DATE: May 24, 2021

TO: Members of Richmond City Council

FROM: Mayor Levar M. Stoney

RE: Equity Agenda Feedback and Analysis

Purpose

Continuing to build One Richmond relies upon improving the way Richmonders engage and take stake in the policies and administrative processes that impact their overall well-being. Actualizing equity through governance will continue to be an ongoing process, as the City intentionally collaborates with those that have been historically excluded from vital conversations. The City's working definition of equity is: **the empowerment of people and communities that have experienced past injustices by removing barriers to access and opportunity.**

Mayor Stoney established Richmond's Equity Agenda as our shared mission in his 2021 State of the City address. We have the responsibility to act intentionally in righting the wrongs of our shared history and actualizing the opportunity this city should afford all its residents. Our roadmap to a more inclusive and thriving city is the Equity Agenda, which will be formally introduced to Richmond City Council as a resolution on May 24, 2021.

There are ten policy categories, or principles, within the Equity Agenda:

1. *Addressing and Preventing Health Disparities*
2. *Housing as a Vaccine for Poverty*
3. *Ensuring Equitable Transit and Mobility for Residents*
4. *Building Community Wealth to Combat Economic Inequity*
5. *Supporting and Caring for our Children and Families*
6. *Creating Equitable Climate Action and Resilience*
7. *Reimagining Public Safety*
8. *Telling the Real History of Richmond*
9. *Strengthening Community Engagement and Trust*
10. *Utilizing Economic Development to Create Economic Justice*

Engagement Timeline

Mayor Stoney announced the availability of the draft Equity Agenda on February 23, 2021. The Agenda was available for commenting on an open feedback platform on RVA.gov called Konveio from February 23 – April 18.

During this time, the Office of Community Wealth Building (OCWB) supplemented digital data collection by conducting in-person and phone interviews of Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority (RRHA) residents. The Office of Multicultural Affairs (OMA) solicited in-person feedback from Richmond's Latino community through coordination with partners at community events. The targeted engagement efforts of OCWB and OMA surpassed the traditional engagement deadline due to the unique nature of their outreach channels.

Summary of Data Collection

To gather feedback on the Equity Agenda, the City of Richmond solicited feedback three ways: (1) online forum; (2) in-person; (3) through a series of virtual meetings

Engagement Type	Channel	Feedback	Notes
Online	Konveio	431 unique comments; 1,421 reactions (thumbs up/agreement; thumbs down/disagreement to comments)	14 tag categories Tags were used as a method to categorize themes mentioned in each unique comment (example; "Have ALL bus stops have shelters. Seen lots of them without them. No one wants to stand in the cold or worse as they wait for the bus" was tagged as "transit/mobility" and "infrastructure")
In-person	Canvassing and community conversations with RRHA residents	3,000 points of contact	OCWB Ambassadors
	Print surveys with Latino residents	380 unique comments	Office of Multicultural Affairs + Community Partners. 16 tag categories

	Print surveys with Latino residents (continued)		Tags were used as a method to categorize themes mentioned in each unique comment (example; "Community Latina (sic) not involved in the development of the city" was tagged as "engagement")

Advertisement of Engagement Opportunity

The opportunity to provide online feedback at any time during the engagement window was heavily advertised.

The city used the following methods to promote the opportunity: presentation at an informal council meeting, launch and ongoing promotion during the mayor's weekly press conferences, earned media solicitation, promotional coordination with partner organizations through a toolkit, regular posting on the city's enterprise social media accounts, and two monetized digital advertisement campaigns.

The digital advertisement campaigns resulted in roughly 35,200 impressions in total. An impression is a way of quantifying when a live person has actually viewed or interacted with the advertisement.

The city did not rely entirely on digital advertising. The OCWB Community Ambassadors distributed 10,000 flyers throughout the RRHA communities that explained the intention of the project and included a QR code to facilitate mobile phone engagement.

