JUST COMMUNITIES
COMMITMENTS MATRIX v.1.0

June 2024

Just Communities is an initiative of the Partnership for Southern Equity.

JUST COMMUNITIES COMMITMENTS

Twenty-two Commitments organized into five priority areas to help communities define success and measure progress.

METRICS TO GUIDE EQUITABLE AND REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Just Communities explicitly tackles the most entrenched and complex challenges facing communities today – poverty, blight and deteriorating infrastructure, lack of economic opportunity, environmental pollution, climate disruption, and health inequities – whether it is within a historically disenfranchised neighborhood disproportionately impacted by rapid growth or disinvestment, or a brownfield site preparing to be redeveloped. To help communities get organized, we developed the following Just Communities Commitments to help guide planning and implementation. Each Commitment helps:

Leverage local data to guide decision making

The Just Communities Commitments ask every community to identify what matters most and sets clear targets to help guide investment decisions and measure progress over time. This includes establishing clear objectives and indicators to determining a starting point (baseline) and what success looks like over time (targets).

Foster Collaboration

Just Communities helps communities see the bigger picture and need for collaboration. Proposed targets must be clearly described, practical, and agreed upon by multiple partners to create a powerful strategic implementation blueprint to guide local project, program, and policy investments.

Harness local wisdom and experience

Just Communities calls for authentic and meaningful participation by the community to shape priorities. This includes partnering with the community to co-design an inclusive engagement plan early in the process, with a focus on documenting lived experiences and local knowledge.

FIVE PRIORITIES TO GUIDE EQUITABLE AND REGENERATIVE DEVELOPMENT

1. **Belonging:** Vibrant and inclusive communities
2. **Opportunity:** Thriving and upwardly mobile communities
3. **Wellbeing:** Joyful and healthy communities
4. **Mobility:** Connected and accessible communities
5. **Environment:** Ecologically restorative and climate resilient communities

Belonging: Vibrant and inclusive communities

1. Civic Participation: Nurture and expand civic knowledge, democratic processes, and opportunities for people to engage, build shared values, and work towards common purpose.
2. Housing Access: Ensure all residents have wide range of stable and affordable housing options.
3. Culture & Identity: Cultivate local culture and provide space for individual expression.

Opportunity: Thriving and prosperous communities

4. Local Economy & Entrepreneurship: Support and grow local businesses and services that meet the needs of the community.
5. Education: Ensure inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities.
6. Employment & Workforce: Promote full and productive employment and economic opportunity.
7. Digital Connectivity: Provide access to affordable and reliable broadband services.

Wellbeing: Joyful and healthy communities

8. Active Living: Encourage physical activity and wellness practices in everyday life.
9. Physical & Mental Health: Foster physical, emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
10. Safety: Ensure people feel secure and respected.
11. Parks & Open Space: Ensure access to open spaces and natural areas.
12. Food: Provide access to healthy and affordable fresh food.

Mobility: Connected and accessible communities

13. Street Network: Increase connectivity and safety of street network.
14. Multimodality: Promote walking and cycling, and micro-mobility options.
15. Transit: Enhance public transit options and access.
16. Electric Vehicles: Accelerate the adoption, access, and affordability of electric vehicles.

Environment: Ecologically restorative and climate resilient communities

17. Climate: Commit to net zero carbon emissions and climate resilience.
18. Energy: Increase access to affordable, reliable, and clean (zero carbon) energy.
19. Water: Ensure sustainable water use and management that meets the needs of the community and the environment.
20. Air Quality: Improve air quality and eliminate pollution.
21. Biodiversity & Ecosystem Health: Improve biodiversity and protect and support the ecological functions of water features, soil, and local vegetation.
22. Waste: Commit to zero waste and building a local circular economy.

