



INCLUSIVE GROWTH BLUEPRINT

A Model for Equitable Development in New York City

Executive Summary

Economic growth has not meant prosperity for everyone. Those who have been left behind have faced displacement due to the increasing cost of housing, increased exposure to the destruction wrought by the effects of climate change, a shrinking pool of employment opportunities and crumbling infrastructure.

Having seen large-scale gentrification and displacement, communities of all wealth levels – and especially Black, Brown and low-income communities – are now skeptical of most government-led efforts, even those that would create jobs or housing.

This Inclusive Growth framework promotes a vision where growth leads to prosperity for most people and where the communities who have been left behind have more of a say in shaping economic development processes, planning and leadership.

The effects of the recession caused by the Covid-19 pandemic now add to the existing challenges caused by climate change and the long-term disinvestment in infrastructure. All of these challenges have reached crisis level for Black, Brown and low-income communities due to their exclusion from the tables of decision-making and the lack of the political action

that is necessary to avert disaster. The unsustainability, inequity and cruelty of the polarized economy of the last two decades – with high-paying jobs and unchecked profit on one end buttressed by low-paying service sector and gig economy jobs on the other end – has increasingly squeezed out middle class stability. The health and economic decimation of this continues to hit those of us that have historically and systemically always been hit. The ongoing Black Lives Matter movement and the energy that reignited during the 2020 protests for George Floyd and Black lives has made clear the widespread need and desire to fundamentally center and strengthen resources and structures to serve historically excluded communities, especially Black and Brown communities.

Despite the mutual grief and trauma of these 18 months, we have also seen new ways to care for each other and build a fruitful society and economy. Mutual aid networks have sprung up in flexibility and abundance, low-wage and undervalued workers who have largely been ignored are now finding power in their collectiveness as essential workers, and tenants throughout the city have successfully pressured all levels of government to prioritize keeping them in their homes.¹ All of these forces add up to the most substantial and real opportunity to recalibrate our economic development processes to proactively benefit those who need it the most or have been locked out thus far.

¹ The New York Times / Gina Bellafante. "How New York Waiters Got the Upper Hand." (July 16, 2021).



What is Inclusive Growth?

The daily life of New Yorkers should be marked by personal and communal prosperity, stability, well-being, dignity and agency to choose their own path and realize their own vision of purpose and success. Inclusive Growth means that all New Yorkers have access to quality careers and livelihoods, affordable housing and economic opportunity through transparent and community focused development and planning driven by the assets, aspirations, needs, priorities and interests of historically excluded communities, especially those historically excluded from realizing the benefits of economic growth. It seeks to actively diminish structural inequity and barriers to individual and communal self-sufficiency and prosperity.

The current system of economic development prioritizes profits and wealth accumulation over people, which maintains the U.S.'s long-standing systems of wealth, power, privilege and inequality. These systems are upheld by several pillars – capitalism, racism, patriarchy, and ableism – which facilitate access and opportunity for some, while limiting or excluding it for others. Recent events, including violence against the Asian American and Pacific Islander community,

the rise of the Black Lives Matter movement, and the explosion of voter suppression laws in states across the country has increased recognition of the role of white supremacy at the heart of our current systems. These systems' values turn into the outcomes of unequal and unjust life experiences, and has the effect of benefiting the few over the many.

Changing the current system of economic development demands that we understand, interrogate and transform the ways in which we maintain and uphold inequities and injustices. It will require concerted effort from all levels of government and from private institutions. New systems for transformation and change must be put in place.



Three Core Pillars of Inclusive Growth

While Inclusive Growth encompasses many aspects of our city, we are starting with three core pillars of change:

1. Economic Development
2. Workforce Development
3. Affordable Housing

We identify these as what people need to live well within a community. The core pillars are the key to forming a more equitable New York City, and must operate in tandem to address critical areas of daily life for the city to survive and thrive.

