



**Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission**

# **ORGANIZATIONAL EQUITY ASSESSMENT REPORT**

**Presented by:**



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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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This report is being delivered to CCRPC during a time of disruption. The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic created a public health emergency for Black people and other people of the global majority. There has been a reckoning with racial violence and discrimination against Black people following the murder of George Floyd in June 2020. In addition, the wealth gap among Black and white Americans persists, and income inequality overall is at an all time high. The devastating impacts of climate change, disproportionately borne by people of the global majority, are becoming more common, and in the midst of these many challenges, the country is experiencing an intense period of political unrest and polarization.

In order to find a way forward, it is imperative to address the long standing disparities that have been laid bare by the pandemic. As Heather McGhee, author of *The Sum of Us* writes,

“...when a nation founded on the belief in racial hierarchy truly rejects that belief then and only then will we have discovered a new world. That is our destiny. To make it manifest, we must challenge ourselves to live our lives in solidarity across color, origin, and class. We must demand changes to the rules in order to disrupt the very notion that those who have more money are worth more in our democracy and our economy. Since this country’s founding, we have not allowed our diversity to be our superpower and the result is that the United States is not more than the sum of its disparate parts. But it could be. And if it were, all of us would prosper. In short, we must emerge from this crisis in our republic with a new birth of freedom. Rooted in the knowledge that we are so much more, when the we in we the people is not some of us, but all of us. We are greater than and greater for the sum of us.”

The belief in racial hierarchy is woven into the fabric of our country. Redlining and other government sanctioned policies have led to centuries of institutional and structural oppression towards Black and Indigenous people. These systems of economic disadvantage, established and maintained by those with political and economic power, directly caused the persistent wealth gaps that exist today between Black and white people as well as a plethora of other structural inequities. In Vermont, BIPOC people are disproportionately impacted by COVID-19, climate challenges, access to housing, and higher rates of incarceration and engagement with the justice system. The cumulative impact of denying BIPOC people equitable access to not only health care but other social determinants of health such as education, housing, employment, and justice is a vast range of health risks and outcomes (Centers for Disease Control, 2020).

Regional planning commissions like CCRPC, have [contributed to](#) unequal resource distribution to people of the global majority. Recently, CCRPC has put forth for consideration a vision of a *healthy, inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all Chittenden county residents, especially BIPOC and other people who have been underrepresented or marginalized.*

Verbal commitments are important, but these alone are insufficient in combating and rectifying the harm caused by systemic oppression and racism. In order to effectively address racial inequities, organizations must understand how the organization's past and present practices are adversely impacting marginalized populations and identify actions that can be taken to remedy these problems.

The Creative Discourse Group (TCDG) is supporting the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) board and staff as they build their capacity to address systemic racism and inequities in their internal and external work. During this initial phase of support, the TCDG worked with CCRPC leaders to establish an Internal CCRPC Equity Leadership Team. In addition, TCDG assessed CCRPC's current work, led several

racial equity workshops for the CCRPC board and staff, gathered information about equity initiatives across the municipalities, and planned and facilitated the November 6, 2021 *Planning for Equity Summit*.

The organizational equity assessment reveals that CCRPC is generally held in high regard by its staff, board, and partners. CCRPC staff are willing and motivated to embark on racial equity work, but lack skill and confidence. As a whole, the board is less far along, in both knowledge and willingness. At the same time, it is evident that CCRPC has valuable resources. The organization has a broad footprint in Chittenden County and holds unique expertise related to planning as well as deep knowledge and experience navigating across municipalities and organizations. While the organization holds this positionality, it also has blind spots. The people within the organization are mostly white and do not hold marginalized identities. They lack the lived experiences and understanding of what many people in the region are actually facing.

