

CITY OF SANFORD EQUITY EVALUATION

October 11, 2022

EQUALITY

means each individual or group of people are given the same resources or opportunities

EQUITY

allocates the resources and opportunities needed by each person to reach an equal outcome.

Equity aims to identify, accommodate, and eliminate barriers that prevent the full participation of all people.

EXAMPLES OF EXISTING CITY OF SANFORD EQUITY INITIATIVES

- ▶ Housing Rehabilitation Programs (URP, ESFR)
- ▶ Partnership with SHA to create affording housing at Linden Ave
- ▶ Preserve and protect affordable housing at Wilrik Apartments
- ▶ S3 Housing Connect to address homelessness
- ▶ Sanford Block Party annual community engagement
- ▶ Partners for Impact resource for S3 partner agencies
- ▶ Sanford Community Assistance & Relief Emergency Support program
- ▶ Placement of parks in residential areas without amenities
- ▶ Kiwanis Family Park Splash Pad offered at no cost
- ▶ Unified Development Ordinance focus on density

CITY OF SANFORD EQUITY EVALUATION

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Making Homeownership a Reality for All

Homeownership can be a critical pathway to economic security and mobility. Increasing the supply of affordable homes in our region can offer more individuals the ability to purchase a home.

Equity Challenge: Developing an adequate number of affordable housing units is a key step to improve homeownership equity in communities. One of the largest barriers for the development of affordable housing is often the cost of acquiring land.

Best Practice

Sanford Redevelopment Lots for Affordable Housing

Since the 1970s, the City of Sanford in Lee County has helped to mitigate land acquisition costs by selling publicly owned lots to area non-profit developers for a nominal fee.

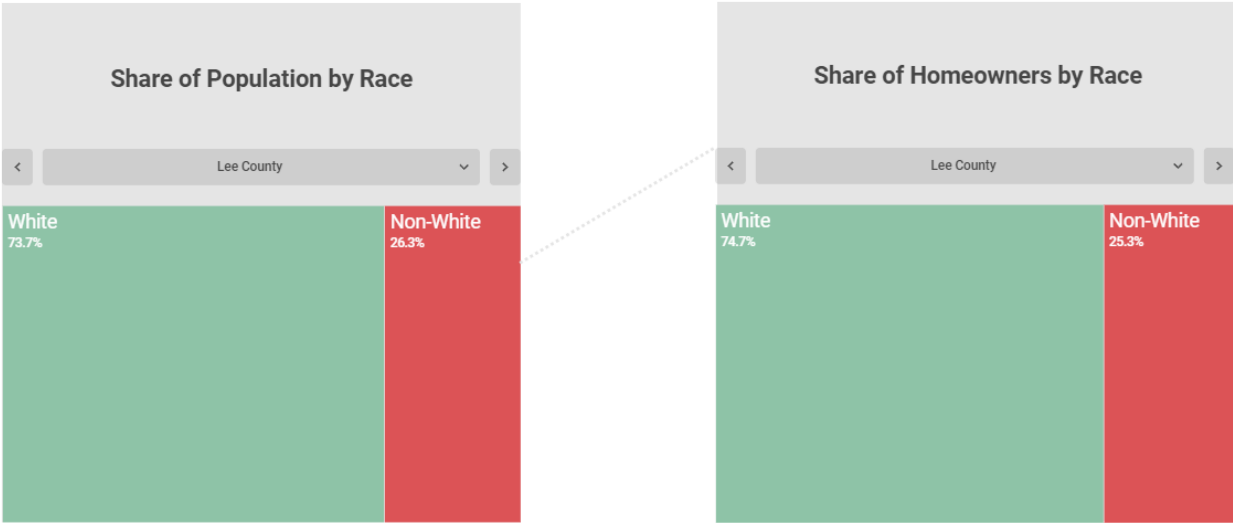
One of these nonprofit developers is the Brick Capital Community Development Corporation who built 62 units of affordable housing between 1995 and 2009. Other nonprofit partners over time have included Habitat for Humanity and the Sanford Affordable Housing Development Corporation.

Residents and for-profit developers that have approved plans to develop affordable housing can also purchase lots from the city at tax-value.

The lots originally came into city possession from a federally funded urban renewal project that demolished unsafe and unsanitary homes.

In communities that have many publicly owned lots in holding, intentionally dedicating them towards affordable housing development can serve as one affordable housing tactic in a community’s toolbox.

Homeownership Rates



Source: American Community Survey 2019 (5-year Estimates)

Supporting Cost-Burdened Individuals

Every person in the workforce should be able to afford to meet their basic needs. HUD defines cost-burdened families as those “who pay more than 30 percent of their income for housing” and “may have difficulty affording necessities such as food, clothing, transportation, and medical care.”

Equity Challenge: A large portion of households in the region and the country are cost-burdened, meaning they spend more than 30% of their income on household-related costs. This prevents households from spending income on other necessities like food, childcare, and educational opportunities.

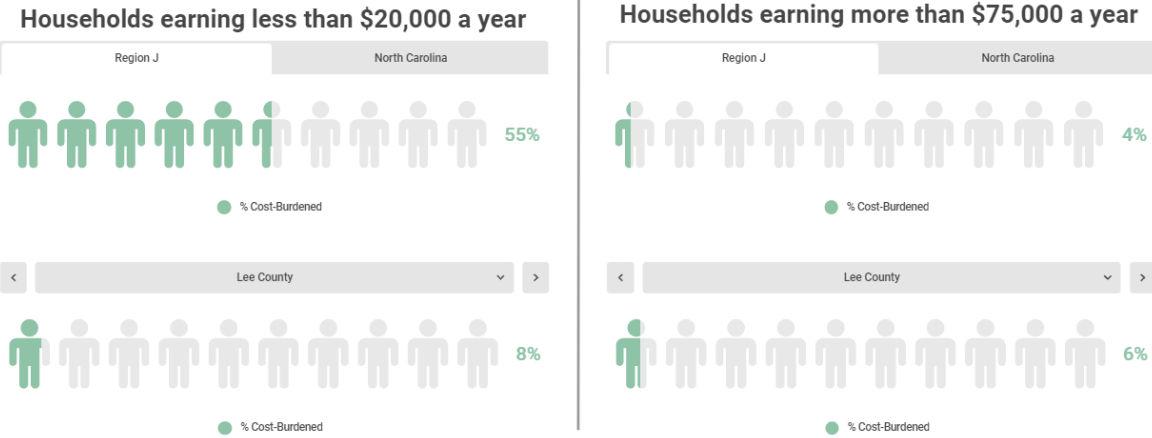
Best Practice

Sanford's Community Assistance & Relief Emergency Support Program

The Sanford Cares Program is a Sanford Community Assistance & Relief Emergency Support program. It was developed in 2017 to provide temporary assistance for residents in Lee County who are struggling to pay their water bills.

