

Thriving Communities Coalition Proposal for Comprehensive Planning

| | |
|--|-----------|
| I. Principles & Comprehensive Planning Mandate | 2 |
| II. Needs Assessment | 3 |
| A. Community-Level Assessment of Current Local Needs, Access to Opportunity, and Displacement Risk | 3 |
| B. Borough-Level | 8 |
| C. Citywide Assessment of Projected Future Needs | 8 |
| III. Goal-Setting Based on Need..... | 9 |
| 1. <i>Growth & Investment Goals By Place</i> | <i>9</i> |
| 2. <i>Addressing the Needs of Disadvantaged Populations.....</i> | <i>11</i> |
| IV. Creation of Comprehensive Plan | 11 |
| A. Land Use & Infrastructure Framework | 12 |
| B. Strategic Policy Statement | 12 |
| C. Budgeting | 13 |
| 1. <i>Ten-Year Capital Plan</i> | <i>13</i> |
| 2. <i>Four-Year Expense Plan</i> | <i>13</i> |
| V. Implement, Track, Report & Enforce | 13 |
| A. Implementation | 13 |
| 1. <i>Community Land Use & Infrastructure Planning.....</i> | <i>13</i> |
| 2. <i>Policy.....</i> | <i>15</i> |
| 3. <i>Budgeting.....</i> | <i>15</i> |
| B. Data Disclosure & Mapping | 16 |
| C. Accountability | 16 |

I. Principles & Comprehensive Planning Mandate

The goal of comprehensive planning is to increase the power of low-income and otherwise marginalized communities over the decisions that affect their future, to advance the equitable distribution of city resources, facilities, and new development. To advance this goal, the comprehensive planning process should be guided by the following principles:

- **Responsive and proactive planning** that seeks to correct historic divestment, meet the needs of current low-income residents of the City, and plan for growth in a way that will allow New York to continue to serve as a beacon of opportunity for future residents of *all* socio-economic backgrounds. To best meet current and future needs, planning must be coordinated with budgeting and policymaking such that all parts of the planning process and the resources of the City are aligned toward the same goals.
- **Fair distribution of resources and development:** Our communities call for an equitable allocation of burdens and benefits related to investment, infrastructure, new growth, and economic development that correct for historic disinvestment, marginalization, and displacement pressure to eliminate disparities across race, geography, and income. The goal of planning should be to ensure that every New Yorker has *equal access to opportunity*, regardless of where they live. To achieve this, planning must focus on *real outcomes for communities and people* – not identical planning treatment or level of investment, but strategies tailored to address existing inequality and help to ensure that all people can thrive.
- **Enforceable commitments – No more empty promises!:** Our communities call for the enforcement of commitments made to mitigate impacts from development and investment.
- **Integration without displacement:** Our communities call for the right to stay in and access neighborhoods with quality housing, good-paying jobs, and cultural and social connections. As part of this, we believe that *public land should be for public good*: used to create deeply and permanently affordable housing, including in high-rent neighborhoods that would otherwise be inaccessible to low-income New Yorkers.
- **Transparency and accountability:** Our communities call for transparent planning shaped by early and ongoing community engagement. The goal is not only to enable New Yorkers to participate, but to ensure that agency and City officials are accountable to the communities they serve, and to the principles outlined by this planning process.
- **Real community power and ownership:** Our communities call for self-determination in the planning process, community-led development, and solutions that are responsive to our identified needs and opportunities. Communities must be equal partners in the planning process, with the goal of planning *by*, not only *for*, communities. Community members must have opportunities to set the direction of planning in both their own neighborhoods and at the City level, and have a real voice in decisions.

Steering Committees

Community members must have opportunities not only to *participate* in the comprehensive planning process, but to *make decisions* that will impact their communities – and lives.

To achieve this, we propose that each borough be required to create a committee that will help to oversee and coordinate efforts at the community district level, and work with the Borough President to begin to identify priorities.

In addition, a *citywide* Steering Committee would collaborate with City officials to develop the specific criteria used to assess community-level needs, opportunities, and risks, and – at the point of creating goals for each community district – would help generate goals that account for both current need, and future growth. The Steering Committee would also help select from among potential land use frameworks and provide ongoing support for implementation of local plans.

These steering committees should be required to include people of color, low-income renters, immigrants, youth, and others historically excluded from planning processes. The citywide SC should also include community planners, affordable housing advocates, and other subject matter experts who can support community members in discussions of technical information.

