

IMPLEMENTING EQUITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN NYC DDC INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

The official strategic plan of New York City - ONENYC 2050 is based on the principles of growth, **equity**, sustainability and resiliency. Achieving equity and social justice is one of the major goals for New York City and is considered a strong foundation for social sustainability and resiliency.ⁱ

NYC Department of Design and Construction is proud of being the City's leading construction management agencyⁱⁱ. We build infrastructure assets for one of the largest American cities and attribute its growth and success to its communities. The projects NYC DDC Infrastructure builds have a significant impact on the day to day life of New Yorkers. The current civil unrest has **created an opportunity to investigate the possibility of achieving higher levels of equity and social justice through infrastructure projects.**

Currently, NYC DDC uses Envision as a guide to improve the implementation of overall sustainability in infrastructure projects. In this framework, Quality of Life (QL) is one of the five categories. The intent of credit QL3.1 *Advance Equity and Social Justice* is to ensure that equality is fundamental to a project's processes - from planning to construction. The Envision framework defines "Equity and Social Justice" as the responsibility of a society to ensure that civil and human rights are preserved and protected for each individual and that all persons are treated equally and without prejudice.ⁱⁱⁱThe credit identifies the degree to which equity and social justice are included in stakeholder engagement, decision making, the project team and communities. The metrics for this specific credit ranges from **Understanding Equity** (Improved), **Mitigation** (Enhanced) and **Empowerment** (Superior); to higher levels of achievement such as **Equitable Access to Benefits** (Conserving) and ultimately to Restorative levels of achievement such as **Equitable Futures** where the project positively addresses or corrects an existing or historic injustice or imbalance.

The NYC DDC Sustainability Infrastructure program assess and works towards ensuring the execution of social sustainability for NYC DDC Infrastructure projects. Moving forward we will aim to collaborate with our various colleagues, sponsor agencies and consultants, to obtain the highest level of achievement for credit QL3.1 and other credits that synergize with those goals.

Implementation strategies that can be considered for Infrastructure Projects are:

- Stakeholder engagement is informed by the historic context of equity, social justice and environmental justice.
- Identify and document social impacts of the project related to equity and social justice.
- Ensure key members of the project team have made commitments to equity and social justice within their organizations.
- Project-specific commitments for addressing equity and social justice.
- Plan to address social impacts related to equity and social justice.
- Create a map showing key demographic data overlapped with areas likely to receive benefits or impacts of the project.
- Engage underrepresented communities and higher rates of participation and/or inclusion.
- The project positively addresses or corrects an existing or historic injustice or imbalance.

ⁱ <http://onenyc.cityofnewyork.us/reports-resources/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/ddc/about/ddc-strategic-plan.page>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://sustainableinfrastructure.org/envision/use-envision/>