

**City of Hyattsville
Race & Equity Task Force Committee
Minutes
September 26th, 2023
7:00 pm-8:30 pm**

PRESENT

Task Force Members:

- Co-Chair Alicia Sanchez Gill Freemyn (AF)
- Co-Chair Jennifer Gafford (JG)
- Record Keeper Secretary Jocelyn Medallo (JM)
- Member Daniel Amador (DA)

Staff:

- Race & Equity Officer Shakira Louimarre (SL)
- Councilmember Michelle Lee, Ward 4 (ML)

Guests:

- Marshall

7:00 pm - Welcome – Co-chair Freemyn

7:00 pm - 7:05 pm – Roll Call – Co-chair Gafford

7:05 pm - 7:10 pm – Acknowledgement of Guests– Co-chair Freemyn

- The representative of Public Works tried to be here, but was not able to make it due to the recent train derailment.

7:10 pm - 7:15 pm – Adoption of July Meeting Minutes- Co-chair Gafford

- July meeting minutes were circulated and reviewed. JG moves to approve and JM seconds.

7:15 pm -8:00 pm – Transportation Section Presentation and Discussion– Secretary Medallo

- [Slides](#)
- Why does it matter? Adequate transportation services and/or well-located housing can mean the difference between getting and keeping a job, accessing healthy food, getting to school on time, or reaching needed medical care.
- An equitable transportation plan considers the circumstances that impact a community's mobility and connectivity needs, and this information is used to determine the measures needed to develop an equitable transportation network.

- Historically, transportation policy in the U.S. has historically created racial disparities through the construction of highways and urban development projects which frequently targeted minority neighborhoods, as well as unequal funding allocation and discriminatory practices in public transit.
- ASSETS:
 - There are a wide range of public transportation options. Located at intersection of three major corridors. City completed transportation study in 2018 and that provides perspective on the city's transportation posture. Conceives of six goals and 9 strategies which will have a significant impact on transportation and mobility access and thereby equity in the city.
 - Several infrastructure improvements and active street projects underway (e.g., Trolley Trail) and there is transit-oriented development.
 - City submitted a letter to WMATA opposing the proposed FY2024 budget cuts to yellow line on the basis that it (1) represented a step backwards for racial equity, mobility, and access to jobs in the region, and (2) undermined more than a decade of work by WMATA, the county, and the cities of Hyattsville, College Park, and Greenbelt to plan for transit-oriented development projects.
 - 2022 ARPA Proposal for an update to the 2018 Circulator Feasibility study
 - Maryland House and Senate Pass SB23 Transportation Equity Act
- GAPS:
 - The City has limited influence on Metro's land use decisions and as 2019 RETF Plan, City has little or no effective dialogue with transit providers
 - While the City has taken strides in advancing transit-oriented development, housing near Metro stations is still out of the price range for many low to mid-income residents
 - Challenges to individual mobility (walking, using a wheelchair or other forms of mobility assistance), bikers, drivers and users of public transportation
- NEXT STEPS:
 - See [slides](#) for full list
 - Systematically integrate an explicit consideration of race equity (e.g., [Racial Equity Toolkit](#)) in government decision-making, including in policies and practices involving transportation
 - Include an equity component and disaggregated quantitative and qualitative data in the [updated Circulator feasibility study](#) and the City's emergency preparedness plan
 - Benchmark existing best practices in equity and transportation and conduct a gap analysis with existing 2018 Transportation Plan projects to understand prioritization of investments and impacts of future recommendations, strategies, and projects
 - Conduct an equity analysis of the existing policy for promoting residents' reporting of issues and concerns, with emphasis on access (e.g., walkways, bikeways, bus stops, streets and requesting traffic calming measures that take into account the unique needs of apartment dwellers)

- Clearly define strategies and processes to engage diverse communities in an equitable and inclusive manner and develop leadership to engage on transportation issues
 - Facilitate equity-centered visioning for mass transit in HVL and community engagement regarding collection of Hyattsville residents' and business owners' transit needs
 - Collaborate with Route 1 and East-West Highway corridors, as well as grassroots organizing groups and coalitions, to advocate to transit providers about transportation equity needs
 - Liaise with other city committees working on linked issues (e.g., Environment Committee, Youth Advisory Committee, Planning Committee, Hyattsville Aging in Place)
 - Collaborate with City housing on transit-oriented development projects to ensure connectivity projects benefit communities of color and other historically underserved communities, to improve housing options
 - Explore opportunities to decrease costs and increase access to transit, as informed by communities
- DA: I haven't seen done is thinking about lower income or college students whether city would consider subsidizing the Capital Bikeshare passes or paying for them. The subsidy may promote equity depending on structure.
 - On the organizing piece, I want to emphasize importance of that at the County level and we hear this as a barrier and the Council should consider a shift in how they interact with Council – not only as the City of HVL but Route 1 Corridor communities. Many of these issues are outside the control of the City. Does the Council need to do more in terms of prioritizing what they will advocate for in representing HVL to the Council?
 - Finally, on the data from previous studies – Needing to gather data that is disaggregated as we are making decisions among these different decisions. To what extent folks may focus on that and go into paralysis? In parallel, can we work on those issues and do better data analysis?
 - AF: For the equity plan, it would be helpful to have data in how gender shows up in how we show up in public space for women and LGBTIQ+ folks – I am curious about gender justice in public spaces? If metro runs at midnight but I don't feel safe to take it at midnight, how do we make the transition safe? Pink attacks when it comes to transportation. Women tend to rely on Uber and Lyft. Incorporate gender data to inform the recommendations.
 - SL: We don't have Hyattsville specific data, but there is a lot of work in the County and City. I want to put an exclamation point on mobility and disability justice issue -- conversations with Hyattsville Aging in Place and public safety groups to find synergy to co-create solutions together.