*The next two pages include examples of advertisements shared with the community

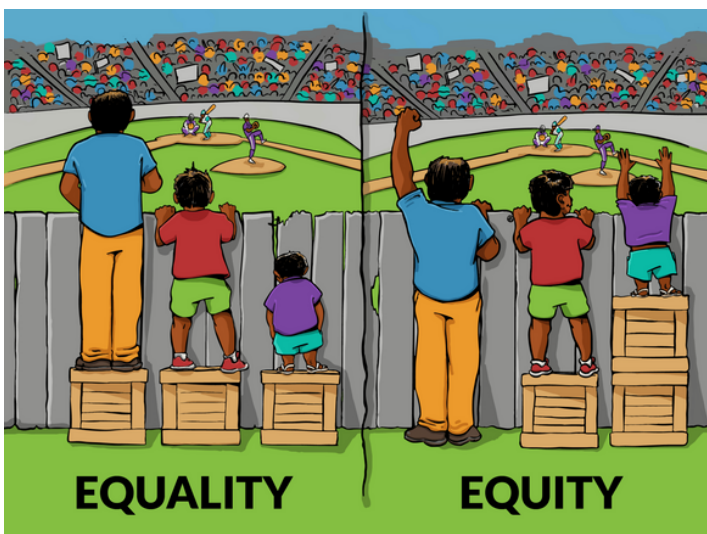# THE RICHMOND EQUITY AGENDA

How to get involved:

WHAT IS IT?

Our roadmap to a more inclusive and thriving city is the Equity Agenda, which will be formally introduced to Richmond City Council as a resolution. But before it's introduced, we want to be sure it reflects the city's vision - that includes yours.

WHAT IS EQUITY?

Equality means treating everyone the same regardless of skin color, gender, socio-economic status. **Equity does more – it acknowledges that people have different needs based on their history and identity.**

The city's working definition of true equity is the empowerment of communities that have experienced past injustices by removing barriers to access and opportunity. A visual example of equality vs. equity is shown below:

EQUALITY   EQUITY

Interaction Institute for Social Change | Artist: Angus Maguire

INVOLVEMENT

Mayor Stoney established this as our shared mission in his 2021 State of the City address.

We have the responsibility to act intentionally in righting the wrongs of our shared history and actualizing the opportunity this city should afford all its residents.

Read the draft and let us know what you think before it becomes formal.

1. **To review the agenda, go to rva.gov/rvaequity.**
2. **Explore the principles and what the city is proposing.**
3. **Add what you think directly to the document.**

Provide feedback until April 18th.

The Richmond Equity Agenda

1 Addressing and Preventing Health Disparities

2 Housing as a Vaccine for Poverty

3 Equitable Transit and Mobility

4 Community Wealth to Combat Economic Inequity

5 Supporting and Caring for our Children and Families

6 Creating Equitable Climate Action and Resilience

7 Reimagining Public Safety

8 Telling the Real History of Richmond

9 Community Engagement and Trust
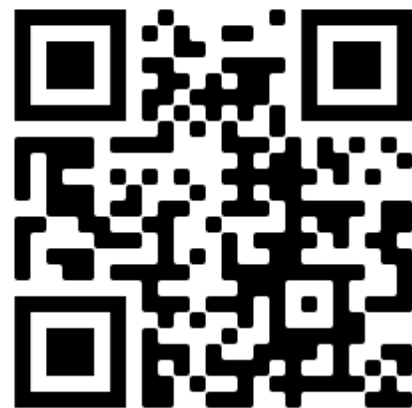
10 Economic Development

Our roadmap to a more inclusive and thriving city is the Equity Agenda, which will be formally introduced to Richmond City Council as a resolution. But before it's introduced, we want to be sure it reflects the city's vision - **that includes yours.**

SCAN HERE:

Do you see any gaps?

ADD YOUR INPUT BEFORE APRIL 18.

RVA.GOV/RVAEQUITY

CITY OF RICHMOND · ESTABLISHED 1737

Analysis of Feedback

Total number of comments: 5,232 (includes agreement and disagreement reactions)

SOURCE	Top Three Issues
Konveio	(1) Housing/homelessness (2) Economic justice (3) Public safety reform
In-person (RRHA communities)	(1) Public safety/gun violence prevention (2) Opioid crisis (3) Joblessness/Economic justice
In-person (Latino outreach)	(1) Improved City Engagement (2) Health/Wellness (3) Jobs/Economic justice

NOTE: We did our best to limit outreach to Richmond residents. However, we cannot guarantee that all online comments are from Richmonders. Additionally, the main goal of engaging with the community on this foundational document was to determine gaps not addressed in the resolution or action items. Every comment is not reflected word-perfect in the final equity agenda, instead common themes were incorporated where applicable.

Summary:

Staff thematically tagged each comment received via Konveio and the Office of Multicultural Affairs that related to a principle outlined in the Equity Agenda.

