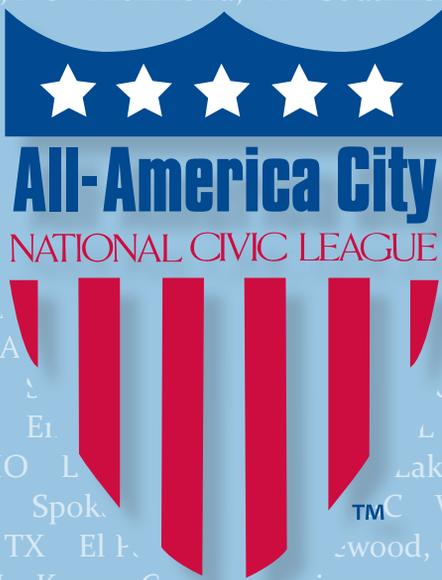
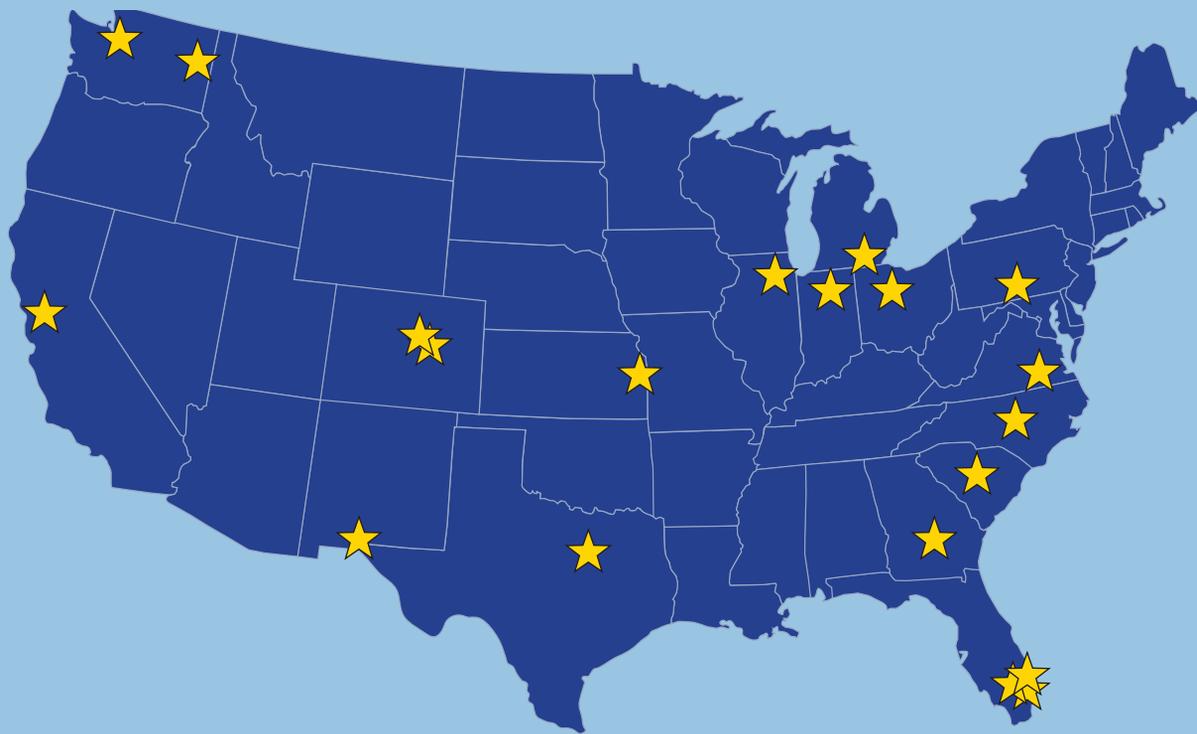


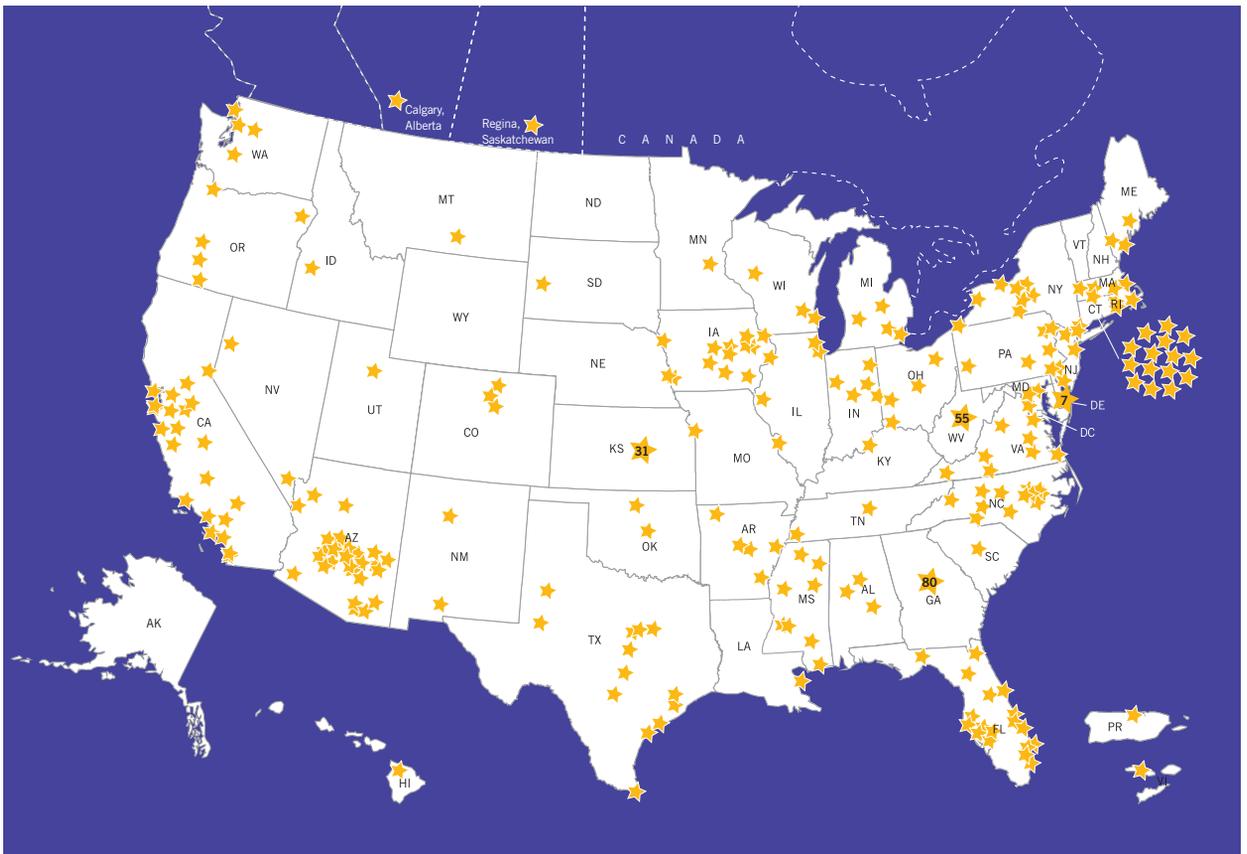
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Fitzgerald, GA Fort Lauderdale, FL Fort Wayne, IN Kansas City, MO Livermore, CA Miami



# 72nd Annual All-America City Awards

## June 7-9, 2021





# COMMUNITIES ACROSS THE NATION ARE MOBILIZING

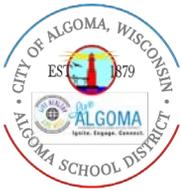
to give more children and families the resources they need to develop as early readers and succeed academically — and in life. Working together with parents, schools and teachers, we can ensure that every child is on a path to a more hopeful future.

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# 2021 All-America City Award Supporters



# ICMA-RC is proud to support the National Civic League's All-America City Awards

From its beginning almost 50 years ago, the mission of ICMA-RC has been to help those who serve their communities build retirement security. As we're evolving our name to become MissionSquare Retirement, we remain committed to helping community focused employees thrive in retirement.

For more information, visit [icmarc.org](http://icmarc.org).

ICMA-RC is becoming

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**MissionSquare**  
RETIREMENT



# 2021 All-America City Finalists

*in alphabetical order by city/county*

**Barberton, OH**  
**Bellevue, WA**  
**Carlisle, PA**  
**Dallas, TX**  
**El Paso, TX**  
**Englewood, CO**  
**Evanston, IL**  
**Fitzgerald, GA**  
**Fort Lauderdale, FL**  
**Fort Wayne, IN**  
**Kansas City, MO**  
**Livermore, CA**  
**Miami Lakes, FL**  
**Miramar, FL**  
**Morrisville, NC**  
**Richmond, VA**  
**Southfield, MI**  
**Spokane, WA**  
**Sumter, SC**  
**Wheat Ridge, CO**



**CONGRATULATIONS!  
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- ▶ *Beautify Your City*
- ▶ *Boost Community Identity*
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# Event Timeline

## 72nd All-America City Awards & Conference: Building Equitable and Resilient Communities

Virtual Event Agenda

### Monday, June 7, 2021

**All Times are Mountain Time**

All Day

Throughout the day, attendees are encouraged to explore content within the [event platform](#). Attendees will find sponsor booths, community's civic action fair booths, cultural entertainment performances, pre-recorded sessions, speeches and more.

10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

#### Equity Roundtable Learning Exchange

[REGISTER](#)

Attendees will join breakout rooms to discuss equity efforts in their communities, sharing best practices and difficulties. Conversation topics will include (but are not limited to) equity in pandemic response, equitable policing/public safety and infusing equity in resilience efforts.

12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Lunch

1:00 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

#### Block 1 of finalist presentations

[WATCH](#)

Jury introductions (1:00); Southfield, MI (1:10); Miramar, FL (1:35); Dallas, TX (2:00); Spokane, WA (2:25)

3:30 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

#### All-America City Awards Opening Ceremony

[WATCH](#)

Attendees will be welcomed by League President, Doug Linkhart and Board Chair, Mayor Patti Garrett. *Keynote speaker: Dr. Gail Christopher, Executive Director, National Collaborative for Health Equity.*

### Tuesday, June 8, 2021

**All Times are Mountain Time**

All Day

Throughout the day, attendees are encouraged to explore content within the [event platform](#). Attendees will find sponsor booths, community's civic action fair booths, cultural entertainment performances, pre-recorded sessions, speeches and more.

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

#### Resilience Roundtable Learning Exchange

[REGISTER](#)

Attendees will join breakout rooms to discuss resilience efforts in their communities, sharing best practices and difficulties. Conversation topics will include (but are not limited to) resilience to health emergencies, climate resilience and fiscal and economic resilience.

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Lunch

12:00 p.m. – 1:35 p.m.

#### Block 2 of finalist presentations

[WATCH](#)

Carlisle, PA (12:00); Morrisville, NC (12:25); Richmond, VA (12:50); Evanston, IL (1:15)



1:55 p.m. – 3:55 p.m.

**Block 3 of finalist presentations.**

Fitzgerald, GA (1:55); Kansas City, MO (2:20); Livermore, CA (2:45); Bellevue, WA (3:10); Fort Lauderdale, FL (3:35)

[WATCH](#)

4:30 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

**Award Announcements and Keynote Address**

The National Civic League will announce the winners of this year’s [Robert Wood Johnson Health Equity Award](#) and the [2021 Hall of Fame Award](#).

*Keynote speaker: Honorable Lori Lightfoot, 56th Mayor of Chicago, IL.*

**Wednesday, June 9, 2021**

**All Times are Mountain Time**

All Day

Throughout the day, attendees are encouraged to explore content within the [event platform](#). Attendees will find sponsor booths, community’s civic action fair booths, cultural entertainment performances, pre-recorded sessions, speeches and more.

9:00am – 10:35am

**Block 4 of finalist presentations**

Miami Lakes, FL (9:00); Sumter, SC (9:25); Fort Wayne, IN (9:50); Englewood, CO (10:15)

[WATCH](#)

10:55 a.m. – 12:55 p.m.

**Block 5 of finalist presentations**

Flex Spot (10:55); Wheat Ridge, CO (11:20); Barberton, OH (11:45); El Paso, TX (12:10); Flex Spot (12:35)

[WATCH](#)

1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

**AAC Festival of Ideas:**

Peer discussion of community projects

[REGISTER](#)

**Group 1:**

Dallas, TX  
El Paso, TX  
Kansas City, MO  
Fort Wayne, IN

**Group 4:**

Sumter, SC  
Englewood, CO  
Wheat Ridge, CO  
Miami Lakes, FL

**Group 2:**

Richmond, VA  
Spokane, WA  
Miramar, FL  
Bellevue, WA

**Group 5:**

Morrisville, NC  
Barberton, OH  
Carlisle, PA  
Fitzgerald, GA

**Group 3:**

Fort Lauderdale, FL  
Livermore, CA  
Evanston, IL  
Southfield, MI

5:30pm – 7:00pm

**Awards Ceremony**

The moment we’ve all been waiting for, the announcement of the 2021 All-America City Awards!

*Keynote speaker: Erika Poethig, Special Assistant to President Biden for Housing and Urban Policy, Domestic Policy Council, The White House.*

[WATCH](#)



# Thank You!

## National Council of Advisors

Leon Andrews, Director, Race, Equity and Leadership, National League of Cities  
Steven Bosacker, Director, GMF Cities, German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States  
Mary Bunting, City Manager, City of Hampton, Virginia  
Kara Carlisle, Vice President of Programs, McKnight Foundation  
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Sarah Rubin, Outreach and Engagement Coordinator, California Department of Conservation  
Hon. David M. Sander, Ph.D., City Council Member and Former Mayor, City of Rancho Cordova  
Daniel Shugurensky, Professor, School of Public Affairs, Arizona State University and Director, Participatory Governance Initiative  
Sean Smoot, Principal Consultant, 21st Century Policing LLC  
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### Major Funders

A special thank you to Campaign for Grade-Level Reading and Southwest Airlines – The Official Airline of the All-America City Awards.

### Partners

American Society for Public Administration; Carl and Lily Pforzheimer Foundation; Government Finance Officers' Association; *International City/County Management Association*; Kettering Foundation; National Academy of Public Administration; National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation; National League of Cities; National Forum for Black Public Administrators; Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; and United Way Worldwide.

### AAC Event Support

A special thank you to the application review committee, jury members, youth award interviewers and volunteers.

### Staff

A special thank you to the staff and senior fellows of the National Civic League.



