

Themes from Neighborhoods of Opportunity roundtable



Agreement about the importance of taking a place-based lens to economic development that acknowledges history

Consensus that it is critical to both: 1) center economic development strategies around place, where each neighborhood receives investment based on community needs and community partners, and 2) acknowledge that select communities will require more investment due to historic underinvestment.



Differing opinions on how to define a neighborhood of opportunity

Strategy should be clear about how it defines a neighborhood of opportunity, which could mean two things. On one hand, they could be communities that are asset-challenged due to historic underinvestment, where there is a big opportunity for impact. On the other, they could be neighborhoods that are already asset rich and currently provide residents with opportunities.



Recognition of the once-in-a-generation opportunity recent federal action presents for neighborhoods

An unprecedented volume of investment – especially federal investment – is currently available for communities, which may dry up in 3 to 5 years. Ensuring communities in need benefit from this funding in a manner that promotes economic growth today and for the next decade is critical.



General alignment on critical assets and services every neighborhood should have

Assets, amenities and services to consider in the strategy include affordable childcare, healthcare, education, housing, transit, safety, workforce development programs and greenspace. These assets could be in every neighborhood to create 15-minute communities.



Interest in data and goals that track access to key goods and services in each neighborhood

Strategy should monitor progress towards ensuring every community has critical goods and resources, acknowledging that certain communities may require more investment to close gaps.



Emphasis on the need to track resident retention as a key indicator of success

Strategy must ensure that residents living in neighborhoods that receive investment to increase access to assets, amenities and services benefit from those investments and are able to remain in place. They should not be displaced or pushed out due to higher costs of living.

Quotes

“We need to acknowledge that these neighborhoods are the way they are because of unfair systems not working over an extended period”

The greatest impact is felt by neighborhoods that has received less resources historically because there is more opportunity to grow the number and type of amenities.”

“All of us need to understand we are in a political, economic, and fiscal policy moment to change the trajectory.”

“I think of affordable housing and quality educational opportunities, early childhood education and safety.”

“Making the goal to get all neighborhoods above the median for certain basic services... that would be a great accomplishment.”

“The strategy must address issues of displacement and take steps to retain those who are at most risk of being displaced”