

What is the Equitable Zoning Project?

Information for EDI RFP applicants

OPCD is exploring Equitable Development Zoning strategies to identify land use and zoning barriers to equitable development and support real estate projects aligned with the values of the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) that have encountered barriers in the City's land use and zoning policies. OPCD is working with partners to study several policies and practices that could advance public welfare, address regulatory barriers, facilitate project approvals, reduce cost and time, and increase predictability.

The [Equitable Development Implementation Plan](#) identifies six equity drivers that establish the City's interest in advance the welfare of communities who experience lower access to opportunity resulting from years of systemic inequities. The EDI program supports projects that provide community benefit by addressing these equity drivers. Many EDI projects are solutions designed by communities impacted by systemic and institutional racism. These community-driven rather than City-proposed projects do not benefit from early access to conventional urban planning expertise. The projects also may not adhere strictly to zoning and land use classifications designed for more conventional development patterns that don't emphasize broader community benefits. This disconnect occasionally creates additional hurdles for EDI projects to be able to execute on their community's vision within City-wide development goals where the original public purposes of the regulations are not being well served.

The Equitable Development Zoning project will explore, and hopefully test, several short-, medium-, and long-term strategies to help projects achieve their goals, including but not limited to:

- 1) Changes to land use and zoning rules that remove barriers EDI projects have faced and currently face.
- 2) A formalized rezoning process to provide additional needed density or allowed uses to help equitable development projects achieve shared goals without the time, cost, and uncertainty of current rezone processes.
- 3) Flexibility in existing allowable uses, through either simpler conditional use permitting or creating new, by-right equitable development uses.
- 4) Changes to permitting requirements and added permitting support to reduce the costs and time associated with EDI projects.

OPCD staff will contact project sponsors that indicate an interest in participating in the development of these potential strategies to identify and discuss the issues facing the project. If it seems like there is a possible match that brings benefit to the project's costs, schedule or feasibility, and the solution would allow the City to test potential solutions that advance equitable development, then OPCD hopes to work with the sponsor to design the strategy and provide technical assistance to help resolve the challenge. It is important for potential participants to understand that OPCD technical assistance is separate from City planning functions. Participation in the development of Equitable Development Zoning strategies does not mean that recipient will receive a permit or that any particular land use decision will result.

Projects DO NOT need to have received EDI funding in order to participate, so long as the project is shown to meet the criteria identified in the RFP Guidance.