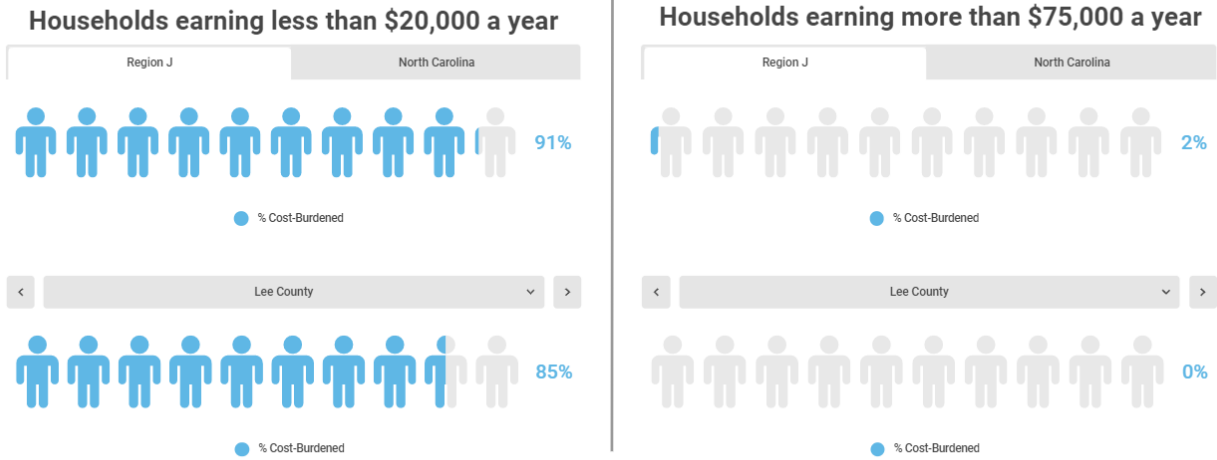
The program allows utility customers to round up their monthly bill to the nearest dollar, make a flat monthly contribution, or a one-time contribution of any amount. The contributions are added to an emergency relief fund administered by Johnston-Lee-Harnett Community Action, a private non-profit agency that helps families with housing, crisis intervention, utility bill assistance, and more. Since 2017, the Sanford Cares Program has collected \$37,139.23 and dispersed \$17,402.93.

Cost-Burdened Owner-Occupied Households



*Cost-burdened households spend more than 30% of their monthly income on household-costs
Source: American Community Survey 5-year Estimates (2018)

Cost-Burdened Renter-Occupied Households

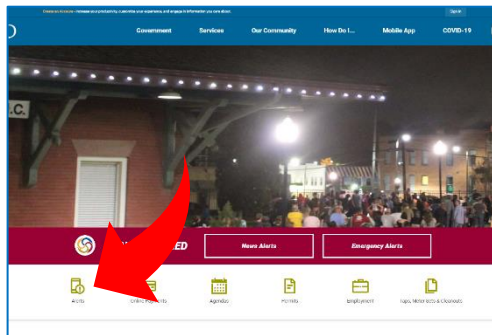


*Cost-burdened households spend more than 30% of their monthly income on household-costs

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIBILITY

Task Force Recommendation

Share City meeting information and a monthly news update including open city staff postings, board seats, and other opportunities with partners.



City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford posts information on its website, TV channel, social media outlets, and billboard.

Information posted to the website is sent via text or email to those who have subscribed to receive it. There are several subscription types that users can choose, including municipal notices, general news, street closures, water outages, water quality, employment opportunities, meeting notices and agendas, and more.

Anyone can opt-in to these subscriptions. The different options are shared in the Alert Center, which is prominently linked on our website.

The City's website and social media outlets can be auto-translated into any language. Most information shared to TV is done so in English only.

Task Force Recommendation

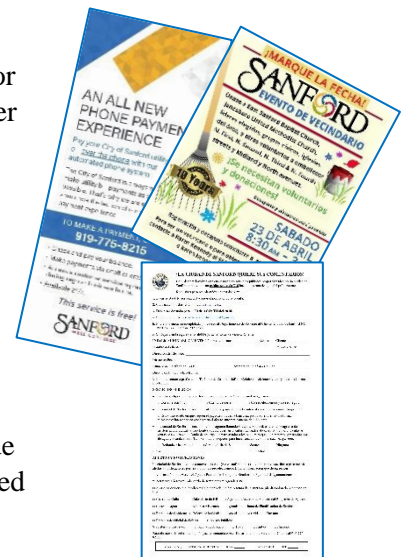
Share City information through a variety of communication methods including email, social media, utility bill insert, and in-person outreach in neighborhoods, churches, and hair salons.

City of Sanford Approach:

Due to the cost of printing utility inserts, the City of Sanford only uses them for large-scale items that affect all customers. The City has more than 18,000 water customers, meaning we print up to 18,000 copies of each insert. (That number is smaller if we only print inserts for inside-the-city customers.)

Unfortunately, we have found that people don't open their utility bills, so it isn't the most effective way to communicate. We have tried to mark envelopes with wording that indicates important information is inside, but we have not seen any uptick in responses.

Staff is limited for regular in-person outreach, such as locating and taking information to neighborhoods, churches, and hair salons. We do often ask Code Enforcement to go door-to-door in specific neighborhoods that may be impacted by an event, such as the Sanford Block Party.



Task Force Recommendation

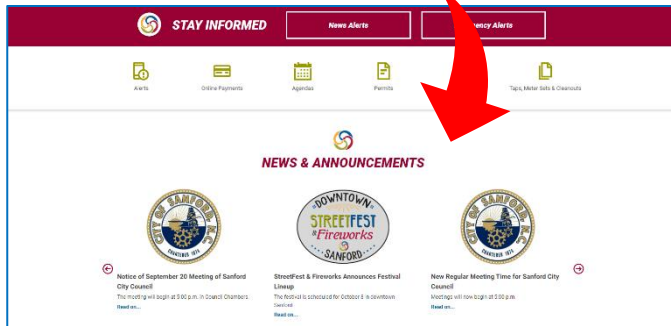
Public initiatives and planning forums that impact a specific neighborhood should be publicized and communicated in advance through flyers posted in the area to engage community member involvement in public meetings.

City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford's departments notify residents in advance of any meetings or forums that will impact a specific neighborhood.

This includes sending notices to property owners in the neighborhood, posting signs in the neighborhood, publishing legal notices in local print media, and sharing information regarding meetings/forums on TV, web, and social media.

Sending direct notices to property owners for meetings that affect the entire city, or for initiatives brought by boards and commissions, such as for public art or environmental affairs would be difficult due to the cost and timeliness of most meetings.