# 2021 All-America City Virtual Presentation Schedule

*All presentations will take place over Zoom.*

## Monday, June 7, 2021

*\*All Times are Mountain Time*

### Block 1 Presentations:

1:00 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.	Jury introductions
1:10 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Southfield, MI
1:35 p.m. - 1:55 p.m.	Miramar, FL
2:00 p.m. - 2:20 p.m.	Dallas, TX
2:25 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	Spokane, WA

## Tuesday, June 8, 2021

### Block 2 Presentations:

12:00 p.m. - 12:20 p.m.	Carlisle, PA
12:25 p.m. - 12:45 p.m.	Morrisville, NC
12:50 p.m. - 1:10 p.m.	Richmond, VA
1:15 p.m. - 1:35 p.m.	Evanston, IL

### Block 3 Presentations:

1:55 p.m. - 2:15 p.m.	Fitzgerald, GA
2:20 p.m. - 2:40 p.m.	Kansas City, MO
2:45 p.m. - 3:05 p.m.	Livermore, CA
3:10 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.	Bellevue, WA
3:35 p.m. - 3:55 p.m.	Fort Lauderdale, FL

## Wednesday, June 9, 2021

### Block 4 Presentations:

9:00 a.m. - 9:20 a.m.	Miami Lakes, FL
9:25 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.	Sumter, SC
9:50 a.m. - 10:10 a.m.	Fort Wayne, IN
10:15 a.m. - 10:35 a.m.	Englewood, CO

### Block 5 Presentations:

10:55 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.	Flex Spot
11:20 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.	Wheat Ridge, CO
11:45 a.m. - 12:05 p.m.	Barberton, OH
12:10 p.m. - 12:30 p.m.	El Paso, TX
12:35 p.m. - 12:55 p.m.	Flex Spot



# 2021 All-America City Awards Jury



**Angela Romans**  
(Jury Foreperson),  
Interim Executive Director,  
AchieveMission



**Joshua Franzel, PhD**  
Managing Director of Center  
for State and Local  
Government Excellence,  
ICMA-RC



**Hon. Margaret Abe-Koga**  
Councilmember,  
City of Mountain View, CA



**Adrianna Hernandez, Sr.**  
Council Aide, Office of the  
Mayor & City Council,  
City of Chula Vista, CA



**Tere Caldwell-Johnson**  
Chief Executive Officer,  
Oakridge Neighborhood



**Donte Martin**  
Assistant City Manager,  
City of Wichita, KS



**Maia Cole**  
Director of Leadership  
Development, HealthONE



**Ciciley Moore**  
Program Officer, Office of  
the President,  
W.K. Kellogg Foundation



**Hon. John Dailey**  
Mayor  
City of Tallahassee, FL



**Lexi Muller**  
Community Outreach Lead,  
Southwest Airlines Co.



**Hon. Jason Shelton**  
Mayor,  
City of Tupelo, MS





# HELPING COMMUNITIES MAKE IT FASTER, CHEAPER & EASIER TO GO SOLAR



The **SolSmart program**, funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, provides national recognition and no-cost technical assistance to help local governments reduce barriers to solar energy growth.

By encouraging solar energy development at the local level, SolSmart helps local governments bring new businesses to your community, promote economic growth, and foster the creation of new jobs.

## SOLSMART BY THE NUMBERS

**99M people** in participating communities.

**441 communities** receiving Technical Assistance from teams led by The Solar Foundation.

**400+ communities** designated their local solar achievements by the teams led by ICMA with the support of the National Civic League, Home Innovation Research Labs, and Cadmus Group.

**55** All-America City Awardees have achieved



**We congratulate** the following communities for being at the forefront of civic and solar innovation, achieving both SolSmart designation and All-America City status:

Alexandria, VA  
Ames, IA  
Asheville, NC  
Atlanta, GA  
Aurora, CO  
Austin, TX  
Bellevue, WA  
Boston, MA  
Brookfield, IL  
Brownsville, TX  
Cedar Rapids, IA

Charlottesville, VA  
Chattanooga, TN  
Chelsea, MA  
Chicago, IL  
Cleveland, OH  
DeKalb County, GA  
Delray Beach, FL  
Duluth, MN  
Eau Claire, WI  
El Paso, TX  
Fremont, CA

Gladstone, MO  
Hartford, CT  
Highland Park, IL  
Huntington, NY  
Independence, MO  
Indianapolis, IN  
Kansas City, MO  
Lakewood, CO  
Lincoln, NE  
Longmont, CO  
Louisville, KY

Lowell, MA  
Madison, WI  
Maricopa County, AZ  
Marin County, CA  
Miami Beach, FL  
Miami-Dade County, FL  
Minneapolis, MN  
Oakland, CA  
Oklahoma City, OK  
Park Forest, IL  
Philadelphia, PA

Plano, TX  
Providence, RI  
Pueblo, CO  
Richmond, VA  
Roanoke, VA  
Rochester, MN  
San Antonio, TX  
Santa Rosa, CA  
Savannah, GA  
Somerville, MA  
West Hollywood, CA

**IS YOUR COMMUNITY READY TO BE RECOGNIZED AS A SOLAR CHAMPION?** Apply now at [SolSmart.org](http://SolSmart.org).

# 2021 All-America City Finalist Program Summaries

## **Barberton, OH**

Due to rapid industrialization and growth at the beginning of the 20th century, Barberton gained the moniker 'The Magic City.' However, as manufacturing and industry began to subside in the 1970s and 1980s, city leadership had to devise a plan for future development. Three values truly describe the vision for Barberton since then: rebirth, rejuvenation, and resilience. These values are exemplified in the highlighted projects that residents, community partners, and elected officials undertook to see Barberton regain its 'magic' and become a healthier, vibrant city for all.

### **Fair Housing for All**

Understanding that resilient neighborhoods rely on safe, stable, and fair housing for all, residents and officials within the City of Barberton made it a priority to increase the availability and awareness of fair housing education and resources.

Multiple census statistics, coupled with public input from various residents and agencies within the city, led to the city adding fair housing services to all Barberton residents as an objective for community development.

The city began using federal funding from the Community Development Block Grant program to aid in community and fair housing initiatives. The Planning Department began by providing two training opportunities, the first for landlords and the second for sub-recipients of city-dispersed Community Development Block Grant funding.

After receiving an overall positive reception, the program was expanded to promote resources for landlords and tenants. Partnering with the Akron Bar Association and Ohio Civil Rights Commission, the City of Barberton provided a Fair Housing Legal Clinic for tenants. During

the clinic, individuals were able to ask questions and receive legal advice on individual rights and fair housing practices. In 2019, the City of Barberton expanded its partnership with the Akron Bar Association to review leases, advise on tenant rights, and answer questions on escrow, evictions, and other housing-related issues.

Additionally, city Council passed a resolution proclaiming the Month of April as 'Fair Housing Month' to affirm the city's position and goal of eliminating racial segregation and housing discrimination.

Over 600 low/moderate-income households received assistance through Community Development Block Grant funding.

### **Community-Based Floodplain Management**

Like many communities across the country, the City of Barberton is vulnerable to flood based hazards. Since many flood zones occur in residential areas, residents see firsthand the need for proper flood mitigation and preparedness activities. When city officials began to develop strategies to reduce flooding, officials sought buy-in from residents to create an inclusive, community-based floodplain management program.

In 2015, the city implemented its first cohesive hazard mitigation document: The Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan. When developing the plan, open public meetings were held to inform residents of the planning and participation process, and citizens could publicly comment on the city's website.

A portion of the Multi-Hazard Mitigation Program included acquiring properties within the city's 100-year floodplain that had experienced repetitive flooding and damages. By acquiring select properties through funding supplied by FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, the city would demolish the structures located on the properties and create a green



space for floodwater storage. The city met with residents to discuss the grant program and gauge general interest. Residents were educated about the grant program and were able to ask questions directly to the Director of Public Service and Stormwater Manager regarding the overall process and next steps. In all, over 46 individuals attended the three meetings regarding the grant program. After learning more about the program, eight out of the fifteen homes eligible under the program volunteered for acquisition and demolition.

To further awareness and education of floodplain and stormwater management, the city also distributed 48,000 newsletters and 500 handouts to residents and displayed announcements at the local movie theater and drive-in. The city has also partnered on programs with the Summit Soil and Water Conservation District, various businesses and non-profit organizations to address flooding concerns, water quality issues, and pollution from stormwater runoff.

### Fighting Hunger through Mobile Meals

In Summit County, there are 82,740 food-insecure people, including 23,320 children. Because hunger is such a widespread issue, multiple organizations and agencies work tirelessly to limit hunger and food insecurity within Barberton. Various nonprofit, religious, and civic organizations locally and throughout the region provide meals and groceries for those in need, but access to these agencies may be a limitation for residents in marginalized communities. To fill in the gaps, the city developed a program to deliver meals to low-to-moderate income residents who do not have any other access to obtaining nutritious meals.

Through funding allocated by the Community Development Block Grant and by partnering with Mobile Meals, the city provided food for low-to-moderate income children, elderly, sick, and disabled residents, all while using a plan provided by a professional dietician.

The program later merged with Family & Community Services, Inc., to expand its Mobile initiative, and provide a wider net of services and resources for low-to-moderate income families, including shelters for the homeless, emergency housing services, veteran's assistance, services for children, aid for domestic violence victims,

community outreach, programs for seniors, and full clinical and addiction services.

In 2018, Mobile Meals provided 1,207 meals to 28 low-income residents and in 2019, the city increased funding to provide home-delivered meals, supplements, and nutrition education for 150 residents.

2020 brought significant changes to food access due to economic hardships caused by the pandemic. The city continued to provide the Mobile Meal program and existing organizations continued working to eliminate hunger and food insecurity within the region.



**CONGRATULATIONS!**  
*Best wishes and good luck to all of the 2021 AAC finalists.*



**"A Community Working Together To Stay #gladSTRONG."**  
[www.gladstone.mo.us](http://www.gladstone.mo.us)



## Bellevue, WA

In the past five years, Bellevue has seen tremendous growth and economic investment. However, Bellevue is struggling with the pains of growth, including a lack of affordable housing, increasing homelessness, and the struggle of seniors to afford “aging in place.” With increased development, concerns about environmental sustainability and a decline in sense of community have grown. Bellevue’s featured projects reflect collaborative efforts to mitigate these growing pains and create an equitable and resilient place for all residents to call home.

### **Inspirational Playground: A Castle for Every Princess!**

The City of Bellevue had several creative and inclusive services for those with disabilities and their families, but the community saw a need to do more.

The Bellevue Rotary Club approached the city about creating an inclusive playground designed for children of all abilities. As the rotary club met with the city and the community, a vision for Inspiration Playground began to take shape, and Downtown Park was identified as an ideal place.

The next step was to engage the community for greater understanding and input. A “Play for All Expo” was held in the Downtown Park to share the Inspiration Playground concept with the community, and to celebrate and learn about community support programs for people living with disabilities. The city and the rotary club continued to engage stakeholders and the community on playground design. Specific effort was made to solicit input from parents with children with disabilities.

Next, the Rotary Club of Bellevue led a multi-year community-wide fundraising campaign, with over 25 organizations, and numerous individual donors contributing to the 4.5-million-dollar project.

By 2017, the city completed construction of Inspiration Playground and celebrated the opening ceremony. Inspiration Playground is now an inclusive play space enjoyed regionally by families and individuals of all ages and abilities, who play and explore at their own pace.

Additionally, trained community playground ambassadors volunteer to help make the playground fun and inclusive. They are energetic and enthusiastic, easy to talk to, and accessible for children who need assistance or have questions.

### **Diversity Advantage Initiative: Learning and Responding**

Bellevue’s Diversity Advantage Initiative was created by the community working with the city to create specific recommendations around the areas of cultural competence within both the city organization and community.

The Diversity Advantage Initiative is advanced by the Bellevue City Council and the Leadership Team, Bellevue Diversity Advisory Network (BDAN), and The Diversity Advantage Team.

#### Building Cultural Competency within City Government

The city has worked to advance the Diversity Advantage Plan and to apply the principles of equity, access, and inclusion within department specific workplans. A sample of actions include:

- Additional staff training in Cultural Competence Foundations, Implicit Bias for Hiring Managers, Title VI and ADA, and Universal Design.
- Formation of Staff Employee Groups: Disabilities Allyship Resource Team, Employees of Bellevue for Racial and Cultural Equity, and Rainbow Alliance for Diversity.
- Diversity Talent Hiring Initiative.
- Procurement Diversity and Inclusion Plan.

#### Building Cultural Competency in the Community

In a normal year, the focus on building community cultural competence is centered around public programs that provide cultural learning and interaction such as Welcoming Week, Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebrations, and several others.

In response to the uniqueness of 2020, the Diversity Advantage Team provided a progress update on the Diversity Advantage Plan during a Diversity Summit, featuring community sessions on racial equity.

The Diversity Advantage Initiative has specific recommendations on how to advance and



# Pitt County



2020



[www.PittCountyNC.gov](http://www.PittCountyNC.gov)

f t v @PittCountyNC

 **PittCounty**  
North Carolina

improve the civic engagement of the entire community:

- Establish trust within the social networks of diverse communities.
- Develop and implement a strategy to increase diverse representation on city boards, commissions, advisory committees, and task forces.
- Offer interpretation, translation, and accommodation services at public meetings.
- Collaborate with local partner organizations to develop community leadership training and mentoring programs benefiting underrepresented population groups.
- Develop and implement a civic engagement strategy to increase general participation in local government among diverse populations.
- Ensure that civic engagement events include follow up efforts to inform participants of how their input has influenced decision making.
- Provide funding and partnerships to community groups or initiatives that meet City of Bellevue diversity goals.

The recommendations are viewed as work assignments for departments to track efforts and progress.

### **Jubilee Reach and the Community: Meeting Crucial Needs in a Pandemic**

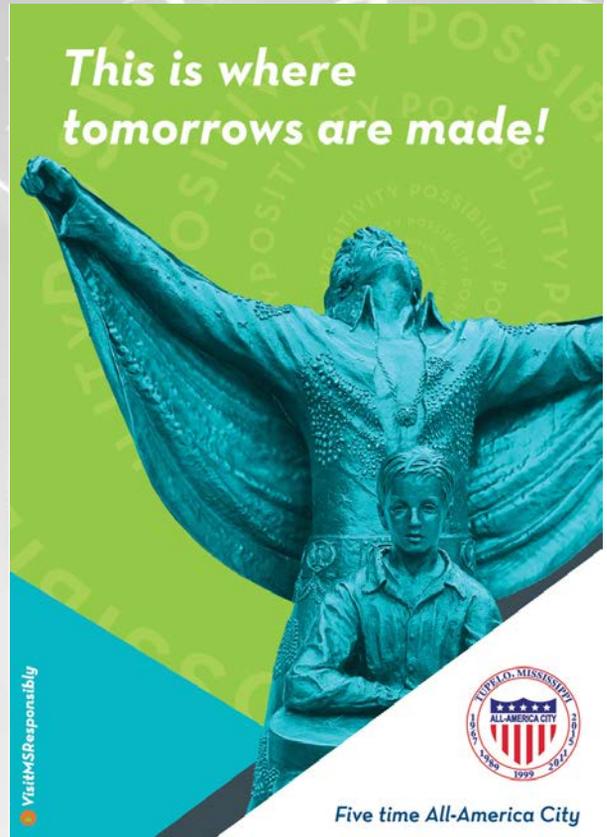
Jubilee REACH serves the children, youth and families of Bellevue through school site coaches, ESL classes at the Jubilee Center, a thrift store, and community service days to provide service to seniors and vulnerable adults.

When the COVID-19 lockdown began, Jubilee REACH listened to the families already being served and decided to redirect efforts and become an essential service to help the most vulnerable in the following ways.

- 746 families and an estimated 3,357 people have been provided with groceries, hygiene products, and pantry items once a week.
- 100 families have received financial support to help with utility bills, rent and essential needs.
- Support to families has been increased from \$150 to \$300 per year during this crisis.
- A weekly warm meal delivery service supports 32 isolated seniors.
- The Jubilee REACH Thrift Store received donations that went directly to assisting families with clothing, housewares, and

furniture.

- As schools went virtual, existing site coaches continued to provide social and emotional support to students, working creatively, and connecting virtually to deepen connections and help students feel a sense of purpose and belonging during the crisis.



### **Carlisle, PA**

Carlisle's pre-existing collaborations and engaged residents allowed them to respond to the compounding challenges of 2020 proactively and effectively. While Carlisle is a diverse community by Central Pennsylvania standards, 2020 showed that there is still significant work to be done by leaders to listen to and act upon the needs of historically underserved residents. Recently, meaningful change has been discussed openly at public forums, generating significant actions which will lead to more fruitful outcomes for all residents.