BELONGING
Vibrant and inclusive communities

COMMITMENT		OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE TARGETS
Civic Participation	Nurture and expand civic knowledge, democratic processes, and opportunities for people to engage, build shared values, and work towards common purpose	− Increase the diversity of civic leadership and volunteerism. − Harness a collective voice to support community-scale civic investments, policies, and programs. − Improve access to local political participation and decision-making, including citizen advisory boards and participatory budgeting. − Encourage in-person and digital neighborhood meetings.	− Share of voting-eligible population who vote. − Percentage of polling stations within a ½ mile walk of all residents. − Percentage of polling stations close to transit or offer transportation services to seniors and those with disabilities. − Ratio of the share of local elected officials of a racial, ethnic, and age group to the share of residents of the same racial or ethnic group. − Ratio of the share of neighborhood association staff and board members (or equivalent) of a racial, ethnic, and age group to the share of residents of the same racial or ethnic group.	− 75% of eligible voters vote in each election. − 100% of all residents live within a mile of a polling station.
Housing Access	Ensure all residents have stable and affordable housing options	− Increase the amount of permanent affordable housing. − Increase the diversity of housing options. − Provide dignified shelter for all members of the community. − Reduce housing costs. − Encourage aging in place. − Provide high quality, green and healthy housing.	− Percentage of the community formally redlined. − Percent of regulated affordable units at 80%, 60%, and 30% AMI. − Percentage of City-regulated rent stabilized units. − Percentage of housing units within a 10 min. walk of transit. − Percent of families that pay more than 30% of their income for housing (housing cost burden). − Homeowner rates by race and ethnicity (racial homeownership gap). − Number of public school children who are homeless during the school year per capita. − Number of evictions annually per capita. − Percentage of homes owned by non-local investors. − Percentage of homeownership to renters. − Number of certified green housing units per capita.	− 90% of families pay 30% or less of their income on housing.

Culture & Identity	Celebrate and honor cultural diversity and heritage and provide space for individual expression	– Foster a keen sense of respect, dignity, inclusion, and connectedness among community members. – Honor and lift up Indigenous history, culture, stories, and leadership. – Preserve and support historic and culturally significant places. – Integrate public art and design features throughout the community. – Increase number of and participation in local cultural events. – Support local media and reporting.	– Number of annual community-wide festivals, events, and celebrations per 1,000 population. – Civic organizations (arts, culture, faith) per 1,000 population. – Number of sites, public art and cultural interpretive installations that celebrate local culture or history per 1,000 population. – Performing arts-and-entertainment-related orgs and space per 1,000 population. – Neighborhood media outlets per 1,000 population – Number of art installations per 1,000 residents.	– Protect and safeguard 100% of all local Indigenous and other important cultural and natural heritage sites and institutions.

OPPORTUNITY
Thriving and prosperous communities

COMMITMENT		OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE TARGETS
Local Economy & Entrepreneurship	Support and grow local businesses and services that meet the needs of the community	– Establish a mix of uses such that grocery stores, pharmacies, health services, community centers, public transit stops, etc. are easily accessible. – Support diverse business development that represents a community's demographics. – Promote locally owned businesses. – Encourage local retailers to purchase goods and services from local producers.	– Percent of local businesses that are locally owned. – Percentage of residents within a ½ mile walk of places to shop for essential goods (e.g., grocery, pharmacy). – Percentage of residents within a ½ mile walk of places to congregate (e.g., community center, senior center, etc.). – Percentage of residents within a ½ mile walk of places to work (e.g., school, office, light industrial, etc.). – Percentage of residents within a ½ mile walk of places to learn (e.g., school, university). – Percentage of business ownership aligned with community population demographics.	– 75% of all residents live within 1 mile of essential services (grocery store and pharmacy) by 2030. – 30% of all local businesses are locally owned by 2030. – 100% of all locally owned businesses represent the demographic makeup of the neighborhood by 2030.
Education	Ensure inclusive and equitable education and lifelong learning opportunities	– Increase or provide full access to early childhood learning opportunities. – Expand college prep and CTE pathways for all high school students. – Eliminate gender, racial, and ethnic disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training.	– Share of children enrolled in preschool. – Average per-grade change in English Language Arts achievement between third and eighth grades. – Share of students attending high-poverty schools, by student race or ethnicity. – Share of 19-and 20-year-olds with a high school degree – Student teacher ratio (median for ages 6-17). – Share of residents with college and post graduate degrees. – Proportion of youth (aged 15-24 years) not in education, employment, or training. – Percentage of students pursuing majors or career pathways in sustainability, clean energy, water systems, climate resilience, environmental engineering,	– 100% access to quality early childhood development and pre-school for all girls and boys. – 100% high school graduation rates for all girls and boys by 2030. – Ensure that 100% of youth and adults, achieve literacy and numeracy by 2030.