- **A Right to Housing.** The goal of the City’s planning processes must be to ensure long-term and not just temporary solutions to the affordability and homelessness crisis. A right to housing would direct city policy to focus on permanent housing solutions, with a focus on serving the lowest-income New Yorkers, people who are homeless, and those most at risk of displacement. The City must plan for and create deeply affordable housing in every community and adopt a housing strategy that centers the needs of those with greatest need, i.e. people who are homeless and extremely low-income.

- **A balance between local self-determination and strategies that make every community a partner in building the future our City needs.** Each community has deep expertise and experience and knows its own needs best – and everyone must do their part to ensure that our City has what it needs to become a thriving, equitable city.

II. Needs Assessment

A. Community-Level Assessment of Current Local Needs, Access to Opportunity, and Displacement Risk

The City’s comprehensive planning process must start with a community-level assessment of each area’s opportunities, unmet needs, and existing displacement risk. This assessment should include both *quantitative* data – a common framework of information that will permit comparison among communities, and enable progress to be tracked over time – and *qualitative* data – narratives from community members on the ground who are most directly impacted by the City’s planning processes. Both types of data should then be considered when goals related to programming, investment in facilities & infrastructure, and growth are set for each community district. This community-level assessment – as well as additional steps throughout the comprehensive

planning process – would be guided by an appointed Steering Committee working in conjunction with the City. Community boards must also be strengthened, supported, and meaningfully representative of the communities they serve to ensure that the local-level needs assessment effectively engages local residents and accurately reflects local concerns.

Quantitative Data Collection

The quantitative assessment process must be designed to produce results that allow City actors and everyday New Yorkers to answer the question: which areas need what, and where should future growth be directed? Each indicator must produce data that contributes to planning that meaningfully addresses the needs of existing residents, increases access to opportunity, reduces neighborhood inequality, and plans for future growth in a way that limits the risk of displacement.

The creation of a comprehensive plan every ten years will allow the City to align its planning process with the release of federal Census data, which occurs every ten years. To the extent possible, the City should seek to account for known flaws in Census data, such as the undercounting of undocumented people, and use community data where available and sound.

Access to Opportunity

This analysis must include examination of community-level determinants of social, economic, and physical well-being across certain topic areas to be explicitly identified within the charter: Housing, Jobs & Industry, Education & Community, Transportation, Health, and Sustainability & Resilience. The Thriving Communities Coalition suggests that this portion of the analysis could specifically measure indicators related to:

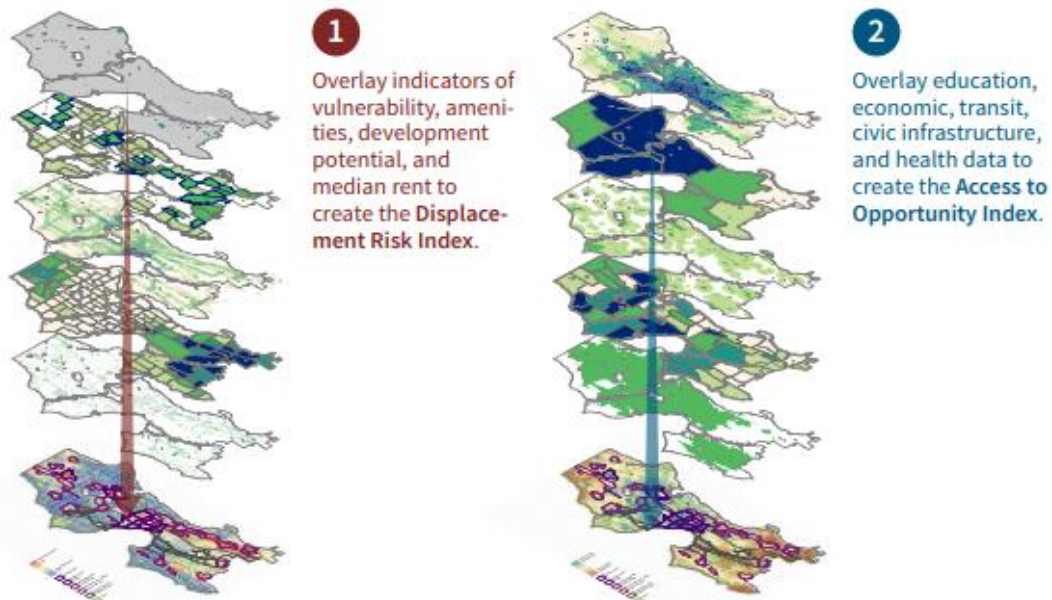
- Housing:
 - The amount and share of deeply affordable housing
 - The amount and share of rent-regulated housing
 - Existing development capacity
- Jobs & Industry:
 - Assessment of existing jobs in the community – full-time versus part-time, wages, etc.
- Education & Community:
 - Access to, and utilization rates of, community facilities such as elementary schools, intermediate schools, child care centers, libraries, and open space
- Transportation:
 - Infrastructure
 - Average proximity to transit
- Health:
 - Proximity to healthcare facilities
 - Access to parks
- Sustainability & Resilience