## Carlisle Community Action Network

As it became clear that the COVID-19 pandemic would reach Carlisle, a group of thirty community leaders, which had met occasionally and in-person since 2017, intentionally expanded its membership and began a collaborative response.

The Carlisle Community Action Network (Carlisle CAN) quickly grew to over 100 community members, including representatives from all sectors of the community.

During weekly Zoom meetings, members listened to community health updates and discussed short- and long-term needs of the community. Spinoff committees would then develop projects to address the identified needs.

A few project examples include:

- **The Carlisle CAN Public Health Initiatives** encouraged individuals, and business owners and patrons to wear masks while in public spaces. CAN members distributed more than 4,000 masks and posters to 120 participating businesses. The group is developing vaccine education materials with special attention to providing role models from communities of color and translating materials into multiple languages.
- **The Summer Youth Care Taskforce** was formed to determine how community members could collaborate and pool resources to support local childcare options during the pandemic. A guiding principle of the group was to create accessible and affordable options to meet the new needs of working families. The Summer Program for Youth added multiple, de-densified sites so dozens of additional families had access to high-quality and safe childcare services.
- **The Civic Action Internship Program** was developed early in the pandemic as a response to the growing list of CAN-generated projects being added to a project waiting list. Dickinson's Center for Civic Learning and Action created an internship program to contribute to the projects and provide experiential learning opportunities for students. The students have completed over 25 different projects in partnership with nearly two dozen community organizations.

## Achieving Racial Equity and Justice

In response to a planned 2000 KKK rally at the Carlisle public square, 100 people converged at the YWCA to plan a "Unity Celebration." Over 2,000 people attended a counter-event at Dickinson College's football field to prove hate won't win in Carlisle.

Black Lives Matter rallies and protests have continued throughout 2020. The largest demonstration took place on June 3rd on Dickinson College's academic quad and was attended by 500.

A well-organized rally can unite people, but to sustain that momentum you need sustained leadership and organizations to empower people to act. Equity focused organizations in Carlisle include:

- Carlisle Hope Station
- Moving Circles
- Not in Our Town
- Greater Carlisle Community Responders Network (CRN)
- Carlisle YWCA
- Human Relations Commission

Recent actions by these groups include:

### Lincoln Cemetery Rededication and Reconciliation

Due to poor maintenance, drainage problems, and vandalism of tombstones, the grave markers of 650 Black Carlisians (1804-1905) were removed and placed into storage, only to disappear.

The 2019 class of the United States Army War College sought to right this wrong by offering a gift to commemorate the cemetery. The class gift of an archway was installed and dedicated in the entryway to the cemetery to guide visitors. Additionally, council funding and grants have allowed for projects beautifying the cemetery and memorial park.

### Racial Equity Town hall and Future Truth and Reconciliation Commission

The Borough of Carlisle and the Carlisle Martin Luther King Commemoration Committee hosted a town hall meeting to kick off a series of deep dives into the racial history, current conditions, and hope for the future of racial reconciliation.



After hearing residents' painful experiences of racism, the borough passed a resolution in March creating a Truth and Reconciliation Commission made up of community members who can research and inform the borough on actions that should be taken to acknowledge, address, and heal the historical wounds of racism in Carlisle.

Carlisle also creates a culture of diversity and inclusion through events such as the Juneteenth, Amani, and Black Cultural Festivals.

### Climate Action Commission

Multiple local environmental civic groups have spent years educating the local community on the environmental costs of air, water, and land/soil pollution and petitioned their locally elected officials to begin to take action and be accountable.

This civic engagement culminated in borough council taking concrete action toward addressing these concerns by approving a Climate Action Resolution committing Carlisle to meet or exceed any state, federal, and international Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction commitment. The resolution also calls for the establishment of a Climate Action Commission (CAC) to recommend a Climate Action Plan (CAP) to council for approval.

Within two months, resident participation in the CAC exceeded that of any other standing borough committee or board, placing over 40 residents into four distinct teams.

- PAT TEAM - Responsible for proposing overarching strategies to meet GHG reduction targets.
- CET TEAM - Responsible for ensuring the CAP reflects community values, including:
  - o Issues of racial and socio-economic equity
  - o Aesthetics
  - o Fairness
  - o Economic development
- PET TEAM - Responsible for conducting cost benefit analyses.
- ZONING TEAM - Responsible for conducting assessments as to how/if specific elements included in the PAT strategies can be implemented under municipal authority.

In total, the Climate Action Commission has brought together dozens of organizations and hundreds of residents into the Climate Action Planning Process. The effort has brought together all stakeholders as well as partners into the climate action planning process, including electricity and natural gas utility company representatives.

Although the Climate Action Commission is only four months old, it reflects years of community engagement between civic groups and locally elected officials.

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## Dallas, TX

In 2018, the City of Dallas accepted “Resilient Dallas: Dallas’ Path to Shared Prosperity,” a strategy that includes seven goals and serves as a guide for all future initiatives and policies. Civic engagement and collaboration were key during the creation of Resilient Dallas, integrating experiences from a network of other cities, stakeholder input, and community participation through interviews and listening sessions.

Three notable goals of the seven are highlighted within Dallas’ featured projects.

### Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan (CECAP)

The Comprehensive Environmental and Climate Action Plan (CECAP) is an ambitious plan that outlines specific actions to mitigate drivers of climate change, adapt Dallas to future climate conditions, and enhance environmental quality over the next 30 years.

CECAP planning was a collaborative effort with over 20 city departments on the Environmental Planning Task Force (EPTF). Additionally, there was a diverse Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) which was comprised of 12 advocacy and community groups, 3 academic institutions, 22 private businesses, 2 local governmental agencies, and 6 public health organizations. The SAC and EPTF had five planning and drafting workshops, along with 12 formal community meetings, 218 informal CECAP events, 941 residential survey responses, 60 business responses, 1,235 other survey responses, over 9,400 community suggestions, and 366 comments on the draft through an online forum before the official adoption of the CECAP in May 2020.

The CECAP ambitiously outlines eight innovative goals, each with specified measurable targets for years 2030 and 2050. Each goal is broken down into actions which are thoroughly explained in the 122-page document.

1. Buildings are energy-efficient and climate resilient.
2. Dallas generates and uses renewable, reliable, and affordable energy.
3. Communities have access to sustainable, affordable transportation options.

4. Dallas is a zero-waste community.
5. Dallas protects its water resources and its communities from flooding and drought.
6. Dallas protects and enhances its ecosystems, trees, and green spaces that in turn improve public health.
7. All communities have access to healthy, local food.
8. All communities breathe clean air.

To date, 76 of the milestones have been initiated and 21 have been completed and The Environment & Sustainability Task Force was formed, so residents can have easier access to providing input in the implementation.

### Welcoming Dallas Strategic Plan

Through the Welcoming Dallas strategic planning process, city staff engaged community residents to understand challenges and identify the greatest barriers to inclusion in the economic and civic life of Dallas.

Based on these needs, the Welcoming Dallas Strategic Plan identified specific recommendations that fall under five goals. Significant accomplishments by the city and partner organizations, broken down by goal, include:

1. Leadership and Communication
  - Welcoming Week Proclamation renewed the city’s commitment to making Dallas a more inclusive city for immigrants.
  - Two trainings connected nonprofit partners with the virtual community resource hub and referral platform, which connects individuals with food, shelter, education, workforce and legal assistance.
2. Safe, Healthy, and Connected Communities
  - The city established a formal partnership to provide universal legal representation for Dallas residents going through deportation proceedings.
  - Identified and developed a comprehensive response—inclusive of immigrant needs—to COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Provided COVID-19 public service announcements in multiple languages.
  - Broadcast the police chief candidate forum with simultaneous Spanish translation.



### 3. Equitable Access

- Distributed \$600,000 cash assistance payments to immigrants and refugees who were negatively affected by the pandemic and were left out of the federal economic stimulus relief programs.
- Ensuring residents with limited English proficiency have equal access to programs and services through a new Virtual Language Center and other translation efforts.

### 4. Civic Engagement

- Provided targeted 2020 Census outreach to immigrant resident neighborhoods.
- Hosted a Spanish language voter educational webinar to help inform first-time voters.
- Hosted a virtual citizenship workshop, connecting 62 residents with legal assistance, ESL and civic classes.
- Worked with family leaders to promote information about pandemic resources among their social circles.

### 5. Economic Opportunity and Education

- Hosted a webinar about the ways educators and businesses could create DACA-friendly workspaces in higher education and work.
- Hosted a webinar promoting financial resources and information for residents and business owners in Spanish.
- Provided educational gifts during the holiday season to 100 immigrant families.

Department, Dallas Fire Rescue Department (DFR), MMHPI, and Parkland Health and Hospital System.

The program began with RIGHT Care teams of three members each: a specially trained police officer, paramedic, and behavioral health specialist who is dispatched to respond to behavioral health related calls. The teams operate 16 hours per day, seven days a week. A Parkland mental health clinician is also housed in the 911-call center to triage calls and serve as a liaison to DPD officers across the city. In 2020, the RIGHT Care team participated in over 1,800 mental health calls, follow-up, and outreach care visits.

Prior to the establishment of RIGHT Care, DPD had few options other than arrest of individuals in crisis. Since the program began, involuntary commitment arrests have reduced by the hundreds each year and there has been a 29.5% reduction in mental health calls to 911 requiring an ambulance response.

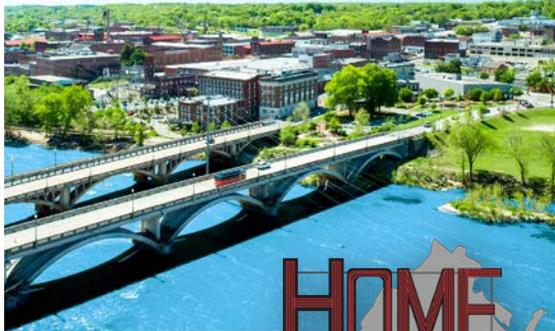
### Rapid Integrated Group Healthcare Team (RIGHT)

A comprehensive study by a local Dallas organization found that annually, there are an average number of 13,000 mental health-related emergency calls to the Dallas 911. Additionally, roughly 17,000 people with mental illness are booked into the Dallas County jail annually. Individuals with mental illness are often involved in the criminal justice system, even without having committed an offence, simply because their actions or needs are misunderstood.

The RIGHT Care Program was initiated in 2018 to divert people experiencing a mental health crisis in the community away from jail or unnecessary hospitalization. The RIGHT Care Program is a collaborative effort between the Dallas Police



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collaboration with county and city governments and funding through the Office of the Governor, United Way of El Paso County (UWEPC) was entrusted to be the backbone agency to host the El Paso United Family Resiliency Center (FRC) and lead efforts in long-term recovery.

With input from community leaders, stakeholders, future FRC participants and staff, UWEPC developed a comprehensive strategy for the FRC. The action plan considered the needs of participants as well as the desires of the general community.

The FRC opened its doors on December 19, 2019 offering a place of healing and support dedicated to serving those directly and indirectly affected by the tragedy. The focus of the FRC is to disseminate information and assist community members in navigating the variety of services available in response to August 3rd.

Culturally sensitive and trained resiliency navigators provide referrals for counseling, financial planning, legal guidance and spiritual care as well as offer documentation assistance, education on reducing mental health stigmas and peer support groups.

## El Paso, TX

In the last three years, El Paso's resilience has been tested. 2018 put El Paso at the center of an international migration crisis, in 2019 the community was a target of a domestic terror attack and just when the city began to recover, the COVID-19 crisis descended. Even though the extent of these crises could not have been predicted, El Paso was prepared. Prepared not just because of the emergency response systems in place, but because the community itself is engaged, empowered and resilient.

### El Paso United Family Resiliency Center (FRC)

On August 3, 2019, a young man entered a busy Walmart in El Paso and opened fire. His actions resulted in the death of 23 individuals, 48 injured and countless others deeply affected.

The need to stand up a resiliency center for long-term community recovery was identified. In

2020 tested the resiliency of El Paso once again with an estimated 453,000 El Pasoans highly or moderately affected by job loss, reduced income, inadequate childcare, stress/anxiety and other factors as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Modeled on the success of the FRC, the Community Resiliency Center will address the needs of individuals and families within El Paso County by increasing awareness and assisting with the navigation of COVID-19 services.

### COVID-19 Response

At the onset of the pandemic a cross functional team of City of El Paso departments was created to manage the challenges of COVID-19. That team was charged with equitably deploying pandemic relief programs and support to ensure not only strong emergency response, but also an inclusive and resilient recovery plan aimed at making the El Paso Community ultimately stronger and more prepared than ever before.



The first step was to initiate the community resilience needs assessment to capture a snapshot of vulnerabilities and priorities at the onset of the pandemic. Non-profits, partner public entities and neighborhood stakeholders were called upon to establish an informed prioritization of needs.

The COVID-19 community needs assessment revealed the following priorities:

Housing + Basic Needs: Ensure that those impacted by COVID-19 have access to food, utilities, shelter, childcare services, and homes free of domestic violence.

Livelihood + Employment: Deliver direct financial support to individuals, families and small businesses struggling to meet financial obligations because of the pandemic.

Once priorities were established, the city proceeded to identify community partners who would be key to deploying the over \$31 million in aid that was committed to the relief program. In the months since the start of the pandemic, over 10,000 households have been provided rental support, over 2,600 households were able to keep utilities running, 2,000 families and essential workers have access to childcare and over 103 million pounds of food have been distributed.

Another highlight has been El Paso's ability to provide shelter and support for those experiencing homelessness. The City of El Paso, alongside community partners, immediately rallied to create surge capacity and immediately relocate over 80 individuals into a new shelter.

### **Equity Response to Tragedy**

Over the last two years, the El Paso community has faced tragedies that have exacerbated existing racial, ethnic, and gender disparities. In that time, YWCA has intervened with multiple programs created specifically to heal the physical, emotional, and psychological scars left behind.

#### Increasing access to high quality childcare

In the summer of 2020, YWCA partnered with the city to provide childcare and emergency respite childcare as part of the COVID relief effort. The partnership between the YWCA and

the city made possible more than half a million dollars in childcare at no cost to families. More than keeping families working, this program kept hundreds of children connected to remote schoolwork, ultimately keeping the COVID learning gap closed.

#### Providing shelter, support and care for women experiencing homelessness

The Sara McKnight Transitional Living Center (TLC) is a 19-unit dormitory-style facility that caters to women and children largely experiencing homelessness due to domestic violence. The TLC staff stabilize, support, and advocate for each participant on an individual basis and provide meaningful, positive developmental activities for children and youth. Also on the TLC campus, the Rapid Rehousing facility offers rent and utility assistance for clients. Due to the incredible commitment of the Homeless Services Staff and the inspiring strength of clients, there has never been a break in service at the TLC.

#### Leading community conversations around social equality and empowerment

Following the August 3, 2019 shooting, YWCA spearheaded a series of dinner conversations where community members could engage in civil discussions about issues related to race and racism in light of the trauma El Pasoans had suffered. When COVID took away the ability to meet in person, those discussions were held virtually.

In March of 2020, YWCA introduced a two-pronged approach to introducing community-wide online racial justice initiatives. Reading with YWCA offers guided readings of children's literature featuring diverse characters and subject matter. The Courageous Conversation series features guest speakers and panels discussing social issues over Zoom.



## Englewood, CO

Englewood's location, engaged community, diverse economy, and proximity to Denver are all positives, but the community has faced significant challenges in the last several years. Namely, the city has struggled to fund infrastructure improvements to deal with aging stormwater systems. COVID-19 and racial tensions in 2020 presented a new set of challenges which exposed the need for increased focus on underserved populations and more robust diversity and inclusion initiatives. The plans and projects featured in Englewood's application show how the city has partnered with residents, the non-profit sector and the business community to address these challenges.

