



**FINAL REPORT OF
THE CITY OF
MANASSAS EQUITY
& INCLUSION
TASK FORCE
DECEMBER 13, 2021**





Who We Are

On September 28, 2020 the Manassas, Virginia City Council appointed an Equity and Inclusion Task Force (EITF) to engage every segment of the Manassas community in an open and honest discussion of issues surrounding racism and diversity. The goal of the Task Force included identifying barriers that limited community members from full participation in the City's economic and community vitality. The results would then yield concrete solutions and course of action items that would be presented to the City Council. The City Council would then be able to take steps to promote equity and inclusion in all facets of city government.

Once a charter was drafted and approved by the EITF, training sessions were conducted by Oliver Allen of Training and Development Strategies, LLC; and Alfranda Durr of ALD and Associates, LLC, hired by the city from December 2020 through February 2021. Member input identified the following areas on which to focus:

- community acceptance
- criminal justice/public safety
- education/educational attainment
- housing accessibility and affordability
- government (representation, hiring, contracting, engagement)
- healthcare access, quality, and outcomes
- employment (childcare, transportation issues)
- accessibility (for individuals with disabilities)
- environment- parks, recreation, and culture (access and accessibility) and
- transportation (access and availability).

During the Task Force's January 26, 2021 meeting, members identified five categories on which to focus discussions with community members. The Task Force divided teams into the following:

- Criminal Justice
- Education/Education Attainment
- Employment
- Healthcare
- Housing

What We Did

In March, April, and June of 2021, the public was invited to participate in a series of virtual and in-person listening sessions. Each team consisted of one team lead, a facilitator, and a scribe.

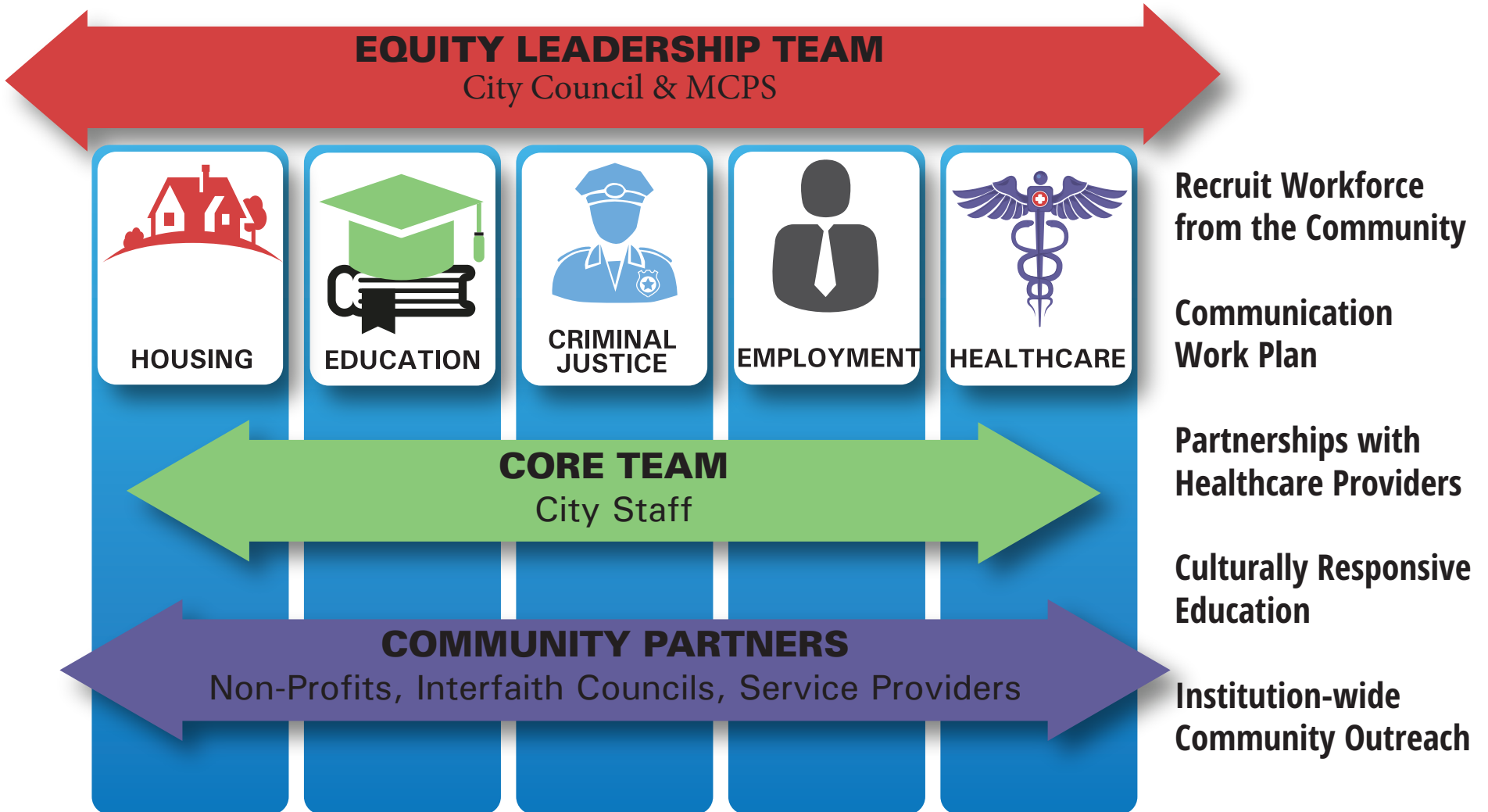
Members initiated the creation of web pages, solicited video uploads and comments submitted online or by phone. They also supported marketing to promote the group's listening sessions. Fifty-two residents responded to an online survey. The task force gave the City Council an interim report on July 12, 2021. The report contained analysis of the online survey.