Displacement Risk

This portion of the quantitative analysis would seek to identify communities where risk of displacement is greatest. Among other indicators, data collected should assess:

- The share of moderate and low-income residents who are housing cost burdened or overcrowded
- Number and share of rent-stabilized units
- Any increase or decrease in the number of rent-stabilized units since the last such assessment
- Sale prices of residences in the community
- Alteration and demolition permits issued by the Department of Buildings
- Evictions executed
- Existing development potential in the community, based on the amount of development allowed by current zoning
- Median rent relative to the overall city average

Figure 3 Indicators combined to create a composite index of displacement



The City of Seattle's growth and investment strategies were guided by its assessment of displacement risks and access to opportunity in each community. See "Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle's Growth Strategy" (May 2016), available at <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/FinalGrowthandEquityAnalysis.pdf>.

Outcomes

Where the “access to opportunity” analysis would measure *determinants* that the City can directly affect through strategies such as affordable housing development or investment in transportation infrastructure, this portion of the analysis would focus on the *outcomes* for community members: what is actually happening in people’s day-to-day lives, and are the City’s strategies having the intended effect? The Thriving Communities Coalition believes that such an assessment is a critical part of developing *equitable* planning strategies that focus on the greatest areas of need, as opposed to examining narrowly whether investment has been *equal*. Indicators in this category could include factors such as:

- **Jobs & Industry:**
 - Average wages (an indicator of job quality)
 - Poverty rate
 - Share of people working fewer than 40 hrs per week
- **Education & Community:**
 - Levels of educational attainment
 - School performance
 - Graduation rates

Disclosure of Disparate Impacts on Disadvantaged Communities and Populations

The City should analyze disparate impacts across two axes:

- Disparate impacts on communities with large people of color and immigrant populations. After identifying the communities at greatest risk of displacement, with the least access to opportunity, and with the highest needs, the City should then identify which communities are majority people of color or immigrant communities.
- Disparate impacts on marginalized groups including people of color, immigrants, children, seniors, and people without a high school degree. This would require disaggregation of information collected during the “outcomes” analysis.

Disclosure of these disparities would enable City actors and members of the public to gauge the extent to which already-burdened populations continue to be negatively impacted by the City’s planning strategies, a factor that must be considered as projects and plans are prioritized.

Strengthened, Supported Community Boards

To effectively carry out the responsibility of assessing local needs, community boards need to accurately represent the communities they are serving and ensure they have the necessary resources to effectively engage the public. To ensure better representation, the charter, building off of the reforms passed in 2018, should mandate alignment between community board composition and the demographics of the district, based on available data. To ensure better engagement, funding for community boards should be increased alongside increased requirements for outreach and engagement, including but not limited to:

- Website management, social media, advertising in local press, events, direct resident engagement, translation services as well as childcare, and refreshments at meetings
- Yearly report from CBs on demographic changes, new projects etc (like a more robust community district profile)

In addition, community boards need increased staffing support to help them navigate the complex process of planning. Importantly, these staff should be attached to the community boards themselves, not the Department of City Planning, to allow local communities to operate as independent and equally empowered partners in planning.

Relationship to Existing Requirements in the Charter

The community-level assessments conducted as part of the comprehensive planning process would serve as a more detailed and robust version of the statement of community district needs that each community board must already prepare each year as the first step in the creation of the Citywide Statement of Needs.¹ Today, the charter requires that each community board prepare and submit to the mayor a statement of community district needs, including a brief description of the district, the board's assessment of its current and probable future needs, and its recommendations for programs, projects, or activities to meet those needs.² Our proposed process would require meaningful data collection and robust community participation to generate community statements of need, and would clearly define “need” to encompass assets such as deeply affordable housing that help make all communities accessible to the most vulnerable New Yorkers.