### Inclusive Police Reform

In response to the George Floyd tragedy, Mayor Olson signed the Mayor's Pledge to Reimagine Policing, developed by the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, that asks communities to engage the community and review policing policies. Council members affirmed this plan, and the police department set about reviewing existing programs.

#### Step 1: Review Existing Programs, including:

- Citizens Police Academy
- National Night Out
- Graffiti Paint Out
- Restorative Justice Program
- Co-Responder Program
- Impact Team
- Body Worn Cameras

#### Step 2: Analyze Use of Force Policies, Discipline and Alternate Policing

In addition to reviewing existing programs noted above, city council outlined additional review and analysis steps based on resident feedback. The final report to the community included an analysis of:

- Staffing
- Policies
- Alternate policing and crime prevention efforts
- Review committee(s) and accountability

#### Step 3: Solicit Expert Advice

Council held a study session featuring four experts who were asked to discuss current trends and best practices regarding policing. City council also requested a survey of all sworn officers to better understand their perspectives.

#### Step 4: A Community Conversation

On July 22, the City of Englewood held a Telephone Town Hall for 21st Century Policing. Police and city council members presented information and fielded questions regarding police practices such as policies, training, hiring, discipline, organizational culture, alternative policing, and best practices for law enforcement.

#### Step 5: Creation of the Police Reform Task Force

Based on information collected from previous steps, city council established a police reform task force, including key local stakeholders. The task force was asked to provide council with recommendations regarding training, hiring and discipline; use of force policies and procedures; and alternate policing.

Meeting for 2-3 hours each week for a month, the task force released more than 30 recommendations that departments are working with EPD to implement as part of step 6.

### Economic Vitality Though COVID and Beyond

When COVID-19 began to close many businesses, the city acted quickly to develop a series of programs designed to support local businesses.

#### Small Business Grants

Thanks to funding from the city budget and the CARES Act, Englewood businesses received 430 grants, with relief funds covering expenses such as PPE, lost revenue, outdoor accommodations and more.

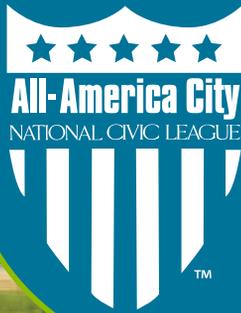
#### Downtown Development Authority (DDA)

Working with downtown business leaders, city council approved a special November election during which voters approved the creation of the DDA. The DDA will partner with city departments, the chamber of commerce, and nonprofits to focus on placemaking, marketing, mobility, safety, and economic development.





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### Career Boot Camp

In partnership with Arapahoe Community College (ACC) and the chamber of commerce, the city sponsored a career boot camp for COVID-displaced workers. The Live Local, Learn Local and Work Local Displaced Worker program will educate 40 participants on career-building skills. Participants will receive \$200 and an additional \$1,145 future scholarship to be used for more training through ACC.

### Time for Takeout

After in-person dining was prohibited, the city partnered with the chamber of commerce to launch the Time for Takeout Campaign. A master list of restaurants offering takeout was quickly assembled and published on both the city and chamber websites and promoted on social media.

### Business Storytelling and Staycation Series

The city and chamber of commerce launched a free business storytelling series to promote

Englewood-based businesses. The campaign was open to all businesses and the communications department launched a social media campaign asking the community to nominate businesses. Each story featured a brief description of a business and a customized video interviewing an employee and showing footage of the business and what services they provide.

### **Emergency Preparedness and Stormwater Resiliency Following Tragedy**

A 2018 flood brought to light Englewood's shortcomings with both emergency management planning and the city's stormwater infrastructure. After the flood, all city staff were required to complete Incident Command System Training. The city also entered into an agreement with Arapahoe County that provides Englewood with a comprehensive emergency management program to prevent, prepare for, and recover from emergencies.

In addition to the tragic 2018 flood event, in 2019 the city experienced a stormwater system failure, resulting in a large sinkhole on a high-volume roadway. These highly publicized system failures increased the urgency of the city to develop a plan for studying, planning, and implementing a long-term stormwater infrastructure plan.

The city undertook key studies to determine the extent of the problem and arrive at solutions. Throughout each of these studies, the community was engaged through public meetings, surveys and direct mailers, individual meetings with homeowners, and stormwater study sessions.

As a result of these studies and community feedback, infrastructure was adopted as the number one priority in the city's 2020 strategic plan. The plan identified 29 projects which would need to be completed to reduce risk and achieve flood protection. Most projects involve the replacement, or installation of larger storm sewer pipes to provide greater capacity to capture and convey water. The highest-prioritized projects will be constructed over the next two to three years.

Additionally, two new stormwater maintenance technicians were hired, and staff completed a proactive maintenance plan.



To fund these improvements, council approved a loan from the general fund and homeowner stormwater fees were increased. Because raising fees is often unpopular, the city began a community engagement and public information campaign to educate, inform and develop resident buy-in.

Additionally, the city created a new utility assistance program which provides for a sliding scale of direct assistance based on income.

career success through the Mayor's Summer Youth Employment Program.

### **Restorative Housing Reparations Program**

There exists a wealth and opportunity gap between white and black Evanstonians because of redlining, discriminatory and restrictive practices in housing, zoning, lending and other policies. Recognizing the disparities that exist, the city council created the Equity & Empowerment Commission and adopted a Resolution (58-R-19) committing to end structural racism and achieve racial equity.

The commission was aided by two Evanston based historical archives in identifying harms inflicted against Black Evanstonians by providing historical and contemporary instances where the City of Evanston might have facilitated, participated in, enacted, or stood neutral in the wake of acts of segregated and discriminatory practices in all aspects of engagement with the Evanston Black community. In addition to this research, the commission held community meetings to gather public input on what actions could be taken. Ultimately the Equity & Empowerment Commission presented a report and recommended actions to the Evanston City Council that addresses "repair and reparations" for Black Evanstonians.

A Reparations Subcommittee was formed to determine viability. Both the National Coalition of Blacks for Reparations in America (NCOBRA) and the National African American Reparations Commission (NAARC) provided advice to the Reparations Subcommittee regarding Evanston's reparations process. Additional town halls and meetings were held to further engage residents in program details.

Ultimately a Restorative Housing Reparations Program was created. Under this initiative, qualified Black Evanstonians would be provided with \$25,000 to either purchase a home, conduct home improvement, or down pay on their existing mortgage.

The reparations program will be funded by the first ten million dollars of the City's Municipal Cannabis Retailers' Occupation Tax. Additional funding came from individual residents, churches, and three local businesses that pledged their



## **Evanston, IL**

Anchored by Northwestern University and known for its architecture and beautiful homes on the lake, Evanston is an independent and thriving community. Evanston has worked to ensure equity and opportunity for all residents by strengthening its Welcoming City ordinance, establishing an Equity and Empowerment Commission, and expanding opportunities for



support by either making one-time donations or contributing a percentage of their profits to the Reparations Fund.

### **Evanston Care Network (ECN)**

At the outset of the COVID crisis, the City of Evanston joined forces with Evanston 311, the Evanston Public Library, AMITA Health, and the Evanston Community Foundation to launch the Evanston Care Network (ECN) website. ECN planning team members represented particular and often underserved subsets of the Evanston population to ensure those specific needs and preferences were taken into consideration when developing the program.

ECN serves as a comprehensive online database of free and low-cost programs and services available to Evanston residents. Resource categories include food, shelter, childcare, healthcare, employment, financial assistance, and more. Contact information and eligibility criteria are listed under each resource, and service providers are asked to “claim” and maintain their listing(s) to provide the most up-to-date information on resource availability.

All ECN materials are in both English and Spanish; additionally, the website itself can be translated into 108 different languages.

To ensure individuals lacking access to technology can still access ECN resources, community members can call Evanston 311 for assistance navigating the website. Calls may be routed to the Evanston Public Library where staff is trained to search the Evanston Care Network and provide referrals to appropriate services. There are Spanish-speaking representatives available for callers who require translation services. Additionally, callers who would like additional mental health support may request assistance through AMITA Health’s crisis line.

The ECN team receives reports showing the number of users, programs, referrals, and information on the most common search terms, so the team can either better promote existing resources or develop new services.

Between its May 2020 launch and the end of December 2020, the Evanston Care Network saw 2,594 users and a total of 5,281 searches.

### **Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP)**

The Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program (MSYEP) began in 1992. For more than twenty-five years, it has provided skills and workforce opportunities year-round for thousands of Evanston at-risk youth ages 14-18.

The program gives participating youth up to nine weeks of entry-level work experience in various jobs and industries through community-based organizations, city government departments, and private sector businesses.

MSYEP allows youth to explore new interests, stay active, build technical skills and expand their experiences. The program allows parents to communicate as often as they like with group leaders, directors, and staff to ensure that their children are receiving the very best.

In partnership with the Addie Wyatt Center for Nonviolence Training, the Mayor’s Summer Youth Employment Program hosted its second annual Kingian Nonviolence Summer Institute. Fifteen Evanston young adults were trained on the principles and steps of nonviolent conflict reconciliation, and how to conduct and lead a nonviolence campaign.

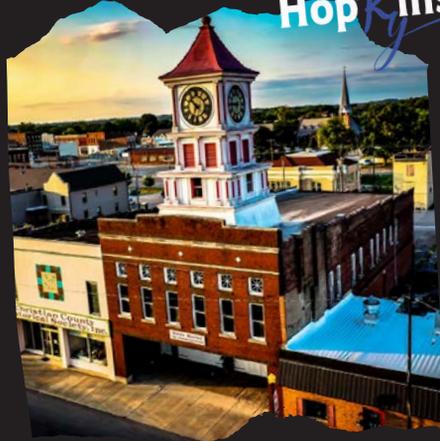
As a workforce development and non-law enforcement crime prevention initiative, the MSYEP emphasizes real-world labor expectations, increases the awareness of services offered by local community-based organizations, and provides career instruction opportunities, financial literacy training, and occupational skills training, and social-emotional growth and development.

The program showed a statistically significant increase in employment opportunities from 150 in 2012 to over 600 in 2020. In addition, there has been a considerable increase in student participation and attendance from around 300 in 2012 to over 700 students in 2020. Finally, Evanston violence, theft, burglary, and drug-related arrests for youth 16-18 decreased by 219% from 2012 to 2018.



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## Fitzgerald, GA

The City of Fitzgerald, Georgia, founded as a Union veteran's colony in 1896, has boasted unity and equity unique to its times for 125 years. Whether it be creatively redeveloping neighborhoods, enhancing educational and career opportunities, or embracing change rather than risking division, Fitzgerald has a history of finding civil ends to uncivil wars.

### Redevelopment Program

By 1996, Fitzgerald numbered just under 10,000 residents and most neighborhoods were in serious decline with limited housing options since developers didn't consider low-to-moderate income buyers a viable market. While home to 30+ industries, workers were forced to seek homes in adjoining counties, oftentimes traveling 20 or more miles for their jobs.

After a series of abatements, renovations, and studies of traditional Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) housing initiatives, Fitzgerald realized it needed to control the lots in need of redevelopment and attract private sector investment.

A target property list was established and made public, with a six-month corresponding amnesty period to clean up voluntarily before the redevelopment plan would require re-establishment of minimum standard housing. A new Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP) application shifted traditional rehab monies to down-payment assistance, incentivizing homebuying over remodeling.

While there was still limited interest from developers for stick-built construction, a local manufactured housing company began building double-wide homes on permanent foundations with traditional roofs, porches, and street fronting doors. Soon developers saw an opportunity to package redevelopment lots with manufactured housing and have a salable product in concert with CHIP assistance. Meanwhile, the city partnered with Habitat for Humanity to build a house that was used to convince builders that more money stood to be made in stick-built housing.

Though still unsure about redevelopment lots, several builders were beginning to spot the untapped workforce housing market and new subdivisions were requesting annexation to take advantage of the down-payment assistance program.

Regency Investments decided to pursue a Low-Income Housing Tax Credit project in Fitzgerald. With the city's full cooperation, it was funded. Simultaneously, the city received the first competitive in-fill housing CDBG award in the state.

By 2008, seven local contractors were building affordable housing. Over 600 units of workforce housing are on the ground and over 700 blighted properties have been resolved due to the initiative.



## Fitzgerald High School College & Career Academy

As a rural school system in South Georgia, the graduation rate and overall College and Career Ready Performance Index for Ben Hill County Schools was disappointing. As the county worked to bring jobs back, there were not graduating students who could fill them.

In response, an educational summit of businesses, education stakeholders, and political leaders was held and focused on improving the partnership between the school systems, community, and businesses. After several years of summits, research, needs assessments and surveys, it was decided that Fitzgerald needed a college and career academy.

After an initial grant application was denied, a decision was made between the participating school systems to move forward with plans for the academy, to be comprised of five academies:

- The Freshman Discovery Academy
- Agriculture, Industrial, and Manufacturing (AIM Academy)
- Allied Health Academy
- STEAM Academy (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math)
- Education and Human Services Academy

In 2018, after adding another school district to its proposed student body, the academy applied again to the Georgia Office of College and Career Academies (CCA) and was awarded one of three, 3.2-million-dollar College and Career Academy grants.

A 20-person board of directors, reflecting a diversity of stakeholders, oversees the FHSCCA, which is fully functioning with college and career tracks in place.

The '22-'23 school year will see the first graduating class having full advantage of the College and Career Academy benefits, but the fruits are already visible in student participation in work-based learning programs.

## Fitzgerald for Change

A shared desire to bridge cultural divides gained momentum because of the Black Lives Matter Movement and the worldwide cry from the death of George Floyd. Community leaders planned a

diverse community-wide march that drew over 300 participants with a shared desire to speak out against racial injustices.

Born out of the unity found through the success of the march, the Fitzgerald for Change (FFC) Community-wide Initiative was established. FFC works in three different ways to build a more equitable community.

### 1. Community-Wide Forums

Monthly Zoom discussions have included conversation on topics including: Racist versus Anti-Racist; What is racism to you; and Unifying the Community, what will it take? Forums include community leaders and panelists who are carefully chosen to ensure the representation of all demographics.

Many participants have said that the conversations are eye-opening and have resulted in increased concern for others.

### 2. Community-Wide Survey

To better understand and share the stories of the entire community, a survey was developed. Questions were open-ended to allow participants to freely tell their stories. Questions covered various facets of racism and asked how race affects life in Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald for Change committee members promoted the survey to their spheres of influence and the local utility company agreed to add it as an insert in resident's bills.

Survey results will be widely available for all to see and gain a better appreciation of the community's story.

### 3. Community-Wide Civic Discussions

FFC is in the planning stages of a series of community-wide discussions to explore residents' sense of belonging and learn how to create a more welcoming community.

Discussions will include:

1. *Who Are We?* Participants will share personal stories.
2. *Where Are We?* Participants will explore the community's shared racial history.
3. *Where Do We Want to Be?* Participants will develop a vision for the community.
4. *What Will We Do to Make A Difference?*



Participants will discover shared interests and start working together on specific projects.

The insights gathered from these conversations will help shape an inclusive strategic community plan and will inspire a greater sense of belonging and inclusion among all residents.



## Fort Lauderdale, FL

Ten years ago, in 2011, the City of Fort Lauderdale celebrated its centennial. The historic milestone offered an opportunity for both reflection on the past and visioning of the future. Fort Lauderdale embarked on a comprehensive community outreach campaign in 2012 that utilized a variety of avenues to gather community-wide opinions about the quality of life. The outcome yielded collective aspirations for 2035, which were used as a guide for the development of Fort Lauderdale's featured projects.

