

Transformation Alliance Guiding Document

The Transformation Alliance's member organizations and agencies are dedicated to ensuring that opportunities and benefits provided by transit investment in communities are made available to ALL residents – present and future. Through a collaborative structure, the Alliance makes decisions about direction, activities and resource allocations. The Alliance's strength comes from weaving a range of partners into roles that best aligns with their mission, goals and priorities.

Theory of Change

Historically, local and regional infrastructure investments in Atlanta have been made in ways that divided neighborhoods and limited opportunities for people on one side of the divide, often people of color or those who are low-income. Our region's social and economic dynamics are directly tied to geography, concentrated poverty, extensive traffic, and an inadequate public transit system – together, all of these things make it extremely difficult to access opportunities. Metro Atlanta has a once in a lifetime opportunity to invest in transit infrastructure that could reshape the built environment for generations. Over the next decade, \$3 billion will be spent on transit and infrastructure, fueling investments and driving changes in housing, health, resiliency, the built environment, and people's experience of place & culture.

As these major new investments in transportation and community development are made, the TransFormation Alliance wants to ensure that your zip code will no longer determine your destiny. By creating a New Atlanta Way for transit and community development investments the Alliance seeks to alter the inequitable development trajectory of our region. This New Atlanta Way will be underpinned by racial equity which is responsive to people within impacted communities, by investing in arts & culture, and by shaping better health and climate outcomes.

Definitions. *The following definitions are important to understand how this information guides our work and commitments.*

Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD)

Transit Oriented Development (TOD) is an approach that prioritizes the preservation and creation of housing, schools, jobs and health outcomes around transit. Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD) combines the TOD approach with an equity lens, to ensure that the development serves vulnerable communities.

Racial equity

Racial equity is the condition that would be achieved if one's racial identity no longer predicted, in a statistical sense, how one fares in life. Achieving such a condition requires addressing root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes and cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes by race, intentionally or not.

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Structural racism

Structural racism is the dynamic process that creates cumulative and durable inequalities based on race, which is itself a social construct. Interactions between individuals are shaped by and reflect underlying, and often hidden, assumptions that shape biases and create disparate outcomes even in the absence of racist actors or racist intentions. We can see the presence of structural racialization in the consistent differences in outcomes in education attainment, family wealth and even life span between races.

Gentrification

Gentrification is a process of renewal of deteriorated urban neighborhoods by means of the influx of more affluent residents. Gentrification is typically the result of increased interest in the neighborhood. In the case of Atlanta, this is a result of major infrastructure investments in transit and community development. Gentrification can result in economic development, increased attraction of business and lower crime rates, but unfortunately gentrification likely leads to displacement of lower-income families without appropriate policies and financial incentives.

Creative Placemaking

In creative placemaking, partners from public, private, nonprofit, and community sectors strategically shape the physical and social character of a neighborhood, town, city, or region around arts and cultural activities. Creative placemaking animates public and private spaces, rejuvenates structures and streetscapes, improves local business viability and public safety, and brings diverse people together to celebrate, inspire, and be inspired.

Guiding Principles. *Our guiding principles directs our collaborative practices and how we work together, regardless of changes in its goals, strategies, or governance.*

Leading with Racial Equity

We acknowledge that decisions were, and are, based on structural racism and we will work to change power dynamics and policies to address this issue through various lenses. We acknowledge that decisions made about the built environment have disproportionately impacted vulnerable communities. We will advocate for preservation of existing residents to benefit for the improvements in their neighborhoods.

Collaboration

Collaboration between people, organizations and entities requires working toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed upon division of work and accountability. We can only achieve our goals through clear and inclusive communication, and partnership with a wide spectrum of stakeholders. We acknowledge the limits of our own understanding, recognizing that what we bring to the table is only a small part of the puzzle. We act with integrity by engaging people from diverse disciplines as contributors to the process and the outcomes.

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The Alliance was built on the understanding that collaboration is our greatest resource, strengthening our existing ecosystem of nonprofits, government agencies and other partners. Successful collaboration requires acknowledging the value of all people and organizations regardless of capacity, leveraging existing work and resources to create alignment, intentionally and generously uplifting partner organizations, and elevating our shared TFA platform and work plan to supporters and funders.

Transparency

We commit to ensuring transparency by working together to be specific about decision making processes, partner roles and responsibilities.

