Report:

A Recommended Approach for

Creating a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan

for Athens-Clarke County

June 27, 2017

Blaine Williams, Manager

Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County

This page left intentionally blank.

Introduction:

This report will:

- Provide a brief history leading up to the direction by the Mayor and Commission for a report that "explores ways to create a more inclusive and welcoming community through the creation of a government-appointed and operated citizen 'human relations' committee, through partnering with an established local entity, or through some other mechanism;"

- Describe the legal limitations on discrimination enforcement by local governments in Georgia;

- Describe existing organizations and their efforts to combat discrimination;

- Discuss perceptions of discrimination on the national level;

- Review personal perspectives on discrimination at the local level;

- Discuss ethnic and racial minorities and socioeconomic status;

- Describe diversity and racial disparity in Athens-Clarke County;

- Define economic inclusion;

- Examine several best practice inclusion efforts in the United States; and

- Offer a conclusion and recommendation for the creation of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for the entire community.

Background: Recent Events

In October, 2015, photographs of a racist-themed drink on a draft of a downtown bar's drink menu surfaced on social media. Additional anecdotal reports intimated that discrimination was going on in downtown bars, with operators reportedly using the pretext of "private parties" or unpublished and inconsistently applied dress codes to discriminate in the admission of certain persons based on their race or color or other characteristics. In the ensuing months, officers of the University of Georgia student government collected accounts of the alleged actions and shared the results with the Mayor and Commission.

On January 5, 2016, the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County Mayor and Commission adopted a resolution which:

- condemns *" unlawful discrimination in any form and hereby call upon all businesses serving the public within the boundaries of Athens-Clarke County to act in a non-discriminatory fashion with regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, disability, or pregnancy, as those terms are defined in applicable federal law and in Athens-Clarke County Code Section 1-17-1;"*

- voiced their position to *"support any investigation into violations of federal or state non-discrimination laws, statutes, and constitutional requirements; federal or state non-discrimination laws, statutes, and constitutional requirements;"*

- *"direct the Attorney and Manager to study and make recommendations to the M&C for actions that may be taken at the local level to facilitate the values expressed in this Resolution, including but not limited to the ongoing consideration of possible revision to the county alcohol licensing ordinance to make a violation of local, state, or federal anti-discrimination or civil rights ordinances or laws a basis for the denial, suspension, or revocation of an alcoholic beverages license."*

On June 21, 2016, the Mayor referred to the Government Operations Committee (GOC) a review of the draft of an alcoholic beverages ordinance with the intent of pursuing amendments that would aid in anti-discrimination efforts.

On July 21, 2016 the GOC members reviewed the Attorney's recommendations during a meeting. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the Mayor and Commission adopt revisions to the alcoholic beverages ordinance that incorporated regulations governing private parties and dress codes, as well as to set up a process by which a citizen could register a complaint along these lines.

On August 9, 2016 the Government Operations Committee produced a report and recommendations titled *Revision of the alcohol licensing ordinance to provide for prohibition against discrimination*. The recommendations for amendments to the alcoholic beverages ordinance included specific regulations regarding private parties and dress codes at bars (those on-premises consumption licensees that are not classified as restaurants). Bar owners were required to post specific signs regarding private parties and dress codes, to maintain records, and, in the case of dress codes, to uniformly apply dress codes during the times that they are in effect. Additionally, the ordinance provided more generally that bars shall not discriminate against any person in the admission to the licensed premises or in the sale, service or delivery of products within such licensed premises on the basis of such person's race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, national origin, citizenship, age, disability or pregnancy. The

ordinance amendments established a process for aggrieved citizens to file complaints for violations of the ordinance with the Attorney's Office, which has authority to investigate complaints and bring administrative enforcement actions before the Athens-Clarke County Administrative Hearing Officer.

On November 1, 2016, the Mayor and Commission, through a Commission-defined Option, directed the following:

1. *Approve the amendments to the alcohol license ordinance as proposed in the report from the Government Operations Committee dated August 9, 2016.*

2. *Direct the Office of the ACC Manager and the ACC Attorney to explore ways to create a more inclusive and welcoming community through the creation of a government-appointed and operated citizen "human relations" committee, through partnering with an established local entity, or through some other mechanism. The goal of such exploration will be to recommend a framework which can best address claims of discrimination, whether through education, through training, through referral to other local, state, and/or federal resources, and/ or through some other means. The ACC Manager and/ or Attorney's Office will present their findings and recommendations to the Mayor and Commission by no later than the end of FY17 (June 2017) for review and possible action.*

3. *Direct the ACC Manager to compile a list of community support services (local, state, and federal) that are currently available to individuals that may help them in addressing any alleged discriminatory practices to which they are subjected that violate current Federal or State non-discrimination laws, statutes, and constitutional requirements. This task should be completed no later than December 31, 2016.*

On December 22, 2016, *t*he Manager released the list of community support services report to the Mayor and Commission.

On May 16, 2017, the Attorney's Office received its first complaint from an African American citizen who alleged that, on April 1, 2017, he was denied entrance to a downtown bar for violating the dress code, which reportedly did not have the dress code visibly posted, in violation of the 2016 alcoholic beverages ordinance amendments. The Attorney's Office investigation of the complaint led to the filing of an additional citizen complaint of discrimination and dress code violation against the same establishment that allegedly occurred on January 20, 2017. On June 19, 2017, the Attorney filed a notice of administrative hearing with the Administrative Hearing Officer alleging violations of the dress code provisions of the alcohol beverages ordinance arising from the incidents alleged in the citizen complaints and alleging violation of the general non-discrimination provisions of the ordinance. The matter is scheduled for an initial hearing on August 2, 2017.

On June 6, 2017, the M&C adopted the Fiscal Year 2018 Annual Operating and Capital Budget, which included funding to create a living wage for all permanent full time and part time positions, and an additional $50,000 for inclusion efforts in the community.

Legal Limitations on Discrimination Enforcement by Local Governments in Georgia

During the first six months of 2017, a group of citizens spoke at Mayor and Commission meetings to state the need for a Human Relations Commission, particularly the need for the Unified Government to develop a group and process that could receive and investigate reports of discrimination in local businesses and perhaps sanction those businesses accordingly. Examples were provided of other similar structures across the country where this is possible.

The Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County Attorney has concluded that Georgia law does not give local governments the authority to adjudicate private discrimination claims and that prosecutions of discrimination claims as criminal cases in Municipal Court generally will not be effective. His interpretation of the law and what is possible is found below:

> *"Question: Are there limits on the ability of a local government in Georgia to enforce violations of civil rights ordinances?*
>
> *Answer: Yes, there are practical and legal obstacles that prevent effective enforcement at the local government level.*
>
> *Criminal enforcement. Criminal enforcement of discrimination laws in general is less frequent than civil enforcement due to the nature of criminal procedure, rules of evidence and Constitutional protections for defendants. While there have been criminal prosecutions of civil rights laws for cases that involve physical violence or clear and direct evidence of criminal discriminatory intent, the focus of civil rights enforcement primarily has been in the civil arena. Criminal cases—with the possibility of incarceration—trigger state and federal Constitutional protections, such as the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination and the "beyond a reasonable doubt" standard of proof that are not required in civil cases. For most discrimination claims, evidence is largely circumstantial and often must be obtained from the person or entity charged with a violation. Also, an aggrieved person must depend on a prosecutor to bring a criminal case. Because of these limitations, persons who are victims of discrimination or violations of civil rights laws overwhelmingly pursue civil claims. In the civil setting, plaintiffs may bring private rights of action in court and can participate directly in the case. Although incarceration, probation and criminal fines are not possible in civil cases, plaintiffs can recover damages, lost wages and back pay (in employment cases) and expenses of litigation in civil cases.*
>
> *Civil enforcement. The law and rules of procedure for bringing claims of unlawful discrimination under the state and federal Constitutions and statutes are well developed. Existing state and federal laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or handicap. The types of claims that are litigated in federal and state courts range from allegations of employment discrimination, discrimination in government programming or policy, and discriminatory housing and public accommodation claims. Some local governments in the United States have adopted anti-discrimination ordinances that prohibit discrimination on the bases described above and have added categories, such as gender identity and sexual orientation, which are not*

clearly included in federal civil rights laws. Many of these ordinances give the local government or committees or commissions established by those governments the authority to investigate claims of discrimination and to implement enforcement remedies. Proponents of these local civil rights ordinances argue that they provide a forum that is less costly and more responsive than remedies through court or federal agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. These programs at the local government level are specifically authorized by the laws of states where these programs are located.

By contrast, Georgia law does not grant local governments the authority to enact local civil rights enforcement ordinances and the procedural mechanisms necessary to make them work. Georgia is a "Home Rule" state where the Georgia Constitution grants authority for local governments to act in a broad range of areas, while reserving other areas for exercise of exclusive state authority. Both the Georgia Constitution and statutes affecting cities and counties provide that the powers granted to local governments "shall not include the power to take any action affecting the private or civil law governing private or civil relationships, except as is incident to the exercise of an independent governmental power."

This provision has been interpreted to mean that local governments cannot adopt ordinances that define or regulate family or business relationships. For example, a local government in Georgia may not impose rent control, nor may it regulate fuel prices or a local minimum wage. An ordinance that regulates private business relationships, such as employer and employee or hotel and guest, would be subject to legitimate challenge based on this Georgia constitutional provision. Similarly, a local anti-discrimination ordinance that applies to private businesses and individuals would be vulnerable as well. Note that this limitation does not apply to locally-regulated industries, such as alcohol sales and vehicles for hire. The Georgia Constitution and statutes have given local governments specific authority to regulate and license in those areas, and they have more latitude in adopting ordinances that regulate private relationships as a part of that regulatory authority. Examples are the recent bar anti-discrimination ordinance and the ordinance that regulates minimum drink pricing.

Aside from the Home Rule issue, local governments in Georgia do not have the legal tools to implement a civil rights enforcement program. To be effective, a local civil rights enforcement program would have to have a forum where parties could present their cases in a civil setting. This forum would include the ability of parties to subpoena witnesses and documents (and punish violators who do not comply with contempt sanctions) and the ability of the court to award monetary damages and/or equitable relief, such as injunctions against future discriminatory acts. This kind of forum is not available to Georgia local governments. Municipal Courts are primarily criminal courts where the punishments are limited to $1,000.00 and six months imprisonment. There is no authority in existing law for a Municipal Court to serve as the kind of forum needed to effectively address civil rights claims in a civil context. There is no provision for award of civil damages to private litigants, for example. Likewise, a committee or commission would not have any authority to subpoena witnesses or award damages. The other courts in the County do not have authority to try civil cases based on local ordinance violations.

In the absence of an appropriate judicial or quasi-judicial forum, there may be a desire on the part of a committee or commission to sponsor public meetings where individuals are

permitted to air specific grievances regarding alleged discriminatory practices by persons or businesses. This should be considered carefully.

As discussed above, there is no effective legal structure in Georgia that gives local governments the authority to conduct investigations into allegations of private party discrimination, with all of the necessary due process protections, such as subpoena power, right to cross examine, legal standards of proof, etc. In the absence of a legally-sanctioned forum with due process protections, a person or business that is falsely accused of discriminatory conduct may have a claim for defamation against the government or its officials. Additionally, a person or business may not have a legally adequate forum to challenge the allegations and present evidence that will rebut the claim, and the allegations may become public and associated with the person or business for years on the Internet. This kind of approach could needlessly injure the reputation of a person or business who in fact may have done nothing wrong."

Existing Local Efforts

With the understanding that any proposed Human Relations Commission would not be able to investigate complaints of discrimination and pursue sanctions, there remain other significant potential responsibilities for such a body, such as education and awareness, identification of systemic barriers and policies, etc. It is important to take an assessment of ongoing local efforts along these lines.

Athens Area Human Relations Council

The AAHRC seeks to continue the work of the late Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. in his tireless struggle for non-violent social change and respect for all ethnic and cultural differences. The Athens Area Human Relations Council (AAHRC) is a citizen-based organization dedicated to promoting positive & unified human relations based upon the philosophy, teachings, and works of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. AAHRC develops educational & social programming to address multi-cultural relations, bring harmony, reduce violence, provide a forum for concerned citizens, build relationships, & advocate and maintain the high idealism of Martin Luther King, Jr. as a framework for social justice. www.aahrc.com

Athens Anti-Discrimination Movement

Athens Anti-Discrimination Movement campaigns for racial and social justice. They aim to combat discrimination and empower the community through education and activism. The organization will peacefully protest against prejudice or bias beliefs that result in unfair treatment of individuals or groups. http://aadmovement.org/

Athens Latino Center for Education and Services

ALCES seeks to meet the needs of the underserved Latino community of Athens through educational and other services and to create a thriving, unified community where people of all ages and cultures value, teach, and learn from one another. This program assists young people who qualify to receive Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, a program that defers deportation actions against young people brought illegally into the U.S. before the age of 16 and provides them with work permits and the opportunity to apply for a driver's license. In consultation with the clients, they prepare the application packets needed to receive or renew Deferred Action.
Website: www.athenslatinocenter.org
Organization Phone: 706-549-5002

The Western Circuit Bar Association

The Western Circuit Bar Association (WCBA) is a nonprofit organization consisting of over 100 attorneys who practice in the Athens-Clarke County and Oconee County areas. The Western Circuit Bar Association was formed to cultivate the science of jurisprudence, to assist the public in obtaining legal representation, to promote reform in the law, to facilitate the administration of justice, to maintain the standards of integrity, honor and courtesy in the legal profession, and to promote and cherish a spirit of fellowship among its members. http://wcbaga.org/

The Attorney's interpretation brings some clarity as to what parameters are possible with a human relations commission. It is also important not to necessarily duplicate ongoing efforts. Given that this is such a wide-ranging topic, however, it may be helpful to gain some context from a national perspective, as well as a broader local perspective, to better understand what forms discrimination may take in Athens-Clarke County as well as other potential opportunities to address.