Employment & Workforce	Promote full and productive employment and economic opportunity	– Create new jobs and economic opportunities. – Expand living wage jobs. – Provide career pathways through targeted workforce training and placement. – Increase financial security through financial literacy and debt reduction initiatives. – Increase access to high quality, affordable childcare.	– Household income at 30th, 50th, and 80th percentiles. – Average hourly earnings, by occupation, age, and persons with disabilities. – Percentage of households living below the local poverty level, by race. – Unemployment rate, by race, sex, age, and persons with disabilities. – Childcare cost burden by race. – Average hourly earnings by occupation classes, by race, sex, age, and persons with disabilities. – Employment-to-population ratio for adults ages 25 to 54. – Share of households with debt in collections.	– Double the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs, and entrepreneurship by 2030. – Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value by 2030.
Digital Connectivity	Provide access to affordable and reliable broadband services	– Ensure quality broadband service is available to all residents. – Ensure affordability of broadband service for low-income residents.	– Share of households with broadband access at home. – Percentage of residents within a ½ mile walk to public internet (e.g., libraries, community centers). – Percentage of residents within a free or low-cost public WIFI node.	– 100% of all low-income households have high speed internet by 2030.

WELLBEING
Joyful and healthy communities

COMMITMENT		OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE TARGETS
Active Living	Encourage physical activity in everyday life	– Improve access to open space. – Increase access to recreation facilities and programming. – Enhance walkability. – Expand safe and well-maintained cycling infrastructure.	– Walk Score. – Percentage of population within ½ mile of active recreation and open space (ball fields, basketball courts, skateboard park, pools, trails, etc.). – Percentage of streets with sidewalks on both sides.	–
Health	Foster physical, emotional, psychological, and social well-being	– Reduce disparities in physical and mental health outcomes and life expectancy. – Improve access to affordable, high-quality health care. – Reduce incidents of community trauma. – Improve and create equitable access to nature. – Improve neonatal health. – Strengthen local health resilience to be successfully respond to public health emergencies. – Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive services.	– Share of adults who rate their own and their children's health as good or excellent (five-point Likert scale from poor to excellent). – Ratio of population per primary care physician. – Share of low-weight births. – Mortality rate attributed to cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, or chronic respiratory disease. – Premature mortality rates (deaths under 75) – Adolescent birth rate per 1,000 women. – Maternal mortality ratio. – Percent of residents within ½ mile or 20 min transit ride of primary care facility. – Average life expectancy. – Percentage of population with health insurance coverage.	– Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information, and education by 2030. – Reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 15 per 100,000 live births by 2030. – Reduce by one third premature mortality through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being by 2030. – Achieve access to local quality essential health-care services by 2030.
Safety	Ensure people feel secure and respected	– Establish a feeling of safety in private and public spaces, in people's interaction with others, and in their experience with services. – Promote "just policing" policies and procedures as defined by the community to reduce overly punitive policing by investing in community-driven safety interventions.	– Adverse Childhood Experiences scale. – Rates of reported violent crime and property crime per 100,000 people. – Rate of juvenile justice arrests by race and sex. – Currently incarcerated population by race, sex, and age. – Vehicle crash/pedestrian injury data. – Percentage of operational streetlights. – Percentage of population within a mile of a community policing center.	–

Parks & Open Space	Ensure access to open spaces and natural areas	– Provide quality and accessible public spaces. – Increase access to public spaces, trails, and waterways. – Ensure parks and open spaces are properly maintained. – Integrate historically marginalized communities into the design and stewardship of public spaces. – Ensure safety in all parks and open space.	– Percentage of residents who live within a ½ mile of a park or open space. – Acres of open space and natural areas per 1,000 residents. – Percentage of residents and visitors who say they are able to use nearby parks the way they'd like (by age, race, income, gender) – Degree to which the demographics of parks program participants reflects the overall demographics of the community. – Number and types of rules or procedures likely to present barriers to park use. – Percentage of park signs and communication materials that are in languages relevant to the resident population. – Percentage of park budget or annual budget allocated for maintenance, by neighborhood. – Percentage of residents who say they feel safe in their local park.	– 100% of residents say they feel safe in their local park by 2030. – 100% of all residents live within a 1/2 mile walk of a park or open space by 2030.
Food	Provide access to healthy and affordable fresh food	– Increase access to healthy and affordable fresh food. – Encourage food production in the community, including medicinal and cultural plants. – Mitigate hunger through free food programing.	– Percentage of residents with severe food insecurity, based on the Food Insecurity Experience Scale Ratio of SNAP participation. – Percentage of dwelling units within a ½ mile (0.8 km) walk of grocery store / food market. – Percentage of dwelling units within a 1 mile (1.6 km) walk of community garden / urban farm.	– 100% of all residents are not food insecure by 2030. – 50% of all residents live within ½ mile(0.8 km) walk of grocery store / food market by 2030.