The requirement of disclosure of disparate impacts on disadvantaged communities and populations would build off of the report on social indicators and equity³ and the report on poverty⁴ that the Mayor is required to produce annually. The former report is required to analyze the social, economic and environmental health of the city, including any disparities among populations including racial groups and income groups, and use indices related to economic security and mobility, poverty, education, child welfare, housing affordability and quality, homelessness, health, and transportation, among other factors. The report must also contain a narrative discussion of differences and disparities “among the subdivisions of the city and of the changes over time in such conditions.” Finally, the report must examine

¹ New York City Charter Chapter 8: City Planning, Section 204: Citywide Statement of Needs.

² New York City Charter Chapter 70: City Government in the Community, Section 2800(d)(10): Community Boards.

³ Example here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/reports/social-indicators-report.page>

⁴ New York City Charter Chapter 1: Mayor, Section 16(b): Report on Social Indicators and Equity. [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny\\$anc=JD_16](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny$anc=JD_16)

disparities “which are significantly related to the jurisdiction of the agencies responsible for [certain city] services”⁵ including local parks, social services, housing code enforcement, and health services.⁶

The comprehensive planning process we have proposed would build on what is already in the charter and render it more impactful by requiring an in-depth, data-driven analysis of disparities, requiring subsequent portions of the planning process to specifically respond to the communities and areas with the greatest need, and involving community stakeholders in ongoing oversight of progress toward these goals.

B. Borough-Level

After data at the community level is collected and discussed locally, each Borough President should conduct a hearing where borough residents can learn the results of the assessments across their borough. This hearing would present an additional chance for residents to testify about the issues they view as most important – feedback that would be reviewed, along with the community-level data, in subsequent stages of the process. Each Borough President would be invited to prepare a statement summarizing the borough’s most critical needs and proposed policies, investments, and other strategies that could address such needs.

This statement could potentially align with other planning documents that the charter already requires or invites borough presidents to create, including borough-level Strategic Policy Statements (which must be developed every four years⁷) and/or comments on the Citywide Statements of Need (which are created annually; the charter invites borough presidents to submit comments to the Department of City Planning, and/or to the mayor in order to propose locations for new city facilities in their borough).⁸

C. Citywide Assessment of Projected Future Needs

⁵ New York City Charter Chapter 1: Mayor, Section 16(a): Report on Social Indicators and Equity.
[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny\\$sanc=JD_16](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny$sanc=JD_16)

⁶ New York City Charter Chapter 69: Community Districts and Coterminality of Services, Section 2704: Coterminality of Local Services.
[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter69communitydistrictsandcoterminal?f=templates\\$fn=altmain-nf.htm\\$q=\[field%20folio-destination-name:%272704%27\]\\$x=Advanced#JD_2704](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter69communitydistrictsandcoterminal?f=templates$fn=altmain-nf.htm$q=[field%20folio-destination-name:%272704%27]$x=Advanced#JD_2704)

⁷ New York City Charter Chapter 4: Borough Presidents, Section 82(14): Powers and Duties.
[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter4boroughpresidents?f=templates\\$fn=altmain-nf.htm\\$q=\[field%20folio-destination-name:%2782%27\]\\$x=Advanced#JD_82](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter4boroughpresidents?f=templates$fn=altmain-nf.htm$q=[field%20folio-destination-name:%2782%27]$x=Advanced#JD_82)

⁸ New York City Charter Chapter 8: City Planning, Section 204(f): Citywide Statement of Needs.