Discrimination on a National Level

Discrimination occurs in human society. In 2010, the National Research Council asserted:

> *Even as a national consensus has developed that explicit racial hostility is abhorrent, people may still hold prejudicial attitudes, stemming in part from past U.S. history of overt prejudice. Although prejudicial attitudes do not necessarily result in discriminatory behavior with adverse effects, the persistence of such attitudes can result in unconscious and subtle forms of racial discrimination in place of more explicit, direct hostility. Such subtle prejudice is often abetted by differential media portrayals of nonwhites versus whites, as well as de facto segregation in housing, education, and occupations.*
>
> *The psychological literature on subtle prejudice describes this phenomenon as a set of often unconscious beliefs and associations that affect the attitudes and behaviors of members of the ingroup (e.g., non-Hispanic whites) toward members of the outgroup (e.g., blacks or other disadvantaged racial groups). Members of the ingroup face an internal conflict, resulting from the disconnect between the societal rejection of racist behaviors and the societal persistence of racist attitudes (Dovidio and Gaertner, 1986; Katz and Hass, 1988; McConahay, 1986). People's intentions may be good, but their racially biased cognitive categories and associations may persist. The result is a modern, subtle form of prejudice that goes underground so as not to conflict with antiracist norms while it continues to shape people's cognitive, affective, and behavioral responses. Subtle forms of racism are indirect, automatic, ambiguous, and ambivalent.[1]*

Acts of discrimination are certainly not limited to the community of Athens-Clarke County, but are perceived across the nation. A recent survey by Pew Research Center finds that:

> *Unfair treatment can come in different forms. Roughly half of blacks (47%) say that in the past 12 months someone has acted as if they were suspicious of them because of their race or ethnicity. Many blacks also report feeling like others have questioned their intelligence. Some 45% say that in the past 12 months people have treated them as if they were not smart because of their race or ethnicity.*
>
> *Roughly one-in-five blacks (21%) say they have been treated unfairly by an employer in the past year because of their race or ethnicity, and a similar share (18%) report having been unfairly stopped by the police during this period.*
>
> *Being treated with suspicion and being treated as if they are not intelligent are more common experiences for black adults who attended college than for those who did not. For example, 52% of those with at least some college education say that, in the past 12 months, someone has treated them as if they thought they weren't smart because of their race or ethnicity, compared with 37% of those with a high school diploma or less.*
>
> *Black and white adults have widely different perceptions about what life is like for blacks in the U.S. For example, by large margins, blacks are more likely than whites to say black people are treated less fairly in the workplace (a difference of 42 percentage points), when applying for a loan or mortgage (41 points), in dealing with the police (34 points), in the courts (32*

points), in stores or restaurants (28 points), and when voting in elections (23 points). By a margin of at least 20 percentage points, blacks are also more likely than whites to say racial discrimination (70% vs. 36%), lower quality schools (75% vs. 53%) and lack of jobs (66% vs. 45%) are major reasons that blacks may have a harder time getting ahead than whites.[2]

These findings are based on a national survey by Pew Research Center conducted Feb. 29-May 8, 2016, among 3,769 adults (including 1,799 whites, 1,004 blacks and 654 Hispanics.

In the same survey, there was some insights into discrimination as perceived by Latinx:

About half of Hispanics in the U.S. (52%) say they have experienced discrimination or have been treated unfairly because of their race or ethnicity, according to a newly released Pew Research Center survey on race in America.

Hispanics' experience with discrimination or being treated unfairly varies greatly by age. Among Hispanics ages 18 to 29, 65% say they have experienced discrimination or unfair treatment because of their race or ethnicity. By comparison, only 35% of Hispanics 50 and older say the same – a 30-percentage-point gap.

In addition, Hispanics born in the U.S. (62%) are more likely than immigrants (41%) to say they have experienced discrimination or unfair treatment. There are also differences by race. For example, 56% of nonwhite Hispanics say this has happened at some point in their lives, a higher share than that among white Hispanics (41%).

Hispanics are significantly less likely than blacks (71%) to say they have experienced discrimination or unfair treatment due to their race or ethnicity at some point in their lives, a gap that extends across most demographic subgroups, including gender and education. However, there is no difference among those ages 18 to 29. Some 65% of blacks in this age group, and an equal share of young Hispanics, say they have experienced discrimination or unfair treatment.

Roughly six-in-ten Hispanics (58%) say race relations in the U.S. are generally bad, a similar share to blacks. But when it comes to the best approach to improving race relations, Hispanic views align more with those of whites. Among Hispanics and whites, more say people should focus on what different racial and ethnic groups have in common rather than what makes them unique. By contrast, blacks are split evenly on the issue.[3]

Closer to Home: Athens-Clarke County Citizen Perceptions

Interviews were conducted in recent months with primarily African American citizens in the community, as this was the source of the original complaints of discrimination, and LatinX perspective was garnered as well. The purpose of the interviews was to gain insight into the forms that perceived discrimination may take in Athens-Clarke County from a broader audience, and ideas about what could be done about it. The range of age of interviewees varied widely, and reflected generally different thoughts along these lines. These are not scientific in nature, but rather impressions that were shared to provide additional context into this overall topic.

With respect to older African Americans, there was a general sense that the African American business and educational community was at its strongest in the days leading up to integration. With respect to the impact of integration, however, there were two sentiments expressed by these older citizens.

The first is that when customer choices opened up to include white businesses in the wake of integration, African American customers began to wane in the patronage of African American business, leading to an attrition of such businesses over time.

With respect to education, it was reported that while the schools prior to integration were separate and unequal, the African American teachers and administrators were familiar and accountable to their students, and the schools had a distinct identity and social structures in place that were lost during the transition in integration. And while the access to white schools may have brought additional resources, that lost identity and cultural change negatively impacted the performance of African American students in white schools. There was a mention of the practice of "social promotion," whereby African American students were promoted to the ensuing grade, even if they were not equipped with the knowledge and skills to be promoted. There was a perception that modern day teachers may hold low expectations for African American students, and these are passed along over time. There were sentiments expressed that there seems to be a relative lack of African American teachers in the school system, and that has a continued effect on students.

There was a general feeling that the urban renewal efforts in the 1980s and 1990s producing more public housing had the effect of increased segregation of housing, while at the same time gentrification and drugs led to the erosion of strong African American neighborhoods and communities. This proliferation of public housing was seen as creating a dependency in the African American community.

There was a sense that the politics of increased environmental restrictions in local ordinances and code had the effect of negatively impacting business, and this had a corresponding impact on employment opportunities for African Americans. There was a strong sense from this age cohort that economic development was all important for the advancement of the current status of African Americans in Athens-Clarke County. One participant indicated that most of the discrimination he experienced was in the workplace, and suggested training and securing the commitment from local business owners and leaders to go back to their workplaces and advance the concepts of equity and inclusion. There is a model for this found in Knoxville, Tennessee through the "Diversity Champions" initiative, discussed further in this report.

Finally, the older group expressed the need to eliminate systemic barriers to success and identify opportunities. They recognized churches as the predominant social structure within the African American community, but also commented "if we have failing families, we have failing churches."

The middle-aged interviewees had a slightly different perspective. There was a recognition that by and large, overt acts of discrimination have eased, but discrimination on a more personal level still persists. This was reported to take many different forms. One example was when well-intentioned persons made statements without recognizing their impact, such as "Wow, you're a really well-educated person," or "Wow, you are really articulate," as if this would be a surprise to them for a person of color. Others reported being followed by the staff when shopping in a retail store. Others reported feeling "invisible" in restaurants to wait staff, or conversely, being stared at by other customers for being in the restaurant. The examples above were posed as consistent occurrences, with the consequence of a cumulative apathy and hopelessness setting in for those experiencing it.

