

Instructions for self-assessment

This self-assessment is the first step in developing a well-rounded picture of community conditions, concerns, and issues related to equitable development. The self-assessment uses qualitative free-response questions, quantitative data analysis, and a community survey as the foundation for determining the appropriate strategies and tools to meet the community's needs and desires. This self-assessment includes three main components:

1. The **QUESTIONNAIRE** includes *qualitative research questions* related to housing, businesses, and jobs, as well as a checklist of existing tools. Each question represents an important component to understanding baseline conditions and change in the study area.
2. The **DATA ANALYSIS** section includes *quantitative indicators of change* for each topic area. Please use the data analysis summary to identify which indicators have been collected. Detailed methods and an excel worksheet are included as an appendix to this document to assist in the data analysis. The indicators are separated into two categories:
 - a. **Required indicators:** These indicators are considered essential to understanding change in your community. Detailed instructions for obtaining these data are included in the appendix to this document.
 - b. **Optional indicators:** These indicators are desirable, but not required. Links to data sources are provided in the appendix.
3. The **COMMUNITY SURVEY** is intended to gather broader community input regarding what is important about the neighborhood, as well as goals and concerns regarding change. Ideally, this survey would be administered to community members by the Task Group, with results compiled ahead of the workshop. Alternatively, this survey can be administered to community members through facilitated discussion, breakout groups or in written form at the community workshop.

Please use this word document to fill out the self-assessment free-response questions and checklist, and follow the directions in the appendix for gathering and presenting the quantitative indicators (some of which can be presented in the included Microsoft Excel file). Also keep the following in mind:

- Wherever possible, please coordinate across relevant departments and agencies (economic development, planning, parks, public works, housing authority, community services etc.) to provide responses that reflect the range of programs and policies that have the potential to impact the future of the neighborhood.
- Please reference relevant plans and policy documents where appropriate, and explain where plans or policies may be in flux or changing direction.
- Please identify instances in which there may be conflicting perspectives or policies on an issue.

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- Do your best to answer the questions both qualitatively and based on available or requested data, but feel free to note when information is not available for a response.

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Questionnaire

Please type responses in the grey boxes below each question. Use as much space as needed to provide a complete response – the boxes will expand as necessary. For questions with a Yes/No/Unknown response option, please place an X in the appropriate box. Free-form responses to these questions are also encouraged in the grey boxes below the question.

General Context and Drivers for this Neighborhood

What are the city or community's current housing goals or vision for development, redevelopment, affordability, and preservation?

What are the city or community's current goals or vision for economic development, access to employment, commercial growth etc.?

What public and private investments have been made or are planned?

What land use and economic development policy changes are planned or have been recently adopted?

Is the study area population changing and if so, how?

What are the community's concerns about change?

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Housing Preserve and create affordable housing

Research Question	Yes	No	Unknown
Are there affordable homeownership opportunities?			
Is the neighborhood experiencing high foreclosure rates or high-risk loans?			
Have typical rents changed in recent years? If so, how?			
Have income levels changes in recent years? If so, how?			
Is there Section 8 housing located in the neighborhood? If so, is it due to expire?			
Have ownership housing prices changed in recent years? If so, how?			
Is new housing development/redevelopment occurring? Please list any relevant projects, including location, number and type of units and typical rents.			
Is the ratio of rental and homeownership changing? If so, how?			

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Business+ Cultural Retain small businesses and cultural identity

Research Question	Yes	No	Unknown
Have commercial lease rates changed in recent years? If so, how?			
Is the physical condition of the local building stock a problem for neighborhood businesses?			
Is lack of financing opportunities (for improvements, expansion etc.) a significant problem for commercial businesses?			
Is loss of customer base a major problem for local businesses?			
Have historic, locally-owned or culturally significant commercial businesses been replaced by national chain retailers?			
Does the business community in the study area serve the needs of local residents? If not, what's missing?			
What are the main challenges existing local businesses may be facing?			
Have any significant cultural institutions or amenities recently been lost due to closure, demolition, or moving?			
Why did this loss occur?			
What are the primary neighborhood meeting places, such as parks, community centers, barbers, churches, grocery stores?			
Are these places associated with any particular group or culture?			

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What are the major community and cultural organizations in the study area? What are their roles/missions?

Jobs Improve access to high quality employment opportunities

Research Question	Yes	No	Unknown
Do local residents have access to high quality jobs – i.e. those which provide a living wage and are aligned with residents’ skills and education levels?			
Are there adequate transit connections to regional employment centers?			
What kinds of employment opportunities are located within the study area?			
Where do most study area residents work? What kind of industries do they work in?			
What educational and skill level do most study area residents have?			
Is the study area close to places with high concentrations of employment, such as a central business district, manufacturing center, or major hospital or other institution?			
What are the opportunities and barriers to employment for local residents?			
What are the post-secondary educational opportunities in or near the study area?			

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Checklist of Existing Tools

Please indicate which policies and tools are already in place in your community by placing an **X** in the box to the left. In the “other” section, please note any existing tools not included in the checklist, or any tools you’re specifically interested in learning more about.