## Community Court – the Neighborhood Focused Court

In November 2018, the average jail population in Broward County was approximately 3,500. To reduce that number and address quality-of-life issues in downtown Fort Lauderdale, the National Community Court Program, a partnership between the Center for Court Innovation and the U.S. Department of Justice Assistance, awarded Broward's 17th Judicial Circuit Court a \$200,000 grant to implement a "community court" within the City of Fort Lauderdale.

The community court model gives the court problem solving orientation, provides a mechanism for community input and connects individuals to social services, without the restrictions associated with a formal court setting. The program affords a proportionate and constructive response to penalties and incarceration for municipal code violations and less serious offenses while helping with the struggles that motivate criminal behavior, substance abuse, mental health issues and homelessness. The court responds creatively by seeking sentences that are restorative to the victim, defendant, and community.

Collaborative efforts from government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and other entities planned and implemented the community court model to be reflective of the diverse resources available in the City of Fort Lauderdale and Broward County.

In 2019, 122 Community Court cases were documented by the Broward County Clerk of Courts and 1,000 individual walk-ins received services through the program. Goods and services, such as hygiene kits, showers, haircuts, meals, clothing, and housing placements are also provided to Community Court clients and walk-ins through donations from community partners and residents.

## Community Emergency Response Teams (CERT) and Fire Explorers

The location of the City of Fort Lauderdale makes it especially vulnerable to natural disasters such as hurricanes, tropical storms, and flooding.

The Fort Lauderdale CERT Team is a diverse group of approximately 400 volunteers who assist Police and Fire Rescue with Domestic Preparedness and Emergency Management. CERT volunteers work



closely with emergency personnel and other CERT members, serving and educating residents in their own neighborhoods.

The community outreach focusses on sharing information and providing practical training at homeowner association meetings, neighborhood meetings, schools, church groups, public workshops, and special events. The topics of the education and involvement vary depending on circumstances, the needs, and the season. In May, June, and July the training is typically focused on hurricane awareness and preparation, while at other times it includes hands on CPR, search and rescue, traffic control, situational awareness, and fire prevention.

The purpose of the education and outreach is to spread the knowledge about what to do before, during, and after an incident. The more people know about disaster preparation, readiness, and recovery, the better and faster the response will be within the neighborhoods in case of an emergency.

CERT Team volunteers can assist in case of any casualties or disasters and work a variety of community events, including giving medical attention, if needed.

CERT team volunteers participate in approximately 100-125 events annually, amounting to approximately 4,300 volunteer hours.

Additionally, the Fire Explorer program is a learning-for life career education program open to youth, ages 13-21, that is organized by the Fire Department's Emergency Management Team. It is a community-based program that serves as an expansion of disaster preparedness and recovery, but also aims to increase job readiness and create more civic capacity.

### **Affordable Housing within a Sustainable and Resilient Framework**

Like many areas across the United States, affordable housing has become a growing concern for the City of Fort Lauderdale. A 2018 assessment identified Broward County among the most unaffordable places to live in the U.S., predominantly due to housing and rental costs increasing at a faster rate than wages and the

slower growth of high paying job creation.

The issue was a top priority of the city commission in 2019 and 2020, and the city explored multiple options to increase the availability of affordable housing options by revising policies to better incentivize affordable housing development.

Rather than focusing on a singular contributing cause, the city implemented multiple mitigation strategies to increase housing affordability. The plan included decreasing housing and transportation costs, increasing the inventory of available affordable housing, and fostering the growth of high paying jobs and industries operating within the city to comprehensively address root causes of the housing affordability gap.

The first step was to identify citywide affordable housing locations that were in proximity to primary corridors and mass transit to decrease transportation costs. Following public outreach and collaboration with stakeholders, new affordable housing policy regulations were crafted and are slated for the city commission's review in the coming months.

Through a mix of incentives, public and private partnerships, and the utilization of community development funds to support affordable housing construction within residential and mixed-use development areas, there have been over 1,900 housing units that have been built, approved, or engaged in the review approval process.

Next, the city drew on its partnerships with the Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance to support and retain businesses and make gradual progress in becoming the center of a Technology Gateway. The city took advantage of state incentive programs to diversify the local economy and target businesses from industries committed to creating new high-wage jobs to increase income. By the end of 2019, 399 new jobs were created through the Qualified Target Industry Program, resulting in higher paying wages for community members.



## Fort Wayne, IN

Over the last decade, Fort Wayne has experienced unprecedented momentum, investing in neighborhood infrastructure, business development, and quality of place amenities that have led to nearly a billion dollars in private investments and a renewed interest in downtown. The momentum has continued even throughout 2020, despite the challenges facing our nation, helping Fort Wayne become a more resilient and equitable community. Once known as “the city that saved itself,” Fort Wayne now prides itself on being a city that is “Moving Forward Together.”

### Riverfront Fort Wayne

Like many communities, Fort Wayne began to withdraw from its downtown in the late 1900s and the historic three rivers, once the center of local life, largely fell to disuse. After major flooding in the 80s, ten miles of levees were built, hiding the rivers behind protective walls and natural brush.

In the 2000s residents expressed their interest in incorporating the rivers back into city life and in 2014, Mayor Henry commissioned a comprehensive riverfront study. Thousands of residents completed surveys, attended events, heard presentations, and shared ideas.

Based on feedback, a plan was created and a committee was formed to guide the project. Phase 1 was the creation of Promenade Park. The park’s grand opening, occurring over three days, was determined to be one of the most successful public events in city history.

Most importantly, the event was recognized as the most diverse anyone had ever attended. Members of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities were all present. The local newspaper included a story about one local immigrant’s fear about being part of a new community. She noted the park’s grand opening made her feel truly welcomed for the first time.

The park was designed not only for recreation, but also for the promotion of civic life and democracy for all. Promenade Park is a place to meet, talk, learn, and listen. People come

for concerts, festivals, shopping, art shows, and parties, but they leave with much more.

The riverfront grappled with 2020’s abrupt changes, but staff quickly created an entirely new concept of programming. Each day, community members were given a new way to safely interact with each other through activities focusing on philosophy, science, art, literature, music and dance, wellness, and games.

### Fort Wayne UNITED

Homicide is the leading cause of death among African American males ages 10-24, nationwide. Some lives are cut tragically short while others are funneled to prison. Fort Wayne UNITED is an effort to disrupt the cycle of violence and answer the call to enhance opportunities, advance youth advocacy and help create a safer city for all, but more specifically for black men and boys.

Programs of Fort Wayne UNITED have included:

- L.I.V.E. (Listening to Input and Voices through Engagement) Sessions and Forums focus on building bridges and fostering healthy relationships between law enforcement and communities of color.
- A Public Safety Academy Training exposes black men and boys to real life scenarios that allow them to experience training and challenges that local law enforcement face daily.
- The Late-Night Basketball Program aims to take those who are statistically most likely to be the agents or victims of crime off the streets where and when crime happens most. Participants are invited to play basketball, engage with local leaders on and off the court, and take advantage of opportunities like on-site employment assistance, health checks and record expungement.
- The Choose Success Initiative allows males, ages 14-18, to be exposed to the positive outcomes of good decisions and the negative consequences of poor decisions. Over a two-day period, participants witness sentencing in an Allen Superior Courtroom, spend a half day at a local university, and have a hands-on experience at the building trades with skilled instructors.

One of the most pivotal programs is the Fort Wayne UNITED TenPoint Coalition. The Coalition



# FORT WAYNE, INDIANA

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER



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**Tom Henry**  
Mayor



is comprised of 25 employees who are faith leaders, former gang members, and family members impacted by the cycle of violence. Coalition members are paid and trained to patrol identified neighborhoods to examine the areas of crime, education, health, and housing. Most evenings coalition members gather neighbors together for free, hot meals and conversation.

Fort Wayne UNITED's most recent initiative, United Front, was rolled out in September 2020, during a climate of racial tension and civil unrest, to provide a safe environment for participants to learn a shared humanity, a common language, and a philosophy that will change the trajectory of the community for generations to come through a comprehensive cultural competency curriculum that fosters racial equity, healing, and unity.

### **Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE)**

Over the course of the past 20 years the student body of Fort Wayne Community Schools (FWCS) became markedly more diverse. Additionally, the percentage of students qualifying for free/reduced lunch increased from 40.37% to 64.59%. Realizing the challenges and opportunities a diverse school population presents, FWCS decided that if it was truly going to meet its mission of educating all students to high standards, it was imperative to support students, families, and educators at a higher level. After assessing needs, researching best practices, and visiting other school districts, FWCS created the Family and Community Engagement Center (FACE).

FACE opened in the fall of the 2016-2017 school year, bringing together resources from across the district and community as a "one stop shop." These resources were designed to close gaps, remove barriers, and provide supports that aid in the success of all students.

FACE was placed in a centralized building along the city bus line. The building was fully renovated and furnished to provide meeting, training, and office space, a health clinic, conference rooms, and state-of-the-art technology. Staff members were hired who had expertise in counseling, college admissions, scholarship obtainment, athletic coaching, music performance, nursing certification, school administration, philanthropy, as well as recruitment for and implementation of tutoring services.

FACE houses and provides programming and supports in the following areas:

- Enrollment, Placement, Recruitment, Retention, and Attendance
- Well Being, Mental Health, Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Support, and Professional Learning
- Health Clinic offering physicals, immunizations and health screenings
- Learning Partnerships
- Preschool
- College and Career Readiness/Parent Engagement
- Tutoring
- Housing services

Through parent meetings, student focus groups and academic achievement data, FACE continuously monitors where it is and where it needs to go.





Photo taken prior to the COVID-19 pandemic

## The City of Rancho Cordova Congratulates the 2021 All-America City Finalists!



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### Kansas City, MO

A surge of investment in arts, culture, transportation, and the downtown core has resulted in a thriving Kansas City, attracting an influx of young professionals and industrial growth in the science, technology, and health care fields. However, the benefits of these improvements have not been realized by all residents. As downtown booms, the city's east side, primarily comprised of low-income and residents of color, has experienced continued disinvestment, resulting in a dramatic impact on the quality of life and life expectancy. As detailed in the featured projects, a strong core of civic leaders and public servants are fighting tirelessly to create a community that is more resilient and equitable for all.

#### Comprehensive Plan Update

In early 2020, Kansas City's City Planning and Development (CPD) department began an update to the city's comprehensive plan. The city's

current plan has helped make the city what it is today, but it failed to represent the interests of all communities. The update, titled the KC Spirit Playbook, intends to apply an equity lens to development in Kansas City.

Launching in 2020 with planned community engagement events, the COVID-19 pandemic forced CPD to pivot to mostly virtual events, highlighting the KC Spirit Playbook website as its crown jewel. The website allows residents to leave their opinions on key topics through participation in forums, polls, and other activities. The Playbook website asks residents to sign up with their zip code, so it tracks where in the city residents are participating.

CPD has promoted the Playbook website at 70 virtual events and through inserts in water bills, and messaging on billboards, buses, and windows of shops and restaurants.

Thus far, the KC Spirit Playbook website boasts nearly 20,000 site visits, with visitors participating in forums, polls, and surveys.

Data collected by the Playbook has revealed that most residents participating online live around the downtown area. This underscores the need to engage communities outside of the central business district. Low-income residents on Kansas City's east side are a high priority group to engage through this process, so CPD has hired a consulting firm to create an engagement strategy for hard-to-reach residents. The firm will help CPD meet residents where they are to learn their unique perspective on life in Kansas City and shape land use and development policy to meet their needs and improve their quality of life.

#### Kansas City Streetcar

The Kansas City Streetcar is a unique case of successful and meaningful private-public partnership. In 2012 the city and the Port Authority of Kansas City jointly filed for a Downtown Transportation Development District (DTDD), for which the voters approved and authorized a sales, property, and surface parking tax to build and operate a downtown streetcar system. With the funding system approved, the Kansas City Streetcar Authority (KCSA) was formally established, including resident and business representatives. The City of Kansas City,



DTDD, and the KCSA form a tri-party agreement which details the funding, design, construction, and ongoing operations and maintenance of the streetcar system. The city owns and controls the KC Streetcar while the KCSA is a not-for-profit formed for the purpose of managing, operating, and maintaining the streetcar.

KC Streetcar officially began operations on May 6th, 2016 and has maintained its free service throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, operating at reduced-capacity with safety enforcements such as social distancing and required face masks. The Streetcar route connects all downtown neighborhoods with 16 platform stops and 2 miles of track. Along the streetcar route there are electronic signs that give real-time information about arrival time, service interruptions, and other pertinent information. The popularity of the Streetcar has led to the approval of two extensions with funding mechanisms established via grant and voter-approved taxation.

In 2016, 97% of businesses along the KC Streetcar line credited the streetcar with having a positive impact on their business and 80% have experienced a positive change in revenue. Additionally, 81.6% and 98.4% of weekday streetcar riders indicated they were “Very Satisfied” or “Satisfied” with the service.

### **Life Expectancy**

Kansas City is still a largely segregated city. White residents typically live west of Troost Avenue, while people of color largely inhabit the neighborhoods to the east. This built environment was intentionally shaped by segregation and discriminatory practices perpetuated by the real estate industry and federal, state, and local governments of the past.

The repercussions of these practices still shape quality of life and community health today. Residents in these neighborhoods are often isolated from opportunity, investment, and public services. As a result, they fall victim to poor social determinants of health and experience lower life expectancies than their white counterparts.

In 2016, the Health Department identified the six zip codes with the lowest life expectancies and set out on an aggressive campaign to decrease the gap between the expectancies in the highest

and lowest zip codes. One of the primary steps in this direction was the establishment of a Community Engagement, Policy and Accountability (CEPA) division.

CEPA has hosted two LifeX Summits, a convening of representatives from all 20 city departments, with the goal of breaking silos and collaborating to develop tangible strategies to increase life expectancy and decrease expectancy inequities.

One of the partnerships that emerged from the LifeX Summits was with the Parks and Recreation Department. The “LifeX Program” affords residents of priority zip codes with free annual community center memberships and access to healthy lifestyle and fitness classes. In return, participants are expected to visit community centers on a regular basis and complete periodic surveys about their health. The Parks and Recreation Department has also sought greater equity by reallocating resources to priority areas.

The city has also intentionally woven life expectancy and health equity goals into the planning documents that guide the work of the Health Department, the Mayor’s Health Commission, and the city. The city will remain vigilant in monitoring life expectancy gaps, advocating for comprehensive care, and collaborating with community leaders to make progress toward health equity.

### **Livermore, CA**

Livermore has never shied away from addressing difficult issues. The community has been creating awareness of and identifying solutions to mental health concerns, racial tension and homelessness for over a decade. It approaches these issues through an equity lens, seeking to provide a safe place for all residents to reside, feel heard, participate in decisions, and thrive. The community’s mantra is “keeping our community safe from the inside out.”

### **Safe from E-Cigarette Use and Mental Health Stigma**

During a regularly scheduled meeting with student representatives from Granada Peer



THERE'S



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**City of Livermore, California**

Health Educators, the Superintendent of Livermore Valley Joint Unified School District (LVJUSD) was made aware of the student's urgent concern on the rising use of e-cigarette products among peers.

Superintendent Dr. Kelly Bowers helped facilitate a series of meetings where students offered data-informed presentations to parent leaders, school faculty, the school board, and city council. Following these meetings, and with the support of the school board, the Livermore City Council unanimously supported an ordinance banning the sale of flavored tobacco and electronic delivery devices citywide. This ordinance also instituted a 1,000-foot buffer zone between tobacco retailers and sites serving youth, such as schools and libraries. Students continue raising awareness of the issue through PSAs and presentations to inform students of the risks associated with vaping early.

