

SPATIAL JUSTICE BENCHMARKING TOOL

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Distributive justice

1. Fair Share

Does your city's vision actually specify who gets what improvements, or does it rely on abstract commitments?

- Is there any indication that benefits will reach neighbourhoods with the greatest need?
- Or does "balanced development" simply mask politically convenient investments?

2. Fair Access

Does the vision meaningfully address access, or does it only gesture at mobility without naming who struggles?

- Do proposed mobility reforms reduce inequalities in commuting time, safety, and cost?
- Or is the plan silently privileging car users, central districts, or already well-served populations?

3. Fair Ability to Shape Services & Spaces

Does your city create conditions for residents to shape their environment?

- Is "participation" enabling people to influence outcomes, or is it merely input-collection before decisions already made?
- Are any groups explicitly empowered to adapt, manage, or transform local resources?

Procedural justice

4. Fair Voice

Does the vision describe participation mechanisms that are meaningful, accessible, and shared across communities?

- Are people invited early enough to shape decisions?
- Or is participation positioned mostly as a formality that must follow "updated protocols" and "reporting structures"?

5. Fair Institutions

Is your city capable of changing course based on feedback?

- Do the references to alignment processes, frameworks, and internal reviews suggest learning and improvement?
- Or are these barriers disguised as procedures, slowing institutional change to a crawl?

6. Fair Processes

Does the municipality commit to acting on what it hears and sees?

- Are there any direct statements about how public input will shift priorities or revise actions?
- Or does the vision maintain plausible deniability by emphasising "efficiency" and "strategic alignment" over responsiveness?

Recognition justice

7. Fair Rights

Does your city recognise and protect groups who face discrimination or structural disadvantage?

- Are there concrete measures, rights expansions, or commitments to address inequities?
- Or does the city hide behind generic language like "evolving needs" and "integrated approaches"?

8. Fair Support for Communities

Does the vision strengthen community-led initiatives, mutual support networks, or shared-resource management?

- Is any form of collective organising acknowledged or supported?
- Or does the city's emphasis on protocols and frameworks crowd out community autonomy?

9. Fair Respect for Communities

Does your city make space for different cultures, ways of living, and alternative spatial practices?

- Is diversity understood as a lived reality shaped by material conditions and cultural claims to space?
- Or is "diversity" treated merely as branding, detached from power, rights, and recognition?

Bonus Questions

A. Based on the vision alone, who in your city gains the most? Who loses the most? Why?

B. Which parts of the city would actually become more just under this vision? Which would become less so?

C. If you lived in this city, would you feel seen, heard, and valued? Or merely managed?

D. Where does procedure strengthen justice? Where does it quietly destroy it?

E. Is your city's vision a careful plan... or a very polite way of saying nothing?