EITF members participated in a series of in-person community outreach events in June, August, and October of 2021 including:

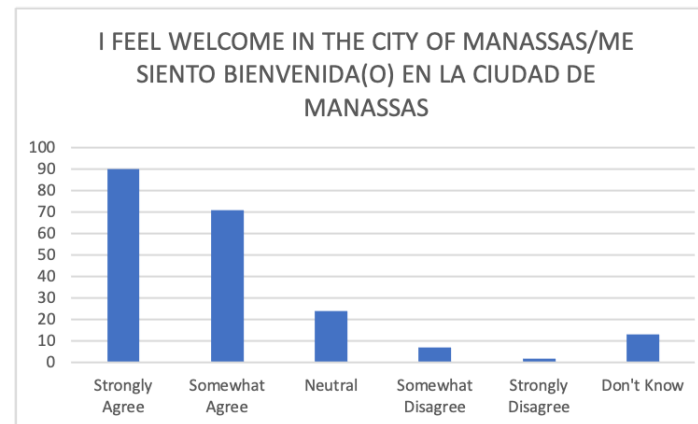
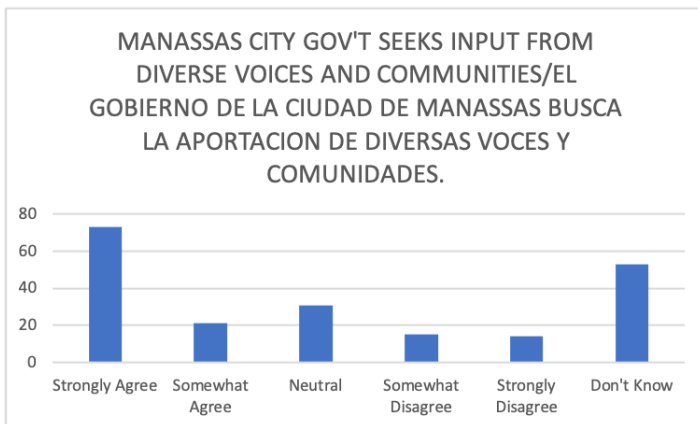
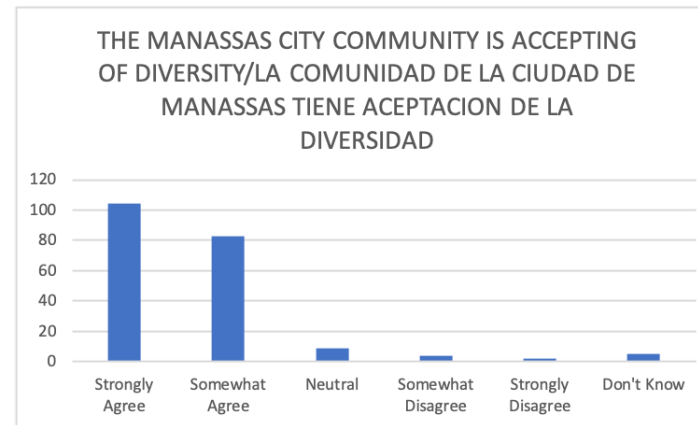
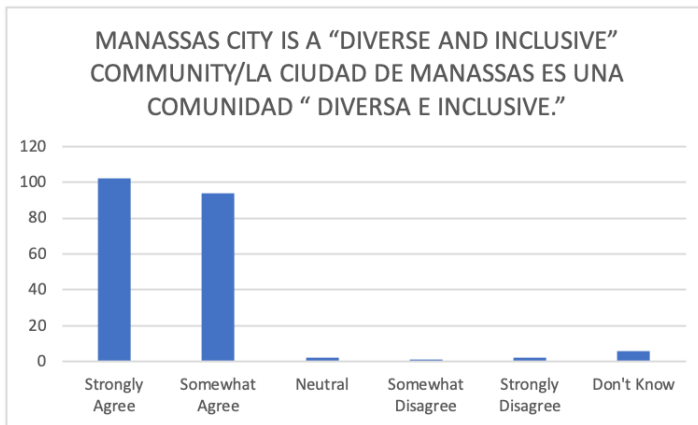
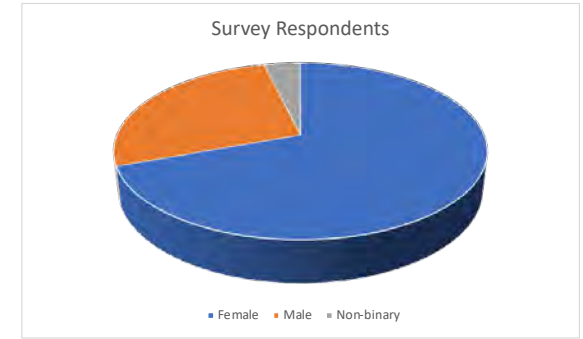
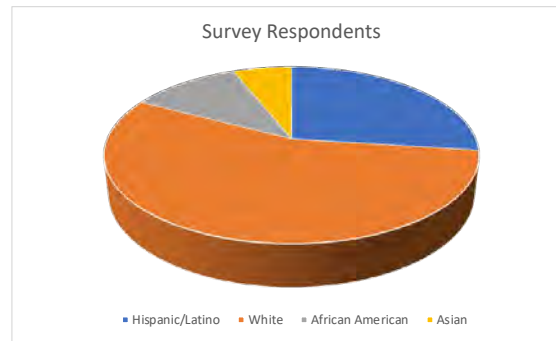
- The Prince William Chamber of Commerce Hispanic Council's Power of Partnership event on June 4
- Manassas Police National Night Out event on August 3
- The Manassas Fall Jubilee on October 2
- The Equality Prince William Pride event on October 3
- The Manassas Latino Festival on October 9

Members gathered paper survey responses and notes in English and Spanish during the June through October events.

Collaborating for Equity in Government



There were 207 respondents for the printed surveys. Results from the printed surveys EITF team members distributed during five community engagement events June-October, 2021:





Education Team Members

February, 2020 through November, 2021

Abigail Gray
Maureen Townsend
Susan Bardenhagen

All team members led/moderated, facilitated, and scribed at the four listening sessions. Also, team members volunteered time at the EITF's outreach events to collect more input from city residents.

