

# Progress Report

## I. Background

On February 9, 2022, the Charleston City Council established the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission (HARCC).

The purpose of HARCC is to promote equity, inclusion, and racial conciliation through meetings, presentations, and research regarding all forms of institutional and community discrimination and assist in implementing any recommendations from the mayor and council through its standing committees to the public, assist with education and implementation of any directive from the council.

The initial HARCC meeting was held on June 16, 2022, in Council Chambers, led by Mayor Tecklenburg. Commissioners gave introductions and elected co-chairs Jerome Harris and Councilman Jason Sakran. At the July 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, Adrian Capers Swinton was announced as the HARCC Manager for the commission onboarding in August. [HARCC](#). The following month, the HARCC ordinance was amended, and this report is submitted in compliance with the requirement of a progress report on the movements of the Commission.

## II. Activities

- Commissioners met 7 monthly meetings with quorum commencing in June
- Recommended amendment to the ordinance
- Adoption of Rules of Operations
- Presentation on City Master Plan
- Prioritize and review of Special Commission on Equity, Inclusion, and Racial Conciliation (SCEIRC) on Economic Empowerment, Housing and Mobility, and Criminal Justice Reform
- Presentation on the Racial Story Map
- Presentation on BCDCOG Lowcountry Rapid Transit Project
- Presentation by Community Assistance Project affiliate of the College of Charleston
- HARCC Manager
  - meets Bi-weekly with Co-Chairs and Bi-monthly with Mayor Tecklenburg
  - Leadership Team of the Equity Core Group
  - Development of Onboarding video
  - Website development
  - Budget development
  - Screening workshop facilitators
  - Lowcountry African American History Network Steering committee
  - Collaborative relationship with MUSC DEI Inclusion to Innovation Summit
  - Series of meetings with Departmental Heads, and Community Leaders

### **III. Observations**

- The existing intersection among and between recommendations of the City Master Plan and certain recommendations of the SCEIRC Final Report.
- The Executive Branch and City Council have acted related to the recommendations in the City Master Plan and the SCEIRC Final Report.
- The Master Plan approved in October 2021 includes a Racial Equity Framework in Resilience and Equity Element
- The Master Plan Community Engagement Recommendations are critical to achieving success
- Potential conflict exists in the debate of SCEIRC Final Report recommendations.

After consideration, the Working Groups were established and met separately.

On November 1, 2022, the Economic Empowerment Working Group met with Chair Alvin T. Johnson, Jr. the discussion began with the purpose and intent of the recommendations rendered by the Economic Empowerment subcommittee of SCEIRC. The intent was to focus on Black-owned businesses and then pivot to providing economic support in the areas of Transportation, Health Care, Home Ownership/Housing, etc. It was important to establish and agree upon the aforementioned prior to proceeding with discussing the City Plan.

After a review of the sixteen (16) Economic Development Recommendations outlined in the City Plan. It became apparent that we recognize not only the intersectionality of the SCEIRC EE recommendations with the City Plan but the intersection of economic empowerment with the other areas outlined in the SCEIRC Report. Further discussion then led to the acknowledgment to not have a siloed approach when discussing any, and all, of the recommendations set forth by SCEIRC, regardless of subcommittee source.

At the end of the day, the Economic Empowerment Working Group unanimously agreed that the recommendations set forth by the Economic Empowerment subcommittee of SCEIRC do align with the City Plan. The challenge before us is putting the plan into action.

In brainstorming a few strategic examples for HARCC to support and/or influence outcomes in alignment with the City's pursuit of opportunities to increase diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our immediate examples proposed a HARCC statement to the BAR in support of the proposed Amendments that loosen City architecture review controls in traditionally African American communities when homes need rehab coming under BAR authority. The stricter approval standards are proposed to be "softened" for homeowners in eligible income categories and/or document longstanding ownership that has kept Black neighborhoods sustainable for decades. More complex examples touched on HARCC opportunities as the City continues its work plan in support of areas expected to be impacted by the construction of the Lowcountry Bus Rapid Transit line and the Lowline development of the abandoned train tracks. We discussed similar City incentives and regulations to guarantee sustainable, diverse mixed-income neighborhoods as Gadsden Green Community is redeveloped by the public-private partner Charleston Housing Authority will bring to the table.