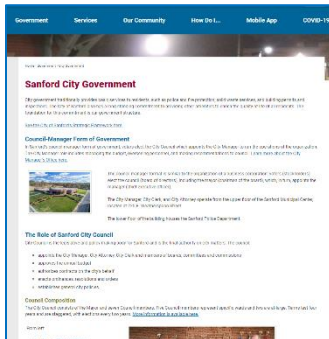
Task Force Recommendation

Create a guide to City leadership positions, boards and local government functions that is bilingual and available online and in print.

City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford has a City Government Guide on its website that can be auto-translated to any language. The guide outlines how the City is managed, gives information about Sanford City Council, and the City's boards, commissions, and committees. The guide can be printed, but it is not formatted as a booklet type guide.

View the guide at www.sanfordnc.net/government.



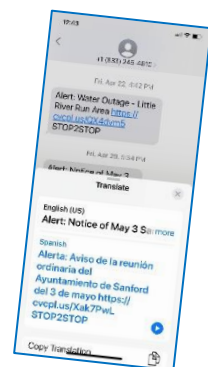
Task Force Recommendation

Create a bilingual text notification system for upcoming public meetings. Include the phone number and instructions for public comment.

City of Sanford Approach:

All notices for public meetings are published to our website, which automatically sends a text or email to anyone subscribed to receive that information. The texts and emails typically include the meeting's date,

time, location, and agenda along with the contact information for the department hosting the meeting. The texts and emails can be translated by the user's device.



City of Sanford Equity Strategies



City of Sanford Suggestion: Diversity on Boards/Commission

Lack of interest in serving on boards and commissions is a concern facing local governments across the nation. Increasing civic participation could lead to greater diversity. The City of Sanford staff can explore ways to better educate the community about public service opportunities.



Task Force Suggestion: Interpretation Services

The Sanford/Lee County Planning Department offers interpretation services for every meeting. The City of Sanford can create a form for people to use to request interpretation services at a Council meeting. We can work to provide this service at as many public meetings as possible.

Things to consider: Who will coordinate? How much time will be necessary to coordinate? Will a regional/national service be used? How will this be budgeted?



Task Force Suggestion: Accountability Measures

Establish accountability measures for all equity actions, including regular updates and an annual report to Council. This project could be undertaken at Council's direction.

Example:



Building Integrated Communities Action Plan Implementation Update April 2021

Our Progress in Implementing the Strategies of the
Building Integrated Communities (BIC) Action Plan 2019-21



Government Communication

Strategy	Status	Notes
10.1 Create a Town-wide Language Access Plan	✔	• Unanimously approved by Town Council in November 2019.
10.2 Town establishes a contract for interpretation and translation services	✔	• Contracts approved for multiple language service organizations.
4.1 Translate critical public housing documents into key languages	✔	• Resident education materials translated; translation of additional vital documents also completed.
4.2 Provide interpretation for critical public housing appointments	✔	• Deviant-based interpretation provided by outside contractor; Public Housing also exploring use of language line service.
10.4 Establish standard language access messages to include on publicity for Town meetings	🔄	• Multi-lingual Town Hall welcome signage designed and being printed; general message developed and materials to be shared.
10.3 The Town supports community organizations to develop solutions to existing language access issues	🔄	• Supported for community interpreter program, neighborhood support circles, and language service organizations.



Housing

Strategy	Status	Notes
2.1 Non-profit affordable housing providers amend policies to serve residents without documentation status	✔	• Habitat for Humanity has amended its policies to serve residents with TPS and DACA. Continuing to work with other housing providers.
5.2 Include housing and legal education in outreach to manufactured home residents	🔄	• Workshops under development in partnership with Employment and other community partners.
2.2 Support the Town's Public Housing Master Plan project to facilitate the involvement of immigrant and refugee residents	🔄	• Interpretation and multi-lingual outreach flyers provided for master plan input meetings.
4.3 Provide housing education and outreach opportunities for immigrant and refugee residents	🔄	• Workshops under development in partnership with community partners.
5.1 Continue implementation of the Town's <u>Manufactured Home Strategy</u> and engage residents of manufactured home communities in jointly designing solutions	🔄	• Working with partners to create County-wide Manufactured Home Action Plan based on what we're learning from extensive resident engagement.
2.3 Continue implementation of the Town's <u>Affordable Housing Strategies</u> and identify best practices to better serve immigrants and refugees	🔄	• Actively pursuing affordable housing development on Town-owned land and exploring options to serve broad range of residents.

Legend: ✔ = completed 🔄 = in progress 🟡 = upcoming For more information, visit: www.townofchapelhill.org/bic



Leadership

Strategy	Status	Notes
8.1 Engage immigrant and refugee youth in the Youth Initiative	✔	• Partnered with local community groups and residents to recruit youth for Youth Design Team.
9.1 Strengthen the Peoples Academy recruitment and curriculum to include immigrant and refugee residents.	🔄	• Conducted research in Spanish and Mandarin for P21 Academy due to limited registration; program was conducted in English only.
7.2 Establish a liaison to welcome and guide immigrant and refugee residents serving on boards and commissions	🔄	• Currently drafting materials to support welcoming and inclusive Town meeting process.
11.1 Further develop a cohort of multi-lingual and multi-cultural Town employees	🔄	• Organization-wide effort underway to increase diversity in recruitment; continuing to explore options for employee language intensive.
12.1 Strengthen the Town's connections to community organizations that serve immigrants and refugees	🔄	• Launched several new partnerships with community organizations and collaborated to address community needs during pandemic.
11.2 Town continues to explore cross-cultural learning opportunities for employees	🔄	• Looking at options to expand cultural exchange program offered by Police to employees in other departments.
8.2 Develop and launch a Youth Peoples Academy	🟡	• Delayed due to COVID-19 impacts.
8.4 Expand school visits to Town Hall to include more immigrant and refugee students	🟡	• Delayed due to COVID-19 impacts.



Public Safety & Law Enforcement

Strategy	Status	Notes
6.3 Continue to expand the Police Department's Know Your Rights sessions with immigrant and refugee residents	✔	• The Police Department held regular multi-lingual Know Your Rights sessions pre-pandemic.
6.1 Create a more centralized and intentional outreach request process for the Police Department	🔄	• Delayed due to COVID-19 impacts.
6.4 Jointly design multi-lingual presentations on gun violence, youth drug abuse, and other issues impacting youth with community partners	🔄	• Presentations under development; delayed due to COVID-19 impacts.



