Equitable Engagement Guidance Checklist for School Travel Planning

Equitable Engagement in School Travel Planning

School Travel Planning (STP) programs strive to create safe communities and provide children with positive and healthy experiences with active school travel (AST). However, access to safe AST is mediated by systems of oppression. Likewise, these systems influence the STP program, its practitioners, and the communities we work with. The impacts of systemic oppression marginalize people along the lines of race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, and more. These systems result in adverse impacts to people's quality of life and the uneven, inequitable distribution of resources. Ultimately, this limits the mobility and ability of historically marginalized students to engage in AST.

Regardless of whether we acknowledge these structural realities ourselves, the people we work with – particularly those in more marginalized communities – understand these systems and the adversity they reproduce. Understanding how these realities inform STP can help us to better meet the needs of the students, parents, caregivers/guardians, schools, and communities we engage with.

The integration of an equity-based approach will be distinct to each community. Accordingly, this checklist is not prescriptive. It is designed to serve as a prompt for important front-end considerations for how to equitably engage with communities, collect data (i.e., evaluation), and implement programming and resources. Reviewing this checklist will aid in further deliberating, and more clearly articulating how your team is integrating equitable approaches into your proposed initiative(s).

The checklist on the following pages has been inspired and adapted from Jay Pitter of Jay Pitter Placemaking Inc.'s Equity Guidance Checklist. We thank Jay for her work and leadership on challenging problematic assumptions in engagement.

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Community and Stakeholder Engagement			
Consideration	**Yes**	**No**	**Actions taken or additional notes**
Have you engaged in discussions surrounding privilege and power with your STP committee?			
Are you working to ensure that STP members from historically marginalized backgrounds are not the only ones tasked with raising and engaging with concerns surrounding power, privilege, and diversity?			
Have you provided opportunities for STP committee members to recognize their own privilege and power and reflect on any conscious or unconscious biases/assumptions they are holding? If not, how can you?			
Have you considered the political and social histories of the community you are working in, and how this might affect your STP/ AST initiatives?			
Is the STP committee representative of the community it is serving? If not, who is not at the table?			
Are the STP needs of students living with disabilities being supported? How or how not?			
Have you considered how your STP planning process can best support the historically marginalized students you might be working with?			

Consideration	Yes	No	Actions taken or additional notes
Have you considered all barriers to engagement and provided opportunities to overcome these barriers?			
Do you know what role the community will have in determining the outcomes of the project?			
Have you explained all outcomes of this project, both positive and negative, to the community members? Will you follow-up with progress updates or project outcomes?			
Have you considered an asset-based lens for the community? What would that look like?			
Evaluation			
Consideration	**Yes**	**No**	**Actions taken or additional notes**
Have you considered all barriers to participation in data collection and provided meaningful opportunities to overcome these barriers?			
Do your data collection strategies and survey/interview questions reflect the circumstances of the community you are working with?			
Have you, consciously or unconsciously, developed "correct" responses? What might you do to challenge these assumptions?			
Have you communicated how the results will be used?			

Programming and Resources			
Consideration	**Yes**	**No**	**Actions taken or additional notes**
Have you considered all barriers to participation in the programming and use of resources? Have you provided meaningful opportunities to overcome these barriers?			
How are STP options distributed between schools you are working with? Can we support equitable distribution with STP planning?			
If a pilot project for infrastructure is part of the programming, are you providing opportunities for the community to provide feedback? Are you taking this feedback into account before deciding to transition to permanent infrastructure?			
Have you considered how STP recommendations and programming may disrupt the lives of community members? Or how it may result in harmful, unintended consequences?			
Have you provided opportunities for the community to grow their skills and to build their capacity to sustain the project outcomes?			