Understanding the direct connection between substance abuse (including e-cigarette abuse) and mental health, the city has increased its focus on addressing the youth mental health crisis. With the help of three federal grants, mental health awareness and response training through the Mental Health Awareness Training (MHAT) curriculum has been offered to students, teachers, and the community at-large. Youth were involved in the curriculum design, which was also offered in Spanish.

Grant funding also supported school violence prevention equipment and training, the formation of a Mental Health Advisory Committee, and the development of mental health referral pathways with seven partnering community agencies. A coordinated partnership with these agencies established a link between students in need and services to help them.

Five years ago, Livermore parents, students, and staff rated behavioral health as their top concern. The same survey conducted in 2020 revealed that lack of resources is no longer a concern among residents, showing the effectiveness and availability of these efforts.

### **Safe in their Own Skin**

With the horrific events of 2020 highlighting the need for racial equity and healing, Livermore responded to residents' concerns by forming the Council Subcommittee on Equity and Inclusion which established a working group made of volunteer community members to address racial health and equitable social justice.

Working group members self-divided into four subgroups: Culture, Policing and Human Services, Youth, and Economics (Housing, Work, and Transportation). The goals of this group are to:

1. Develop a vision for the future that ensures equitable public safety.
2. Develop and implement short-, mid-, and long-range plans, focusing on completing high priority action items in a timely manner.
3. Measure and report on progress regularly and transparently.

The working group will assist the City Council Equity and Inclusion Subcommittee to refine the scope of work, define objectives and establish measures for success for city council approval.

Additionally, young alumni of color met with the superintendent and campus leadership for several days to establish norms and create a safe space to share their experiences, reveal their uncomfortable truths, and generate solutions to improve the experiences of current and future young people of color. A Wellness Center focused on social-emotional wellbeing was established at the high school, along with new clubs: People of Color, Culture Doctors and Students for Social Change. All LVJUSD staff received implicit bias training prior to the start of school. A consulting group provided ongoing professional development to all staff on "How to Be an Anti-Racist."

Additionally, the local college and various community organizations offer programming and education to promote equity and social justice.

### **Safe from Housing Instability**

Homelessness and lack of affordable housing is not unique to Livermore, the community's robust response to housing inequity is the difference.



Pictures4People is a nonprofit art movement, dedicated to “painting a brighter future, one painting at a time.” Paintings of Livermore residents experiencing homelessness are sold at local auctions with all proceeds going to local organizations helping community members in need.

The city, coordinating with the park district and social services providers, opened a park facility to provide a place for those experiencing homelessness or housing instability to park and shower.

Las Positas College (LPC) also helps students with housing security, as well as hosts a Housing Resources webpage that directs students to community resources and has a section specifically for COVID-19 Housing Resources.

The city is working on ensuring residents have an affordable place to live through four affordable housing projects. Additionally, a Tiny House Homeless village will provide 31 temporary and permanent housing units as well as wrap-around services to local community members experiencing homelessness.

In addition to creating new housing units for persons experiencing homelessness, the Vineyard Housing and Services project will expand an existing food and homeless services site to provide permanent infrastructure for emergency and safety net services.

The school district has also tackled the crisis facing families in transition and homeless youth. Efforts have focused on better and earlier identification and tracking, implementing periodic check-ins by Child and Welfare Attendance Specialists and Counselors, increased training in engagement strategies, continued referrals to community resources and social services, development of Individualized Learning Plans, implementation of alternatives to suspension, provision of free local transportation, increased after school support and extended summer school opportunities, and provision of Chromebooks and Wi-Fi hotspots to ensure equitable access to distance learning.



## Miami Lakes, FL

The Town of Miami Lakes, incorporated in December 2000, is one of the youngest municipalities in Miami-Dade County. The town council’s initiatives are directly focused on encouraging civic engagement, collaboration, and inclusiveness. Beginning in 2001, the Town of Miami Lakes introduced 11 volunteer committees to address the challenges the community faces and to plan future initiatives. Volunteer committees ensure that public safety, cultural affairs, elderly affairs, youth activities, neighborhood improvement, special needs, education, economic development, and veterans’ needs are identified and met by the residents these issues impact directly.

### Creating Civic Capacity Through Leadership

Through the town’s 11 volunteer committees, over 100 diverse stakeholders contribute civically and provide their unique perspectives to address challenges and improve quality of life. Thanks to the early adoption of live-remote public commenting technology a year before the pandemic began, Miami Lakes was able to have city council and committee meetings live streamed on the town’s website and social media

channels, allowing the important work of various committees to continue.

#### Elderly Affairs Committee (EAC)

For almost twenty years, the EAC has advocated for programs and activities that keep seniors physically and socially active. Efforts include:

- An age-restricted Senior Village with an apartment community, assisted living facility, a skilled nursing facility, and senior activity center.
- Safer crosswalks.
- A program to assist seniors during hurricanes with shutter installation.
- On-demand rides within town boundaries.
- Bilingual technology and computer classes with free access to tablets.
- “Groceries for Seniors” program providing home-delivered groceries and meals.
- “Meet & Eat” events offering bi-monthly social gatherings for lunch and BINGO.

#### Cultural Affairs Committee (CAC)

The diverse group of individuals making up this committee works to establish the town’s cultural identity and developed an annual calendar of culturally diverse events.

When racial injustice demonstrations began across the country in the Summer of 2020, the CAC planned the Miami Lakes Comm[UNITY] Virtual Prayer event featuring representatives from ten different local religious and spiritual denominations. The virtual event sent out a powerful message that regardless of race, national origin, age, ethnicity, or socio-economic status, we all want to be treated equally and fairly.

#### **Pivoting to Help Residents During COVID-19**

When the pandemic struck, Miami Lakes residents, organizations, and local businesses shifted course to help one another.

Giving Gators, The Breanna Vergara Foundation, and volunteers came together for the “Groceries for Seniors” program, offering groceries to over 300 individuals weekly for four months.

The Elderly Affairs Committee (EAC) pivoted their “Meet & Eat” events to a COVID-safe, contactless drive-through. The drive-through model allows seniors to have a brief socially distanced

conversation with their peers and receive lunch and a Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kit.

Where Symphony of the Americas performed is now the site of ongoing weekly food drives. Since April 2020, Miami Lakes United Methodist Church has served over 28,000 families in need in partnership with Feeding South Florida and Farm Share.

The town’s committees continued to deliver memorable experiences amid COVID-19. Children celebrated Mother’s Day with a take-home painting activity, participated in a virtual fishing tournament for Father’s Day, and had a drive-by visit from the Easter bunny. The town’s 41st Annual Veterans Day Parade expanded from a 3-mile route to almost 10-miles. Over 70 military groups and individuals were honored throughout a town-wide ceremony as residents watched the procession from their yards or online. Additionally, the Youth Activities Task Force organized the first Winterfest Parade, complete with familiar holiday characters.

#### **Mental Health Awareness Task Force**

The Town of Miami Lakes and its Youth Activities Task Force and Veterans Affairs Committee, together with a local college student and resident, hosted the “Out of the Darkness Mental Health Awareness Walk” in honor of a fellow student who struggled with mental illness and committed suicide.

The suicide awareness walk included an interactive mural for students to write messages to their late friend or for those still struggling with mental illness. Along the track, several mental wellness resources and organizations were present to distribute information. Licensed therapists and those affected by the recent loss gave testimonies and shared ways to cope and grieve.

In addition to the mental health awareness walk, the town’s annual Health and Fitness Fair featured over twenty companies or organizations specifically related to mental health and wellness.

Continuing the community’s focus on mental health, the Miami Lakes Town Foundation





**ONE  
MIRAMAR**

The beautiful City of Miramar is centrally located between the Miami and Fort Lauderdale metro areas and is less than 30 minutes to the Miami and Fort Lauderdale airports and seaports.

**Miramar prides itself on its multi-cultural diversity as there's something here for everyone!**



*Whatever you're looking for,*  
**IT'S RIGHT HERE IN MIRAMAR!**



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awarded grant funding to a local teacher for her “Throwing Kindness Like Confetti” project. The project transformed the girl’s bathrooms in the school with hand-painted murals with inspirational messages and affirmations.

The foundation also awarded a grant to “The Open Mind, Open Arms: Mental Health Awareness Organization.” A high school student started the mental health awareness club to allow for candid conversations about mental illness.

Additionally, with the rise of COVID-19 and the restriction of social events, weekly Facebook Live: Mental Health Thursdays were hosted through social media channels to spark open dialogue about breaking the stigma of mental health treatment.

Town council formalized the Mental Health Advisory Task Force to break the stigma and encourage open dialogue associated with mental health treatment and those individuals in recovery. The task force will provide the town with a set of recommendations on how the town could continue to support efforts to address the stigma associated with mental health treatment and identify possible solutions for the community.

## Miramar, FL

For two decades, Miramar has experienced astronomical growth, resulting in both benefits and growing pains. Expansive new construction resulted in an under-resourced historic community, lack of human services, few cultural resources and transportation headaches. Through resident collaboration, Miramar has proven itself to be resilient in its response to challenges.

### Building an Equitable and Resilient Economy

In 2015, Miramar’s business community approached the city commission about strengthening small business support. Through individual and group stakeholder meetings from 2015-2016, the community began to develop the Miramar Economic Development Action Plan. Priorities included:

- Diversify the tax base.
- Expand urban innovation & revitalization activity.
- Achieve a unique sense of place.

- Leverage arts, entertainment & sports assets.
- Tie together distinct neighborhood subareas into a cohesive city.

The experience of working together to develop the economic action plan proved valuable when in 2016, the small business community and residents voiced concerns over the lack of opportunities for small businesses and a lack of diversity in city procurement. The city held several public meetings to gather information from residents and determined that a Disparity Study was necessary.

The study found evidence that there was underutilization of small businesses and that Minority/Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE) received fewer bid awards. The city hired a diversity professional who developed and implemented a Business, Inclusion and Diversity (BID) Program to address the discrimination identified.

Working through small business empowerment meetings, stakeholder strategy sessions and community outreach forums, BID fosters the adaptive capacity of small, minority, and disadvantaged businesses so that they can tackle tough challenges and thrive. Activities include:

- Educational webinars, training workshops, and conferences to build relationships, and strengthen underutilized firms.
- Sharing technology including advanced software and a subconsultant database that prime contractors can use to meet M/BWE participation goals.
- Connecting underutilized firms with regional project opportunities.
- Quantifying citywide utilization of minority businesses.

From 2011 to 2016 only 7% of the city’s procurement was awarded to local M/WBE firms. Through intensive outreach and training, that number grew to 29% in 2019 and 33% in 2020.

### The Miramar Cultural Center (MCC)

MCC celebrates the creativity and cultural diversity of Miramar. Located in Miramar’s center, it is a natural gathering place for performances, educational activities and civic events.

The COVID-19 pandemic posed significant challenges to MCC’s cultural programming, but



MCC staff re-evaluated its strategy and pivoted to meet the new needs of the community.

Residents are enjoying a virtual programming series called MCC LIVE2U that offers free digital connections to the arts at any time via the Center's YouTube Channel. Audiences are taking virtual classes and engaging in the arts from home.

Programming has included:

- Storytime Readings
- Live music and dance lessons
- Cooking and mixology classes
- Virtual Gallery Tours
- Live concerts
- Live music Happy Hours

#### Helping Seniors During the Pandemic

Catering and theater staff have been preparing meals to be delivered to seniors on a weekly basis, allowing MCC to maintain staffing levels while offering a meaningful service to senior citizens.

#### Helping Students and Families During the Pandemic

Cultural Center staff forged a partnership with FLIPANY (Florida Introduces Physical Activity and Nutrition) to provide more than 100 children and their families with a week's supply of food.

MCC also learned that parents desperately needed virtual extracurricular activities to engage their children constructively. MCC partnered with the Palm Beach Symphony (PBS) to bring free classical instrument training to the community. Each week since September 2020, community members learned to play orchestra instruments from professional musicians.

#### Employing Local Artists to Create Free Art in Public Spaces

An outdoor Windows to Our World mural gallery was launched to safely showcase the work of local artists. This year's themes are Hispanic Heritage, Black History, Earth Month and Caribbean Heritage.

### **Revitalizing Historic Miramar**

While much of Miramar has experienced rapid development in the past 15 years, Historic Miramar was left behind. Several programs have been launched to revitalize the area.

#### Community Garden

Located on city-owned property and managed by volunteers as a micro-urban farm, this educational program embraces healthy living, urban agriculture, science, family nutrition and wholesome cooking.

A gardening training center, manned by 42 active volunteers, increases resident awareness of healthy eating to reduce chronic diseases, such as diabetes, heart disease and obesity.

Farm-to-Youth events engage elementary school children by teaching them where fresh food comes from and letting them taste nutritious fruits and vegetables.

During Disco Soup events, adult residents come together to slice, dice and boogie to music while transforming ugly or blemished veggies into a deliciously prepared meal.

#### Early Childhood Program

The Early Childhood Program provides a safe, healthy, and chemical free environment. The program partners with childcare professionals to reduce environmental health hazards found within or around child-care facilities.

#### Senior Centers

In response to growing community need, city government financed and constructed the Historic Miramar 34,000 sf senior center complex, connected to the city and region by its own transportation system. There are two senior centers and an Adult Day Care, each with its own extensive programming, and 13 vehicles on the road daily, shuttling passengers to medical visits, day trips, the grocery store and other appointments.

During the pandemic, the Senior Center team reimagined how to connect with seniors by developing numerous methods of virtual contact including weekly reassurance calls, and twice weekly home food delivery.



## Morrisville, NC

Morrisville is one of the fastest-growing and most diverse towns in North Carolina, located adjacent to North Carolina's Research Triangle Park – a national hotbed of technological development, hosting over 250 companies and 50,000 workers. The town's economy is based on highly skilled professional and technology industries, and a population that is diverse, affluent and highly educated. The idea of living connected and living well guides the town's decision-making processes in all areas and has been the catalyst for infrastructure improvements including roadways, greenways and recreational facilities.

### Morrisville Moves to the Market

The Morrisville Healthy Food Hub project was a four-year collaborative effort to create a one-stop shop for healthy eating and living.

Western Wake Farmers' Market (WWFM) was moved to Morrisville's Town Center, bringing it within a mile of more than 9,000 total residents. The new Town Center location is also at the intersection of the recently developed north-south and east-west greenways, giving families the opportunity to walk or bike to the market. To help residents walk or bike to the healthy food hub, the town installed directional signage along the greenway system, sidewalks, and other corridors. The town and the WWFM are exploring possible expanded shuttle services to provide access to families who can't walk, bike, or drive.

To address resource barriers, the market enables low-income shoppers to convert their EBT/SNAP dollars into tokens and requires all vendors to accept them.

The WWFM has worked to recruit more vendors who sell ethnic vegetables and provide cultural ambassadors to allow Asian, Indian, and Chinese residents living nearby to find their favorite products.

The nearby Morrisville Community Garden (MCG) provides a hands-on learning environment to teach children and families about the joys and benefits of growing healthy food. All produce from the education garden is donated to a local

food bank along with recipe cards that offer suggestions on how to prepare the food. A "Cooking Matters" class is being developed to teach low-income families how to grow their own food and prepare it for eating.

The Healthy Food Hub supports healthy and active lifestyles through the confluence of the greenways, market and community garden.