Public Transportation

Strategy	Status	Notes
1.4 Provide transit service information in multiple languages	✔	• Interpretation and multi-lingual outreach flyer provided for Bus Rapid Transit community input meetings.
1.1 Collaborate with Chapel Hill Transit on short-term transit planning process	🔄	• Interpretation and multi-lingual outreach flyers provided for Bus Rapid Transit community input meetings.
1.2 Engage employers with a significant immigrant and refugee workforce in improving transportation options for 2nd and 3rd shift workers	🔄	• Transit services extended to better serve residents on nights and weekends.

Legend: ✔ = completed 🔄 = in progress 🟡 = upcoming For more information, visit: www.townofchapelhill.org/bic

CRIMINAL JUSTICE

In the state of North Carolina, policing is heavily regulated. Police departments are allowed limited flexibility to create their own policies and procedures. In this section, we have noted where state law is accomplishing the goals identified by the City of Sanford Equity Task Force.

North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice



In June 2020, Gov. Roy Cooper established the North Carolina Task Force for Racial Equity in Criminal Justice. The task force's mission is to examine the state's criminal justice systems and recommend solutions to stop discriminatory and biased practices, achieve racially fair outcomes, increase accountability in law enforcement, and enhance public safety.

The task force developed 125 recommendations, each focused on changing a different part of our criminal legal system. Many of these recommendations have been added to law through Senate Law (S.L.) 2021-138, while other ideas remain under consideration. S.L. 2021-138 also addresses several of the strategies offered by the City of Sanford Equity Task Force. Read the law at <https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2021/S300>.

Task Force Recommendation

Implement training initiatives focusing on community policing techniques. Suggested community policing techniques:

- Create a departmental policy to increase walking patrols in lieu of driving patrols.
- Spend non-enforcement time in neighborhoods through collaborations with local partners.
- Increase law enforcement marketing team presence at community events.

State of North Carolina Criminal Justice Reform:

Part 11 of S.L. 2021-138 expands mandatory in-service training to include community policing, minority sensitivity, use of force, duty to intervene and report, mental health for criminal justice officers, ethics, response to domestic violence cases, and juvenile justice issues.

Juvenile justice issues include (i) the handling and processing of juvenile matters for referrals, diversion, arrests, and detention; (ii) best practices for handling incidents involving juveniles; (iii) adolescent development and psychology; and (iv) promoting relationship building with youth as a key to delinquency prevention.

Task Force Recommendation

Establish a Mental Health Rapid Response Crisis Team with mental health professionals. Chosen model should track metrics and provide training on mental illness, autism, intellectual disabilities, substance misuse, and homelessness to all system stakeholders, including emergency dispatch operators, to ensure that these models are implemented in a racially equitable way.

City of Sanford Approach:



Every sworn officer in the Sanford Police Department is required to have Crisis Intervention Training (CIT).

CIT is a specialized training program utilizing mental health and substance abuse experts, legal experts, consumer/family advocates, and experienced CIT officers. They teach law enforcement officers how to de-escalate volatile situations involving those with mental health disorders.

The training is accomplished through role playing, learning about the likely behavior of people experiencing a mental health crisis, listening and interaction skills, hospital

emergency room protocols, resources available for the mentally ill, and other information.

Locally, CIT is a major collaborative effort by Lee Community Action Network, CCCC, Sandhills Center Local Management Entity of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Central Carolina Hospital, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Sanford Police Department, and Broadway Police Department.

Also partnering in the training are local mental health providers: Advance Behavior Center, Inc., Monarch Behavior Services, Johari Family Services, Inc., Family Connexions, Center for Behavioral Healthcare, Hopeful Horizons, VC & Associates, Inc., Daymark Recovery, N.C. Mentor Network, Peace of Mind, and the Lee/Harnett Family Support affiliate of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)-North Carolina.



Task Force Recommendation

Implement training initiatives with law enforcement and emergency responders focused on mental health crisis:

- Trainings on behaviors associated with mental health and drug use for all officers, especially new officers.
- Invite expert to give trainings on Adverse Childhood Experiences.

State of North Carolina Criminal Justice Reform:

Basic law enforcement training is being revamped to have an increased emphasis on de-escalation techniques, crisis intervention, mental health training, and acknowledging/addressing implicit bias.

See the description of Sanford Police Department's policy on Crisis Intervention Training for all sworn officers.

Task Force Recommendation

Create a joint parks and recreation department between the Lee County Parks and Recreation commission and the Sanford City Parks Commission to evaluate and strategically and equitably plan parks for impact in urban, high-density low-income neighborhoods for youth including adolescents.

City of Sanford Approach:

Since the 1970s, Lee County has been the primary provider of parks and recreation programs for both county and city residents. Over the past decade, City leaders have recognized the importance of parks to creating a sense of place.

In conducting an inventory of the City's park amenities, the City recognized that many of its older neighborhoods did not have a neighborhood park. To rectify that absence, the City built playgrounds in these neighborhoods: Carr Creek, Pineland/Martin Street area, Third Street, and Maple Avenue.

In 2013, the voters in Sanford approved a \$2 million bond initiative for parks and a \$4 million bond initiative for greenways, showing decision makers that residents' desire for parks was strong. From this vote, the Kiwanis Family Park inclusive playground and splash pad was developed.



The City kept equity in mind when making the playground and splash pad accessible to those with special needs or disabilities. Equity was also a deciding factor for whether to charge for the splash pad's use. In many municipalities, visitors must pay an entrance fee. The City decided to make our splash pad free so that there would be no barrier to its use.

Since 2013, both the City of Sanford and Lee County Government have undergone parks and recreation studies through qualified, professional urban planning firms. Those firms inventoried and evaluated the existing park

system - including municipal and county parks - to determine where public funds would best be spent. Sanford City Council has approved a new parks master plan in the FY 2022-2023 budget.

Most recently, the Sanford/Lee County Planning Department updated its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO), a document that guides residential and commercial development. The updated UDO makes active open spaces a requirement for high-density development, which will add to the City's park inventory.

At this time, there is not a joint board or commission. However, the park directors and boards for both departments are in constant communication and work together where possible.

Task Force Recommendation

Update City job applications with a prominent notice informing applicants that the position may require a background check and unless required by state law, a record of conviction will not automatically exclude you from consideration for employment.

City of Sanford Approach:

The criminal record question was removed from the supplemental form of the City of Sanford employment application. A notice regarding a record of conviction/non-automatic exclusion is included in the Statement and Signature section of the City of Sanford employment application. This notice is also



included on the City webpage under the Employment section under Job Opportunities, and is also in the Human Resources Employment Process section for all positions.

Employment decisions are based on candidate qualifications and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, status as a parent, family medical history or genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, disability (physical or mental), age, military service, or other non-merit-based factors.

Law enforcement applicants must complete the NC Criminal Justice Education and Training Standards Commission form F-3 (LE) to determine certification eligibility. The City of Sanford has no authority over these regulatory requirements or forms; however, law enforcement applicants must also complete the City of Sanford Employment Application.