There was a feeling that the notion of one group being superior to another group is intrinsic thinking, and dated back to the beginnings of this country. There was a sense of a general lack of cultural competency in one judging others actions because they are different than the cultural norms one experienced in their own upbringing – "I live this way, so everyone else should follow suit." They stated that there is powerful conditioning associated with one's appearance, and their sense that young African American males dressed a certain way sent a strong danger signal to white citizens. They agreed that one may have to change their look or their dress to be more fully accepted.

One interviewee shared that "Racism happens when you have a community with many different cultures living side by side, but not interacting, and this creates narratives about either race that persist and remain unchecked." There was a recognition that local non-profits and businesses sincerely wanted additional diversity, but were not familiar with many (or any) African Americans. For those that are known to a larger degree, they are continually pursued for these purposes, which has the effect of limiting the variety of perspectives representing the African American community.

Whether it is policing or upper management, there was a sentiment expressed for the need for persons in key positions in the community to understand and engage the people with whom they interact. It was admitted that "you can't legislate love," and that government cannot solve all problems, though there was an emphasis on building relationships and helping others find their voice. There was a strong sense with this cohort of personal accountability – that the problems being experienced in the African American community needed to be addressed by their members. Similarly, that when well-intentioned white citizens arrived in an African American neighborhood to help with an issue, it was viewed from a position of authority. This group also articulated that having teachers who looked like their students would aid in the figure of authority and influence. Reasons cited for the perceived lack of African American educators was the cost of housing, the proximity to Atlanta, and the relative lack of African American social infrastructure in Athens-Clarke County. There was a desire stated for the need to teach today's youth skilled trades and soft skills for their future success. The relative lack of access to capital for African American businesses was also noted.

With the younger cohort of African Americans, there was a distinct feeling that discrimination was occurring primarily in downtown, and particularly with the downtown bars. There was a sense that one was not welcome unless one adhered to different standards to fit a certain look. Indeed, several of the interviewees intentionally wore their hair and clothes so as to stand out and be different in a form of

protest for these types of practices. They stated that often times African Americans are assumed to be homeless by virtue of their clothes. A University student interviewed felt that by and large, the University of Georgia campus was a welcoming place, and that downtown and the Greek Life environments posed challenges.

While the entire group of interviewees fully recognized the existence of more subtle forms of discrimination in Athens-Clarke County, all groups seemed to gravitate around two main themes: the need for both economic inclusion and to bolster the future success of today's youth.

A general LatinX perspective involved a distinction between "legal" and "personal" discrimination. An example of what is meant by legal discrimination are certain laws passed on a State level that target illegal immigrants, and the requirement of certain government issued documents to gain access to certain programs or places. There is a power inherent in having the documentation, and it is seen as a win/lose proposition.

On a personal level, both in terms of appearance and accent, LatinX are often asked, "Where are you from?" LatinX who have been in the community for some time consider themselves to be from here, and they have high affinity for the community, but often feel in subtle acts as being "expelled" from this place and community. It is reported to be constant and painful.

This perspective further concurs with the African-Americans interviewed in that the notion of black as being something less is intrinsic in the thinking of different races, not just whites. LatinX peoples are sometimes a mix of indigenous peoples and those of African ancestry, and have varying levels of skin shade, much like some African Americans. Even within their own cultures, a concept of "colorist" judgement persists, a term coined by Alice Walker in 1982 that refers to preference given to lighter skin tones.[4] The perception is that going far back into history, some form of dehumanization (and continues in some cases) was conducted to justify one group's more aggressive treatment of another group, and the effect of generations of dehumanizing filters has become engrained in unconscious thinking.

In summary, the following were themes taken from these conversations:

- Discrimination and "colorism" occurs in Athens-Clarke County, most consistently in subtle forms;
- There are systemic barriers to success and opportunity that need to be examined;
- There is a lack of engagement between the different communities living in Athens-Clarke County and the need for more clearer communication channels;
- Increasing diversity on boards, in business, and in educators would be a positive effort;
- There is a perceived cultural standard with respect to appearance to more readily facilitate acceptance;
- Finding commonality and encouraging engagement among members of various races would be a helpful step to building awareness to mitigate discrimination; and
- An effort towards achieving economic inclusion for all, particularly with youth, would be a worthwhile endeavor.

Discrimination, at face value, can be based on a difference in physical appearance as well as cultural differences. Socio-economic status differences can also differentiate individuals' views of others and create a stereotype that can feed. Discrimination and equity issues are tied together.

Ethnic and Racial Minorities and Socioeconomic Status

Excerpts from an Equinet European Network of Equality Bodies report insists there is a link between discrimination and poverty, and that a more integrated approach to addressing each may prove more effective:

Poverty and discrimination are two closely linked types of injustice. They reflect different aspects of inequality – inequality of resources and inequality of recognition. However they both create barriers to participation in society and in the economy. Poverty is fundamentally an economic phenomenon. It stops people from participating in society and the economy by limiting the economic resources that they have at their disposal. It is based on inequality in the distribution of these resources in society. Discrimination is, in part, a cultural phenomenon. It stops people from participating in society and the economy by excluding them on the basis of their membership of a particular societal group. It is based on inequality in access to status and standing for, and recognition of, different identity based groups in society. Many groups experience both forms of inequality at the same time…

Minority ethnic groups, older people or people with disabilities, for example, experience poverty and social exclusion as well as discrimination and low levels of status and standing…

*…Despite this link, the policy responses to poverty and to discrimination continue to be fragmented and characterized by different strategies and approaches. This diminishes the effectiveness of both anti-poverty and anti-discrimination strategies. **A more integrated approach would better reflect people's real experience of inequality and would hold greater potential to eliminate inequality.**[5]*

The American Psychological Association asserts:

Socioeconomic status (SES) is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. It is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. When viewed through a social class lens, privilege, power, and control are emphasized. Furthermore, an examination of SES as a gradient or continuous variable reveals inequities in access to and distribution of resources. SES is relevant to all realms of behavioral and social science, including research, practice, education, and advocacy.

SES and race and ethnicity are intimately intertwined. Research has shown that race and ethnicity in terms of stratification often determine a person's socioeconomic status (House & Williams, 2000). Furthermore, communities are often segregated by SES, race, and ethnicity. These communities commonly share characteristics of developing nations: low economic development, poor health conditions, and low levels of educational attainment. Low SES has consistently been implicated as a risk factor for many of the problems that plague communities. Seeking protective factors to minimize these risks, researchers have reviewed literature that highlights the resilience of persons overcoming social challenges associated with skewed distribution of resources (Corcoran & Nichols-Casebolt, 2004). It is important to understand that continually skewed distributions breed

conditions that ultimately affect our entire society. Thus, society benefits from an increased focus on the foundations of socioeconomic inequities and its correlates, such as racial and ethnic discrimination and efforts to reduce the deep gaps in socioeconomic status in the United States and abroad.[6]

The Pew Research Center analyzed data from the U.S. Census Bureau and found that the racial divide is economic as well, and this is perceived to be linked to discrimination and its effects.

The racial gap extends to household wealth – a measure where the gap has widened since the Great Recession. In 2013, the most recent year available, the median net worth of households headed by whites was roughly 13 times that of black households ($144,200 for whites compared with $11,200 for blacks).

