

Breakout Room Notes

Questions:

1. What are the possible ways you may be able to integrate equity into GDS?
2. What would need to change in your municipality or the energy system offerings to better integrate equity into a GDS?

GROUP 1 - Devanshi

Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

- Importance of having surveillance and tracking data to track equity-deserving groups
- Equity lens is so important for the health, economic, and environmental benefits
- PHUs have data on equity deserving groups and areas. Municipalities can collaborate with local PHUs to get that data on vulnerable populations and incorporate equity into GDS

Durham Region

- Durham Region is developing regional GDS
- How would regional municipalities vs. lower-tier municipalities implement GDS, and if both have it, how would that work? What is the interplay?
- We need collaboration through all stages of GDS development
- Example Issue: Whitby already has equity considerations in its GDS but what about the other lower-tier municipalities in the Durham Region who don't have it, can regional GDS address this gap?
- This shows the importance of adding GDS Metrics such as community well-being

King Township

- **Example: Township of King**
 - o Does have GDS standards, and they are getting updated currently to include subdivisions
 - o Equity in the King context could be useful
 - o Mapping out the equity-deserving groups is interesting for King, lots of higher-income folks, affluence, also lots of seniors
 - o So doing this work and understanding the demographics for implementing this into King's GDS
 - o Understanding what it looks like and exploring equity deserving groups to fit King township's community will be important

CEA

- **Issue Identified:** A lot of GDS targets single-family homes so those in multi-unit buildings are not benefitting from these GDS, and that disproportionately affects equity-deserving groups
 - o The barriers must be removed, and it should be easier to implement across building types
 - o Clear, standard guidelines help with messaging the importance of equity inclusions
- **Pushback on Affordable Housing:**

- o Developers don't want to build more affordable housing as it costs the same to build as regular housing. More government and other funding support is needed to subsidize affordable housing construction
- o A lot of pushbacks from developers regarding affordable housing across the board
- **Issue Identified:** Small municipalities worry that if they implement GDS, developers will move over to the next municipality, so it highlights the importance of regional GDS to prevent this from happening.
 - o GDS can make it more difficult for developers to find developing in that community attractive

Windsor

- Developed a regional stormwater plan
- Cut down on developers' complaints about requirements
- Was very uniform and clear on the climate change impacts that would affect the region
- Don't have GDS yet but do require an energy strategy for larger buildings
- It was observed that when developers are building the development to sell it, they oppose higher energy performance requirements. If they aren't going to operate it over the longer term, they are more willing to comply with the requirements as it saves on long-term operating costs.

GROUP 2 - Desi

General: No one else is advancing equity considerations in municipal plans/actions conversations so people are grateful we are!

Mississauga

- Have a volunteer GDS since 2012 with no equity considerations
- In the process of updating them and adding equity-related considerations
- Getting help from their EDI staff

Edmonton, AB

- GDS volunteer, no equity
- Having a retrofit financing program PACE that brought them thinking of equity and how it does not reach vulnerable populations
- Updating Zoning Bylaw – hoping to plug-in equity related language to advance overall equity

Markham

- GDS since 2014, no equity
- Updating the standards and opportunity for adding equity lens
- Adding equity in their Strategic Plan to strengthen equity lens
- Markham partners with Richmond Hill and Brampton on Integrated GDS – which allows changes to the GDS whenever needed (I believe without needing any council approval)

QS:

- Are there incentives for developers for purpose-build rentals and GDS?
- Is there a way for municipalities to tap into private capital to advance GDS/Equity/Affordable Housing?
- Can an Official Plan review with equity-related consideration language roll into equity consideration in other plans?

- What are other mechanisms to apply equity?

GROUP 3 - Gaby

Advancing equity:

- **Housing diversity:** If GDS are able to increase housing diversity (in terms of types and sizing of housing) then it will help achieve some equity advancements in that more housing options are available at different costs
- **Decarbonization & social housing:** Okotoks is advancing a social housing project with developers and has explored how decarbonization efforts can increase control of temperature conditions in social housing and how reducing the need for duplicative systems may be able to advance the use of heat pumps to provide both cooling and heating (and not having to have an air conditioner and a furnace – or even to enable cooling because the heat pump can provide both heating and cooling)
- **Infrastructure:** It would be good to learn more about how infrastructure is brought into new communities and how the infrastructure is paid for and how reducing the need for two systems can reduce the infrastructure costs and advance increase electrification of heating

Questions:

- **Vacant lands:** How might municipalities be able to make better use of vacant lands they own to advance affordable housing opportunities? Is there a municipality that has done that analysis of the opportunities for underutilized municipal land to be used to advance mixed income developments that advance a significant level of affordable housing?
- **Inclusionary zoning:** How is Inclusionary zoning working for those municipalities advancing it thus far? Would be good to learn more from the experiences of municipalities on this.
- **Verification:** Incentives can help drive developer uptake of GDS metrics but it is challenging to ensure that those savings are passed onto property owners. What approaches might be able to help with verifying that?
- **Housing affordability:** It would be important to have a conversation across the network around: are we expecting too much from GDS to advance housing affordability? Is it better to have an affordable housing plan and link that with the GDS? Is a more comprehensive housing affordability plan required to advance the GDS? What are the pros and cons?