City of Sanford Equity Strategies



Task Force Suggestion: Offer pay incentives for bilingual officers and recruit employees with Spanish language fluency.

The City recognizes the value multilingual employees bring to help increase access to government programs, services, activities, and information. We agree that language access reduces institutional barriers and demonstrates a proactive effort to comply with institutional civil rights obligations.

Management is currently evaluating a policy to provide premium payment for employees who are fluent in Spanish and other possible community fluent languages. Proficiency testing would be required to determine eligibility for premium payment consideration.

The recommendation is to create a new program to compensate community-serving employees (those who have regular direct communication with the public) for Spanish language fluency, starting with Police, Customer Service, and Human Resources departments.



Task Force Suggestion: Create a collaborative center for youth to gather and participate in multi-faceted youth recreation programming (sports, arts, education, etc.). The space could be available to a variety of youth-oriented programs from local organizations.

A potential location to consider is the Hales Center/Armory. Any youth center would require collaboration with Lee County Government at City Council's direction.



Task Force Suggestion: Create an accessible form of transportation for middle school and high school students to attend the youth center.

Accomplishing this would require collaboration with Lee County Government at City Council's direction.

Legislative/Judicial Decisions

The following Equity Task Force recommendations fall outside the purview of local government. Advocating for these measures would fall to Sanford City Council:

- Recommend that the Lee County District Attorney's Office eliminate incarceration for failure to pay fines and fees.
- Recommend that the State of North Carolina eliminate or reduce Pay to Stay (\$10 a day).
- Establish a program to eliminate traffic court debt and restore driver's licenses.

EDUCATION

Task Force Recommendation

The City of Sanford and Lee County Schools can collaborate on sharing job postings and information. The City of Sanford and Lee County Schools can collaborate on maintaining a community contact list that includes regional Minority Serving Institutions (MSIs) such as Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs).

City of Sanford Approach:

The Human Resources Department currently collaborates with the middle and high schools to participate in mock interviews with students.

The department will collaborate with the Lee County Schools to share job postings in an effort to inform students of future employment opportunities, as well as inform school employees of employment opportunities.



The department also participates in school career fairs where possible. This has been paused due to the pandemic, but the HR Department can reach out to the schools to find out when career fairs will resume.

The Human Resources Department has developed a list of regional institutions of higher learning, including HBCUs, and has posted this information on the employee intranet for continuing education purposes. We will also collaborate with these institutions and share job postings via [joinhandshake.com](https://www.joinhandshake.com), etc.

City of Sanford Equity Strategies



City of Sanford Equity Suggestion: Career Development

The Human Resources Department has developed a list of regional colleges and universities, including historically black colleges and universities, that includes links to their registration pages and grant information. This list can be made available to employees through the employee intranet to assist in easily locating schools for furthering their education, encouraging continued professional and career development, and improving opportunities for advancement.



City of Sanford Equity Suggestion: Tuition Reimbursement Awareness

The City of Sanford offers a tuition reimbursement program to all full-time employees who have completed 6 or more months of service with the City. The program encourages employees to increase their professional/technical knowledge, skills, and abilities, and better prepares them for promotional opportunities within the City, by offering reimbursement of up to \$2,000 per fiscal year in tuition costs.

Note: Minority employees are participating in the tuition reimbursement program at a rate consistent with non-minority employees.

The City encourages participation in the program and will continue to publicize the program through mass communication (e.g., employee newsletters, emails, etc.). We will also evaluate whether enhancements (e.g., increase reimbursement amount, etc.) should be made to the program.

Recommendation: Raising the reimbursement amount to \$2,500 may increase participation.



City of Sanford Equity Suggestion: Eliminate Redundant Testing

The City of Sanford has discontinued the reading comprehension test previously required of fire fighter applicants. The test was a general knowledge exam that measured reading and comprehension skills to ensure a candidate was at or above the 10th grade level. These skills are currently measured during the process of becoming a certified fire fighter in the state of NC.



City of Sanford Equity Suggestion: Interview Improvement

Human Resources will sponsor an internal training opportunity for all employees that will focus on improving employee interviewing skills to better prepare them for promotional opportunities.

The department will also sponsor an internal training opportunity for all supervisors that will focus on improving their interviewing skills in an effort to assist in ensuring the best qualified candidate is selected for employment and/or promotional opportunities with the City.

Lee County Schools Opportunities

The following Equity Task Force recommendations fall outside the purview of the City of Sanford. Advocating for these measures with Lee County Board of Education and Lee County Government would fall to Sanford City Council:

- Invite the superintendent of the Lee County Schools to provide a report on the issues that minority students face and the school system's current actions to address those issues and close educational gaps.
- Organize a State of the Schools public forum with principals to provide information about and answer questions about school discipline rates, poverty, and resource allocation.
- Convene with Lee County Schools to support networks for educators of color, organize professional development that fosters inclusive school environments, and create new entry points into the school system based on models with proven success.
- Convene with Lee County School System stakeholders to expand and develop entry points into the school system that are based on models with proven success in recruiting racially, ethnically, and linguistically diverse school system employees.
- Invite Lee County School District and Lee County Board of Education to give a report to the City and community organizations about measures to diversify staff, including key performance indicators and goals for increasing the racial, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of the educator workforce.

HEALTH

In the state of North Carolina, cities can only perform the services or functions authorized by the state. The City of Sanford Equity Task Force recommendations for public health and public schools are not authorized for cities. Where possible, we have noted how the City of Sanford's policies and procedures align with the task force's health equity recommendations.

Task Force Recommendation

Work with COLTS to expand transportation services connecting uninsured and underinsured people to health service providers, including specialists in the Triangle area.



City of Sanford Approach:

The County of Lee Transit System (COLTS) is owned and operated by Lee County Government. COLTS is most used by low income and elderly people for transport health service providers, including specialists in the Triangle area. Riders must call 24 hours in advance for COLTS services.

The Planning Department is currently working with the N.C. Department of Transportation to explore low-cost and/or subsidized rideshare options within certain zones inside the city limits. Called microtransit, these rideshare options can reach underserved communities by providing a transit option with quick response times to those individuals without access to a personal vehicle, such as community college students and first-time employees. The level of service for microtransit is typically higher and more responsive than even a fixed route system.

If established, the service would be available to anyone, not just city residents within those zones.

Task Force Recommendation

Require law enforcement and other first responders to complete sensitivity trainings for dealing with people struggling with drug addiction.

City of Sanford Approach:

Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) is a specialized training program utilizing mental health and substance abuse experts, legal experts, consumer/ family advocates, and experienced CIT officers. They teach law enforcement officers how to de-escalate volatile situations involving those with mental health disorders.