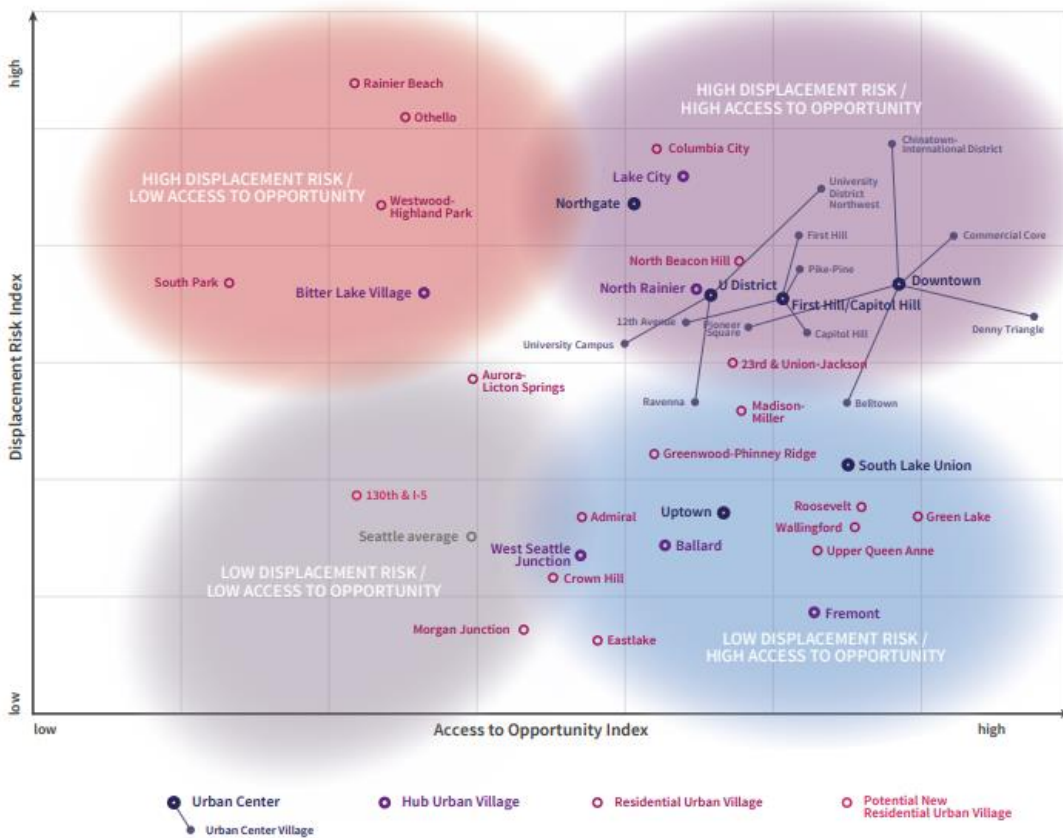
Where the community- and borough-level assessments would focus primarily on *today's* needs – needs that reflect decades of disparate investment in neighborhoods and people, and that point toward strategies designed to correct such inequalities – the citywide assessment should seek to project anticipated growth in the next 10 years, and the *future* needs that are likely to arise as a result of this growth. This projection of future needs should be conducted by the Department of City Planning and mirror the same categories of need assessed at the community district level – including housing, jobs & industry, and the other focus areas named above.

III. Goal-Setting Based on Need

1. Growth & Investment Goals By Place

At this stage of the process, the City would establish community-district level goals that would take into account both existing community needs, and projected citywide needs. We propose that the City create a neighborhood typology similar to the typology used by the City of Seattle to guide its growth, in which community districts are characterized based on their existing access to opportunity and displacement risk, and growth and investment strategies appropriate to each type of community are adopted.

Figure 7 Displacement Risk / Access to Opportunity Typology



In Seattle, neighborhoods were characterized on the basis of displacement risk and access to opportunity, and investment and growth were directed in accordance to these typologies. See *“Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle’s Growth Strategy”* (May 2016), available at <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/FinalGrowthandEquityAnalysis.pdf>.

Importantly, we believe that the charter should *require* the City to direct the majority of future growth to communities where displacement risk is low, and to direct investment – in infrastructure, services, and meaningful anti-displacement strategies – to communities where access to opportunity is lowest and need, as indicated by outcomes, is highest. As the City of Seattle notes in its Seattle 2035 plan:

To achieve equity, how growth unfolds is as important as the amount of growth ... The timing and pace of redevelopment can also influence the likelihood of displacement. Rapid changes can be more destabilizing for a neighborhood real estate market and therefore more likely to displace existing residents than a steady rate of growth that allows time for accompanying offsetting investments to be effective. If unmitigated, rapid market-rate redevelopment in high displacement risk areas is likely to exacerbate displacement pressures. Limited housing choice and supply in areas with low displacement risk and high access to opportunity is likely to continue to inhibit equitable access for marginalized populations.⁹

We believe that a requirement that directs growth to communities with low displacement risk and investment to areas that most need it balances the City’s responsibility to plan for underserved communities who are already here, while also creating opportunities for future residents of the City. As it plans for investment, the City should especially prioritize communities with populations that have been specifically and structurally disadvantaged over time.