When asked about the underlying reasons that blacks may be having a harder time getting ahead than whites, large majorities of black adults point to societal factors. Two-thirds or more blacks say failing schools (75%), racial discrimination (70%) and a lack of jobs (66%) are major reasons that black people may have a harder time getting ahead these days.

On each of these items, the views of blacks differ significantly from those of whites. But, by far, the biggest gap comes on racial discrimination, where only 36% of whites say this is a major reason that blacks may be struggling to get ahead, 34 percentage points lower than the share of blacks who say the same.

The views of blacks and whites are more closely aligned when it comes to the impact that family instability (57% and 55%, respectively) and a lack of good role models (51% and 52%) has on black progress. However, the relative ranking of these items varies among blacks and whites. While whites rank family instability and a lack of good role models above or on a par with societal factors as major reasons that blacks may have a harder time getting ahead than whites, fewer blacks say these items are major reasons than say the same about lower quality schools, discrimination, and lack of jobs.

Blacks are more likely than whites to say a lack of motivation to work hard may be holding blacks back: 43% of black adults and 30% of whites say this is a major reason blacks are having a harder time getting ahead than whites. [7]

Diversity and Racial Disparity in Athens-Clarke County

Athens-Clarke County continues to develop as a diverse community. The 2017 Envision Athens Community Assessment report shares:

> ***An increasingly diverse community.*** *As the population increased from 2000 by more than 20,000 individuals, the community's racial and ethnic make-up was transformed. The overall share of the minority population has increased for each measured group, other than Black or African American. While this segment grew by 18 percent, its share of the overall population decreased from 27 to 26 percent. This was offset by gains in in the Asian, Some other race, and Two or more races categories. Note, the Hispanic / Latinx* designation tallies under "ethnicity" and is not measured in the overall share of racial groups.*

> ***Growth of the Hispanic / Latinx* community****. This was the fastest growing minority segment between 2000 and 2015, nearly doubling in size and adding more than 6,300 new residents. This trend is mirrored by the state, where the increase was 110 percent. This growth in the local share correlates and is also captured in the increase in the foreign born population. A recent survey (2016) found 85 percent of the Hispanic / Latinx population are foreign born with 52 percent immigrating from Mexico. This same survey found, 41% of families live in mixed immigration status homes.*

> ***Large foreign-born population.*** *This segment grew by 42 percent from 2000. The largest proportion, 53 percent, immigrated from Latin America, 33 percent from Asia, and ten percent from Europe.*

> *Ethnicity and race are sometimes – but not always – synonymous. For example, the Census Bureau considers "Hispanic or Latinx" to be an ethnic designation, but it considers "African American" to be a racial designation. A person may identify with one or both. An ethnicity is often a social classification whereas race is primarily defined by physical characteristics. "Latinx" refers to the gender-neutral version of Latino or Latina.[8]*

However, local demographic data also demonstrates that there are varying degrees of equity across different indicators. This gap in equity has been an intensely discussed issue in the community with seemingly little headway made at reversing the trends. Examining and addressing these equities could improve the access to prosperity for all citizens of Athens-Clarke County:

> **Higher instances of poverty for persons of color**. There are higher instances of falling below the poverty law by blacks (50.1%) and Latinx (41.7%), than whites (30.1%).

> **Higher unemployment rate for persons of color**. While Athens-Clarke County enjoys a relatively low employment rate as compared to the State of Georgia, there is a much higher unemployment rate for blacks (9.2%) than whites, no other race (5.6%).

Lower household median income rate for persons of color. The household median income for blacks ($22,342) is approximately 60% of that of whites ($36,210) and closer to 70% of that of Latinx ($32,444).

Number of firms with or without Paid Employees. Minority owned firms (2,944) account for about a third of all firms with or without paid employees, as compared to two thirds non-minority owned (6,039).

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2015 American Community Survey 1 year Estimates

Race and Ethnicity in Private Employment professions. African Americans make up 26% of the population, but are participating as 30% of the private employment workforce. African American women lead the participation rate to males 17% to 13%.   African Americans make up 50% of all laborers, 42% of all service workers, and 41% of all operatives, but only 3% of Executive/Senior Level Officials and Managers, and 14% of First/Mid Level Officials and Managers.   Of African American men and women, the men disproportionately represent African Americans in the laborers and operatives, while the women disproportionately represent the race in First/Mid level Officials and Managers, Professionals, Technicians, Sales Workers, and Office & Clerical Workers.

Source: U.S. Department of Labor Statistics, 2015

https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/statistics/employment/jobpat-eeo1/2015/index.cfm#select_label

Race/Ethnicity of Clarke County School District Students and Staff.   While black students account for 49% of all CCSD students, the percentage of black PK-12 teachers is 19.7%. Latinx students account for 24% of the student population, but only 2% of the PK-12 teachers are Latinx. This is compared to white students comprising 21% of the student population, and 75% of the PK-12 teachers are white.

Graduation rates by race and ethnicity.   In FY16, the CCSD graduation rate for blacks was 77%, Latinx was 77%, while the white graduation rate was 87%.

Homeless Education Program Caseload.   There are currently 705 children on this caseload, 75% of which are black, 6% Latinx, and 9% white. Children on this caseload meet the definition of homelessness included in the McKinney-Vento Act. Unlike the definition of homelessness used in the annual Point In Time Count in Athens-Clarke County (which only includes people who are residing in a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation), the children on this caseload meet an expanded definition of homelessness that also includes families who are doubled-up, couch-surfing, or generally lacking a fixed, regular and adequate residence.

Economic Inclusion Definition

As discrimination is linked with equity, and a significant gap occurs in several areas in Athens-Clarke County, a closer look at the opportunity of pursuing conversations about economic inclusion is warranted. The Center for International Private Enterprise states that "economic inclusion" refers to:

> *…equality of opportunity for all members of society to participate in the economic life of their country as employees, entrepreneurs, consumers, and citizens. Individuals of all social backgrounds and income strata should have opportunities to participate in the economy and reap the benefits of their participation. Fundamentally, inclusion entails access without bias to markets, resources, and opportunities.*
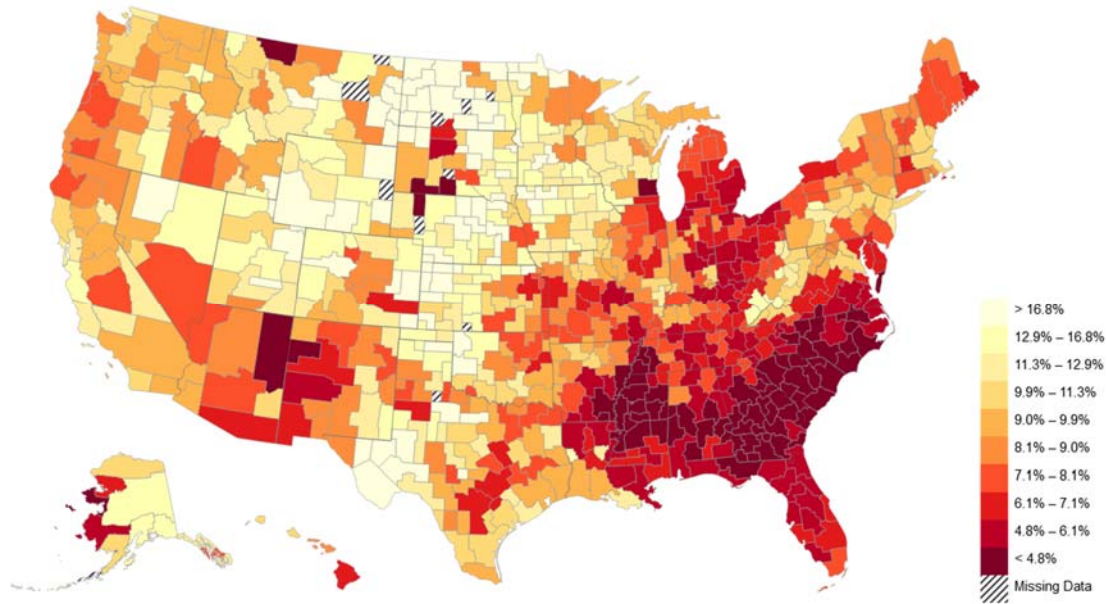>
> *Inclusiveness spreads through complementary changes on two levels. On one level, communities enlarge economic opportunities for individuals of diverse backgrounds by extending access to markets and opportunities for education, employment, and entrepreneurship. On a second level, individuals acquire the abilities needed to contribute productively and take advantage of market opportunities. Naturally, these levels of change are interrelated and successful inclusion comes about when individuals and communities become better connected in dynamic ecosystems.*
>
> *Fostering inclusion through active participation in the economy involves increasing access to opportunity by greater numbers of workers, entrepreneurs, and consumers in ways that generate additional economic growth. Successful inclusion unlocks the potential of more and more individuals and communities and empowers them to improve their circumstances and status. This active process differs from other responses to inequality that focus solely on reshaping outcomes, such as supplementing income levels or altering the distribution of wealth.[10]*

One of the contributing factors to the equity gap and stunting economic mobility is a lack of social capital in the minority communities. The following quote and image is taken from The Equality of Opportunity Project, a team of researchers out of Harvard, Stanford, and Berkely led by Stanford's Raj Chetty.

> *Concentrated poverty is related to another factor Chetty and his colleagues mention: social capital, which is essentially the mechanism that allows people to interact with others and become a part of broad networks that can lead to opportunity. It can help people get hooked up to first jobs, internships, and scholarships. Without these types of connections, children are more likely to take a similar path to their parents. For those who live in areas of concentrated poverty, this means they don't learn about opportunities that might get them out of poverty, or about people in different income brackets.[11]*

The image is titled "The Geography of Upward Mobility in America," from the Equality of Opportunity Project and shows children's chances of reaching the top 20% of income distribution given their parents are in the bottom 20%.[10]

	> 16.8%
	12.9% – 16.8%
	11.3% – 12.9%
	9.9% – 11.3%
	9.0% – 9.9%
	8.1% – 9.0%
	7.1% – 8.1%
	6.1% – 7.1%
	4.8% – 6.1%
	< 4.8%
	Missing Data

A child in Athens-Clarke County whose parents income are in the lowest 10th percentile (or $16,000 or less) has just a 4% chance of ending up in the upper quintile of income. This cycle not only perpetuates poverty, but also stigma and stereotypes that fuel discriminatory thinking.

When access to social capital and networks are limited, economic mobility is that much harder to achieve, and will continue to create a distance and promote a negative differentiation between individuals.

If you have already been exposed to travel, executive role models, and quality life and education, you may have a natural, authentic executive presence that provides you a head start. Family history or legacy can translate into appropriate connections. This could also be interpreted as the dark side of assimilation, but we know that mentoring is not enough; it's about sponsorship, who you know and who knows you. In most programs that want to see the advancement of the diverse population, participants tend to be over-mentored and under-sponsored based upon access.

Most will need to seek their own sponsors outside of the structured talent management process. These are the relationships that form naturally when an executive is willing to tell you the real story, speak up for you in the succession meeting, give you that risky assignment, and be there if you fail because he or she feels a positive connection to you. When you are comfortable in a particular circle of people, this may be an invisible advantage. People like you or with the same experiences or lifestyle can be drawn to you regardless of race or gender or orientation without realizing why. When we talk about hiring in our own image, it's not always limited simply to race, gender, generation, or sexual orientation.

Everything practical tells us that we should pay attention to many dimensions of diversity, including some that don't commonly come to mind. In an age of cultural diversity, fast-paced ethnic growth, and increased understanding of the LGBT community, our socio-economic

class is also a necessary part of what we bring to the table that defines how and who we are.[12]

Another promising avenue for economic mobility is entrepreneurship, a concept that is getting increasing focus from a variety of players in Athens-Clarke County. These players include the Economic Development Department and the group participating in the Network for Southern Economic Mobility, a program that includes Athens-Clarke County, Chattanooga, TN, Greenville, SC, and Jacksonville, FL committed to increasing upward mobility for youth and young adults in the lowest income brackets. Again, from the Center for International Private Enterprise, a goal of economic inclusion is to:

…encourage more individuals of diverse backgrounds to become entrepreneurs. Entrepreneurs themselves form the core of an entrepreneurial ecosystem. Where traditional employment opportunities are scarce, entrepreneurship provides a route to avoid dependence on the social safety net and discover paths to advancement.

Education has an important role to play here in shaping career aspirations, critical thinking, and attitudes toward problem solving and risk. Cultural change is also part of the process needed to encourage experimentation and learning instead of shunning failure, and to embrace entrepreneurs as creators of value in society.

The drive to promote youth entrepreneurship is motivated by the pressing need to create jobs amid burgeoning young populations. Especially in places where public sector careers are the dominant choice for young graduates, entrepreneurial careers can spark private sector development and open new paths to opportunity. Youth entrepreneurship can be seen as an investment in the capabilities of future business leaders. Although most young entrepreneurs will not create permanent jobs for others, they do acquire valuable experience. Startup experience prepares youth for future ventures and allows them to bring entrepreneurial practices into other companies, large or small. This experience also cultivates leadership qualities.[13]

Best Practice Inclusion Efforts

There are many examples nationally of approaches to gaining perspective and understanding about issues dealing with discrimination and equity, and developing concrete strategies in moving forward. Three best practice approaches will be discussed here:

- Diversity Champions – Knoxville Chamber of Commerce
- The Better Together Community Action Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement – City of Decatur, Georgia
- City of Beaverton Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan – City of Beaverton, Oregon

Diversity Champions – Knoxville Chamber of Commerce

A novel approach to creating conversations around diversity and encouraging CEOs to transform their workplaces is found in the Chamber of Commerce in Knoxville, Tennessee known as "Diversity Champions."

Diversity Champions is a group of 60 Knoxville-area business leaders focused on communicating the importance of a diverse workforce. The taskforce was created to:

- Challenge the definition of diversity and inclusion within their firms as more than race and gender.
- Hold elected officials accountable to diversity and inclusion policies that have substance and enforceability.
- Engage and communicate diversity and inclusion as core values.
- Communicate diversity success stories to the media, to the Diversity Champions task force, and to employees.
- Seek to ensure procurement spending that exceeds goals with minority-, woman-, and veteran-owned firms.
- Publicly support the notion that diversity and inclusion are key to the economic development of our region.
- Develop a written strategic plan, measure the results, and recognize those who are excelling in diversity practices.

The below was taken from an interview with Doug Minter, Director of Small Business Development for the Knoxville Chamber, who coordinates the Diversity Champions program.