Housing: Maintain and Increase Affordable Housing

	Rent control regulations
	Limitations on converting rental units to condominiums
	City or county-based first-time homebuyer assistance/education
	Housing rehabilitation assistance
	Community land trust
	Housing trust fund
	“Inclusionary” zoning that requires developers to provide below-market housing
	Zoning incentives for providing affordable housing
	Simplified/fast-track permitting process for affordable housing
	Fee waivers/reductions/deferrals for affordable housing projects
	Tax abatements/forgiveness for affordable housing projects
	Affordable housing impact fee for new development
	History of negotiating community benefit agreements for new development
	Other:

Business and Culture: Retain Small Businesses and Cultural Identity

	Technical assistance to small business owners
	Preference for local and small businesses for public contracts
	Grants or low-interest loans for commercial rehabilitation and/or tenant improvements
	Short-term rental assistance or working capital for small businesses
	Presence of community development credit unions
	Zoning regulations encouraging/requiring local, small businesses
	Zoning/density bonuses for developers including community amenities
	Zoning/density bonuses for developers setting aside space for small businesses
	Other:

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Jobs: Improve access to high quality employment opportunities

	Living wage ordinance
	Local hiring requirements for publicly-funded projects and/or in community benefits agreements
	Other:

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SUPPORTING EQUITABLE DEVELOPMENT

Data Analysis Summary

An excel workbook is provided with detailed instructions for gathering data on the following indicators. Please fill in the following table with a summary of findings and insights.

Metric <i>(Italics indicates optional indicator)</i>	Considerations	Findings
Housing		
Change in income distribution, 2000-2010	Are incomes rising or falling, within the upper, middle, and low-income ranges?	
Change in household tenure, 2000-2010	Is the share of rental or ownership households increasing/decreasing?	
Inventory of existing affordable housing stock	Does the community include a high concentration of subsidized housing units, as a share of such units citywide?	
<i>Change in ethnic composition, 2000-2010</i>	What races/ethnicities are decreasing or increasing as a share of the population? Does this trend mirror citywide trends, or is it different?	
<i>Inventory of expiring Section 8 and Section 202 housing</i>	Is a high share of subsidized housing units at risk of loss of affordability due to expiring contracts?	

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<i>Foreclosure risk index</i>	Is there a high level of foreclosure risk in the community compared to other parts of the city and region?	
Business + Cultural		
<i>Current commercial rents and sales prices, relative to the city average</i>	Are rents/sales prices higher or lower than the city average for each major commercial use (i.e. retail, office, warehouse, manufacturing space)?	
<i>Current commercial vacancy rates, relative to the city average</i>	Does the neighborhood have a higher commercial vacancy rate compared to the city average for retail, warehouse, and/or manufacturing space?	
<i>Change in commercial rents and sales prices, relative to the city average</i>	Have commercial rents declined or risen at a higher rate than the city average?	
<i>Change in commercial vacancy rates, relative to the city average</i>	Have commercial vacancy rates declined or risen at a higher rate than the city average?	
<i>Business turnover rate</i>	Are businesses experiencing high turnover and/or instability? What kinds of businesses are replacing previous businesses?	
<i>Map of cultural institutions and meeting places</i>	Are there cultural institutions that provide services or represent specific cultures? What cultures? What kinds of institutions and meeting places exist? Are they public or private places? Are they commercial, public, or non-profit?	
Jobs		
Citywide employment map	Is there a concentration of employment in the community? How far are major employment concentrations?	

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Study area resident commute map	Where do community residents work? Do they work in those areas of concentrated employment? Are residents well-connected to employment concentrations via roadways and/or public transportation?	
Current resident education profile	How well-educated are residents relative to the citywide population?	
<i>Profile of regional or citywide employment opportunities by sector</i>	In what industries are jobs concentrated? Are community residents well-prepared for the skills required in those industries?	
<i>Study area employment map</i>	Is there a high concentration of employment in the community itself?	
<i>Profile of study area employment opportunities by sector</i>	In what industries are study area jobs concentrated? Are community residents well-prepared for the skills required in those industries?	
<i>Map of public transportation connections</i>	How well does public transportation connect residents to the places in which they work? To major employment concentrations in the city/region?	
<i>Share of automobile-owning households</i>	Do residents have access to an automobile?	

Guidelines for the municipality distributing the survey

- The survey can be used flexibly based on distribution capacity among community organizations or the municipality. For example:
- Community organizations can fill out the survey themselves, prior to the workshop.
- Community organizations can distribute the survey and gather information from community members prior to the community workshop
- And/or the survey can be distributed to attendees at the community workshop.
- Collaborate with community leaders who have trust and established relationships with the community.
- Reach out to the community through existing organizations and meeting locations such as churches, neighborhood associations, business associations, community centers, and parent-teacher associations.
- Gather perspectives from residents, business owners, renters, home-owners, a range of age groups, and the various racial and ethnic groups that make up the community.

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Community Survey

Sample topics to consider while answering questions:

- *Housing affordability*
- *Community character and culture*
- *Job and business opportunities*
- *Important businesses, community institutions, and places*
- *Retail and services*
- *Recreation amenities*
- *Benefits from new public investments*
- *Community participation in decision-making*

Survey Questions

What is special about your neighborhood?

Do you think the neighborhood is changing? If so, how?

How are these changes affecting you and your neighbors?

What are you concerned may change in the future?

What changes would you like to see in the neighborhood?

What would you like to stay the same?