In terms of process, **we propose that the Steering Committee work with the Department of City Planning and other agencies to set land use, budgeting, and policy goals for each community district.**¹⁰ Again, these goals would both seek to meet current needs, and account for each community’s share of projected future needs, including growth needs. Community district targets would include targets related to:

- The total amount of housing, and amount of deeply affordable housing, to be created in each community
- The creation or upkeep of community facilities such as parks, libraries and shelters

⁹ See *“Growth and Equity: Analyzing Impacts on Displacement and Opportunity Related to Seattle’s Growth Strategy”* (May 2016), available at <https://www.seattle.gov/Documents/Departments/OPCD/OngoingInitiatives/SeattlesComprehensivePlan/FinalGrowthandEquityAnalysis.pdf>.

¹⁰ The Progressive Caucus has proposed that targets for growth, investment and fair share at the Community District level be created by a new Mayoral Office in collaboration with the Steering Committee. The Thriving Communities Coalition is potentially open to such a structure and agrees that institutional support for the Steering Committee is critical to its success.

- Investment in infrastructure such as schools, transportation and health facilities
- Investment in anti-displacement strategies

The Charter would require that these draft community district-level goals be released publicly, followed by series of required, borough-based information sessions & opportunities for the public to provide feedback and suggested revisions. This process would be similar to, and expand upon, the review process already required for the Citywide Statement of Needs,¹¹ which is required to be made publicly available and the subject of hearings at the community board level. As with that process, members of the public, the borough presidents, and each community board would be invited to submit comments and proposals.

After this feedback had been collected, the Steering Committee could then adopt modifications, after which the Steering Committee, City Planning Commission, and City Council would vote - in that order - to adopt the goals.

2. Addressing the Needs of Disadvantaged Populations

The Steering Committee should also set goals related to improving life outcomes for disadvantaged communities and populations throughout the City. These goals would be addressed by near-term investments in City services responsive to those needs. Again, these draft goals would be released publicly and made available for comment before potential modification by the Steering Committee and a final vote to adopt by the Steering Committee, City Planning Commission, and City Council.

This process would build on the existing requirement in the charter that the Mayor annually create and report on both the poverty rate and the City’s efforts to reduce it,¹² and disclose “short and long term plans, organized by agency or by issue, for responding to the significant problems and disparities evidenced by the data presented in” the required report on social indicators and equity.¹³

IV. Creation of Comprehensive Plan

Guided by the approved goals, the City would then create a Comprehensive Plan consisting of four parts:

- **A land use and infrastructure framework** to set guidelines & targets for future development in each community
- **A strategic policy statement** to guide future policy and budgeting decisions
- **A Ten-Year Capital Plan** to guide future decisions about capital spending

¹¹ New York City Charter Chapter 8: City Planning, Section 204(f): Citywide Statement of Needs.

¹² New York City Charter Chapter 1: Mayor, Section 16(b): Report on Social Indicators and Equity.

[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny\\$anc=JD_16](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny$anc=JD_16)

¹³ Example here: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/opportunity/reports/social-indicators-report.page>

- **A Four-Year Expense Program for Service Delivery** to guide agency spending on contracts for services to communities.
 - The charter would also require that a percentage of each annual operating budget be put in an **Equity Fund** reserved for the communities and/or populations with the greatest identified needs.

A. Land Use & Infrastructure Framework

The Department of City Planning would create a high-level land use and infrastructure framework to guide future planning and development across the City. We propose that DCP be required to create several alternative frameworks that the Steering Committee be allowed to choose from among – all of which would be required to respond to the community district-level goals outlined during the “goal-setting” portion of the planning process. The City would then perform a Generic Environmental Impact Statement for the Steering Committee’s preferred framework. Pursuant to the GEIS process, there would be opportunities for public hearings, comments, and potential revisions before this GEIS were finalized. This process would not create a detailed zoning framework for each community district, but would instead provide a high-level outline of the amount and type of development planned for each community.¹⁴

Finally, the City would create a list of infrastructure projects required to address existing needs and mitigate future impacts disclosed during the GEIS process for the preferred land use framework.