What New York Needs from the Next Administration

The new mayoral administration represents a new opportunity. What is needed from it is a new vision of economic and racial equity and the ability to implement this vision.

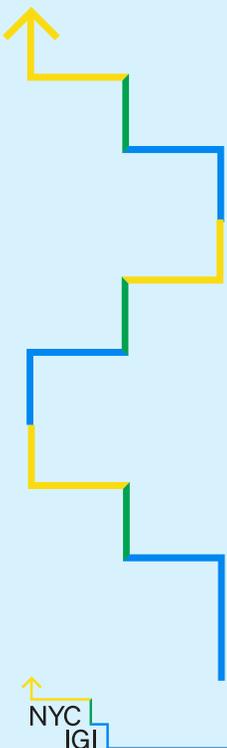
This vision must be bold and must not go back to the old playbook from previous recoveries. Previous recoveries resulted in far greater growth and opportunity for those already enjoying privileged places in our city. It is clear that the people who benefit the most from the status quo cannot be the same people to determine a new direction. If we want a different direction, the new administration must take a different approach – one that prioritizes equitable growth and is shaped by an inclusive process.

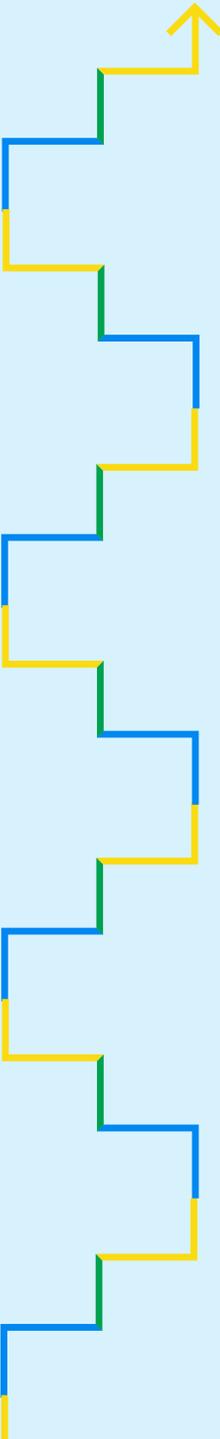
Inclusive Growth Recommendations

The specific policy changes the IGI Steering Committee recommends have been organized by the three core pillars and embody values and narratives of Inclusive Growth. These specific policy changes rest on a set of foundational best practices and must directly benefit individuals, strengthen neighborhoods and change the overall system that produces these inequities. Recognizing the importance of scale for implementation, the recommendations have been further categorized at three levels: People, Community and Systems. This structure emphasizes a cohesive and holistic approach to policy practice and attempts to alleviate siloing the recommendations within the core pillars.

Foundations and Best Practices for Inclusive Growth

- ▶ Make community empowerment engaging and accessible: Dedicate resources and professional support toward community engagement and leadership for neighborhood, community and city-wide planning and development
- ▶ Ensure transparency, accountability and access to information for individual projects and developments as part of a comprehensive planning process
- ▶ Build in community power and ownership to enable community-led projects to thrive
- ▶ Utilize a cultural inventory to ensure key neighborhood institutions are not displaced
- ▶ Create new wealth-building opportunities for communities that face systemic barriers to wealth-building
- ▶ Integrate sustainability and resiliency initiatives within Inclusive Growth developments, and prioritize all sustainability initiatives to start with low- and moderate-income and Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities first
- ▶ Proactively work to rebuild trust between place-based agencies and communities through City leadership





Economic Development Recommendations

People

- ▶ Connect economic development with workforce development
- ▶ Incorporate a small-business framework in economic development focusing on small business growth, sustainability and M/WBE support
- ▶ Support families in order to help develop skills and opportunity
- ▶ Make health and wellness a core part of an economic development strategy

Community

- ▶ Prioritize investments in real estate and physical infrastructure that are also investments in social infrastructure
- ▶ Make more transportation choices safe, affordable, sustainable, convenient, comfortable and enjoyable options, especially at the neighborhood level
- ▶ Clean the transportation sector, starting with the communities most negatively impacted by heavy vehicle traffic and transportation emissions today
- ▶ Reform and democratize community representation in the economic development process