The Education Team crafted questions for two virtual listening sessions. EITF member leaders and facilitators, and the sessions' participants reported that the pandemic exacerbated barriers and exposed inequities.

Two virtual listening sessions given by the Education Team were comparatively well-attended. Attendees mainly addressed the following:

- Early childhood education and support
- High school success
- The college application process
- Opportunities to attend local community

colleges, such as Northern Virginia Community College

The Task Force also solicited comments regarding equity and inclusion in the City of Manassas:

- Via an interactive website and phone message system
- Online survey or video message upload
- Posting comments on chart paper
- Completing surveys at outreach events from March 2021 through October 2021

EITF members and city staff staffed outreach booths at five community events, where more than 200 surveys were completed. Participants also provided notes to share their comments on Manassas as an "equitable city."



Virtual Listening Session Questions

- What concerns do you have about equity, and inclusion with education and education attainment in the City of Manassas?
- How have you, your family, or community been impacted by the education system and educational attainment in the City of Manassas?
- We would like to hear about any barriers you have faced accessing the education system and programs.
- What concerns do you have about the quality of education in the City of Manassas?
- Please explain any positive experiences.
- What recommendation would you give for improving education/education attainment in the City of Manassas?

A caveat was offered by the Education Team for its listening sessions participants to note: For this topic, we acknowledge that the pandemic and virtual learning format has presented unique concerns. If you would like to include pre- and during COVID situation concerns, this would greatly help the process.



Virtual Listening Sessions March 16, 2021

13 total participants including 6
community members

April 10, 2021

10 total participants including 5
community members

What We Heard

- ▶ Manassas City Public Schools should have an **agency and liaison to address the needs of our youngest citizens**- The Smart Beginnings program that services the three districts of MCPS, Manassas Park, and Prince William County, keeps track of all children who are eligible, not just the ones receiving services. This agency and its liaison would coordinate with the established Social Services staff.
- ▶ When students do not come to kindergarten prepared and ready to learn, there isn't additional support for them and their progress and success is limited. There need to be classes/outreach for parents and families **offering proactive strategies for home involvement**. Look to Haydon Elementary's language immersion programs for a successful model of the aforementioned strategies. However, each elementary school should become a neighborhood-based community center, which would serve as a support system for students who are transitioning into Mayfield Intermediate School. All schools should have **teachers and staff that "look like the students."**
- ▶ The schools need to have better **engagement with families, with resources that incorporate** accessibility and inclusivity.
- ▶ Realizing that a large percentage of Manassas' population is Hispanic and other ethnicities, there should be **representation in the workforce and communications in varied languages**.
- ▶ **Tutoring and literacy programs** need funding across all Pre-K-12+ levels. Include student input in surveys and program implementation.
- ▶ There's a need for programs that can **assist and support the high school to college transition, including applications and financial aid. This program should involve** students as freshmen and continue at each step, not just be offered.
- ▶ A need for **mental health services to address social and emotional wellness**.

Two in-person sessions addressing Education, Criminal Justice, and Housing were held in June. One was moderated and presented in English by the EITF Chair; one was in Spanish, with a bilingual EITF member leading and scribes from both the community and an EITF member fluent in Spanish. The following questions were put forth related to Education:



In-Person Listening Sessions
June 14, 2021 (English)
June 17, 2021 (Spanish)
 @ Georgetown South
 Community Center
 More than 100 total participants

Listening Session Questions

- Is Criminal Justice a major issue in the community?
- Are education funding, and safe and adequate housing issues?
- Regarding education, how has your family or community been impacted? Describe your experience.
- What are your concerns about fair, accessible, and equitable treatment, or equitable services from the city?
- What recommendations would you give for improving any of the areas?
- What improvements would you like to see immediately?
- Are there any fears and concerns that you experienced or heard yourself that have not been discussed today?



What We Heard

- ▶ **Attention to chronic absences** should begin in elementary schools to establish “being in school” as a responsibility of the families and students
- ▶ **After-school and summer activity opportunities** for all pre-K-12 students should be accessible financially (e.g. Boys & Girls Club has a costly charge), perhaps, something similar to Manassas Park’s Community Center could offer similar programs. **Note: The Martin K. Alloy Boys & Girls Club of Manassas responded:**
- Summer camp program has scholarships for families with financial hardships.
- No family is turned away for inability to pay \$50 annual membership fee.
- During COVID we provided completely free care to our families.
- ▶ Involving the **Police in neighborhood programs** and activities would foster a proactive relationship and rapport.
- ▶ In response to comments made about the need for **career training and job trades** at the secondary level -- Manassas City School Board members who attended, shared information on “Career & Technical Education” classes offered at Metz and Osbourn. Presentations and Forums would be helpful for parents and community members on this subject.
- ▶ Addressing the critical need for newsletters, homework, outreach, and other publications, as well as phone messaging options, to be **available in Spanish**. It was noted in the EITF’s outreach, that the city’s newsletters and other communication are only available in English.



In-Person Listening Sessions
June 14, 2021 (English)
June 17, 2021 (Spanish)
 @ Georgetown South
 Community Center
More than 100 total participants

- ▶ There is **not enough help in the schools for Spanish speaking parents.**
- ▶ **School employees must be friendlier and more engaging with parents.**
- ▶ **Families need assistance in filling out necessary forms.**
- ▶ Schools need **more summer programs** in order to prevent summer learning loss.
- ▶ **Truancy paperwork** takes too long.
- ▶ **Children who are academically behind, will continue to face** challenges to catch up.

Suggestions:

- ▶ **Need to build a bridge between parents, school and police.**
- ▶ **Reinstate trade school curriculum in school** to help students transition into trade schools or community colleges. Northern Virginia Community College offers classes that address this.



Virtual Meeting with Greater Prince William Chapter of the NAACP
September 21, 2021
 Five members and the staff liaison attended the virtual meeting to listen and identify these issues. Most of the requests were connected to economic development and equitable access to programs. The following are related to Education:

What We Heard

- ▶ City of Manassas has never been part of the **PW Human Rights Commission**; they would like to see the city represented.
- ▶ RE: American Rescue Act, how is **money being spent to benefit communities of color?**



The EITF conducted roundtable discussions with service providers, including Manassas City Police Department, UVA Prince William Medical Center, and Manassas City Public School staff.

