



CITY OF MILWAUKIE

Applying a Racial Equity Lens to CPAC's Housing Policy Review Process

While Milwaukie is a small subset of the greater Portland Metro area, oppression of people of color in the region is based upon historically discriminatory practices such as redlining and voter discrimination. While these practices are no longer legal, the generational impacts and trauma caused by these policies persist today in the form of lower household incomes and significantly lower rates of homeownership by people of color. Such housing patterns block access to opportunities for upward mobility and wealth-building further exacerbating inequality across other areas of livelihood. Current policies in the region continue to have negative impacts on the region's low-income communities and communities of color, manifesting as gentrification and displacement in their neighborhoods, continued racial profiling, and disparate school outcomes for youths of color.

It is useful to use racial equity as a lens to address social justice more broadly in organizational decision-making processes. Doing so not only helps address ingrained power dynamics between white and non-white populations at the institutional level, racial equity considerations also inherently address other social justice-related issues impacted by ill-considered – or historically nefarious - governmental decisions such as the city's low-income residents.

To pave a new path, Milwaukie needs to ask the tough questions and develop policies and programs that actively dismantle oppressive and burdensome issues unfairly placed on the city's vulnerable communities while replacing them with policies that center and uplift them. To do so requires the City and the Comprehensive Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) to evaluate strategy and policy considerations through the utilization of a racial equity lens. The following questions provide CPAC with the necessary considerations to help progress Milwaukie's vision for a more equitable community for its diverse residents.¹

The City of Milwaukie defines equitable housing as **diverse, quality, physically accessible, affordable housing choices with access to opportunities, services, and amenities**. As you work your way through this guide, please utilize this definition while also keeping in mind the following elements unique to Milwaukie as you frame your review and inform the desired outcomes we wish to achieve.

- Nearly 55% of people of color in Milwaukie are renters while nearly 41% of White populations are renters, making people of color disproportionately vulnerable to displacement due to escalating rents. Seventy-two percent of African American Households are renters.
- Approximately 45% of people of color residing in Milwaukie own homes while White populations have a homeownership rate of nearly 60%. Among African American households, there is a 28% homeownership rate².
- Milwaukie's African American population is more likely to be rent-burdened than any other race with a median household income (MHI) of \$26,452, well below the income needed to pay no

¹ These questions were curated via assessment of multiple racial equity toolkits utilized throughout the country and region. These include the City of Portland's Racial Equity Worksheet, the City of Seattle's Racial Equity Worksheet, Saint Paul, Minnesota's Racial Equity Worksheet, Portland State University's Strategic Planning Equity Lens, Multnomah County's Equity and Empowerment Lens, and Housing Equity Questions in relation to the City of Seattle's Housing Affordability and Livability Agenda (HALA) utilized by the HALA Advisory Committee.

² US Decennial Census, 2010

more than 30% of their income on housing (which would require a household to make more than \$46,040 per year). The MHI for White populations is over double at \$56,294³.

1. What are the specific housing equity goals set out by the Milwaukie Housing Affordability Strategy that the proposed strategy/policy is aiming to address?
 - a. **Goal 1:** Develop Units, aims to “increase the amount of housing affordable to people across the income spectrum;”
 - b. **Goal 2:** Prevent Displacement and Keep Affordable Units Affordable, aims to “stabilize and protect renters and homeowners by preserving existing affordable housing and increasing education and access to resources;”
 - c. **Goal 3:** Connect People to Existing Affordable Housing, prioritizes “help[ing] existing and potential residents find, qualify for, and access housing that is affordable and appropriate for their needs.”

2. What are the benefits and burdens that communities may experience with this strategy/policy?

3. What are potential unintended consequences?

4. How will this strategy/policy support the empowerment of people from historically marginalized communities?

³ ACS 2017, 5-year Estimates