November 2, 2022, the Housing and Mobility Working Group met with Chair Councilman Seekings regarding the intentionality of utilizing the upcoming resources. Upon review of both plans, it was apparent opportunities for recommendation in the areas; however, there is work being implemented below as indicated in the City Master Plan (pg. 77)

- Work with BCDCOG and neighboring jurisdictions to advance existing plans to provide water taxi/high-speed ferry systems as a public transit option.
- Create a permanent funding stream for the construction and maintenance of sidewalks and other pedestrian and cyclist infrastructure citywide.

As the discussion continued, it is the Working Group’s intentionality to recognize transit connections to access to nutrition, employment opportunities, and attainable and appropriate housing. To create equitable resources collaboration with other City departments including Zoning and outreach organizations will be necessary.

November 3, 2022, The Criminal Justice Reform (CJR) Working Group met with Chair Dr. Bonnie Cleveland to begin work on a review of the Criminal Justice Reform HARCC. The Task Group agreed to split the SCEIRC recommendations for CJR into three subsets (i.e., Policing, Ordinances, and Judiciary) for ease of review and preliminary analysis. Upon agreeance to review the subset recommendations with the topic leaders from the SCEIRC work and to review any intersection for the City of Charleston’s Master Plan.

In all three areas, Policing, and Judiciary, there is no direct overlap with the 10-year plan.

1. The policing group met on November 9<sup>th</sup> the subcommittee emphasize that public engagement is a strong part of the 10-year plan and essential in successfully recommending, adopting, and implementing our goals. They made recommendations on each of the objectives listed in the equity plan under Policing.
2. Strategy - Continuous Assessment of Policies and Practices
  - i. Utilize the “Continuum on Becoming an Anti-Racist Multicultural Organization” *need data and review from CPD*
  - ii. Apply the Racial Equity Assessment tool framework *need data and review from CPD*
  - iii. Establish a Permanent - *HARCC created and active*
3. Strategy – Continue Implementation of the CNA Racial Bias Audit Report Recommendations
  - i. Develop a comprehensive plan - *suggest review by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party*
  - ii. Update 2020-2025 CPD Leadership Plan - *suggest review by independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party*

- iii. Engage independent third-party entity - *suggest review by an independent 3<sup>rd</sup> party*
- 4. Strategy – Examine CPD Budget
  - i. Examine the CPD budget - *suggest rigorous budget review for any needed changes*
- 5. Strategy - Develop Strategic Partnerships
  - i. Work in collaboration with the state - *investigate areas where links exist currently and suggest new links if needed*
- 6. Strategy - Redefine Citizen Police Advisory Council
  - i. Redefine the role of CPAC - *use the Engagement section of the 10-Year Plan to improve results*
- 7. Strategy – Improve Department Transparency
  - i. Increase transparency by enhanced public access - *use the Engagement section of the 10-Year Plan to improve results and examine the distribution of IT resources*
- 8. Strategy – Support New Legislation that will address public safety
  - i. Support passage of George - *adopt a good strategy for public safety and funds to support*

Regarding Courts, Commissioner Cleaveland spoke with Judge Arthur McFarland, who served on SCEIRC and has experience regarding courts, and Councilman Shahid, head of the Public Safety committee for the City Council. The judiciary should be independent of influence from the other two branches (Mayor and City Council), and steps have been made to do so; however, needs to be formalized.

The court must provide adequate and equitable public defender services for indigents, and stakeholders should be involved in understanding what it would take to provide that. The task force believes there is an opportunity to explore the Livability court and how it intersects with the equity report’s housing goals, and how the city can help under-resourced individuals who reside in the city.

CPD continues its active engagement with the Citizens Police Advisory Council (CPAC) and the Charleston County Criminal Justice Coordinating Council (CJCC). The CPD also looks forward to strengthening its communication and collaboration with the Human Affairs and Racial Conciliation Commission (HARCC) over the coming years.

#### **IV. Recommendations**

- All City Departments participate in the City of Charleston Equity Core Group
- Vacancies on commission be filled in a timely manner
- City Prioritize implementation of the City Master Plan Resilience and Equity Element Recommendations
- City Prioritize implementation of City Master Plan Community Engagement Recommendations

- City begins to utilize the Racial Equity Framework adopted in the City Master Plan
- Standing Committees on Community Development and Public Safety schedule review of SCEIRC Final Report recommendations

**V. Path Forward**

- Workshops and Community Outreach
- Review of remaining SCEIRC Final Report recommendations
- Development of a reporting and tracking HARCC mechanism