> "The mission and vision of what you are attempting to do has to be branded in such a way that doesn't push people away, but really gets them interested. Our approach is not legalistic in nature and branding it as "Diversity Champions" and our content gets people asking questions and wanting to get involved.
>
> If you don't have an enlightened CEO, you cannot create change in the workplace. Our process was initially created by SunTrust Bank, who wanted to get people talking about diversity. There was no mission, no vision, with monthly meetings. We started with about

100 people who were engaged, but as you might imagine, without structure, over the course of two years the attendance dwindled.

The Knoxville Chamber stepped up and brought the program inside and provided administration with great results. We do not necessarily deal with race or social justice, but rather focus on the marketplace and workplace – we want them to be welcoming. We want to create enlightened CEOs, create pathways for diverse small business to get training and support, and get large companies doing business with small companies.

We started a series of CEO summits, held a small fireside chat of no more than six CEOs, no more than 20 present in all. We always ask the same two questions to start the conversation: "What's keeping you up at night?" and "Give me a success story."

We also ask the CEOs to sign a pledge for diversity – which is a strong signal to their business and the community. We act to help them be accountable for creating change, and we build resources for the things they are having trouble with. We try to curate what are the biggest needs these employers have.

We have an active group – we have held five summits so far this year, and have two left, with the goal of engaging 30 new CEOs this year. Our focus will be to continue to help those 30 CEOs this year, and identify an additional 30 CEOs for next year, and measure the impact we are having.

Qualitatively, we been successful , as these CEOs would never have been engaged in these discussions. We have started a new program this year - Knoxville has challenges as African American men are often on the lowest rung of everything we want to measure. We are now inviting two high school African American males to participate in these sessions, and it has been amazing. They learn a great deal, the CEOs interact with the kids and ask questions, and this has been a huge success. This isn't really meant to be done from a race standpoint, but we want to send a message to these kids that here is what we do as a Chamber, and if you want to stay in Knoxville, we want to support you. We'll get you plugged in, but if you leave, please come back and we will continue to help you. Their response has been, 'What you guys are doing with us needs to be inside the schools….why haven't you been teaching us like this before.'

The conversation needs to be couched in a way to convene people, that this is a fruitful effort, a savvy way to encourage business to come to the table and say, "Hey, we're welcoming." You have to get focused on what is important. For us, it is enlightened CEOs, promoting economic inclusion with diverse entrepreneurship, contractors' boot camp, (for construction contractors who may not be giving enough contracts to minority sub-contractors, or having problems with no minority firms bidding on the work). We help to increase the pool of minority subs, we can double the number of those bidding and grow them to support more people to contract with. Economic inclusion and entrepreneurship are all important. For instance, Knoxville has begun accepting more refugees, and we've got data that shows they contribute to the economy. So when they arrive, they need to be considered as a value proposition. How can we be a part of making the new environment they are becoming accustomed do different from what they have experienced in the past?

Once a situation happens in a community, the confirmation bias goes through the roof. Here in Knoxville, only 9% of our population is African-American. We (Knoxville) don't have an issue with overt racism per se, it is more along the lines of not being seen as much, and a lack of realization of the power relationship between both races. We need to be more intentional instead of reacting or assuming we know what the reality is.

You need to be proper when you set the table for the discussion – we've gone slower than maybe we could have here, but we are not pushing people away. Again, this is not a minority program or to make this about race, we practice economic inclusion, we welcome everybody who wants to be here, and it took time to build that. The Chamber is a place where everybody can come, we look at equity positioning where we may have to go beyond to get certain people to the table. We are actually training the leadership graduates out of the Chamber to facilitate these conversations in the community.

If you are having issues with people being denied access to a bar because of dress, that is a problem, and it should be addressed. But the much bigger issue is the lack of access in the workplace and marketplace – which is fundamentally affecting people's livelihoods, and this is an opportunity to elevate the discussion. Economic inclusion be it social or political or commercial is at issue. Great cities and communities make economic inclusion a priority. Not just because it is the right thing to do but because it makes good business sense."

The Better Together Community Action Plan for Equity, Inclusion, and Engagement – City of Decatur, Georgia

When the City of Decatur released its 2000 Strategic Plan, included among the plan's guiding principles was, "Encourage community interaction." Beneath this broad direction was a goal that stated, "Maintain and encourage racial, ethnic, economic, cultural, and other types of diversity." The 2010 Strategic Plan placed an even stronger emphasis on diversity, with the second of its four guiding principles reading, "Encourage a diverse and engaged community."

Better Together is a citizen-led, government-supported effort to build deeper connection, understanding, and mutual respect among the Decatur community. The process facilitated a community conversation around the myriad differences — in culture, race, age, abilities, politics, and economic resources.

In December 2014, a steering committee called the Better Together Leadership Circle met as a planning group for several months. In July 2015, the group invited the community to join in developing a Community Action Plan. This process was initiated with a citizens' survey on their perceptions of their community.

There were facilitated conversations with the public, and hundreds of citizens participated through public input in the Fall of 2015, culminating in the creation of a tangible Community Action Plan focused on cultivating a more just, welcoming, inclusive, equitable and compassionate experience for all who visit, live or work in Decatur.

Better Together's deliverable, the Community Action Plan, is intended to be a policy and implementation guide for the city commission, consisting of facts about Decatur's populations, background on the Better Together process and the people behind it, key findings and recommendations that emerge from the

process, the community's suggested actions moving forward, and the individuals or organizations responsible for implementation.

The plan spans a three year period, beginning in the first quarter of 2016 and includes a set of 60 action items that support six focus areas:

1. Support community participation and engagement among all members of the city's population.
2. Prioritize racially-just community policing by improving relationships between community members and law enforcement and ensuring community members are treated in a just way with equity and respect.
3. Ensure the availability of diverse and affordable housing in order to prevent the displacement of existing residents and provide for a variety of housing types and prices.
4. Cultivate a welcoming and inclusive retail environment for serving a diverse clientele.
5. Maximize the use of public spaces for the enrichment and well-being of all Decatur residents, workers, and visitors.
6. Facilitate low cost transportation options for people of all ages and abilities.

http://www.decaturnext.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/01-BT-Community-Action-Plan.pdf

City of Beaverton Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan – City of Beaverton, Oregon

In 2009, the City hosted multi-cultural community forums, bringing together over eighty community leaders to talk about priorities and the future of Beaverton. From that process, an ad-hoc Mayor's Diversity Task Force began to work together to help strategize how to address the issues of cultural inclusion. One of the key recommendations was to create an advisory board on part with other boards and commissions to help lead the work. This Diversity Advisory Board helped to develop the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan.

Taken from the Vision for the Community:

> *Diversity, equity, and inclusion matter because we have a shared fate as individuals within the Beaverton community. We share prosperity when everyone living in Beaverton achieves their full potential. Research shows that inequality hinders economic growth while inclusion promotes economic growth.*
>
> *Working towards equity and inclusion will benefit us all by supporting a healthier, more competitive, more diverse workforce and business sector. This stronger workforce will have increased purchasing power to support local businesses and generate a higher tax base to support necessary government services. A more diverse local business community will attract customers from around the region and stimulate the local economy.*
>
> *Supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion makes not only economic sense – it is also the ethical choice. The City of Beaverton and community partners can fulfill their mission by working to transform our institutions around these concepts to ensure fairness and opportunity for all.*

The plan is focused on racial/ethnic diversity and eliminating barriers for three principal reasons:

1. A demographic shift in the community, and the need to be responsive;
2. Racial disparity in the community, and responsibility to improve equity; and
3. An effort to incorporate populations that have been historically under-represented and underserved by the government.

