



1000 Friends of Florida
Statement on Social Equity
June 11, 2020

Since our founding 34 years ago, 1000 Friends of Florida has been dedicated to building better communities and saving special places throughout our state. But our vision of a state that includes vibrant cities and towns, thriving and livable neighborhoods, and an outstanding quality of life cannot be realized if discrimination denies many Floridians of color the equal opportunity and just treatment under the law that we are all due as Americans. Like countless people across our state, our country and around the world, we are outraged and heartbroken that a Minneapolis police officer choked the life out of George Floyd as he begged for mercy. We are more convinced than ever that all of us, everywhere, have a moral responsibility to take a stand against racism, hate and bigotry wherever we encounter it.

We at 1000 Friends of Florida fully recognize that community planning can be a tool to either to deepen discrimination in our society or help lay the path toward greater equality. There has been a long, shameful history of institutionalizing discrimination. Redlining — the 20th century banking practice of refusing to invest in minority neighborhoods — was reinforced in local zoning codes and public spending decisions. Minority neighborhoods have been chosen for a disproportionate share of “undesirable uses,” from landfills, to polluting factories, to other uses that can have long-term detrimental health, noise and economic impacts for the residents who make their homes there.

Planning decisions made today can either perpetuate these problems or help resolve them. Zoning decisions can rip apart lower income neighborhoods by replacing them with large-scale commercial development or major highways — or help maintain and reinvigorate these areas for the families who have lived there, sometimes for generations. Local governments can steer funding for sidewalks, parks, schools and other infrastructure upgrades to select neighborhoods — or establish a holistic process to ensure that those in the community with the greatest need are served. State and local government can abet the longstanding tradition of placing noxious uses in minority neighborhoods, often with serious health ramifications for area residents — or invest in cleaning up toxic sites and promoting compatible economic development that benefits longstanding residents of the area.

Through the support of our followers and the wise leadership of those who have come before us at 1000 Friends of Florida, we have been given a platform to advance equality and justice through our priorities and policies: fighting pollution and climate change, to which communities of color are often most vulnerable; promoting affordable housing or transit, public services that enhance economic opportunity and strengthen entire communities; preserving and expanding wilderness areas that all Floridians have a right to enjoy as open, safe spaces for birdwatching, jogging and more; and ensuring that citizens in every neighborhood are guaranteed a role in planning the future of their communities.

There is much that needs to be done to bring about a more just and equitable Florida. There is a need for deep introspection among individuals and organizations alike — including 1000 Friends of Florida. We commit to keep these issues in the forefront as we work to use community planning as a tool for the better future that every Floridian deserves.