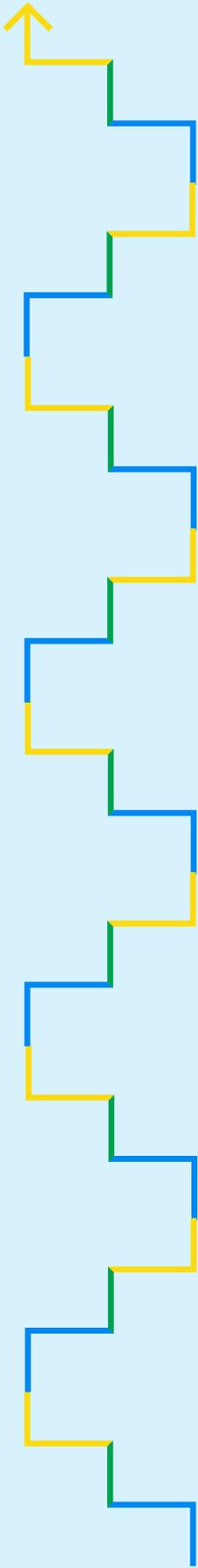
Systems

- ▶ Develop a proactive, equity-based and enforceable comprehensive planning framework, and draw projects and policies from this comprehensive plan
- ▶ Coordinate land use planning, economic development, transportation, housing, climate and other city-wide goals
- ▶ Reform the land use process
- ▶ Create a public accountability entity with the power to enforce community benefits agreements
- ▶ Understand, plan for and fund New York City's transportation system at a city-wide level, centering equity goals in the process
- ▶ Update New York City's regulatory and enforcement approaches to expand safe, clean transportation options while supporting Inclusive Growth goals around racial justice, job creation and workforce development
- ▶ Ensure a just energy transition to prioritize all sustainability initiatives to start with low- and moderate-income and BIPOC communities first

An Inclusive Growth Vision of Community

The word "community" is an expansive one. It can be, and has been, used in ways which both reinforce and combat existing structures of power and influence. We reference "community" throughout this framework and recommendations many times. An Inclusive Growth vision of "community" centers people of color, people from low-income backgrounds, and historically excluded groups in general, especially when referencing actions in neighborhoods where people of color and historically excluded groups live. Community includes both existing local residents and local community infrastructure, such as community-based organizations, faith-based institutions and community boards.





Workforce Development Recommendations

People

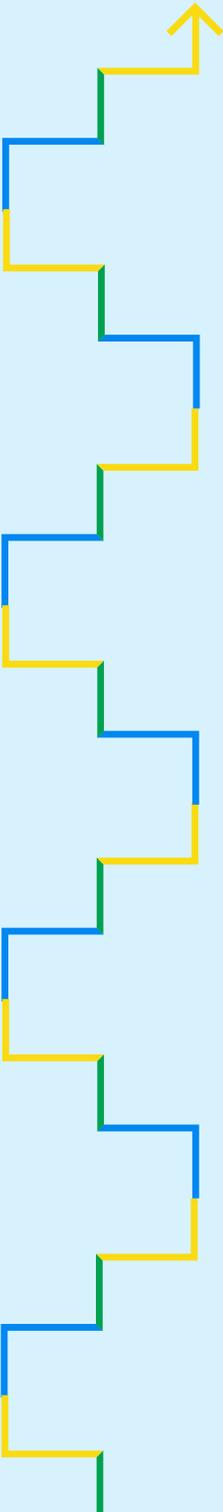
- ▶ Address structural barriers that prevent people from participating in workforce and training programs
- ▶ Institute hazard pay for essential workers by advocating for amendments to the Fair Labor Standards Act
- ▶ Increase funding and support for dislocated workers to upskill in their current sector or re-skill and enter a new sector
- ▶ Create workforce development and entrepreneurship programs that serve the particular needs of older adults
- ▶ Create pathways to integrate immigrants with skills gained abroad into New York City's workforce in line with their experience and particular needs
- ▶ Support career readiness among non-traditional college students

