

5. Guiding Principles



Youth-led art at MMSD's North Basin; Cr. MMSD

Process, Recommendations & Implementation

The guiding principles shaped the planning process and the plan's project recommendations, and they inform the steps for implementation.

These principles were developed through public engagement, feedback from project partners, and the foundation laid by past planning efforts.

Each of these guiding principles are related and together they lead to more informed, efficient and impactful projects.



From left to right: Promise Zone Ride 2018, cr. MMSD; CTC Off-street Trails Focus Group July 2019, cr. DCD; Pop-up ice cream event at Garden Homes Park, August 2019; cr. NWSCDC

Equity

Different neighborhoods have different needs and what works to help the residents of one community thrive, may not be enough for another. The goal of achieving equity is for everyone to reach their fullest potential, without barriers.

Equity and equality are often used interchangeably, but the difference between these terms is important.

Equality means everyone receives equal treatment and resources, regardless of their needs or assets. While a small portion of the population may thrive with such treatment, many will receive little to no benefit at best, and, at worst, may even be harmed.

Equity goes beyond simply treating everyone the same. Equity means that individuals and groups receive treatment or resources based on their individual needs or assets, or because they have been treated differently historically. The goal of achieving equity is for everyone to reach their fullest potential, without barriers.

The graphic depicts the difference between equality and equity. In the top image, two communities have received the same resources, despite their differing needs. While these resources work well for one community, there is not the right amount or type of resources for the other community. In the bottom image, both communities have received the resources needed for their community to thrive. It is important to note that the resources needed for a community to thrive can vary in cost, and there is a need to dedicate additional resources to the communities and people who need it most.

Connecting the Corridor projects should:

- Take actions toward achieving racial equity and transforming the systems and institutions of racism that impact the health and well-being of the community.
- Collaborate with partners and engage the public to ensure equitable implementation



Equality and Equity renderings were created by Matt Kinshella

Health

The World Health Organization describes health as “a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”¹ For the purposes of this plan, this definition of health will be used when referring to individuals or communities.

Health is often looked at in terms of access to healthcare, individual behaviors such as smoking or exercise, and genetic disease risk. In public health, these are called downstream individual health factors.

However, health is also impacted by social, environmental, and economic factors. In public health, these are called upstream factors, or social determinants of health.

Health Equity Lens

Health equity means everyone has a just opportunity to reach their fullest health potential. In contrast, health inequity means there are avoidable, unnecessary, and unjust health differences in a population.

Using a health equity lens means acknowledging that there are factors out of an individual’s control that influence their health - the social determinants of health. These factors include characteristics such as race/ethnicity, class and socioeconomic status, gender, and sexual identity. More broadly, there are systemic and institutional factors that influence health, such as legislation, government program rules, and inaccessible funding sources. Finally, there are factors that impact living conditions, such as safe schools and homes, transportation access, access to parks, air and water quality, and making a livable wage.

Enacting policies that impact the social determinants of health can change systems and remove barriers to good health, enabling larger numbers of people to be as healthy as possible.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought conversations and actions around health equity to a larger audience. Communities of color across the country have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and data continues to show how this impact is tied to health inequities. The CDC states “Long-standing systemic health and social inequities have put many people from racial and ethnic minority groups at increased risk of getting sick and dying from COVID-19.”² In Milwaukee, there is renewed attention and focus on addressing the root causes of health disparities impacting residents.

Social Determinants of Health are:

- Environmental factors that influence health such as access to parks and green space.
- Social factors that influence health such as racism, access to education, and overall social connectedness.
- Economic factors that influence health such as income levels, inherited wealth, and health care costs.

Connecting the Corridor projects should:

- Make improvements in parks and open spaces, streets, and transportation networks to reduce neighborhood health disparities and improve health outcomes for residents.
- Design green infrastructure and stormwater management installations to positively impact environmental health.
- Create streets that support mobility by modes other than cars to reduce car trips, improve congestion, and reduce air pollution. Air pollution can cause asthma in children and adults and it is linked to high blood pressure and heart disease.