For the purposes of this report, the definitions given in the plan are consistent with the terminology used herein:

- "Diversity" is the variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined setting.
- "Equity" is when everyone has access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential.
- "Inclusion" means that everyone can participate, and everyone belongs.

There are a number of goals in the plan:

1. **Language Access** – Everyone has access to and is treated with respect and dignity in receiving the services provided by the City of Beaverton regardless of language proficiency.
2. **Individual and Family Support** – Everyone has access to the services they need throughout their life journey from infants to seniors.
3. **Public Safety** – Everyone feels safe and is treated with respect and dignity in Beaverton's public safety system.
4. **Economic Opportunity** – Everyone has the opportunity to thrive economically.
5. **Infrastructure and Livability** – Everyone has access to the infrastructure to support good quality of life, including adequate housing, public transportation, and parks and recreation centers.
6. **Health and Wellness** – Everyone has access to resources that support holistic health, well-being, and extended life.
7. **City Practices** – City practices reflect the needs of our diverse community. Programs, services and decision-making processes are accessible to and incorporate members of all of Beaverton's diverse communities.
8. **Multi-cultural Community Center** – To promote diverse cultural interchanges and experiences through the creation of a multi-cultural community center that becomes the hub of city life.

http://www.beavertonoregon.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8942

Conclusion and Recommendation

Discrimination occurs in human society, which includes Athens-Clarke County. Local citizens relay that discrimination today is most often subtle in nature, and creates a negative effect.

The authority to adjudicate private discrimination claims is not afforded to local governments by the State of Georgia, as it might otherwise be found in other parts of the nation. However, there are some ongoing efforts by various organizations in Athens-Clarke County to combat discrimination and promote citizen harmony, and there are opportunities for even more action within the community.
While there are physical, cultural, gender and sexual differences that can lead to discriminatory thinking, there are also socio-economic differences that can create a negative frame of reference tied to race, color, and ethnicity.

As described previously, there is an intrinsic link between discrimination and equity, and there is little doubt that such long-standing equity issues are present in Athens-Clarke County. Other communities in the United States and Georgia have developed best practice inclusion efforts that could be successfully adapted to create an equity and inclusion plan in this community.

There is a need locally for a thorough and frank assessment of the impact of discrimination in the community and its connection with equity and socio-economic issues. This is a step which should be taken before creating a new Human Relations Commission or other body. Otherwise, such a group would lack clear, locally developed collective goals and expectations. The recommendation is to develop a fully integrative approach that will expand the conversation on discrimination to include a community-based effort to eliminate discrimination through the promotion of equity, inclusion and economic mobility for all citizens. Some good work is already taking place in Athens-Clarke County with respect to youth (Athens Community Partnership for Youth Development and the Network for Southern Economic Mobility), but there is more that can be done.

The development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan for the entire community--and not just the government-- using this approach, will distill targeted strategies and an action plan for all stakeholders in the community to understand, appreciate and promote diversity in the community, begin to bridge the equity gap, and increase economic mobility. The strategies should be developed using such an integrative approach and should include identified performance indicators to measure relative progress. The final Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Plan may include a proposal for a Human Relations Commission or other body in addition to other initiatives that can implement the strategies and action plan, all with the goal of addressing discrimination in Athens-Clarke County.

In the near term, it is recommended that the Mayor appoint a temporary (6-12 month) task force of community members from across Athens-Clarke County to work with staff from the Housing and Community Development Department and the Manager to create a draft scope for development of a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion plan for the community. This task force will further work through the ultimate facilitation process.

This draft scope will be presented to the Mayor and Commission for their review and comment at a future work session. The amount currently budgeted for an inclusion effort is $50,000, so future approval of any contracts necessary for consultants, facilitators or other services within such budget will not be required from Mayor and Commission.

The Manager will prepare this recommendation in the form of an agenda item for Mayor and Commission consideration in the August/September 2017 cycle.

If this recommendation is accepted, it will take a true commitment and sustained effort from many stakeholders, produce uncomfortable conversations, and challenge the current thinking of all involved. However, given the polarizing events of late throughout the nation, it represents a true opportunity to dig deep into the issues, have frank discussions, create and communicate collective parameters, design meaningful strategies, and assess relative performance. This then becomes the vehicle by which the stakeholders can make Athens-Clarke County a more inclusive and welcoming community for all citizens.

Citations:

1. "4 Theories of Discrimination." National Research Council. 2004. *Measuring Racial Discrimination*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. doi: 10.17226/10887**.** https://www.nap.edu/read/10887/chapter/7#58

2. "On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart." Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org. June 27, 2016. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/

3. Krogstad, Jens Manuel, and Gustavo Lopez. "Roughly half of Hispanics have experienced discrimination." Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org. June 29, 2016 http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2016/06/29/roughly-half-of-hispanics-have-experienced-discrimination/

4. Tharps, Lori L. "The Difference Between Racism and Colorism." Time.com. October 6, 2016. http://time.com/4512430/colorism-in-america/

5. "Addressing poverty and discrimination: two sides of the one coin." Equinet, the European Network of Equality Bodies, 2010. Belgium. http://www.equineteurope.org/IMG/pdf/poverty_opinion_2010_english.pdf

6. "Ethnic and Racial Minorities & Socioeconomic Status." American Psychological Association. www.apa.org. http://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/minorities.aspx

7. "On Views of Race and Inequality, Blacks and Whites are Worlds Apart." Pew Research Center. www.pewresearch.org. June 27, 2016. http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2016/06/27/on-views-of-race-and-inequality-blacks-and-whites-are-worlds-apart/

8. "Community Assessment: A Summary of Conditions and Trends." PlanningNext. Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. March 2017. http://envisionathens.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Community-Assessment.pdf?1314b1

9. Bettcher, Kim and Teodora Mihaylova. "Economic Inclusion: Leveraging Markets and Entrepreneurship to Extend Opportunity." Center for International Private Enterprise. May 26, 2015 http://www.cipe.org/publications/detail/economic-inclusion-leveraging-markets-and-entrepreneurship-extend-opportunity

10. Semuels, Alana. "Why It's So Hard to Get Ahead in the South." The Atlantic.com. Atlantic Monthly Group. April 4, 2017
https://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2017/04/south-mobility-charlotte/521763/

11. http://www.equality-of-opportunity.org/neighborhoods/

12. Wiley-Little, Anise D. "How Economic Inclusion Can Lead to Success." The Atlantic.com. Atlantic Monthly Group. Jan. 2014.
https://www.theatlantic.com/politics/archive/2014/01/how-economic-inclusion-can-lead-to-success/430515/

13. Bettcher, Kim and Teodora Mihaylova. "Economic Inclusion: Leveraging Markets and Entrepreneurship to Extend Opportunity." Center for International Private Enterprise. May 26, 2015
http://www.cipe.org/publications/detail/economic-inclusion-leveraging-markets-and-entrepreneurship-extend-opportunity