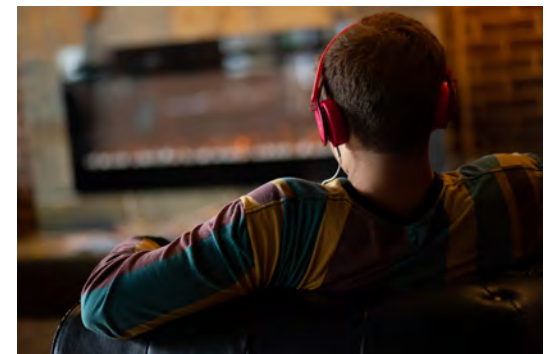
The team asked the following questions:

Questions for MCPS Staff

- What programs, offices, staff, and or efforts are in place to address the following:
- Representatives from “Smart Beginning” asked: How is the city identifying eligible students from Pre-Headstart to Pre-school age for programs to get them ready for kindergarten?
- Both representatives from NVCC’s Manassas campus and parents of high school students are concerned about:
 - a) How are students being prepared for the transition to community college courses.
 - b) What support is available to give students the opportunities and support needed for applying to college and how to navigate the tuition process -- specifically the “Jump Start” program, which does not have the number and diversity of applicants it should.
 - c) What opportunities are available for students to take Career & Technical training courses at both levels being offered?
 - d) The backlog of truancy paperwork results in the school year ending without any resolution.

- What processes are in place to ensure that students have “role models” or teachers that “look like them” – to ensure diversity in hiring and appointing at all levels?
- Does school staff include a diversity, equity, inclusion officer or staff person specifically addressing these needs?
- What steps have been taken to support Spanish-speaking parents who call for assistance? [Many of the Manassas elementary feeder school neighborhoods have a high percentage of Hispanic families. There does not seem to be enough staff at schools who can speak Spanish to assist or support parents who call for assistance].

It was also stipulated: Please note that all of the sessions took place last spring and early summer prior to the opening of schools in August with full-time instruction. Some of the topics presented were exacerbated by the pandemic.





**Virtual Roundtable Session
with MCPS Staff**
October 27, 2021
10 participants

What We Heard

- ▶ The **Preschool Initiative Program** is already being planned for 2022. Kids ages 3-5 will be transitioned into Pre-K programs. Birth to 5 “early learning developmental standards” have been outlined. Social workers have been given a service directive and are in place at each of the schools. Kindergarten “readers” from retirement communities have benefits for both parties. Offerings for pre-school are in both English and Spanish with “Parent University” plans.
- ▶ Each of the English 12 classes participate in the **Naviance** program, going through college applications and worksheets. An NVCC-Manassas workshop hosted twenty families onsite; each day on Zoom, students and families can work with financial aid officers, even if they are not attending NVCC; and twenty colleges met with interested families.
- ▶ There is a fear by **DACA students** whether they are classified as international or domestic.
- ▶ Eleven of the sixteen clusters in **Career & Technical Education**, including fine and performing arts, are offered at Osbourn HS. Many of these clusters offer specific credentialing upon completion. Workplace readiness certification is also offered.
- ▶ All students are required by state mandate to take the **Economics/Finance class**.
- ▶ A **graduation coordinator** was hired two years ago to address systems and pathways toward graduation. There is a credit recovery system for seniors. Restructuring the course paths in Math allows for relevant classes to students’ needs.
- ▶ **ESOL** is a three-year path, expediting classes by scaling down the course load. Challenges during COVID- in-person CPR requirements and CTE credentialing, e.g.- Saturday and during school options were created and some English classes were changed to block or semester schedules so students could “catch up.”
- ▶ Consideration is given for students who have to work and **GEDs** for special needs students are arranged with blended learning and online to complete self-paced courses.
- ▶ **RE: truancy-** dire need for court’s availability; during COVID attendance officers were out in the community and tracking attendance to maintain a less than 10% absentee rate. Truancy trend begins with families in elementary school so this needs to be addressed sooner.
- ▶ Personnel director stated first priority is to **hire the most qualified candidates**. Using employer referrals, Spanish fluency is first priority. It is challenging to get minority candidates for teachers.
- ▶ There is a three-year **plan for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and a task force**



**Virtual Roundtable Session
with MCPS Staff
October 27, 2021**
10 participants

consisting of eighteen staff members sharing with MCPS School Board and Cabinet- with a student and parent focus- first year: conversation on diversity, second: antiracism, and third on cultural competence. There is a liaison and audit with the Virginia Department of Education in areas of focus determined by data collection. Culturally responsive instruction is the end goal of the strategic plan (document was provided to City staff liaison with EITF).

- ▶ The staff have taken steps to be inclusive and a “**welcoming environment**” is one of the four pillars of the district’s program. Via TEAMS at the school level, equitable education and creating high quality instruction is a focus.
- ▶ Two **programs in the GTS community** include “Parents as Educational Partners” and the Latino family literacy project.
- ▶ The ESOL Family Action Council study is in need of a **division level interpreter**, a new position, to take DEI to a higher level of accountability. The staff are actively working to have more diversity in both instructors and participants in classes; it is hard to achieve, especially during COVID with a limited pool of applicants. There is a division level interpreter, who coordinates with all interpreters to ensure high quality. Every school has a trained interpreter with Spanish as top priority, with additional staff who are bilingual. Urdu and Arabic are two more languages for which translators/interpreters are needed.
- ▶ **Mobile hotspots program** with four major

carriers vetted during 2020-21. Eight hundred were set up so far for 2021-22, with 560 more created. These were contracted with federal Cares Act funding. One-to-one device to student issued at the high school level.