1) www.who.int/about/who-we-are/constitution; accessed March 2020
 2) www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/health-equity/race-ethnicity.html; accessed July 2020

Safety & Accessibility

Reckless driving in the city is considered a significant risk to the health and safety of the Milwaukee community. Street design often enables dangerous driving, which has had disproportionate effects on neighborhoods of color, including in the CTC area. Because of this, alternatives to driving are often limited and unsafe for residents, sometimes leading to negative health outcomes.

Connecting the Corridor projects should:

- Make streets and public spaces safer for all users, especially the most vulnerable users, by applying complete streets elements, applying Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles, and building community cohesion.
- Reduce barriers that prevent neighborhood residents and employees from accessing schools, jobs, places of worship, parks, shopping venues, off-street trails and other destinations on foot, by bicycle, or on public transit.
- Integrate pedestrian and bicycle access when appropriate to provide the best connectivity for the public as possible.
- Increase the amount and connections to recreational amenities like parks and off-street trails; look to implement these features in stormwater projects to maximize the impact of the investment.

Sustainability & Resilience

The impacts of climate change with increases in flooding and pollution are felt unevenly in Milwaukee. These issues have long-lasting health consequences that disproportionately impact low-income neighborhoods and communities of color. Because of this, projects and actions in this plan need to take sustainability and resilience into account.

Sustainability means avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance.³

Climate resilience is the ability to anticipate, prepare for, and respond to hazardous events, trends, or disturbances related to climate. Improving climate resilience involves assessing how climate change will create new, or alter current, climate-related risks, and taking steps to better cope with these risks.⁴

Connecting the Corridor projects should:

- Increase environmental sustainability and resiliency, including managing stormwater, to reduce negative impacts to residents and businesses, improve water quality, and support natural ecosystems.
- Improve air quality by investing in the natural environment like trees and green spaces, and by creating streets and a transportation system that encourages the use of transportation modes other than driving in a vehicle alone.

Community Engagement

The projects in this plan have the ability to improve quality of life, build community cohesion, and increase community ownership and pride in the area. Community members are the experts in their community. Authentic community engagement during a project planning process ensures that projects are implemented in way that has the greatest impact for a community.

Connecting the Corridor projects should:

- Explore opportunities to create improved public spaces in all types of projects – streets, trails, stormwater, and parks.
- Encourage community centered programming of open public spaces.
- Invest time and utilize varying methods to engage with the community in planning and designing projects to ensure that the end product best serves the community.

During the Connecting the Corridor process, City staff and partners engaged the community in new and authentic ways. Community members provided specific feedback for near-term projects while also discussing general needs and concerns to inform new and long term projects. Community partners engaged with residents outside of public meetings through “pop-ups” at events and one-on-one discussions with community leaders. For City-led meetings, additional resources were provided to the community to help make meetings more meaningful. For example, a walk and discussion related to a traffic safety project along N. 27th Street was held in conjunction with a community resource fair.

Tying the Projects to Other City & Community Goals

The guiding principles and the projects in this plan complement and facilitate economic development. Economic development within the 30th Street Corridor that brings new family-supporting jobs to the neighborhood remains central to all planning efforts in the Corridor.

Development projects are traditionally judged on economic measures, including the number of new jobs created or property value added to the tax base. Connecting the Corridor projects are each designed to also have **environmental** and **social** benefits in addition to **economic** benefits. Here are a couple examples:

- A proposed new park that also incorporates stormwater management amenities achieves all of these benefits by providing an area for recreation, helping to reduce the risk of flooding and backups at nearby homes and businesses, improving water quality, and increasing habitat opportunities.
- Reimagining streets for people of all ages and abilities can also have positive impacts on economic development. Data are limited, but some cities have been able to track how Complete Streets lead to an increase in property values, the number of businesses, and employment levels. When a commercial corridor is a place where people want to walk and enjoy the environment, they are likely to spend more time and money in the area.

As Connecting the Corridor projects are being designed and implemented, these guiding principles should remain at the forefront to ensure projects are responsive to community goals.

3) www.dictionary.com/browse/sustainability; accessed March 2020
4) www.c2es.org/content/climate-resilience-overview; accessed March 2020