#GD-SP-001

GUIDANCE | GU-03

Enabling Equitable Infrastructure Projects: Practical Strategies for Municipalities

NOVA SCOTIA FEDERATION OF MUNICIPALITIES

Integrating equity into municipal infrastructure operations involves shifting from passive consultation to actionable, equity-centered engineering and planning workflows. By collecting localized data on environmental burdens, partnering with Community Land Trusts, leveraging funding co-benefits, and aligning with broader anti-racism initiatives, municipal staff can actively address infrastructure disparities.

Key Insights

Data Equity: Collect Data to Understand Environmental Burdens

Collaboratively gather spatial and environmental data specifically focused on documenting historical infrastructure deficits, localized flood patterns, and contamination pathways in historically underserved African Nova Scotian communities. Municipalities can combine technical engineering inspections with community-contributed observations, photos, and high-water records to geolocate recurring drainage backups.

Why? *Resource-limited municipalities frequently lack GIS mapping and hydrological models for historically marginalized neighbourhoods, creating spatial data blind spots. Documenting environmental burdens helps ensure engineering baselines accurately reflect community lived realities rather than theoretical assumptions.*

Learn More: Municipal Engagement (WWH-01)

Design & Investment Equity: Consider Community Co-Benefits in Funding Applications

Design stormwater infrastructure applications for provincial and federal grants (e.g., Sustainable Communities Challenge Fund, FCM Green Municipal Fund) to feature multi-functional social co-benefits. This includes co-locating nature-based bioswales or rain gardens at prominent community hubs like recreation centers, churches, or land trusts.

Why? *Layering nature-based climate adaptation with social assets creates compounding community benefits—such as improving public space accessibility, protecting emergency comfort centers, boosting local biodiversity, and supporting community food security.*

Learn More: Community & Workshop Insights (WWH-02)

Structural Partnership Equity: Leverage Existing Research & Guidance as a Starting Point

Use the engagement insights, research, policy review, and community case studies compiled within the NSFM Guidance Document as a foundational resource for supporting local partnerships and project design rather than starting research from scratch.

Why? *Asking community members to repeat information or re-explain historical challenges creates consultation fatigue and risks re-traumatizing residents. Grounding staff work in research that has already been documented honors past community contributions, respects local capacity, and accelerates equitable project delivery.*

Learn More: Enabling Equitable Engagement (GU-01)

Land Sovereignty & Anti-Displacement Equity: Partner with Community Land Trusts (CLTs)

Formally collaborate with local Community Land Trusts on land-use planning, public works upgrades, and green infrastructure co-management.

Why? *Land trusts steward real estate in perpetuity on behalf of the community to combat market speculation and gentrification. Partnering with CLTs aligns public infrastructure investments with community-owned land, helping address historic water security and drainage deficits while supporting permanent community control.*

Learn More: Leading the Way (BG-07)

LEARN MORE: View the full Guidance Document at FloodAdaptNS.ca

Acknowledgement : *Financial support for this project was provided in part by Natural Resources Canada through the Flood Hazard Identification and Mapping Program (FHIMP). We also acknowledge funding and support from the Government of Nova Scotia's Municipal Flood Line Mapping Program (MFLMP).*

Canada NOVA SCOTIA