- ▶ Comcast Internet Essential promotion of **wireless service @ \$9.95/month** has been promoted.
- ▶ With schools returning to in-person instruction, there are:
 - **Activity buses** for the high school and clubs resuming at other schools.
 - There is **increased newsletter distribution**.
 - **Before and after school care** to support families is available through different vendors.
 - There is a “**Remind**” **app** for families which is sent in multiple languages with announcements, pushed out by individual schools.
 - **Texts, email, and phone messages** are an opt-out rather than opt-in program; accountability with periodic checking for bounce-backs and unopened/deleted as unread.

Education Top Takeaways

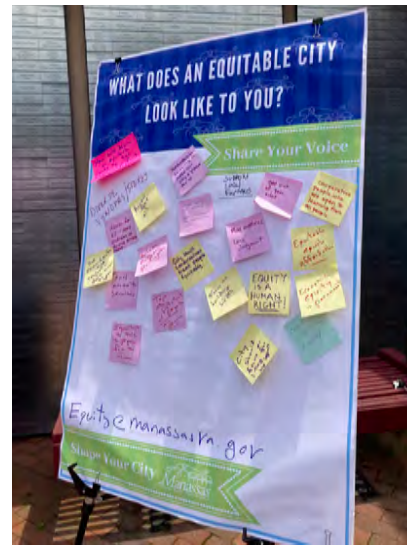
From the EITF's Interim Report to the Manassas City Council, July 12, 2021

- ▶ There need to be **more activities** for kids to stay in school, stay engaged, and find a career; **more communication** on options beyond college (i.e. trades), and more summer activities and resources.
- ▶ There are **communication barriers** – some providers/educators don't bother to reach out to Spanish speaking families on their terms or norms; difficult paperwork, no one to help.
- ▶ **Diversity** includes more than race – **mental health** needs to be addressed in schools.
- ▶ Should **survey students** about equity and feeling accepted; “see how they feel.”
- ▶ **Early childhood services** need to be available to everyone. The city should make sure everyone is aware and given access to these services.
- ▶ Review data, hold more listening sessions, identify best practices.
- ▶ Identify barriers and areas of concern for further exploration through a series of subject roundtables.
- ▶ Propose a vision for an equitable City of Manassas.



Recommendations

Education Team of Manassas City Council's Equity & Inclusion Task Force
December 13, 2021



- Create a Manassas City staff position as **Equity and Inclusion Coordinator** with liaisons to the school district; police department; emergency services department; social services, including housing, mental wellness, and healthcare; human resources; and court system. Align neighborhood school communities with similar police and social services staff.
- Continue culturally responsive education practices in both the schools and training of police, healthcare and emergency services personnel, social services, and human resources.
- Beginning with the dire need for hiring staff who represent the diversity of our student population, the students need to be encouraged to become teachers, STEM professionals, police and healthcare professionals, and then choose to live in Manassas.
- Establish transparency in hiring and seek to diversify the workforce.
- Elicit student input for DEI so as to garner representation of their voices in policy making and programs that impact them.



Housing Team Members

February, 2020 through November, 2021

Bill Briscoe
Dianne Lane
Maidy Whitesell



Virtual Listening Session
April 6, 2021
In-Person Listening Sessions
June 14, 2021 (English)
June 17, 2021 (Spanish)
@ Georgetown South
Community Center
More than 100 total participants
Community Engagement Sessions

What We Heard

- ▶ Need more options for housing
- ▶ Zoning needs to allow for more density
- ▶ Affordable housing
- ▶ Less density
- ▶ Multifamily housing and businesses
- ▶ Some non-commercial landlords discourage single parents from applying for housing.





In-Person Listening Sessions

June 14, 2021 (English)

June 17, 2021 (Spanish)

@ Georgetown South

Community Center

More than 100 total participants

What We Heard

- ▶ We need to implement rent control. The Hispanics pay very high rent and many times the conditions of the houses are not well maintained.
- ▶ We have to have **more than one job** in order to pay the rent.
- ▶ **Rent in the City of Manassas** is becoming inaccessible for Hispanic families.
- ▶ Need **parking** for each home.

- ▶ **Overcrowding** due to high rent with renters making minimum wage.

Suggestions:

- ▶ **More affordable housing needed.**
- ▶ All **new developments** should have a percentage set aside for affordable housing.
- ▶ **Improve quality** in section eight housing.



Virtual Meeting with Greater Prince William Chapter of the NAACP September 21, 2021

Five members and the staff liaison attended the virtual meeting to listen and identify these issues. The following are related to Housing:

What We Heard

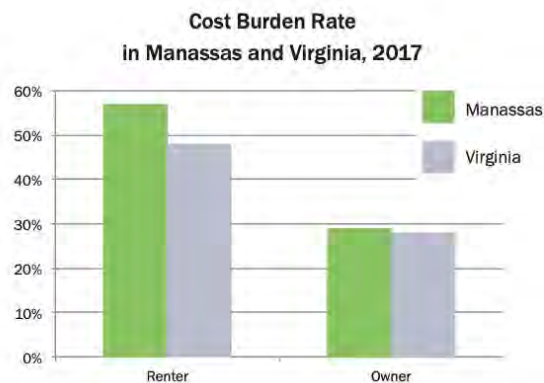
- ▶ City is “**moving out**” **lower income housing** units with higher priced units, lower income residents can’t afford new housing. Concerns of not being able to place lower income residents.



What the Data Revealed

- There are 637 units funded by Low Income Housing Tax Credits that are at risk of conversion in 2027 (24-unit multifamily) and 2032 (161 units in 2).
- Since 2009 Manassas has not funded the Housing Trust Fund; the Housing Trust Fund has been inactive since 2010.

---Manassas Housing Reports



The rising cost of rental housing contributes to a cost burden rate among Manassas renters that is much higher than the rate of renter cost burden in Virginia as a whole. In total, 57 percent of the city's renter households pay more than 30 percent of income in housing costs each month. In Virginia, 48 percent of renters are cost burdened.

Rates of cost burden among Manassas owners are more comparable to those of the state as a whole. Around 29 percent of the city's owners pay more than 30 percent of their income in housing costs, as do 28 percent of Virginia owner households.