### COVID-19 Response: Re-Connect Morrisville

Morrisville's leadership, county and state governments, community organizations, residents, businesses and others played a key role in ensuring that Morrisville stayed connected and viable through the pandemic.

#### Core Operations

Town government never closed and public-facing services continued to be provided. Additionally, town meetings were made available online.

Emergency food distribution locations were setup around the region, allowing low-income families to drive through daily for free meals.

Additionally, the town distributed 6,500 masks via distribution events and direct PPE drop-offs.

The parks and recreation department continued to offer recreation opportunities for the community through programs such 'Rec to Go' bags available for curbside contactless pickup and online and outdoor fitness classes.

#### Supporting local businesses

The town and chamber helped businesses by creating a digital platform to highlight establishments and connect patrons with businesses. "Small Business Saturday" was also held to generate revenue for local businesses.

#### Virtual Programming

- Both Morrisville 101 & Teen Morrisville 101 were offered virtually in 2020. The free citizens academy provides residents with a better understanding of what it takes to be a civil servant and covers the different career options in local government.
- The police department held a virtual National Night Out (NNO) event. Registered communities received NNO swag, a banner,



and a link to access their own neighborhood virtual celebration.

- S'Morrisville 2020 was held as a contactless event at the park. The drive-through allowed residents to safely receive pre-packaged S'mores kits and T-shirts.
- The annual Halloween celebration was a drive-through event where attendees received giveaways such as candy, coupons from local businesses, face coverings and swag.
- The police department held a virtual holiday event during which they unveiled a virtual holiday card, had story time, a live acoustic musical performance, and a greeting from Santa.
- A Class of 2020 Graduate Celebration Video was produced and made available online and via social media.

### **Cricket at Church Street Park**

Morrisville has seen a rapid increase in the population of the Asian Indian community. The town began looking for ways to be responsive to the interests of the new residents and several began expressing interest in cricket play, so the town entered into a partnership with the Triangle Cricket League (TCL).

The partnership began with providing temporary cricket grounds on various multipurpose fields within Morrisville's park system. Parks were modified to accommodate the unique field needs for cricket play, which gained the attention of the United States of America Cricket Association to host several tournaments.

Seeing the clear interest in cricket, Morrisville recognized the need for more intentional development of facilities. Open houses were held to design a new park, and the town received an overwhelming response to build a competition-size cricket ground. The town spent approximately \$6.5 million on Church Street Park and it officially came on-line in 2015.

The success of previous tournaments, coupled with the availability of a regulation-sized ground, gained the attention of the International Cricket Council (ICC) and after a site visit, they announced that the Americas region qualifier for the 2020 ICC World Cup would be played at Church Street Park.

The event quickly came into doubt when it was realized that the pitch—where the batsmen stand to hit balls thrown by the other team's bowler—was not up to international standards.

Local cricket enthusiasts volunteered their time to unload specialized clay and sod, and special curators were brought in from New Zealand and Australia until finally, the grounds were ready.

Ultimately, the 2018 international event was a massive success and Church Street Park continues hosting cricket leagues and tournaments, bringing large crowds of people to Morrisville.

### **Richmond, VA**

Richmond's recently adopted master plan, Richmond 300: A Guide for Growth, relies on justice-centered planning decisions to build a more beautiful, sustainable and equitable city. The plan, which collected input from thousands of Richmonders, imagines Richmond in 2037 – at the 300th anniversary of its founding – to be a more inclusive city that commemorates and learns from its history. To root that vision in real experiences, Richmond 300 prioritized historically divested neighborhoods and areas negatively impacted by redlining. By focusing on these neighborhoods, the city can heal the wounds inflicted by racist policies, literally building a better city for underserved residents.

### **Equitably Expanding Green Space**

In January of 2020, Mayor Levar Stoney convened a "Green Team" of public servants, residents, and nonprofit professionals and tasked them with developing a framework and structure for ensuring all Richmond residents reside within a 10-minute walk of a public green space or park.

The Green Team developed an objective methodology centered on racial equity through the Climate Equity Index, ultimately electing to place the new parks in the city's 8th and 9th council districts. These districts are made up of areas that were annexed in the 1970's by a white majority city council to maintain a white majority population in the City of Richmond. Today, with ensuing white flight after the annexation, these



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two council districts are majority BIPOC and have seen a lack of investment in amenities like parks and green spaces.

Mayor Stoney announced, and city council passed, an ordinance to create five new parks based on the recommendations of the working groups. After the legal process cleared the way for these new green spaces, community engagement efforts began allowing the Southside neighborhood to imagine and envision these spaces going forward.

A grant was procured to pay facilitators and residents for their participation in reimagining a greener Southside and one park site is being prepared for onsite and experiential engagement. A trail through the new green space will allow residents to experience the land safely, get a feel for the site, look for natural features they are drawn to, and envision what the park should become.

Public engagement and citizen leadership will guide the next steps of bringing these five new parks online, increasing green space access for 5% of Richmond residents.

### **Reimagining Public Safety**

The racial reckoning of 2020 shook the nation and the City of Richmond. As protesters marched past the the Robert E. Lee monument in Richmond, they called for racial equity and justice. In response, a community-driven Task Force on Reimagining Public Safety was formed.

The members of the task force represented the legal profession, mental and behavioral healthcare, restorative justice non-profits, emergency services, trauma-informed education and service, advocates for reformation of the justice system, and residents from public housing, Latino, and LGBTQ organizations.

Over the course of 90 days, the task force had many difficult, and at times uncomfortable, conversations. From sharing stories of trauma and examples of systemic racism, to debating steps for meaningful community healing. Despite community engagement limitations due to the pandemic, the task force held eight “strategic listening sessions” to gain additional community input on their initial recommendations.

In November 2020, the task force submitted its final report, which included 15 recommendations. These recommendations included developing a new routing system for some non-criminal calls for service, creating a community-led police training academy, support for a Civilian Review Board, centralizing de-escalation in use of force policies and providing incentives for de-escalation, improving police accountability by requiring law enforcement officer business cards, increasing cultural and communication awareness and accountability, and establishing an Office of Restorative Justice and Community Safety, to name a few.

The city has started the thorough evaluation and review of each recommendation. Moreover, the City of Richmond recently hired a new Chief of Police who has already started making changes to the department, including: establishing an Office of Professional Accountability to work with officers to support their professional development and to address accountability concerns raised by the community, creating business cards for officers, planning for a community-led training portion of the police academy, and ensuring that de-escalation training is forefront and awarded on-duty. Additionally, administrative teams are evaluating options for an alternative response system for some police calls, and the establishment of an Office of Restorative Justice and Community Safety.

### **Universal Afterschool**

With education and children’s affairs being a key priority of residents, the city set out to identify specific opportunities to enrich children’s educational experiences. Conversations with community leaders and residents made it clear that everyone wanted to ensure that children had productive ways to spend their time *after* the school day.

After initial planning meetings with key stakeholders and a commitment of 7.2 million from the city and philanthropists, it was announced in August of 2018 that every elementary and middle school student in Richmond would have access to high-quality, full-service afterschool programming by 2020.

An Out-of-School-Time (OST) Steering Committee—membership including





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representatives from providers, philanthropists, city, and schools—developed a list of key priorities:

- Onsite programming would first be established in communities serving high poverty areas.
- To be considered “full service,” programming must include transportation, dinner, and occur at least three days each week.
- Programs operating in schools with large populations of Latino students would be staffed by Spanish-speaking Latino individuals.

An OST coordinator was hired to facilitate a loose confederation of nonprofit and public OST providers, called the Greater Richmond OST Alliance, which collaboratively designed the after-school program.

By late 2019, all 33 elementary and middle schools were hosting or providing transportation to high-quality, full-service afterschool programs for 1,000 students. When COVID struck and schools closed, this meant that every single public elementary and middle school in Richmond had OST partners available to help with front-line response to ensure that families had access to the resources they needed to stay safe and healthy during virtual schooling.

## Southfield, MI

Southfield is an international city bustling with people from a rich array of cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, including large African American, Armenian, Chaldean, Jewish and Russian populations. As Southfield’s demographics have changed, so too has the city’s approach to reaching and engaging the community. City leaders actively engage residents, through its boards & commissions, public meetings, and town halls, to gather input that is used to help shape policies and programs that reflect the community’s vision. In response to that input, the City of Southfield has increasingly focused on creating more reflective and inclusive community programming in addition to a more walkable downtown area.

### Supporting the Black Lives Matter (BLM) Movement

As a community with a majority African American population, Southfield residents and officials have

been particularly touched and impacted by the historic and recent acts of police brutality and racial injustice.

In response to the most recent national tragedy of the murder of George Floyd, the city installed new *Black Lives Matter* and *Southfield Strong* banners. The banner installation was just one of the city’s responses to the tragedy.

- **Southfield Unity Day – Kneel to Heal, June 14, 2020.** At this event attendees formed a symbolic human chain of unity and kneeled for eight minutes and forty-two seconds to honor the life of George Floyd.
- **Black Men Unite Peaceful Protest – June 28, 2020.** The march was designed to unite Black men while protesting police brutality and racial injustice. The event also included a voter registration drive and 2020 Census encouragement.
- **“Our Sorrow and Determination for a More Equal and Just Society” Joint Resolution.** The Southfield City Council & Mayor adopted this joint resolution to show solidarity with efforts to root out systemic racism. The city also continues to support training, policies and practices for police officers that de-escalate tense situations and avoid the use of deadly force.
- **Southfield Police Department Duty to Intervene Policy.** A new policy amendment was adopted that requires every sworn employee present at any scene to stop another sworn employee when force is being inappropriately applied or is no longer required.
- **My Brother’s Keeper (MBK).** The Southfield Chapter of MBK hosts monthly meetings featuring different guest speakers, in addition to other activities, events and field trips to mentor Southfield’s young men of color.
- **International Peace Poles Installation & Dedication – November 6, 2020.** The city held a dedication ceremony for the installation of new International Peace Poles.

### Protecting a Community of Color during the COVID-19 Pandemic

In response to the pandemic, Southfield declared a State of Emergency on March 13, 2020 and immediately activated the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). Since that time, efforts to support the community and keep residents safe have been extensive.



### City Operations

- Public meetings of the city council and city boards and commissions were conducted virtually, with the opportunity for residents to watch online and call-in questions.
- Safe social distancing floor stickers and safety glass partitions have been installed in all public buildings.
- All individuals are required to wear facemasks and to self-screen for COVID-19 symptoms before entering any city office or facility.

### Business Assistance

- Allowed restaurants to expand outdoor dining areas.
- Allowed providers of personal services to operate outside an established business.
- Reduced fees and expedited approvals.
- Provided businesses with free 'Open for Business' and/or 'Open for Carryout' lawn signs.
- Distributed over 400 free COVID-19 safety tool kits to help small businesses reopen safely.
- Offering grants for restaurant relief through the Restaurant Technology & PPE Reimbursement Program and the Restaurant Weatherization Program.

### Parks & Recreation Operations

- Produced virtual fitness classes for children, adults, and seniors.
- Golf courses, tennis courts and parks remained opened, following CDC guidelines of social distancing.
- The Transportation of Southfield Seniors program continued providing reservations and transportation for medical appointments and limited grocery trips.

### Public Library Operations

- E-books and magazines, audiobooks, movies, music, children's resources, and research tools were made available online.
- Contactless book pickup was available via a drive-up window.

### Vaccine Promotion

- Provided vaccine information on the city's website, social media platforms and public access channel.
- Took out full page ads in the local paper.
- Launched a COVID Vaccine Hotline to assist seniors and other residents without internet access to register for eligible vaccination appointments.

### **Creating Affordable Housing Options and Sustainability through Adaptive Reuse**

The City of Southfield is home to a significant and growing number of both senior adults and low- to moderate-income individuals and families who need safe, clean, and affordable housing options.

#### Housing Rehabilitation

To provide that level of housing stock and opportunity, Southfield recently invested almost \$20 million in two affordable senior housing developments. A tax credit financing and a construction loan was procured to renovate McDonnell Tower Apartments and the tower and townhomes at River Park Place. In addition to the renovations, upgrades to improve energy efficiency are expected to lower residents' monthly utility costs and reduce the carbon footprint of the buildings.

The project included extensive exterior and interior renovations and energy-efficient upgrades. Additionally, the buildings received community amenity additions, including a new activities center, a café, a game room and an exercise room.

#### Mixed-Use Redevelopment

In 2015, the City of Southfield purchased the shuttered Northland Center mall, once the largest shopping mall in the world, with plans to remediate, demolish and sell the property to a qualified developer.

Following the purchase of Northland in 2015, the city held several "Imagine the Possibilities" public input meetings with the community to share their ideas and input for the future of the former mall site. The city held strong to that community vision for four years with little developer interest until Contour Companies of Bloomfield Hills came along.

Contour Companies proposed a true dynamic mixed-use redevelopment including apartments at various rental rates, retail and restaurants, office and green space that very closely mirrors the city's original vision for the Northland redevelopment based upon residents' collective input.

The purchase agreement with Contour Companies was approved along with a master plan for the 114-acre redevelopment.





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homeless youth and prevent significant trauma to the student and communities in the future.

Thanks to funding and support from key partners the plan was funded, and in 2016, Priority Spokane contracted with a community expert, Catholic Charities, to help carry out the plan. Priority Spokane's 25 Steering Member organizations provided additional supervision and guidance for the project.

Priority Spokane placed specially trained Community Health Workers (CHW) in four high need elementary schools and one middle school. Each school was strategically selected based on its location, number of homeless students, and other resources already available within the school. They specifically recognized a need among Spokane's Marshallese population and placed a community health worker from the Marshallese community in one elementary school where many Marshallese students were enrolled.

Each CHW had access to \$10,000 in flexible funding to use to stabilize and/or house families when other resources weren't available. The project was studied and evaluated over the course of three years.

The program and partnerships resulted in stabilizing and/or housing 80% of the homeless children in the pilot and their families and after three years, 95% of them were still stabilized and/or housed.

Following the pilot project, Priority Spokane recommended looking for opportunities to grow the model to build longevity and trust.

## Spokane, WA

Originally a gathering spot for the Spokane Tribe, Spokane has retained the spirit of connectedness through the years – from the mining in the late 1800s, the railroad hub of the early 1900s, the site of the Expo '74 World Fair, and the historic restoration efforts of the early 2000s. Now, the community has once again come together to prioritize citizens' needs, collaborate among diverse groups, and deliver results for all residents.

### Stabilizing and Housing Homeless Youth

Priority Spokane is an endeavor to create a vibrant future for Spokane County by implementing community-defined goals. After evaluating data and research, a community assessment identified homelessness and mental health as the largest problems facing the county, so in 2015, Priority Spokane began working to stabilize the lives of homeless and at-risk of becoming homeless children in grades K-8. Priority Spokane understood that by housing/stabilizing homeless children, they could prevent them from becoming

### Urbanova: Neighborhood Impact Initiative

Founded in 2016, Urbanova was borne out of Spokane's vision that an equitable and resilient future will be co-created by the people living in the community. The Urbanova collaboration now includes more than 30 people working in concert to achieve social, economic, and environmental equity and resilience for Spokane.

Urbanova recognizes that technology and data products are not sufficient to improve outcomes for people unless a genuine effort to first understand how people experience the city



and its services is made. The Urbanova approach begins by assessing the community quantitatively and qualitatively to guide efforts to improve the lives of residents.

This effort included in-depth interviews with diverse local stakeholders, and included an evaluation and cataloging of hundreds of available quantitative data sets. Community results began to coalesce around three key areas of well-being in the community: 1) safety and security 2) affordability and 3) environmental equity.