Community

- ▶ Invest Federal Covid-19 recovery funds into workforce development
- ▶ Support the hiring needs of small businesses through the workforce development system
- ▶ Connect New York City's workforce development system to local economic development projects, including real estate development, projects sponsored by public agencies like the NYC Economic Development Corporation and local development agencies.
- ▶ Create a permanent Workforce Development Fund
- ▶ Expand a pipeline of talent in green technologies for a clean energy future and ensure that historically excluded communities, and especially environmental justice communities, are prioritized in training programs and hiring

Systems

- ▶ Revive the Mayor's Office of Workforce Development (WKDEV) as New York City's chief authority overseeing the city's workforce agenda
- ▶ Shift government thinking around New York City's workforce development policies and systems from being viewed primarily as a poverty reduction strategy to being seen as a fully integrated part of the city's overall economic development
- ▶ Streamline New York City's workforce development program investments into two main program buckets: 1) early employment training programs and 2) career pathways training programs so that New Yorkers can quickly identify and move into programs that meet their employment goals
- ▶ Streamline, coordinate and build in more flexibility into funding mechanisms to incentivize connectivity among service providers that increases access to any workforce programs for jobseekers
- ▶ Create a set of key performance indicators (KPI) with which to measure outcomes for clients across the whole workforce development system
- ▶ Root out workplace discrimination and worker abuse by reinforcing policies that increase and strengthen worker protections and job quality, including wage theft enforcement, indexed minimum wage and worker safety nets



Affordable Housing Recommendations

People

- ▶ Deeply invest in rental assistance dollars to address the needs of low- and extremely low-income New Yorkers
- ▶ Strengthen the safety net to prevent evictions
- ▶ Increase social service funding tied to housing units to ensure more people maintain their housing

Community

- ▶ Create a housing plan focused more on outcomes than outputs, and target subsidies and tax incentives toward projects that meet the deepest needs of households within that plan
- ▶ Create more affordable housing opportunities in areas with lower share of affordable housing supply to ensure all New York City neighborhoods are accessible to various income levels and especially those with low- and extremely-low-incomes
- ▶ Identify barriers to points of entry to housing for specific communities, and commit funding and infrastructure towards addressing such barriers
- ▶ Improve housing quality and stability in historically disinvested neighborhoods
- ▶ Unpack and address the complex interplay of housing and education policies and practices that impact neighborhood-level segregation
- ▶ Invest in community connection and social ties opportunities for residents of NYCHA housing to address inequitable amenities and community resources

Systems

- ▶ Facilitate greater coordination and accountability between agencies responsible for homelessness and housing through a streamlined entity
- ▶ Engage a broad and representative set of stakeholders in the creation of the city-wide housing plan
- ▶ Streamline engagement processes across agencies that oversee development and place-based change
- ▶ Meaningfully address fair housing mandates and root out discrimination in the housing market
- ▶ Significantly invest in NYCHA rehabilitation, infrastructure and preservation
- ▶ Address resiliency, climate adaptation and sustainability for New York City's residential building stock, especially in NYCHA and when public subsidies are used

NYC Inclusive Growth Initiative



The New York City Inclusive Growth Initiative is composed of a 18-member Steering Committee representative of the diversity of New York City in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, immigration history and status, incomes status, thought and disability. It is proactively inclusive of people with non-traditional educations, people who do not have access to other networks of civic influence in New York City and people with working-class backgrounds and occupations. Convened and facilitated by the New York City Employment and Training Coalition, the Association for Neighborhood & Housing Development, and Regional Plan Association between February and July 2021, this Steering Committee developed this Inclusive Growth blueprint with recommendations for the future of economic development, workforce development and affordable housing.