MOBILITY
Connected and accessible communities

COMMITMENT		OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE TARGETS
Street Network	Increase connectivity and safety of street network	– Improve walkability throughout the community. – Accommodate people with disabilities to better move throughout the community by meeting ADA (American with Disabilities Act) and ABA (American Barriers Act) standards. – Adopt a complete streets strategy to encourage long term investments in street and sidewalk design.	– Intersection density. – Street connectivity index. – Percentage of total street length with bicycle and micro-mobility facilities. – Percentage of arterial intersections with traffic-controlled crosswalks. – Percent of circulation network block length with continuous sidewalks present on both sides. – Percentage of sidewalks and intersections that are ADA compliant. – Number linear feet of complete streets.	–
Multimodality	Promote walking and cycling, and micro-mobility options	– Establish safe pedestrian and bike facilities. – Provide options for shared bikes, scooters, and car services. – Promote traffic calming to enhance safety and prioritization for bicyclists and pedestrians. – Improve connections between modes of travel. – Reduce transportation costs, especially among low-income residents.	– Walk Score. – Bike Score. – Percentage of students walking to school and residents walking to work. – Percentage of income spent on transportation, by race. – Percent of bike and car share stations within a ¼ mile walk of all residents. – Percentage of population using other micro mobility (I.e., scooters). – Availability of voucher programs to encourage transit (i.e., youth, seniors). – Number & demographics of those injured from bicycle and pedestrian crashes (serious injuries, deaths). – Death rate due to road traffic injuries.	– Zero deaths from traffic-related accidents by 2030. – Walk Score of 80 or higher by 2030. – Bike Score of 80 or higher by 2030.
Transit	Enhance public transit options and access	– Improve transit amenities and infrastructure to encourage ridership and safety. – Provide high quality, safe, and frequent public transit services. – Enhance speed and safety of transit throughout the community. – Increase public transportation options (bike share, scooters, commuter vans, subsidized ride services).	– Transit Score. – Housing & Transportation Index (burden). – Transit stops per square mile. – Percent of transit stations that provide shade. – Percent of residents within a ½ mile walk from transit stop. – Percent of local transit that runs frequently (less than 15 min headway) between 6 AM- 7 PM.	– Transit Score of 70 or higher by 2030. – 100% of all residents live within ½ mile from a transit stop by 2030.

| Electric Vehicles | Accelerate the adoption, access, and affordability of electric vehicles | Support the build-out of public EV charging infrastructure. Encourage EV-ready codes for local buildings. Offer free public parking and priority parking for EV vehicles and e-bikes. Encourage adoption of electric car- and e-bike ownership and sharing services, with a focus on low- and moderate-income residents. Enable faster and cheaper local registration for EVs. | Percentage of electric vehicle and ebike ownership within the neighborhood. Number of EV charging stations per capita. Number of local ebike and scooter sharing stations per capita. | E-bike and scooter sharing available within the community by 2030. |

ENVIRONMENT
Ecologically restorative and climate resilient communities

COMMITMENT		OBJECTIVES	INDICATORS	ILLUSTRATIVE TARGETS
Climate	Commit to net zero carbon emissions and climate resilience.	– Eliminate locally generated greenhouse gas emissions. – Combat heat island effect. – Ensure basic needs are met during climate related events. – Increase the capability of the community to deal with climate related events. – Increase the capacity for grey or green infrastructure to withstand climate related events and reduce damage during such conditions. – Create local education and awareness-raising programming on climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.	– Neighborhood CO2 emissions (metric tons/year) – Per capita CO2 emissions (metric tons/year). – Heat vulnerability index. – Urban Heat Island index. – Percent tree canopy coverage or number of trees. – Projected flood risk. – Projected wildfire risk – Number of deaths and directly affected persons attributed to climate related events and disasters per 100,000 population. – Proportion of total local government spending investments to improve climate resilience. – Damage to critical infrastructure and number of disruptions to basic services, attributed to disasters. – Number of local organizations, businesses, and institutions that adopt and implement local climate action plans and disaster risk reduction strategies.	– Reduce the community's exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other environmental shocks and disasters by 2030. – Zero deaths from climate related events by 2030. – Increase tree canopy by 5%.
Energy	Increase access to affordable, reliable, and clean (zero carbon) energy.	– Increase efficiency of all buildings. – Transition to all electric infrastructure and buildings. – Develop community-scale solar and other distributed clean energy systems. – Upgrade local industry to be more energy and resource efficient. – Offset carbon-based energy consumption through purchase of renewable energy certificates. – Increase demand response and smart grid capabilities throughout the community.	– Energy burden of households. – Proportion of population with primary reliance on clean fuels and technology. – Installed renewable energy-generating capacity per capita (watts). – Renewable energy share in the total energy consumption. – Carbon content of local grid-delivered electricity (CO2 pounds/megawatt-hour). – Energy intensity measured in terms of primary energy. – Frequency and longevity of outages using SAIFI (System Average Interruption Frequency Index) & CAIDI (Customer Average Interruption Duration Index).	– Double the number of buildings with heat pumps between 2020 and 2030. – Double the number of buildings with solar (including community solar) 2020 and 2030.