----2019 Comprehensive Plan Housing Plan



Recommendations Housing Team of Manassas City Council's Equity & Inclusion Task Force December 13, 2021



Barriers to Improvement

- Zoning for density is biased to current state housing approach.
- Overt barrier to allowing Accessory Dwelling Units.
- Paper-only Housing Trust Fund

Opportunities for Improvement

- Require any new developments to establish a percentage of its housing in alignment with 2020 Census to be set aside using the Low Income Housing Tax Credit. Provide opportunity for residents who have income of 50 - 60% of the Area Median Income.
- Recharter and fund the Housing Trust Fund to include explicit goals increasing housing availability for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Explore the development of zoning for Accessory Dwelling units. Provides opportunity for first owner or down-sizers to reside within the community.
- Provide periodic fair housing educational materials to non-commercial landlords.



Employment Team Members

February, 2020 through November, 2021

Lianne Best
Karen Huff
Charlotte Lehmann
Keith Nguyen
Rachael Porter



Virtual Listening Sessions
April 14 and May 8, 2021
(8 participants)
and
Community Engagement
Sessions

What We Heard

- ▶ Through two public Zoom comment sessions, the Manassas City Equity and Inclusion Task Force Employment Committee has been pleased to learn that **hiring by Manassas City is perceived to be as largely diverse; however, the city lacks diversity among its leadership, in both elected and staff to support that perception.**
- ▶ Community residents felt that **the local healthcare system could benefit from a more diverse workforce by strategic planning.** Residents felt that Manassas City Public Schools are in a position to help increase diversity by providing healthcare education and training to the local

community. Residents suggested that local and private groups could provide healthcare education and training through Osbourn High School vocational classes.

- ▶ Community focus was on the **challenges facing lower-income and non-English-speaking residents in applying for work.**
- ▶ Responses from virtual listening sessions and hard-copy questionnaires completed at public events revealed that residents **overwhelmingly expressed being comfortable with the level of diversity in the City population,** and with seeing representatives of themselves at local shopping and professional venues.



In-Person Listening Sessions

June 14, 2021 (English)

June 17, 2021 (Spanish)

@ Georgetown South

Community Center

More than 100 total participants



Virtual Meeting with Greater Prince William Chapter of the NAACP September 21, 2021

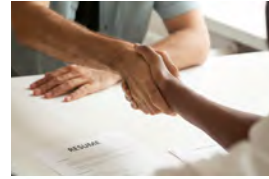
Five members and the staff liaison attended the virtual meeting to listen and identify these issues. The following are related to Employment/Economic Development:

What We Heard

- ▶ Many Hispanics **want to become police officers**, but feel discriminated against and therefore do not apply.
- ▶ Hispanics have defined hours to begin work, but no defined hours to leave work. Families reported concerns about what could happen **with their children during the hours when we cannot be at home.**
- ▶ Studies have shown the **salary of white people are higher** than that of Hispanics.
- ▶ **Recommend that police take cultural sensitivity training.**

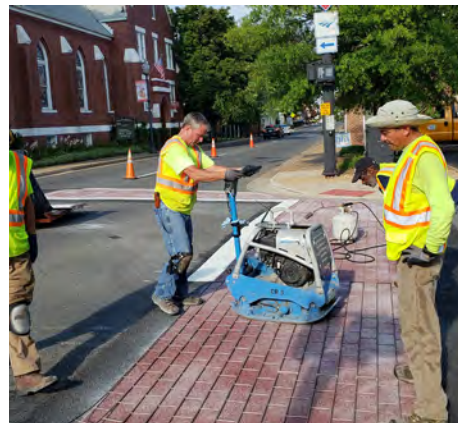
What We Heard

- ▶ Haven't seen any **proposals from Economic Development Director**, especially how proposals would benefit communities of color.
- ▶ How is **American Rescue Act** money being spent to benefit community of color?
- ▶ Community needs insight into **city's contract negotiations.**
- ▶ Would like to see racial makeup of contract awards, and better efforts to **advertise and solicit RFP/RFI** to the community.



Recommendations

*Employment Team of Manassas
City Council's Equity
& Inclusion Task Force
December 13, 2021*



- **The city could benefit from additional Spanish-speaking employees**, to support Spanish-speaking city residents.
- Committee recommendations include **development of an inclusive city employment opportunities website** as well as **advertising position openings through other, non-internet avenues** other than the city website. These advertisement opportunities could potentially include:
 - notification kiosks at City Hall and the farmers market to post jobs;
 - and **employment stations** at the new Manassas City Library at Wellington Station to both post jobs and provide computers for applications.
- The community suggested **coordinating with local African-American churches** (First AME Church, First Baptist Church) and the NAACP to also host kiosks and employment stations, and place ads in the local Latino newspaper and at the annual Asian festival.
- Note that the Prince William County chapter of the **NAACP has conducted extensive studies and analysis** of employment and economic data locally, and is willing to share their conclusions with City staff for further improvements.
- While opportunities for progress exist, the general assessment was that **Manassas City's employment framework offers overall equity and inclusivity**.



Healthcare

Healthcare Team Members

February, 2020 through November, 2021

- Jayne James
- Gretchen Almstead
- Amanda Fultz
- Marion Stanley
- Christopher Swartz



Virtual Listening Session
April 8
 (11 participants)
 (2 additional sessions were cancelled for lack of attendance)
and
Community Engagement Sessions

Listening Session Questions

- What are your concerns about quality and accessible healthcare in your community in the city of Manassas?
- We would like to hear about any barriers you face in accessing quality healthcare in the City of Manassas.
- What concerns of bias or inequity do you have about the healthcare services in the City of Manassas?
- Please explain any positive experiences.
- What recommendations would you give for improving healthcare services in the City of Manassas?