- JG: 2015, City did partner with UMD for shuttle to be able to partner with residents. HVL residents could use any UMD shuttle but that ended. If we are cycling through that idea again, what is the problem?
- AF: Last year, they did a City transportation assessment walk-through and did an analysis. The focus of that assessment was the safety for walkers. There was an analysis done after that.
- Marshall: The City did pay for HVL to use the UMD shuttles, but it was underutilized.
- ML: In last Council meeting, there was a presentation about transportation and different ways they are looking to provide different transportation issues. The concerns listed also echo my own experience.

8:00 pm – 8:26 pm –Timeline Next Steps for Equity Plan Presentation to Council and Discussion

- SL: We were originally aiming for the October Council meeting but we can consider December. If we missed December, we would not get this in front of Council as they are deliberating on the budget. Council's approval of the plan wouldn't happen until January/February 2024.
 - **September 26 2023:** Complete final run of section presentation and decide a roadmap
 - **October 24:** Review and discuss department head feedback on recommendations. Prioritize final recommendations and categories them into short, medium and long term. Draft a high-level executive summary that includes the main points.
 - **Mid-November Ad-hoc meeting** – Review Council presentation slides and develop gameplan for council presentation.
 - **November 28** – Practice run-through of Council presentation. Develop a plan for community engagement.
 - **December 4th** – Present updated Equity Plan and timeline for community engagement
 - **December 19th** – Reviewing and incorporating Council feedback
 - **December / January** – Host community engagement sessions and Hello Hyattsville Community Engagement
 - **January 2024** – Review community engagement and incorporate it in the plan and do a run through for Council Presentation part 2
 - **February 2024** – Council Presentation part 2 and vote to hopefully approve the plan
- DA: It would be beneficial to invite Councilmembers to attend community engagement sessions. Plans tend to be documents that inform implementation for administration but don't necessarily lead to changes to legislation. Would Equity Plan be implemented as city ordinance?

- SL: It is up to the RETF. Ideally this plan would be one of the city's approved plans. The Circulator study is a great example because it has been approved as City departments work on implementing that and hopefully they will look at the RETF plan to make sure there is an equity lens and we need to get this data. Legislatively. Council members can look at the plan to inform future legislation – how these recommendations are written is something we can also think about and Council can use this plan as a resource.
- DA: City staff may be better positioned to say, based on the recommendations, there are things we can do under the current authority that we have and there are things that we need additional authority.
- AF: I understand that SL will take the lead on the drafting. In terms of process, is there a way you want to receive feedback from us? Is this something we can do in Google docs to facilitate feedback loop?
- SL: Most likely but will check with Maryland Open Meetings Act. Two questions: Overall does this cadence seem reasonable? And, are you OK with pushing back presentation to December?
- AF: Collectively we are all OK on moving the presentation by December.
- SL: November ad hoc meeting? We could try to push it all to the November 28 meeting but that is a lot to do before the December 4th meeting.
- AF: If we did an ad hoc meeting, would that meeting still need to be public?
- SL: Yes. It could be in person.
- AF: Agree to meet ad hoc in November.

8:27pm - Equity Officer Updates and Discussion

Equity Officer Updates will be shared by email.

- Several partners would like to partner with City and specifically REFT. They would like to do a brief presentation. First is Arianna from Story Tapestries, which does art integration in Maryland and there is Deirdre Gray of Auntie's Home, which provides transitional housing for trans, non-binary gender and youth.
- AF: We have heard from Jamie Klein with the Code Compliance Committee about Urban Agriculture.
- SL: We can prioritize Jamie Klein and Auntie's Home, given City decisions about Body Autonomy Act. I will revert back to Story Tapestries for November.

- AF: They presented the Body Autonomy Act in Council meeting and can bring some information to the group for our next meeting.
- SL: It was a robust discussion at the Council meeting and would encourage you to read the minutes.

8:31pm Community Comments

- No comments

8:32pm Review Agenda for Next Month and Adjourn

- In summary for next month's agenda,
 - Feedback from Department Heads
 - Urban Agriculture (Jamie Klein)
 - Auntie's House
 - Update on Bodily Autonomy Act
- AF moves to adjourn; DA seconds