Projects developed based on findings include:

#### Liberty Park

An immediate project stimulated by the Neighborhood Impact Initiative was bringing safety and security enhancements to the city project already underway to revitalize Liberty Park. The project expands the University District streetlight and hyperlocal air quality pilot to include Liberty Park and surrounding areas.

#### Spokane Predictive Analytics – Insights to Prevent Homelessness

Urbanova collaboration partners decided they would like to launch a data sharing pilot to determine if utility payment activity is a valid predictor for at-risk populations. The objective is to provide earlier detection of billing/payment challenges to better facilitate the delivery of wrap-around services for economic or other hardships.

#### South Landing Eco-District – Improving the Equity of Clean Energy and Smart Grid Projects

Urbanova's role in this project is to provide advisory, technical, and project outreach services leading to data-informed recommendations to advise how to equitably extend the benefits of the Eco-District to all members of the community.

### **Spokane Gives Initiative**

Spokane Gives began in 2014 as a week-long volunteer event. Today, in partnership with the Spokane County United Way, Spokane Gives takes place annually throughout the entire month of April and serves as an expansion of existing philanthropy in the community and works to build the network between volunteers and non-

profits to promote giving year-round.

The Spokane Give's website functions as a landing page for non-profits to submit service projects and volunteers to sign-up to serve. Over 300 non-profit organizations are connected to the website and thousands of citizens use it to discover short and long-term volunteer opportunities.

A Steering Committee, comprised of key stakeholders, organizes core service projects, develops a mini-grant fund, coordinates outreach efforts, and leads a kick-off event each April.

Service projects have included:

- Churches 'adopting' a local school to provide an appreciation event for teachers and staff.
- A Community Health Fair and Mobile Food Bank event in a low-income neighborhood.
- A cleanup day picking up litter along the riverbank and walking trails, painting murals over graffiti, and helping residents remove unwanted materials from their property.
- An event at a women's homeless shelter to paint rooms, clean carpets, install energy efficient lighting, sort clothing donations, and upgrade storage capabilities

Through donations from local credit unions and businesses, \$100-\$300 mini-grants are provided to support non-profits in completing service projects. Each year, approximately \$10,000 is raised to support almost 35 organization's service projects.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, United Way was able to send volunteer needs to every registered user of the website, alerting the diverse community to emerging opportunities. Over 1,300 volunteer positions were filled using the website in the first half of 2020.

### **Sumter, SC**

From its beginnings, the City of Sumter has enjoyed a diverse community. The racial makeup of the community has contributed to a cooperative spirit that has persisted through some of the nation's most challenging times, resulting in a progressive city that is open to ideas of inclusivity, diversity and equitability. This is



reflected in representation in local government, and many city services being offered in multiple languages. Sumter proudly cultivates a culture of engagement, with active efforts to encourage participation in community matters through community-based events, meetings and forums. Civic awareness and inclusiveness have served Sumter's citizenry well in the current turbulent era of civil unrest. The success of Sumter's community-based initiatives is largely due to the input from its diverse community.

### Full STEAM Ahead

Despite losing 5,000 manufacturing jobs in the first decade of the 21st century, Sumter's manufacturing sector has made an astonishing comeback thanks to community investment in infrastructure and workforce development. However, a new problem arose as Sumter's most talented young people were leaving the community due to a perceived lack of opportunities. At the same time, as manufacturing jobs have become increasingly

technology-oriented, the demand for skilled talent has increased.

The community has risen to the challenge by providing all students in Sumter free tuition options for post-secondary STEM education. With the establishment of the Sumter Career and Technology Center, local education leaders recognized that there was a demand for mechanical, technical and medical training. The program includes cybersecurity, mechatronics, aerospace engineering, and more, equipping high school graduates to fill positions in these fields or build their continuing education on a solid knowledge base.

Sumter's schools were early adopters of the STEM philosophy, with several schools being nationally accredited STEM schools, offering electives including digital multimedia, robotics, financial literacy, biomedicine, fine arts, technology and more. The Liberty STEAM Charter School, a tuition-free K-12 STEAM curriculum school, will welcome its first students in fall of 2021.

## Seven-Time Winner First-Ever Hall of Fame Winner



The annual eSTEAM Sumter event boasts over 70 partners and 6,000 attendees, including public and private students and their families, teachers, and potential future employers who participate in a variety of booths, performances, and hands-on STEAM-related activities for all ages. Sumter's Dual Enrollment program allows any area high school student to graduate with certificates in mechatronics and machine tools. The program gives participants a chance to earn money and gain experience during their high school years.

Sumter's innovative educational programs have already begun paying dividends. Between 2010 and 2020, the number of Sumter residents with at least a high school diploma has risen 8% and nearly 60% of residents have gone on to post-secondary education.

### Love Sumter

After the death of George Floyd during the summer of 2020, protests against systemic racism and police brutality were held across the world, including in Sumter.

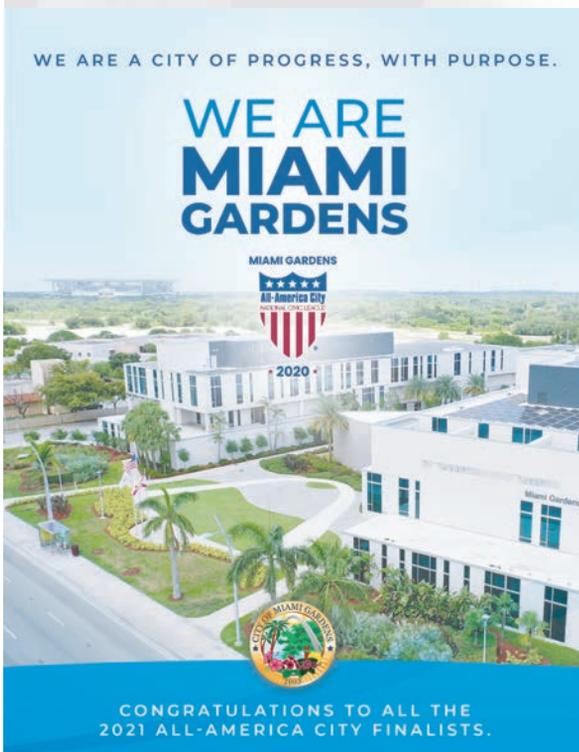
On June 14, 2020, a group of several hundred individuals, organized by more than 70 local church leaders, conducted a peaceful solidarity march in downtown Sumter. The momentum from this march led to the formation of the Sumter Leaders of Faith social justice task force among the clergy for the purpose of addressing racial equality issues. The task force meets quarterly and has included the Chief of Police and the Sumter County Sheriff in ongoing discussions. Additionally, the business community in Sumter has started a monthly open discussion series, starting with a segment on diversity and inclusion.

The foundation for a positive approach to law enforcement in Sumter has been in the making for the past decade. The forefront of the Sumter Police Department's strategy is a community-oriented approach that facilitates positive relationships between law enforcement and residents.

- Crime Stoppers is comprised of volunteers who assisted local law enforcement with tips, resulting in numerous convictions and the recovery of more than \$4 million in stolen property and illegal substances.
- The Community Services Unit provides every citizen with a connection to the department outside of normal law enforcement duties, establishing relationships and building bonds within the community.
- The School and Community Mentoring Program is a partnership with the Sumter School District to provide officers and children the opportunity to interact through reading programs, lunch buddies, and field days.
- Project CheckMate employs a single officer whose time is dedicated to checking on vulnerable adults to ensure their needs are being met.
- Random Act of Kindness (RAK) Pack program facilitates ongoing positive interaction between officers and the local transient population. With contributions from the community, officers assemble and distribute care packages to those in need.

### Sumter Pride

Sumter is routinely ranked as one of South Carolina's most livable cities, and this is a point of pride for community leaders. However, there is one segment of the population who do not have a secure place to call home. Several local



community and organizations work hard every day to see that all citizens have a secure place to call home.

### Sumter United Ministries

Sumter United Ministries operates a 26-bed emergency shelter with meals, showers, and laundry facilities provided. A separate winter shelter located in downtown Sumter provides 30 additional “no questions asked” beds when temperatures are forecast below 40 degrees, serving solely as a safe and warm place to sleep for anyone who asks.

### By Name Project

This nonprofit provides food, clothing, and hygiene items to those who remain underserved. Their policy is that they don’t ask questions, they serve anyone. The organization serves 50-60 people from a mobile trailer at each of its twice-monthly events, offering friendship and support to those who are often overlooked, ignored or who have slipped through the cracks.

### The Crosswell Home

The Crosswell Home provides full-time housing to children of all ages, while they actively participate in school and numerous community events and activities. As of 2020, the Crosswell Home has provided housing for more than 1,000 children from various circumstances and backgrounds. Some stay a few days, while others live at the home for years, but no matter how long they stay, they are encouraged to learn, play, and develop to their fullest potential.

### Project Restore

The Restore program through Sumter United Ministries makes homes safe, dry, secure, and accessible. Through the program, homeowner income and budget are reviewed to determine an applicant’s priority, and a Construction Director coordinates and trains adult and youth volunteers to help complete the work, while materials costs are covered by Sumter United Ministries and their community partners.

Whether providing a hot meal and friendly conversation or constructing a ramp that enables a homebound person to visit relatives and friends, Sumter’s outreach programs are a source of gratification for a community that prides itself on caring.

## **Wheat Ridge, CO**

Wheat Ridge was incorporated in 1969 by families who wanted to preserve its rural feel despite the pressure of neighboring Denver’s metropolitan sprawl. For its first 35 years, Wheat Ridge was a quiet city where residents commuted to other cities to work and shop. However, as time went on, it became important to find a way for the city to evolve, while still honoring its rural roots.

Wheat Ridge residents, business owners and civic leaders are committed to honoring the legacy of a quirky small town while striving to increase the quality of life for everyone in a way that is sustainable for years to come.

### **Wheaties Academy**

Wheaties Academy is a grassroots leadership program developed to expand and diversify the civic voice. Wheaties Academy was created to build the bench of community leaders and to ensure that the diversity of engaged civic voices reflected the actual diversity of the city.



Each cohort included people of differing ages, residency tenures, family status, housing type, gender identity, and religious background. The program fee was less than \$400 with financial assistance provided to ensure money was not a barrier to participation.

Wheaties Academy was structured with the following goals to ensure graduates gained both skills and civic experience:

1. Remove barriers to involvement.
2. Elevate diverse voices in community storytelling.
3. Establish a network of actionable relationships.

Over the course of seven months, participants learned how to work together to address challenges creatively and authentically with support of mentors, civic leaders, and other community members.

At the end of the curriculum, participant teams designed a grassroots project to address a

community issue. Projects were required to involve at least 20 residents, three businesses, and two city officials.

Project examples:

- **#WheatiesLove.** This project created a brand to celebrate ways to express love for the community. #WheatiesLove changed the tone and topics of civic dialogue on local social media and generated constructive conversations between neighbors.
- **Greetings From Wheat Ridge.** This project resulted in the first ever collaborative community mural on a city building.
- **Connect 2 Creek.** This project involved community members designing a panel for a 28-panel pop-up art piece celebrating a local waterway.

Of the 45 program graduates, 70% have gone on to serve the community in some capacity.



## Sustainable Wheat Ridge

After environmental stewardship was prioritized in the 2035 Vision Statement in Wheat Ridge City Council's Strategic Plan, a resident-led advisory committee was assembled.

The new committee, Sustainable Wheat Ridge, was made up of 11 resident volunteers who got to work assembling an action plan. In total, the resident committee dedicated over 550 hours of volunteer time to complete the action plan. The plan was approved and a budget of \$25,500 was awarded.

Engaging with Xcel's Partners in Energy program was the city's first major initiative. The committee worked closely with professionals from the utility company to fund home energy audits which would allow Wheat Ridge residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and save money on their utility bills. In 2020, the partnership with Xcel Energy was expanded to a multifamily outreach plan and direct mailers to the business community to advertise free commercial building audits.

Next, the committee partnered with the Regional Air Quality Council to provide \$150 rebates, subsidized by Sustainable Wheat Ridge, for the first 30 residents that recycled gas powered lawn mowers and purchased an electric mower. The committee also provided more than 165 rain barrel diverter kits to residents that wished to capture rainwater.

Other efforts include:

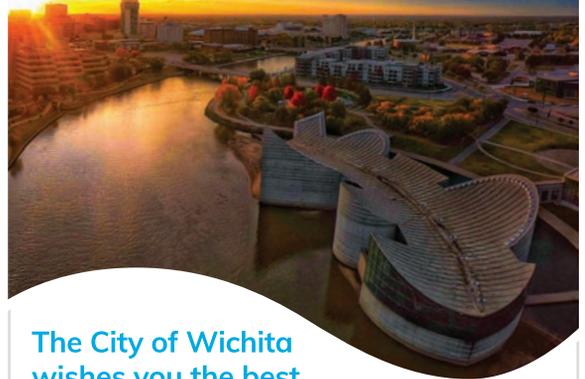
- Sustainable Neighborhood Network- allows neighborhoods to implement sustainability programming based on residents' needs and interests.
- Scraps Mile High- gives residents opportunities for low-priced composting options.
- Fresh Food Connect- provides extra produce from local food growers to those experiencing homelessness.

With the help of city and external grant funds, the action plan from 2018 is 51% complete.

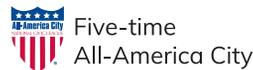
## Wheat Ridge Together

Wheat Ridge Together is the culmination of Wheat Ridge's collaborative efforts to respond to the dual challenges of the pandemic and racial justice reckoning.

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## Together Through the Pandemic

Wheat Ridge was well positioned to face the challenges of the pandemic due to two new virtual public engagement tools that were launched prior to the pandemic; What's Up Wheat Ridge to enhance online community engagement; and Wheat Ridge Speaks to provide official public comment on city council and planning commission items. Wheat Ridge Speaks hosted 54 meetings on the platform in 2020, and 166 comments were submitted with 5,528 website visits.

Businesses were supported through an online application that resulted in the distribution of more than \$750,000 in grants to assist businesses with daily operations, the expansion of outdoor operations, and the purchase of PPE. The city also created signage in Spanish and English and distributed these along with free masks to local businesses to assist with the implementation of the mask mandate.

## Together Through Inclusion and Equity Initiatives

The death of George Floyd sparked a meaningful conversation in Wheat Ridge focused on systemic





### TALLAHASSEE CITY COMMISSION

Mayor Pro-Tem Jeremy Matlow, Commissioner Dianne Williams-Cox, Mayor John E. Dailey, Commissioner Jacqueline "Jack" Porter, Commissioner Curtis Richardson



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racism. Wheat Ridge community members created an organization called Wheat Ridge for Equity and began demonstrating six days a week to support Black Lives Matter.

Wheat Ridge for Equity members asked the city to take the following actions:

1. Start continuous equity training for all city staff and elected officials.
2. Create an equity task force to review all city departments and policies for racism and bigotry.
3. Ensure the task force is composed of underrepresented community members.

On September 21, 2020, because of community input, city council provided direction to staff to implement the suggested actions.

City management scheduled Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion training for all city staff and city council. In addition, the city hosted two virtual, public conversations in the summer and fall.

City council also approved the formation of the Race and Equity Task Force and 20 members were appointed on February 8, 2021. The task force begins meeting with a facilitator bimonthly in March 2021.

In addition to the important work of Wheat Ridge for Equity, on June 22, 2020, city council passed a resolution condemning racism and hate.





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I pledge to spark Acts of Kindness—one at a time, sprinkling compassion around the world.

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I will treat others with courtesy, politeness, and respect.

I will do little things, because little things make a big difference.

I commit to putting my Heart in Action, sharing a smile and a little bit of love to make someone's day a little brighter.

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