Virtual Listening Session
April 8
(11 participants)
(2 additional sessions were cancelled for lack of attendance)
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Community Engagement Sessions

What We Heard

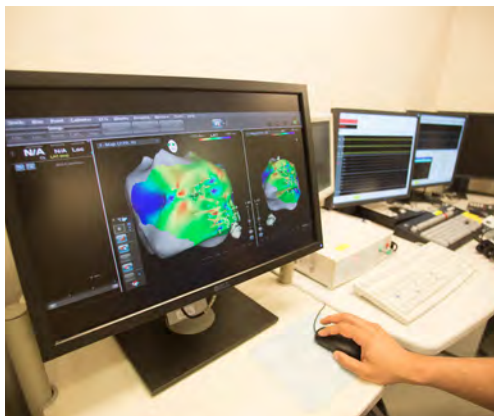
- ▶ **Non-English speakers need reliable means to communicate** while receiving treatment and aftercare. Residents perceived a lack of representation within the healthcare workforce. They reported that communication with medical professionals had been difficult, inadequate, or misunderstood.
- ▶ **Residents perceived bias** due to language capacity or health insurance status and felt ignored, disrespected at time of intake or treatment.
- ▶ It is difficult for residents to understand what health resources are available within our community. They would like to see **links to healthcare options on our website**.



In-Person Listening Sessions
June 14, 2021 (English)
June 17, 2021 (Spanish)
@ Georgetown South
Community Center
More than 100 total participants

What We Heard

- ▶ **An EMT stated that many patients were picked up by an ambulance and asked to be taken to Fairfax instead of Prince William Hospital.** Emergency services are required to take patients to the nearest hospital. Some of them choose to have someone else transport them to Fairfax.
- ▶ It is important to **have a healthcare workforce that reflects the community**.
- ▶ Patients lacking access to healthcare **use the emergency room** because they don't know who else to call.
- ▶ Can the healthcare workforce be **trained on implicit bias** in the treatment of all patients?
- ▶ How do I find information on **available resources** for those lacking economic resources?
- ▶ Could the city invest in having **interpreters present at medical facilities**? Prince William Hospital is actually federally mandated to make language interpreters available to patients, so the question is, are they offering those services to patients or are they leaving it to patients to ask?



- ▶ **How can we encourage diversity among healthcare providers?** What can we do to help immigrants enter the healthcare field? There are plenty of people who want to, but there are barriers. For instance, the cost of education and exams is a barrier to those wanting to enter fields like healthcare or public education.
- ▶ It costs several hundred dollars to become a **certified translator**. Is that something the city could help with?
- ▶ I would really like to know more about the **availability of information on city services and programs offered pertaining to healthcare**. I can't find the information on the city's website. I think it would be helpful if members of the community were able to find information more easily.
- ▶ Do we have any city programs to train recent graduates to become healthcare providers in exchange for working in the city for a certain amount of time?
- ▶ As an educator, I wonder, when nurses come to schools to talk to the students about healthcare subjects, could they also do a soft recruitment and talk to the kids about **careers in healthcare**?
- ▶ The Manassas free clinic has tremendous wait times. Sometimes kids are not able to enter our school system for weeks because they don't have health insurance, and they have to wait for an appointment at the free clinic to get a physical and vaccines. **Could the free clinic set aside certain days to focus on these children?**
- ▶ I think it would be helpful if you could hold **in-person listening sessions** in communities that may face barriers to joining a Zoom session.



**Health Roundtable with
UVA Prince William Medical
Center staff**

October 27

(Bill Briscoe, Gretchen Almstead
and Kisha Wilson Sogurno
interviewed Dr. Stephen Smith,
Ms. Heather Aram and Kim G)

What We Heard

*Question: What **training is provided in customer service**, and how frequently?*

- ▶ Diversity and Inclusion, striving for excellence, courage to be upstanding are core values of our organization, and all basic to the mission of the hospital. They have been recognized on a national level in many domains. Orientation and striving to uphold the Platinum Rule to treat others as they want to be treated are fundamental values. UVA Prince William Medical Center (PWMC) provides new team members eight hours of respectful customer service that also includes equity/diversity/inclusion training. Additionally, annual training is also provided. Leaders have additional 2 day training to facilitate conversations with their own team. Since the beginning of COVID pandemic, most training has been online, but they plan to increase in-person training after COVID.

*Question: What **training is provided in cultural competence**, and how frequently?*

- ▶ Dr. Stephen Smith, President and COO, UVA Prince William Medical Center said staff has training on various issues, including gender identity. He also spoke of “dislocation and communication” regarding residents of differing backgrounds and cultures. Dr. Smith said that patients may not have had access to primary care doctors for preventative care and as a result, residents use PWMC for all of their healthcare needs. There appears to be a need to inform diverse communities that the U.S. health care system operates differently through primary care.

*Question: Can you please share the **demographics of your staff**?*

- ▶ All of the 15 hospitals within Novant Health System-wide are 23.4% Black, 5% Hispanic, 83% female and 17% male. They stated the percentage of Hispanics is higher at the PWMC. They have staff from several age groups. Their staff includes a lot of veterans.

*Question: **What percentage of your staff speak Spanish**?*

- ▶ The PWMC has four fulltime cultural ambassadors, and 70 employees certified language assistants other than English. There are even more than those who have taken the certification test. These ambassadors do more than translation; they’re able to put things in cultural context. Their vaccine clinics always have five to six interpreters available. They have several language services to assist patients, including visual aids for Sign Language. Translation for language services is available 24/7.

*Question: Can you share the portion of your **patient survey that relates to client satisfaction**?*

- ▶ Surveys are routinely provided but not always completed. All questions on the survey relate to client satisfaction and there has been an uptrend. They have tried to individualize service, to establish more of a personal connection with patients, which with greater connectivity, has had positive benefits. They are transitioning to a new survey vendor and hoping to fine tune the feedback.



Question: What are your challenges?

- ▶ Dr. Stephen Smith also spoke of problems hiring and retaining medical and other professional staff, including plumbers, electricians, and other support professionals. Their biggest challenge is attracting diverse talent to fulfill the hospital's diverse needs. He said that the hospital needs a funnel to seek talent, and more diversity. He reported that COVID has increased the intensity of treating patients, more adversarial relationships, including violence against staff by those who denied or disagreed with COVID diagnoses and/or treatments. Staff burnout and retention of staff is a particular challenge. Cost of living in Manassas is higher than many expect. Other jurisdictions pay more and the hospital loses people after they've been trained.