The training is accomplished through role playing, learning about the likely behavior of people experiencing a mental health crisis, listening and interaction skills, hospital emergency room protocols, resources available for the mentally ill, and other information.



Locally, CIT is a major collaborative effort by Lee Community Action Network, CCCC, Sandhills Center Local Management Entity of the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, Central Carolina Hospital, Lee County Sheriff's Office, Sanford Police Department, and Broadway Police Department.

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Task Force Recommendation

Collaborate with Lee County Schools and other stakeholders to develop age-appropriate training/education curriculum on addiction and substance use to be used in classrooms.

City of Sanford Approach:

The Sanford Police Department's Community Policing Unit speaks about substance abuse/addiction at local schools and youth programs as invited.

The unit could work with schools and youth programs to identify and implement age-appropriate curriculum developed by subject matter experts.

Note that the Lee County Sheriff's Office has deputies assigned to each public school. The Sheriff's Office would be a better entity to collaborate with for school curriculum as they are already inside the buildings.

Task Force Recommendation

Develop and implement awareness campaign or education workshops on addiction and substance use for the community (with diverse representation); educate and equip the public on the use of the drug Narcan to treat opioid overdoses.

City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford Commission on the Opioid Abuse Epidemic has advocated for addiction and substance use awareness. Workshops may be an option moving forward.

The Lee County Health Department has established a Narcan clinic. At the clinic, they provide prevention kits that include Narcan and educational information.



City of Sanford Equity Strategies



Task Force Suggestion: Invite experts to present to Sanford City Council on substance abuse and addiction, particularly as they impact people of color.

Considering that Sanford City Council is typically well educated on substance abuse crises, City of Sanford staff could instead keep Council informed about community resources for people in crisis. That information could be then be shared with constituents as necessary. This information could include the County's 24/7 triage line for medical emergencies.

Making this information available to Council members would serve the task force's recommendations that the City 1) maintain and distribute a health resource list and 2) create a 24-hour center or hotline.

Note: The 911 Telecommunications center does triage mental health calls as they are able. They are trained to do so and receive regular information from local and regional mental health providers.



City of Sanford Equity Suggestion: Healthcare Insurance and Funding

The City of Sanford offers all full-time employees health insurance coverage, and provides options for election of dependent coverage. A preferred provider organization plan (PPO) is offered, as well as a more cost-effective high deductible health plan (HDHP) with a health savings account (HSA).

The City of Sanford provides enrollment opportunities into a flexible spending account for those covered under the PPO plan, enrollment in the HSA is only for those on the HDHP, and we are also considering offering a health reimbursement account.

The City currently contributes into the HSA for those enrolled in the HDHP and is exploring other options that might help offset healthcare costs for lower income employees.



City of Sanford Equity Suggestion: Healthcare Coverage for All

Along with offering all full-time employees health insurance, the City of Sanford also extends coverage to eligible dependents to include:

- 1) spouse – under an existing marriage that is legally recognized under any state law – including same sex marriage;
- 2) children – through the end of the month of their 26th birthday; and
- 3) a dependent child who, in accordance with NC law, is and continues to be either intellectually or physically disabled and incapable of self-support.

Unauthorized by the State

The following Equity Task Force recommendations are not authorized for cities:

- Create an affordable Community Care Clinic with a Health Liaison/Health Navigator.
- Create a free/reduced cost mental health clinic.
- Increase access to free mental health care for teenagers/children within the schools.

HOUSING AND HOME OWNERSHIP

Task Force Recommendation

Create a Livable Housing Initiative with bond issues and/or general funds to support and attract innovative affordable housing development through infrastructure funding (water and sewer, curb and gutter, streets, sidewalks, open space, parks, community facilities) in target areas of East Sanford, Washington Avenue, Woodland Avenue, and Jonesboro.

City of Sanford Approach:

On January 11, 2022, the Sanford/Lee County Planning and Community Development Department presented a Livable Housing Initiative strategy to Sanford City Council as part of an affordable housing presentation.

The primary challenge with the majority of affordable housing strategies is the source of funding, both start up and reoccurring costs. Funding is certainly a primary consideration if the City is to take steps to sustainably impact affordable housing in our community.

Potential options: The City could provide start up assistance (feasibility studies, environmental assessments, etc.) to potential developers and submit projects for Urban Redevelopment Authority grants.

A bond initiative would accumulate more funding, but would need public support and require a referendum. There are other funding sources that could be used for this purpose.



Existing City Equity Initiatives

The City has already embarked on projects that fall under this umbrella:

- Over the years, the City has added four playgrounds in neighborhoods that did not have a recreational outlet for youth.
- More recently, the City partnered with the Sanford Housing Authority to rehab a structure on Linden Avenue to become permanent affordable housing units specifically for families that fall below 50 percent of the area median income as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This project also added sidewalks and curb and gutter along Linden Avenue.
- Through a 2020 court judgment, the City of Sanford was granted control of the Sanford Affordable Housing Development Corporation. The Sanford Affordable Housing Development

Corporation owns Wilrik Hotel Apartments, a 41-unit affordable housing complex located in Downtown Sanford. The City’s goal was to restore public oversight of the corporation and the operations of the Wilrik.

Since the City has taken control of its operations, building security and safety have been enhanced, common areas have been improved, to date four apartment units have been renovated, and numerous other units have undergone minor repairs previously neglected.

Through our involvement and new management of the building, we have aimed to improve the lives of residents by connecting them with case management and other organizations to assist with needs, such food insecurity and rental assistance. We also worked to minimize tenant displacement.

- On March 22, 2022, the City of Sanford committed \$850,000 in water and sewer infrastructure to Brick Capital Community Development Corporation to support 45 single-family homes and 16 multi-family supportive housing units on Washington Avenue. See page 23 for more information about this project.

Task Force Recommendation

Rehabilitate housing in target areas with a minimum of 25 substantial rehabs per year.

City of Sanford Approach:

This type of strategy was discussed during the affordable housing presentation to Sanford City Council on January 11, 2022.

Rehabilitation for 25 units annually is aggressive. Factoring in Urgent Repair Program and Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation grants, City staff considers 15-18 rehabilitated units to be more realistic. The City of Sanford and Lee County each have agreed to fund \$250,000 of American Rescue Plan Act funds for rehabilitation of homes. The initiative will be similar to the City of Sanford’s Urgent Repair Program.

Important: The number of rehabbed units may increase due to partnerships, such as the projects with the Sanford Housing Authority and Brick Capital CDC referenced above.

Since 2006, the City has renovated approximately 200 homes.

Task Force Recommendation

Pursue an increase of at least 20% of new or rehabilitated affordable housing units each year.