B. Strategic Policy Statement

The Charter already requires that every four years, the Mayor issue a strategic policy statement that identifies the most significant long-term issues faced by the City, policy goals, related to those issues, and proposed strategies for meeting the goals.¹⁵ We propose that the Charter be amended to require the strategic policy statement to describe what policies and strategies will be used to advance the goals identified as part of the comprehensive planning process, and how. As is already required in the charter, the Mayor would be required to consult the strategic policy statements developed by borough presidents, and confer with the Department of City Planning in preparing this statement.¹⁶

¹⁴ As the Progressive Caucus has noted, such a framework would be similar to the City’s current waterfront plan, which provides a vision for future development of the waterfront that designates areas for different kinds of uses.

¹⁵ New York City Charter Chapter 1: Mayor, Section 17: Strategic Policy Statement.

[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny\\$anc=JD_17](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter1mayor?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny$anc=JD_17)

¹⁶ New York City Charter Chapter 8: City Planning, Section 191(b)(6): Department and Director of City Planning.

[http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter8cityplanning?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny\\$anc=JD_191](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter8cityplanning?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny$anc=JD_191)

C. Budgeting

1. Ten-Year Capital Plan

Our proposal would require the existing Ten-Year Capital Plan to advance the community district-level goals identified through the comprehensive planning process. Community boards, borough presidents, and agencies - all of which play a part in setting the City's capital priorities - would be required to respond within the budgeting process to the identified needs and explain how their recommendations advance the identified goals. For example, today, when agencies prioritize projects within the capital plan, program, and budget, they frequently use a matrix that looks at revenue, cost, timing, and other factors. Our process would require that progress toward the goals identified in comprehensive planning be included as a selection criterion and given weight when prioritizing capital projects, and agencies would be required to disclose how specific decisions are intended to advance the goals.

2. Four-Year Expense Plan

Today, planning for contracts for City services occurs annually as part of the expense budgeting process, but there is no longer-term, cross-agency vision for how service contracts will be deployed. The Coalition proposes that the charter mandate a *new* Four-Year Expense Program that would align City contracts for services with the areas and populations with the greatest need. Like the existing Four-Year Capital Program, the Four-Year Expense Program would set forth a detailed vision for several years rather than only one, allowing for competing priorities to be weighed thoughtfully and for long-term investments in critical programming to be thoughtfully rolled out over a longer period rather than only year to year.

V. Implement, Track, Report & Enforce

A. Implementation

1. Community Land Use & Infrastructure Planning

The Land Use & Infrastructure framework would guide all future community land use plans and zoning actions, whether City-sponsored, developer-led, or community-led.

i. Creation of Community Plans

Each community district would be required to create a community land use plan. Each community land use plan would include proposed zoning changes, and proposed siting of infrastructure projects deemed necessary to meet each community's current and future needs.

Community members would be deeply involved in the creation of local community plans, supported by strengthened community boards and the independent planners hired to work with each CB. In creating each community district’s local plans, each community would be given the opportunity to consider several potential scenarios developed by their local community board’s planner. The scenarios could vary, for instance, in proposed locations for facilities or new housing development – but all scenarios would be required to advance the community district level goals identified and approved in the “goal setting” phase of comprehensive planning, and to align with the higher-level land use framework. Through local hearings and other community engagement that would include, but not be limited to, hearings at the community board level, the community would select a preferred scenario, which would be adopted as the community land use plan.

ii. Expedited Zoning Actions

Community plans would not be automatically accompanied by concurrent rezoning actions. But once the City or community board decided to advance the proposed zoning changes, they would move forward per an expedited timeline, once they were confirmed as being in compliance with the land use framework.

This would allow the City and community boards flexibility in determining priorities for rezonings – a structure that acknowledges that the creation of community plans will be a time- and resource-intensive process that cannot be realistically rolled out in 59 community districts at once.

[Expedited Process for Land Use Actions in Compliance with the Land Use Framework or Community Plans](#)

- Upon filing documents with the DCP, the applicant would be required to submit documents defining how the rezoning action does or does not comply with the framework or community plan.
- Applicants whose plans were in compliance would need only submit any required supplemental environmental review analysis that might be required.
- Upon certification of the zoning action, DCP would certify compliance or non-compliance. Actions not in compliance would proceed through the existing ULURP process.
- Applications that did comply would be subject to an expedited process that would invite the community board and Borough President to hold public hearings and allow for modifications by the CPC and the Council.