Water	Ensure sustainable water use and management that meets the needs of the community and the environment.	– Improve access to clean water to all community members. – Improve water efficiency. – Use recycled or reclaimed water for non-potable needs. – Improve stormwater management and flood mitigation throughout the community by mimicking natural water patterns and hydrologic responses. – Prevent contamination of groundwater and surface waters. – Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.	– Water burden of households. – Water shutoffs of households annually. – Gallons of water used per capita, for potable and non-potable uses. – Change in water-use efficiency over time. – Percentage of buildings connected to non-potable water sources. – Annual water quality index (WQI) score. – Water quality violation days / year. – Number of days with water use restrictions. – Percentage of 50-year storm events managed within the neighborhood. – Percent of buildings and critical infrastructure in the 100 yr. and 500 yr. flood plain. – Percent of land subject to flooding and sea level rise.	– Zero deaths and illnesses from water pollution and contamination by 2030. – Increase water-use efficiency in buildings by 20%.
Air Quality	Improve air quality and eliminate pollution.	– Reduce & mitigate emissions of criteria pollutants. – Enforce air emissions regulations. – Conduct local monitoring to augment regional emissions reporting.	– Air quality index. – Annual mean levels of fine particulate matter (PM 2.5 and PM 10). – Average surface air temperature. – Number of industrial sites per thousand residents. – Number of miles heavy trucking routes per thousand residents. – Mortality rate attributed to household and ambient air pollution.	– Reduce in half the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air pollution and contamination by 2030.
Biodiversity & Ecosystem Health	Improve biodiversity and protect and support the ecological functions of water features, soil, and local vegetation.	– Remediate contaminated land for productive reuse. – Protect or restore natural features, water bodies, and habitat to enhance biodiversity and optimize ecological function and connect to broader ecological corridors. – Protect rare, threatened, and endangered species. – Protect and enhance soil fertility in urban farms. – Protect and enhance native vegetation.	– Species of plants/acre. – % plantable area supporting native plant communities. – Forest area: % preserved, % interior, as applicable. – Width of riparian buffer along waterways – Acres of wetland protected, preserved, or restored. – Restored or intact hydrology and groundwater. – Proportion of important sites for terrestrial and freshwater biodiversity within protected areas. – Percentage of connected corridors, conservation easements, other contiguous protected areas.	– Increase plant biodiversity by 50% by 2030. – Create 25 ft buffers of native vegetation along all waterways by 2030. – Remove 100% all non-native invasive plants by 2030.

Waste	Commit to zero waste and building a local circular economy.	- Divert waste from landfills through reduction, reuse, and recycling. - Capture of organic waste for productive use. - Eliminate toxic materials within the community. - Promote circular economy.	- Percentage of nonhazardous waste diverted from landfills annually. - Percentage of organic waste diverted for energy recovery or composting annually. - Community recycling rate. - Total generation rate. - Number of illegal dumping complaints.	100% of all residents, institutions, and businesses are participating in food composting by 2030. 75% recycling rate for curbside recycling materials by 2030. - Zero illegal dumping complaints by 2030.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTHERN EQUITY

Founded in 2008, PSE advances racial equity and shared prosperity for all in the growth of metropolitan Atlanta and the American South. Through forums, research, and organizing efforts, PSE helps to lift up and encourage just, sustainable, and civic practices for balanced growth and opportunity. Through the organization's strength in connecting and educating diverse individuals and organizations, PSE encourages the adoption of just and sustainable practices for shared prosperity. By fostering collaboration, knowledge sharing, and collective action, PSE helps communities realize their civic agency and build power through the organization of money, people, and data.

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