Other Notes:

- ▶ Provide educational information on how healthcare works in the U.S. and offer information about primary care doctors, preventative care, and other local healthcare options.
- ▶ Continue partnerships with advocates and faith-based groups to promote health education, including the importance of establishing a primary doctor relationship and vaccine education.

Health Care Top Takeaways

- ▶ Information on healthcare services, should be on the city's website and available in multiple languages.
- ▶ There should more mental health and substance abuse treatment options.
- ▶ More collaborative partnerships between community health providers.
- ▶ Support bilingual/multilingual residents with training to become certified medical interpreters.
- ▶ Partner with the Community Health Coalition of Greater Prince William County to provide community health services. The information should be available in multiple languages on the city's website.
- ▶ Continue hosting health fairs, screenings, training, and vaccine mobile clinics.

Criminal Justice



Criminal Justice Team Members

February, 2020 through November, 2021

Amy McCracken
Andy Morris
Heather Rice
Sharon S. Smith



Virtual Listening Sessions
March 27 and April 24, 2021
(17 participants)
Community Engagement Sessions

What We Heard

- ▶ **Communication remains a major barrier** – the inability of officers, dispatchers and civilian staff members to fully engage with the community due to a lack of Spanish speaking members of the law enforcement community. An ongoing feeling that the Hispanic community’s concerns get “lost in translation.” Emergency responders should be trained to at least say “please hold while we transfer you (to a translator)” in Spanish.
- **Update from MCPD:** 12 sworn officers are fluent in Spanish, six others have a “basic” level of Spanish language proficiency. Six non-sworn employees are fluent in Spanish,

and one other has basic proficiency. One officer and one other employee are listed as speaking “other languages.”

- ▶ “The criminal justice workforce should recruit from the community; **workforce needs to mirror the community.**”
- ▶ “**Manassas had a proactive response** to last year’s social unrest events.”
- ▶ “Teenagers that get in trouble with the law are **treated too leniently** by the courts and prosecutors.”
- **Update from Office of the Prince William Commonwealth’s Attorney:** Beginning in 2020 a task force was assigned to track cases involving juveniles. Mike Phipps, Deputy Commonwealth’s Attorney, has been involved in tracking each case, focusing on repeat offenders. The primary focus of juvenile courts is rehabilitation and providing necessary resources for those offenders. CA’s office is not involved with school truancy matters.



In-Person Listening Sessions

June 14, 2021 (English)
June 17, 2021 (Spanish)

@ Georgetown South
Community Center

More than 100 total participants

What We Heard

- ▶ **Community policing** is needed to get to know the neighbors and neighborhood. Builds relationships. Should always be the same officers to establish that relationship.
- ▶ Police drive into the area, park their cars and **don't always get out of cars**. "Seem to be afraid."
- ▶ Parent and former instructor at police academy **defended training** at academy.
- ▶ **Parents need to teach** their children respect in the home and in life.
- ▶ **Better overall training needed**, especially in communication.
- ▶ Why don't the **police walk through the streets** instead of only being inside their vehicles so as to be able to observe more fully and be more engaged with people of all ages.
- ▶ On one occasion, I called the police to make a report and they insisted on knowing my **social security number**.
- ▶ The police **must not use the children as interpreters**.
- ▶ The police **need to employ more Spanish speakers and translators**.
- ▶ **Police need more authority with the children under their watch**.

Translated from the Spanish meeting:

- ▶ Why can the police not have a **friendly relationship with the community**? They only come when they are called for some incident that has occurred.



**Virtual Meeting with
Greater Prince William
Chapter of the NAACP
September 21, 2021**

Five members and the staff liaison attended the virtual meeting to listen and identify these issues. The following are related to Criminal Justice:

What We Heard

- ▶ Is there a **Citizens Task Force**?
- ▶ City of Manassas has never been part of the **Prince William Human Rights Commission**; would like to see the city represented.
- ▶ Concerns about lack of community participation, and **how our meetings are advertised.**
- ▶ Need transparency for officers who have multiple complaints, and **how the officers are being disciplined.**



- Offer **monetary hiring incentives** for any “new hires” with second language skills or those who pass “second language courses.”
- Maybe the city could **offer and pay for second language courses.**



Recommendations
*Criminal Justice Team of
Manassas City Council's Equity
& Inclusion Task Force
December 13, 2021*



Recommendations

*Manassas City Council's Equity
& Inclusion Task Force*
December 13, 2021

- **Recharter and fund the Housing Trust Fund** to include explicit goals increasing housing availability for low- and moderate-income residents.
- Require any new developments to establish a percentage of its housing in alignment with 2020 Census to be **set aside using the low Income Housing Tax Credit**.
- **Improve website functionality** with instructions on homepage in Spanish and/or other languages for easier connection to City services such as employment opportunities.
- **Install notification kiosks** at City Hall, post jobs on message boards at the farmers market, designate “employment stations” at the new Manassas City Library at Wellington Station where jobs are posted and applicants have access to computers.
- **Monitor hiring incentives** for any “new hires” with 2nd language skills or those who pass “second language courses.” Maybe the city could offer and pay for second language courses.
- **Develop joint community outreach initiatives** with healthcare providers to limit communication barriers.
- **Partner with the Community Healthcare Coalition** of Greater Prince William to identify ways that resources can be used more efficiently and effectively.
- **Continue culturally responsive education practices** in both the schools and training of police, healthcare and emergency services personnel, social services, and human resources.
- **Create a Manassas City staff position of Equity Inclusion Coordinator** to act as a liaison with area agencies to monitor and track progress of the City.
- Follow best practices model below:
 - Create a standing Diversity Commission in the Town of Leesburg, VA
 - The Racial & Social Justice Commission in the Prince William County
- Continue in-depth research about characteristics of different groups in the community.