*Note: this proposal for an expedited process largely aligns with the streamlined process proposed by the Progressive Caucus. However, because the Thriving Communities Coalition envisions the creation of community plans at a later stage in the process, we suggest that applications consistent with either the more general land use framework *or* the detailed community plan – whichever is then in place – be expedited.*

The Thriving Communities Coalition suggests that the passage of rezoning actions be prioritized in communities identified as having high access to opportunity and low displacement risk, where new growth can most easily be accommodated without triggering negative consequences, and potentially in communities where both displacement risk and current development capacity are high: areas that could be protected from overdevelopment through downzoning.

In areas where rezoning actions based on community plans had not yet been passed, private and public actions deemed in compliance with the more general land use framework for that community would be permitted to move on an expedited framework rather than the ordinary ULURP process (though local councilmembers, with the support of the Speaker, would have the option of calling up any specific actions they disagreed with). Creating this fast track for actions deemed to be in compliance with the broader land use framework would have the dual benefit of expediting actions that advance the community district level growth goals, and incentivizing communities that wish to direct growth at a more granular level to create community plans.

2. Policy

The four-year Strategic Policy Statement would be used by the Mayor, City agencies, and City Council to guide future policy decisions in alignment with the goals of the Comprehensive Plan. To improve transparency and accountability, the Charter should require that policy proposals include a written explanation of how the policy in question advances the goals, and meets the needs, identified in the community planning process.

3. Budgeting

i. Capital Projects

Agencies would be required to align annual capital budget decisions with the Ten Year Capital Plan.

ii. Expenses

Annual Contract Budgets would be required to align with the Four-Year Expense Program to direct City services where most needed.

In addition, we propose that each year's Contract Budget be required to include an *Equity Fund*: a certain percentage set-aside for the communities with the greatest identified need. This Equity Fund would help to guarantee that a certain share of each year's budget would go to the places and people

that need it most. This requirement would parallel the current requirement in the charter that allocates 5% of each year's capital budget among the five boroughs based on population and geographic area.

B. Data Disclosure & Mapping

The Charter already requires the mapping of facilities addressed in the Citywide Statement of Needs,¹⁷ and major components of the Ten-Year Capital Strategy.¹⁸ In addition, in recent years, the City has undertaken efforts to make other data related to its investments publicly available – for instance, via the Housing New York map.¹⁹

We propose that as part of the comprehensive planning process, agencies be required to collect and disclose capital and, to the extent possible, programmatic investments designed to advance the community district-level goals identified in the comprehensive planning process. To the greatest extent possible, this information should be mapped in a way that allows community members understand the investments in their neighborhoods and progress toward completion of multi-year capital projects.²⁰ Much agency reporting is not organized this way today, making it difficult for everyday people to know what is going on (and not) in their community.

C. Accountability

We believe that the comprehensive planning process we have outlined will succeed only if the City creates oversight bodies to ensure the plan's success, dedicates resources to these oversight bodies, and relies on deep and meaningful community participation to help see through the successful implementation of the multi-faceted components of each community plan.

We are still working to develop a long-term vision for oversight and accountability. As initial ideas, we suggest that both the citywide Steering Committee, and borough-level committees we have envisioned be supported as permanent bodies supportive of comprehensive planning, rather than appointees who would serve only during the period in which the comprehensive plan is created. These bodies should be required to host annual community hearings where progress toward district-level goals can be discussed and priorities for the forthcoming year identified. In addition, we propose that the City create an inter-agency coordinating group to help facilitate the actions of agencies as they carry out the plan. Finally, we join the Progressive Caucus's call for the creation of a dedicated Mayoral Office to help support and oversee the creation and execution of the Comprehensive Plan.

¹⁷ New York City Charter Chapter 8: City Planning, Section 204(d): Citywide Statement of Needs.

¹⁸ New York City Charter Chapter 9: Capital Projects and Budget, Section 215: Ten-Year Capital Strategy. [http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter9capitalp rojectsandbudget?f=templates\\$fn=default.htm\\$3.0\\$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny\\$anc=JD_215](http://library.amlegal.com/nxt/gateway.dll/New%20York/charter/newyorkcitycharter/chapter9capitalp rojectsandbudget?f=templates$fn=default.htm$3.0$vid=amlegal:newyork_ny$anc=JD_215)

¹⁹ <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=192d198f84e04b8896e6b9cad8760f22>.

²⁰ A similar idea, a NYC Capital Projects Tracker, has been proposed by Councilmember Brad Lander as [Intro 113](#). The Thriving Communities Coalition suggests that a Capital Projects Tracker not only be established, but *required* as part of the comprehensive planning process within the charter.