



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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City Releases Plan to Advance Racial Equity and Announces Two Resident-led Task Forces

Bloomington, Ind. - The City today released its [Plan to Advance Racial Equity](#), following more than a year of activity and community collaboration. The plan recommends, among other actions, the formation of two resident-led task forces that will undertake long-term processes to evaluate, report on, and propose recommendations to address racism and other types of discrimination in Bloomington, including within the context of law enforcement.

The Plan to Advance Racial Equity derives from the engagement of The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law and its [Divided Community Project \(DCP\)/Bridge Initiative](#) in the summer of 2019, when issues surrounding racism led to the temporary suspension of the Bloomington Community Farmers' Market. The Bridge Initiative facilitated the process of addressing community conflict by activating and channeling the community's own resources and leadership.

Over several months in 2019, a team from the Bridge Initiative, which offered its services at no cost, was led by former Rochester, New York Mayor and Urban League President William Johnson. They conducted dozens of interviews with local community leaders and other residents about the overall state of race relations, diversity, and inclusion in Bloomington, and

shared their findings in a [report](#) December 2019, as summarized in this City [press release](#). The report shares observations about deep, systemic, and underlying problems of racism and other forms of discrimination and sets the stage for a long-term, community-based collaborative process for addressing them.

The report also called for the establishment of an independent community task force, supported by the City, to lead the process of identifying and implementing further action steps. Pointing to Bloomington's "wealth of community leadership talent," the report proposed that the task force include as many of the community's organizations and movements as possible, disagreements notwithstanding, to manifest "the power of people coming together across different groups to act on initiatives where there can be consensus." The report suggests that the task force be community-led, with City background support in its formation and operations.

To implement recommendations from the 2019 report, a team of eight City residents has been activated and involved in developing the Plan to Advance Racial Equity and a process to develop a new, community-led Racial Equity Task Force. This task force, dedicated to addressing broad issues of racism in the community and developing recommendations to address them, will comprise a broad selection of residents from across the community, to be assembled in a ground-up process. Invitations to join the task force will be made to community members, with an emphasis on those representing underserved populations.

The resident group developing the racial equity plan also proposes the formation of a second task force, dedicated to the Future of Policing, to review policies, practices, and procedures through the lens of racial justice to create an optimal vision of law enforcement in the greater Bloomington community for the years ahead. This group will comprise representatives of each of the jurisdictions covered by the participating law enforcement agencies--the Bloomington Police Department, the Monroe County Sheriff's Department, and the Indiana University Police Department. Both task forces will be resident-led and will provide regular reports to the community.

"During this very challenging year, the COVID pandemic and ongoing violence against Black people have spotlighted racial inequity in our country," said Mayor John Hamilton. "Many in our community have been advancing social justice and racial equity for years, in the face of

systemic racism. The City will support the community's efforts with these two new task forces, led and directed by residents, and also work to further the other proposals contained in the Plan to Advance Racial Equity."

The eight residents who have been advancing this racial equity work received training at DCP's Second National Academy, *We, the People: Strengthening Democratic Engagement to Address Civil Unrest for Community Leaders*. Joining with teams from three other U.S. cities, the Bloomington team attended a three-day training in early March 2020 designed to strengthen conflict resolution-related planning and capacity building, support and strengthen the development of a local 'core' leadership convener group for the communities, and provide planning opportunities for each core leadership group.

The DCP Academy Team included Carl Darnell, Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, IU School of Education; Donald Griffin, Jr., owner of Griffin Realty; Lisa-Marie Napoli, Director of the IU Political and Civic Engagement (PACE) Program; Maqubé Reese, Assistant Director for Diversity Initiatives at the IU Kelley School of Business; and community activist Robb Stone; along with City of Bloomington Director of Community and Family Resources Beverly Calender-Anderson, Director of Public Engagement Mary Catherine Carmichael, and Bloomington Police Chief Michael Diekhoff.

In addition to the formation of the community task forces, the Plan to Advance Racial Equity describes actions to advance racial equity that City staff and council members may undertake, including the development of a racial equity impact assessment for decisions about City policies, programs, practices and budgets; the implementation of de-escalation, anti-racism, and implicit bias training; the development of an anti-racism tool kit for small businesses, and a review of purchasing processes and procedure to increase patronage of Black- and/or minority-owned businesses.

Those interested in working collaboratively to advance racial equity in the community by serving on the Racial Equity Task Force or the Future of Policing Task Force should contact Beverly Calender-Anderson at andersb@bloomington.in.gov or 812-349-3560.