City of Sanford Approach:

The City has partnered with Brick Capital Community Development Corporation and Habitat for Humanity for new housing units for 2022. Similar partnerships could be used to identify and improve existing units.

The City could adopt a 20% benchmark if other affordable housing strategies are implemented. The challenge is how to measure and track the number. Also, 20% might be a very aggressive goal depending on the number of units involved.

Potential option: If money is allocated into a revolving loan fund, the City could implement housing rehabilitation based on housing needs. Code Enforcement could assist with identification of houses as well as housing rehabilitation waiting lists.

Task Force Recommendation

Initiate an Urban Redevelopment Area process in East Sanford to buy distressed housing stock, make repairs, and resell with covenants that protect the affordability of the home.

City of Sanford Approach:

In 2019, the School of Government Development Finance Initiative (DFI) conducted an affordable housing study that focused on East Sanford. DFI helps local governments understand their specific housing needs along the housing spectrum and navigate the development tools available to them.



The study identified the Temple Park area (Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth streets specifically) as a good candidate for local government redevelopment. Sanford has had past success using this tool, and this is an option City Council could consider.

This is a time intensive and complicated process. The housing market is positively changing without direct government intervention.

Task Force Recommendation

Expand City staff capacity and resources devoted to housing and community development to secure external funding for expansion of affordable housing stock and inclusionary development.

City of Sanford Approach:



The City has regularly used consultants to identify funding sources and affordable housing opportunities. A defined affordable housing program would require fund allocation to pay a consultant for that work.

Additionally, a growing need to accomplish this type of strategy is an additional staff person who can focus on affordable housing and cross-train for S3 Housing Connect's initiatives and related community development projects. The current structure of 1.5 full-time positions dedicated to this work is not sufficient to address future affordable housing initiatives.

Recommendation: Replacing the current part-time (20 hours per week) position with a new full-time position would provide more continuous support and capacity to address our housing needs. Adding a

full-time housing specialist within our Community Development division would certainly enhance our current level of service. This position would focus specifically on affordable housing including maintenance of existing programs, soliciting new grants and additional funding sources, and assist the public and elected officials in keeping a pulse on affordable housing trends and opportunities.

If Council desires to implement any of the strategies as included in this report to enhance our response to affordable housing, adding this full-time position is a necessity.

Task Force Recommendation

Create a Livable Housing Forum consisting of representation from the Black and Latinx communities and community organizations (see partners) that annually reports on progress in affordable housing and provides recommendations.



City of Sanford Approach:

This was a strategy identified as part of the Building Integrated Communities (BIC) Hispanic outreach grant project in 2014-2017. Ultimately, the creation of a task force to serve as a liaison between the Hispanic community and the City was not successful.

Future efforts will likely need to include integrated neighborhood planning initiatives with multiple city departments.

Task Force Recommendation

Expand bilingual education about home-buying with an emphasis on outreach in Black and Latinx communities.

City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford hopes to partner with Brick Capital CDC for the following:

- Provide monthly 6-hour homebuyers education classes (currently held bi-monthly), which would include Spanish speaking options.
- Offer one-on-one housing counseling for first time homebuyer counseling, eviction prevention counseling, and foreclosure prevention counseling.
- Facilitate down payment assistance for 80% AMI or below homebuyers through our partnership with the NC Housing Finance Agency.

This recommendation is based on a national gap in the rate of homeownership between Black and White families. In 2018, 72% of White households owned a home compared to 42% of Black households, 57% of Asian households, and 47.5% of Hispanic households.



Potential: The goal of the partnership is to close the gap in the rates of homeownership. The City would fund \$10,000 per year for 3 years for the initiative.

Task Force Recommendation

Establish commitments to public/private partnerships with SAGA, City Council, and other groups to achieve measurable, annual improvement in affordable, quality housing and neighborhoods.

City of Sanford Approach:

To some degree this is already in place, as the City, the County, the Sanford Area Growth Alliance (SAGA), and other local agencies (community college, school board, etc.) maintain strong partnerships and communication on key topics, including housing.

Staff also maintains excellent relationships with local builders and agents within our development community and can assist in fostering partnerships to promote affordable housing.

We also need to continue to maintain and promote our local non-profit partners and seek opportunities for new partnerships (private and/or non-profits).

Task Force Recommendation

Collaborate with SAGA to restart the Housing Commission to focus on workforce housing development.

City of Sanford Approach:

The City consistently works with the SAGA to promote housing as part of our comprehensive approach to industrial recruitment and community growth.

SAGA and S3 Housing Connect have existing housing committees that could guide and enhance efforts to develop affordable housing for all.

Important: Expecting private, for-profit developers to participate in affordable housing without any public subsidization is unrealistic.



Task Force Recommendation

Aggressively pursue minimum housing standards working with owners, landlords, property management companies to address issues of substandard housing and enhance housing quality in a sustainable and equitable manner.

City of Sanford Approach:

S3 Housing Connect's committees have tried landlord outreach but haven't been well received. Without an incentive-based program or funding to encourage landlords to participate, this may be more challenging.

Several larger cities, including Durham, have a great landlord outreach program with funds set aside for repairs.

Option: The City could implement focused minimum housing enforcement in targeted areas, at the direction of Sanford City Council.

City of Sanford Equity Strategies



City of Sanford Equity Initiative: Community Land Trust

Brick Capital CDC is in the planning and design phase for a new subdivision on Washington Avenue right across from Horton Park. This 16-acre tract will include 45 lots for single-family homes and a 16-unit apartment complex.

The plan with this subdivision is to utilize a community land trust model, which is a model of affordable housing that allows the land to remain in a trust. When a house is sold to a family, they are purchasing the “sticks and bricks,” but the land is leased to them.

This is a good and sustainable model for affordable housing for two reasons:

1. Because the land trust owns the land, it controls the sales price of the home, which guarantees a certain amount of affordability to the next generation of homebuyers; and
2. Because the land trust owns the lands, it acts as an HOA of sorts, which ensures that the subdivision will be well maintained.

The apartment complex will be for supportive housing, which is defined as housing that includes case management services for the tenants such as mental health services or food insecurity services.

Sanford City Council and Lee County Government have agreed to fund \$1.6 million for the project and the City is currently pursuing a community development block grant for an additional \$900,000.



City of Sanford Equity Initiative: Sanford Block Party

The Sanford Block Party is an annual event that targets a Sanford neighborhood for a day of beautification that includes light carpentry, painting, and landscaping.

The purpose of the Sanford Block Party is to help maintain Sanford’s housing stock, beautify its corridors, and enable homeowners to stay in their homes as long as possible.

The event also opens communication between neighborhoods and the City and helps establish trust between City government and residents.