Examples of Prevalent Themes Captured via Digital Data Collection (Konveio)
Housing, Public Safety, and Economic justice ranked highest amongst comments received.

Housing (10.3%)
- Commenters provided their thoughts on diversifying housing stock within city limits, supportive/transitional housing, and increase shelter space for those experiencing homelessness.
- Action item, "2B. Implement the comprehensive zoning changes recommended in the Richmond 300 Master Plan to provide greater housing opportunities in all neighborhoods," was added to illustrate the need for continued collaboration between the Department of Planning and Review, Richmond City Council and residents of the city, to collectively update zoning ordinances to support affordable mixed-use developments, supportive housing and shelter space, within all neighborhoods. Creating pathways for Richmonders to have the choice in which neighborhood they call home, despite income, eliminates the stigma of "otherness," in hopes of increasing well-being.

Public Safety (10.3%):
- Commenters brought attention to public safety needs that were highlighted collectively by civil unrest seen across the nation during the summer of 2020. Thorough hiring practices, alternative response systems for calls to service, and civilian oversight committees were highlighted by those who interacted with the Equity Agenda via Konveio.
- It is important to note that many of the comments related to public safety expansion in the City of Richmond were addressed prior to the introduction of the Equity Agenda through Mayor Stoney's Task Force to Reimagine Public Safety. The task force convened for 90 days, and supplied recommendations to the administration that address use of force policies, designate approaches to public safety that use a human services lens, as well as methods to prioritize community healing and engagement.
- Staff edited action item 7C to clarify the status of the task force recommendations, indicating that 27 out of the 31 recommendations are in progress or under evaluation for feasible implementation.

Examples of Prevalent Themes Captured via In-Person Data Collection (RRHA Residents and Latino Community)

Data collection in, and of itself, illustrated barriers for marginalized communities being unable to fully engage with the digital platforms used to capture resident comments. To close this engagement gap, Community Ambassadors of the Office of Community Wealth Building utilized hard copy flyers and questionnaires, which deconstructed the equity agenda to highlight the major ten equity focus areas outlined in the resolution (flyer examples attached).

Staff gathered that it was difficult for Richmond's Black and Brown community members to engage fully with the Equity Agenda as day-today challenges (gun violence, substance use, etc.) superseded certain action items that related to "Ensuring Equitable Transit and Mobility for Residents" and "Creating Equitable Climate Action and Resilience."

Prevalent themes that were derived from RRHA in-person data collection majorly involved needs reflected within the barriers to fully engage with certain aspects of the document. RRHA residents noted needs for elevating public safety, implementing gun violence prevention strategies, supports to combat substance use disorder, and access to sustainable career and job opportunities. Action item, "4C. Conduct targeted outreach to underserved communities to provide connections to jobs and resources" was added to support efforts to support joblessness and inform residents of alternative career pathways.

Prevalent themes derived from OMA's engagement with the Latino community majorly involved improving health disparities via more affordable options, need for better City engagement, and more access to better paying jobs. Although healthcare costs are not controlled by City of Richmond offices, the comments that were collected illustrate an opportunity for the City to

engage more with local clinics to increase awareness of preventative health options and resources that are already available to Richmond's Latino community. Action item, "1D. Support opportunities to expand access to healthcare, such as education campaigns, outreach in targeted communities, and mobile health events" was added to support this effort.

Next Steps

With approval of the resolution from City Council, action items outlined from the ten principles will be assigned to their respective portfolio within city departments (i.e.; "1D. Ensure public safety officers have access to and are trained in the application of Narcan to help save lives" will be coordinated by the Richmond City Health District and Richmond Police Department; "3H. Collaborate with GRTC to maintain zero fare beyond the COVID-19 pandemic and expand route frequency" will be coordinated by the Office of Equitable Transit and Mobility-DPW).

With Council support of the creation of the Office of Equity and Inclusion (FY22 budget) within the Office of the Deputy Chief Administrative Officer for Human Services, this infrastructure will provide city support and guide the implementation of the Equity Agenda. The creation of this office will facilitate a streamlined systems approach to ensuring respective departments are listening to residents, incorporating best practices and feedback, and implementing policies and strategies that are representative of the residents in which they are intended to support.

The newly created Office of Public Information and Engagement will provide the outreach structure needed to continue this conversation and the communications infrastructure to provide vital public updates. Ultimately, the engagement effort around the Equity Agenda is far from over. This foundational document will inform ongoing dialogue and aid in the effort to close the trust gap between city government and the city's residents.