We commit to advocating for transparency and sharing information whenever possible to empower all partners. Partners agree to share information received, or actions taken, as long as sharing such information does not violate organizational confidentiality, undermine organizational interests, or compromise constituencies. We acknowledge that some information is confidential and cannot be shared.

We seek to collect data and evidence that can objectively inform decision making—this includes research directly related to an issue AND knowledge of different perspectives. Given our efforts to be responsive, efficient and maintain momentum, we will strive to consult with each other—via calls or in-person meetings—on relevant issues and determine the most appropriate strategy, rather than taking independent, uncoordinated action. We believe there is value in dialogue—though it's not always possible or necessary to speak with a single voice, we want to build trust and maintain relationships by clarifying self-interest, sharing the positions of different constituencies, and being transparent about where we agree/disagree.

Respect

We begin from a place of trust in order to build trust – we commit to assuming positive intent between partners. We are attentive to how we approach every form of communication. We seek to be clear about what we know and don't know, and what we are asking of others. We treat everyone as we would like to be treated, and encourage others to do the same.

We strive to resolve conflicts constructively, either one-on-one or through facilitated discussions with Alliance members or facilitators. We create an environment that propagates respect and celebrates collective learning and discovery. To facilitate learning, we will create a sharing platform for knowledge exchange from one organization to the other. We will respect community and the people that live in them, empowering community members to share their history and wisdom and be a part of the decision making.

Strengthening Atlanta's Civic Infrastructure

Nonprofits play a critical role in Atlanta's push toward a more equitable city and region. However, the majority are often confronted with capacity-building challenges. Long-term support for Atlanta's leading nonprofits is required to ensure the resiliency and sustained impact of these organizations. The strength of the TransFormation Alliance depends on the strength of its members. We strive to raise the public awareness of member organizations while working to increase their capacity via resource development, training and technical support.

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Sharing of Resources

We understand that nonprofits vary drastically in influence, need and operational capacity. This understanding requires a deep sensitivity to the dynamics of power and capacity among TransFormation Alliance members. Alliance leadership will strive to ensure the assets of the Alliance are leveraged in ways that promote the equitable distribution of resources and leadership opportunities.

Key Perspectives Driving Our Work

Our work will strengthen communities through Equitable Transit Oriented Development (ETOD). The below perspectives are how we accomplish the TransFormation Alliance's work:

People: We seek to ensure that the lives of community members are improved, community leaders are empowered by knowledge, data, and development processes which reflect authentic community voice in design and decision making. We work to create a model that sufficiently funds and includes processes for achieving authentic community partnership in the development process.

Arts and Culture: As creativity and creative expression illuminate individual and interpersonal experience, arts and culture is a key tenet of the TransFormation Alliance's activities. Arts and culture impacts our economy, health, environment and social fabric. We will use Arts and Culture as a platform for community discussions and engagement. Arts, culture and creative expression play a pivotal role in community development to stabilize disruption and preserve community culture.

Transportation and Job Access: We advocate for projects and funding to maintain our existing transit system, its connectivity to other transportation modes and responsibly expand access to our transit infrastructure. We work to ensure workers of all wage levels and demographics can access high quality jobs and employers have access to qualified workers.

Housing Choice and Innovative Capital Finance: We coordinate resources to facilitate ETOD projects. We will advocate for policies and resources that create and preserve affordable living options near transit.

Climate and Health. We will work to create new sustainability and resiliency policies, including green and efficient housing, clean energy resources, green infrastructure, healthy food access and introduce a range of recreational programming. In addition we will build out capital deployment mechanisms for equitable, green and healthy investments.

Our Core Activities

Convene: We are committed to partnering with others and facilitating conversations that result in positive change.

Educate: We engage and empower communities affected by transit development to ensure their voices are heard and included in decision-making processes.

Advocate: We promote policies and practices that drive ETOD and improve transit connectivity for people throughout metro Atlanta.

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Technical Assistance: We develop tools to inform, catalyze and support ETOD that reflect sound value propositions and the input of residents.

Project Finance: We seek to leverage financing solutions that encourage development partners to include ETOD principles and design in their projects.

Community/Cultural Organizing: We facilitate the coordination of cooperative efforts carried out by local residents to promote the interests of their community. In addition we use cultural organizing to integrate arts and culture into organizing strategies. Cultural organizing is about organizing from a particular tradition, cultural identity, community of place, or worldview reflecting the unique cultural, artistic, organizational and community context of its practitioners.

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