bare minimum, an equitable building will not negatively impact its surrounding natural or built environment. Ideally, the building will *complement* its natural environment by addressing local issues in its design (i.e. planting trees to improve air quality, being mindful of native species, providing gardening space if needed, etc.) and not introducing any environmental hazards. An equitable building and its surrounding sidewalk, parking lot, landscaping, etc. must be well-maintained as appropriate. Additionally, the building shall not introduce or exacerbate existing issues of high-volume traffic or noise. It will also complement its built environment. |
| **Economic Justice** | *Fair treatment of workers; Inclusion; Treatment with respect; Values influence development decisions.* | At the bare minimum, an equitable building shall not exacerbate income inequality. An equitable building will introduce jobs to the local economy as much and as appropriate as possible. Training and job shadowing should be offered to provide meaningful jobs and encourage long-term careers. |
| **Define and Track Equity** | *Define and track equity* | There must be a clear definition of equity with examples of what is considered equitable and metrics that are then tracked. Binding language that uses terms such as "must", "shall", and "will" must be used in place of terms such as "should" or "maybe". Accessible language will be used when detailing the metrics and measures of success. |

**Examples of the Equity Fundamentals**

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| *Equity Fundamentals* | *Example #1* | *Example #2* | *Example #3* |
| **Culture: A Right to Belong** | Ever the Land movie about Te Kura Whare: The Tūhoe people take pride in their relationship with Mother Nature. The distinctive arch at the entrance to the Tribal Chamber of the Living Building simulates the flight path of Tama-nui-te-ra (sun) across the sky, from east to west. The entrance is also highly acclaimed for its openness – it is meant to feel welcoming and inspiring to all its visitors. Natural logs serve as posts, beams, and trusses, emulating the forest and reflecting on the vital role that trees play in the wellbeing of Tūhoe people. 1) <https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/ever-land-living-building-documentary-guided-reflection>  and 2) <https://living-future.org/biophilic/case-studies/te-kura-whare/> | [NCCHR: The curvature of the walls of the National Center of Civil and Human Rights was inspired by the driving force of change: protests. It was "an evolution of the idea of interlocking arms." https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/](https://www.civilandhumanrights.org/) | ["America's Cities Were Designed to Oppress" explains how it can be dangerous to implement models of strict community vigilance such as those encouraged by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) because they can facilitate discrimination against black people for being "suspicious." "America's Cities Were Designed to Oppress" explains how it can be dangerous to implement models of strict community vigilance such as those encouraged by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) because they can facilitate discrimination against black people for being "suspicious." "The problem is when you are black in this country, you live daily with the heavy weight of the world’s distrust on your shoulders."  https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-03/how-to-design-justice-into-america-s-cities](https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-06-03/how-to-design-justice-into-america-s-cities) |
| **Community Engagement** | [The Living Building Challenge, through the requirement that two major project team organizations that must attain a JUST label, includes workforce development/training/community benefit agreements, registered apprentice programs, or similar programs. https://living-future.org/just/](https://living-future.org/just/) | NAACP Community Engagement Guidelines: There are a lot of frameworks and theoretical guidance and not enough clear implementation best practices created by and for people typically excluded from the process of design and development. This resource, the first of three we intend to publish, is written for community members, residents, tenants, and neighbors to get equipped. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/17lhe4T-U-hEAYOnkLqNM6GxpoqZtU98DMvkLp2ugB5o/edit> | The documentary does a great job of explaining how there can sometimes be a narrative of "them" vs. "us" - they also discuss how important it was for the architect (Ivan Mercep) to first ask the community for their design preferences before even having one of his own. https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/ever-the-land-2015 |
| **Enhance the Local Environment** | [Inclusion by Design - page 8: People living in disadvantaged areas are more likely to suffer the impacts from high traffic volume, with its associated noise, disturbance and poor air quality, and a greater likelihood of being killed or injured on the road. https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/inclusion-by-design.pdf](https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/inclusion-by-design.pdf) | [June Key Delta Community Center (great grassroots example, very environmentally sustainable and mindful of location) - transformed from a gas station; uses rainfall. https://www.portlanddeltas.org/jkdcc](https://www.portlanddeltas.org/jkdcc) | ICA Greenrise Building: Also known as the "ICA GreenRise Uptown Learning Laboratory”, the building demonstrates a creative culture for living and working among its diverse tenants, of nonprofits and 7th floor residents, while establishing an energy efficient eco-system that aims to take the entire building off of the grid. https://www.ica-usa.org/greenrise.html |
| **Economic Justice** | [Ever the Land movie about Te Kura Whare (case study draft complete): Some Tuhoe tribe members that worked on Te Kura Whare continued to work in the construction industry well after their work on the building. https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/ever-the-land-2015](https://www.nzonscreen.com/title/ever-the-land-2015) | [Growing Change (an example of flipping prisons) offers plenty of training and learning opportunities for things such as business, farming, aquaponics, vermiculture, etc. http://www.growingchange.org/](http://www.growingchange.org/) | [King County Sustainable Infrastructure Scorecard offers a credit for "advancing econmic justice" which could include a project labor agreement https://www.kingcounty.gov/about/policies/executive/peraeo/per131aeo.aspx](https://www.kingcounty.gov/about/policies/executive/peraeo/per131aeo.aspx) |
| **Define and Track Equity** | [NAACP Getting Beyond Green Report: This is a strong recommendation - but the NAACP is also still working to define what equity means vis-a-vis sustainable buildings. https://naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CESBS-Equity-Baseline-for-Building-Standards\_July-2019.pdf](https://naacp.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/CESBS-Equity-Baseline-for-Building-Standards_July-2019.pdf) | Equity Impact Review tool is a value-focused and data-driven process review tool. Its purpose is to ensure that equity impacts are rigorously and holistically considered and advanced in the design and implementation of the proposed action (plan/policy/program development, operations modification, capital programs/projects, etc.) <https://www.kingcounty.gov/elected/executive/equity-social-justice/tools-resources.aspx> | LBC Equity Petal lists several requirements that projects must meet in order to satisy the equity petal. Here, equity is not given a single definition but rather a few different options for defining equity in order to fulfill the intent of equity in a way that best suits the development site. https://living-future.org/lbc-3\_1/equity-petal/ |

**Core Documents**

Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment. (2008). Inclusion by Design. Retrieved from <https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/inclusion-by-design.pdf>

Jacobs, B., & Ederer, D. (n.d.). Introduction to Equitable and Sustainable Development. Retrieved January 01, 2021, from <https://serve-learn-sustain.gatech.edu/introduction-equitable-and-sustainable-development>

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. (2019, July). NAACP Getting Beyond Green Report. Retrieved from <https://mcgrawimages.buildingmedia.com/CE/CE_images/2020/oct/CESBS_Equity_Baseline_for_Building_Standards_July_2019.pdf>