LEADERSHIP AND INCLUSION

Task Force Recommendation

Recruit residents at community and church meetings and at HBCUs for staff and leadership board positions.

City of Sanford Approach:

Human Resources currently recruits for job vacancies via all the traditional outlets, as well as through the N.C. Department of Employment Security, social media, employment agencies and websites, educational institutions, churches, salons, and more.

For boards, commissions, and committees, typically staff will share information about vacancies via traditional media, social media, and the City’s website. Staff has not actively recruited for advisory boards as comprehensively as HR has for staff positions.



Task Force Recommendation

Hold government meetings in places such as churches or community centers.



City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford has held meetings in non-government spaces as needed, such as when meetings were held at the Civic Center due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Informal public input sessions are often held in community settings to encourage civic participation, such as a parks session recently held at Kiwanis Family Park.

The Sanford/Lee County Planning Department also attempts to hold meetings in affected neighborhoods where possible. Some neighborhoods may not have a facility conducive to a public meeting.

Another important consideration is the ability to record meetings so that they can be made available to all.

Sanford City Council Decisions

The following Task Force recommendations will require the direction of Sanford City Council:

- Create a City staff position to oversee the implementation of the Equity Action Plan and future equity efforts.
- Create a City of Sanford Equity Advisory Board.

WAGES AND INCOME

Task Force Recommendation

Commit to an equity statement or resolution.



City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford is an Equal Opportunity Employer (EOE), which means we provide equal employment opportunities to all applicants. Our EOE commitment is clearly stated in the employment section of the City’s website, in job postings, and advertisements.

Our commitment is as follows: “We pledge to provide equal employment opportunities (EEO) to all employees and applicants for employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity/expression, sexual orientation, pregnancy, status as a parent, family medical history or genetic information, national origin, political affiliation, disability (physical or mental), age, military service, or other non-merit-based factors.”

Task Force Recommendation

Create an affordable/free orientation program to City services, departments, elected and appointed opportunities on boards and commissions, and host the program in community spaces.

City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford offers Sanford 101, a free 12-week program that introduces community members to each service department within municipal government. The goal of the program is to explain to participants the reasoning behind municipal decisions.

One day of the program is dedicated to understanding city governance, including boards and commissions, council wards and seats, and city management.



Since inception, there have been more than 80 graduates, several of whom went on to serve on boards and commissions.

Note: Sanford 101 was previously known as Sanford Citizens’ Academy. The name was updated to remove outdated language and show the program’s inclusivity. In all places possible, the City of Sanford has removed the word “citizen” unless it is required.

Task Force Recommendation

Provide training for all senior administration officials and department heads on the use of racial equity tools for policy and process decision making.

City of Sanford Approach:

City services such as trash and recycling pickup or utility services are provided equally to all City residents.

The City of Sanford has several initiatives that seek to provide equity across the community. Some examples of

this are the Essential Single-Family Rehab and Urgent Repair programs, which works with elderly and low-income homeowners to help them make necessary repairs to keep the home in good condition. The City also has a long history of affordable housing initiatives.

Staff is open to new tools to examine decisions through an equity lens, as Council advises.

Task Force Recommendation

Racial Equity 101 Foundations Staff Training: Implement a requirement that all employees complete this training as a condition of employment every two years.



City of Sanford Approach:

City of Sanford has provided bias training in previous years to employees with hiring responsibilities and is committed to continued training in this area. We are researching resources for providing this training and will make a recommendation to Council.

Task Force Recommendation

City tax grants to new companies will be contingent upon proof or commitment to equitable hiring practices and racial and ethnic diversity in management and the workforce (see performance measures, for example).

City of Sanford Approach:

The City of Sanford relies on the Sanford Area Growth Alliance (SAGA) for economic growth and investment, including incentive recommendations.

SAGA supports equitable hiring practices and racial and ethnic diversity in management and the workforce. In SAGA's experience, incentives are typically offered to large employers that offer competitive wages and likely already share the City's values relative to equitable hiring practices and racial and ethnic diversity.



SAGA welcomes the opportunity to affirmatively address these values during the community overview portion of our site visits, and potentially include a statement affirming these values in the City's formal incentive agreement. Whether such a statement should or would include a legally binding commitment to measurable performance standards is unclear to us at this time, but may be a subject worthy of further discussion.

Task Force Recommendation

Seek collaboration with SAGA and the Chamber of Commerce to convene area businesses, community leadership, and other stakeholders to participate in equity initiatives (see examples under performance measures).

Business Approach:

SAGA, which includes the Chamber of Commerce, welcomes the opportunity to communicate with their members and other stakeholders regarding the opportunity to participate in the City's equity initiatives.

Task Force Recommendation

Collaborate with local businesses and churches to fund and create a STEM summer camp for elementary school students in trusted community spaces.



City of Sanford Approach:

Lee County Schools and Central Carolina Community College (CCCC) both offer STEM and other science type camps, both during the school year and over the summer. CCCC recently received a grant from the Pentair Foundation to offer even more STEM activities for youth.

In the past, the City of Sanford has held the Sanford Youth Academy for middle grades to expose youth to municipal jobs. This academy allowed youth to meet and interact with

first responders as well as parks, public works, engineering, and human resources staff.

This type of careers-based experience is meant to help youth see the many opportunities available to them in municipal government. As part of the camp, youth learned about hiring and interview tips and met with a coach focused on a growth mindset.

We have partnered with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Central Carolina and Lee County Schools in this endeavor. We also worked with guidance counselors and community members to ensure camp enrollment reflected the diversity of our community.

Looking forward, due to staffing and facility needs, it is more feasible for the City to provide content and/or funding for a camp than to be responsible for running one.

City of Sanford Equity Strategies



Task Force Suggestion: Increase Racial and Ethnic Diversity on City Boards by Recruiting through the Sanford Equity Communication Network

The City of Sanford is happy to work with the Sanford Equity Communication Network to recruit for boards and commissions in underrepresented communities. This can be accomplished by subscribing network members and organizations to the information we already push out to the community.



Task Force Suggestion: Promote Educational Opportunities

The City of Sanford can add this information about the Central Carolina Promise program and other CCCC education opportunities through its employee newsletter and on the employee intranet. Staff would need Council guidance to promote these programs to the community.



City of Sanford Suggestion: No Requirement for Driver's Licenses

Human Resources has worked closely with department management to determine which positions require a North Carolina driver's license for employment. It was determined that not all positions require regular (constant or definite pattern) driving. As a result, several job descriptions have been revised to exclude the driver's license requirement.

For positions that do require driving, a check of the applicant's driver's license record is now conducted pre-offer as opposed to prior to an interview.



City of Sanford Suggestion: Livable Wage

The City of Sanford has increased the starting pay for every position to at least \$15 per hour.