Generally, the CCRPC team is willing to step forward, engage in self reflection, and make changes to ensure that resources are effectively leveraged to improve the lives of the broader community, especially BIPOC and others who hold marginalized identities. This willingness sets CCRPC apart from many other organizations. Even so there is much work to do to move from this important first step to fulfilling CCRPC's responsibility to disrupt and dismantle the decades of systemic measures that are still present today and perpetuating significant inequities and harm to people of the global majority.

Upon conclusion of this equity assessment, The Creative Discourse Group offers three (3) broad recommendations.

1. *Center Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in every facet of the CCRPC's work*
2. *Prioritize connections with diverse populations including People of the Global Majority and those who have been marginalized or underrepresented*

3. *Leverage CCRPC's authority, expertise, and resources to become a regional equity leader.*

In order to accomplish these high level goals, CCRPC will need to build internal infrastructure (hiring staff dedicated to equity work, and continuing to build its Equity Leadership Team), create opportunities for CCRPC staff to build ongoing relationships with underrepresented community members, increase investment in inclusive community engagement processes, and serve as a host and convener for both formal and informal Chittenden County leaders who are engaged with racial equity and economic justice work.

## **OVERVIEW, SCOPE OF WORK, and GOALS**

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On October 30, 2020, the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) released a Request for Qualifications for a consulting partner with experience in racial equity to support the implementation of short and long term goals to advance racial equity in Chittenden County.

For the purposes of providing a guidance on the potential work, CCRPC outlined the following activities and goals as a starting point:

**Racial Equity and Justice education/training program(s) for 16 staff and 29 Board members**

*GOAL: To build a shared understanding of organizational goals and priorities, and to provide learning opportunities that identify and confront inequities and advance anti-racism efforts.*

**Organizational assessment of our bylaws, plans, policies, and programs through the lens of anti-racism and white privilege**

*GOAL: To ensure our organizational plans, policies, and procedures not only do no harm with regard to racial equity and justice but are anti-racist in their intent and practice.*

**Regional education and/or training program for municipalities, partner organizations, and the public**

*GOAL: To help elevate the voices of those already leading this critical work in our communities, and to lead by sharing best practice examples that prioritize the needs of traditionally underserved and underrepresented communities.*

**Other opportunities as identified**

*GOAL: We recognize this work is ongoing and must be flexible and responsive to emergent community needs. We desire a partner interested in helping us support the cities and towns we serve in addressing opportunities for policy change to end systemic racism.*



The Creative Discourse Group (*formerly Creative Discourse*) responded to the request for proposal and was chosen to work with the CCRPC board and staff to help them build their capacity to address systemic racism and inequities in their culture, practices and policies. In addition, TCDG is supporting CCRPC in working towards their vision of a healthy, inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all Chittenden county residents, especially people of the global majority and other people who have been underrepresented or marginalized. The goals of the work include:

- Establish the relationships and infrastructure needed to ensure that underrepresented residents have a meaningful voice in planning decisions that affect them
- Create shared understanding about systemic racism and inequities across board and staff
- Build capacity among board and staff to effectively address systemic racism and inequities
- Create opportunity for shared learning across municipalities
- Ensuring that an effective equity lens is being applied to policy areas (such as land use, housing, and transportation)

To meet these goals, the TCDG outlined a scope of work that includes several phases.

The scope of work for Phase 1 included:

1. Establishing an Internal CCRPC Equity Leadership Team;
2. Assessing the CCRPC's current work;
3. Leading several racial equity workshops for board and staff
4. Gathering information about equity initiatives across the municipalities;
5. Planning for and convening a summit of CCRPC board, staff, community partners, and informal and formal community leaders.

Phase 2 will be designed to: 1) assist with priority setting based on recommendations outlined in this report, 2) support the implementation of priority actions toward achieving the organization's equity goals, and 3) ensure that CCRPC's equity work is informed by the lived experience and perspectives of a broad range of people who live or work in Chittenden County.

## METHODOLOGY

The Creative Discourse Group approached the initial phase of work with CCRPC with the goal of uplifting as many voices as possible. It was important to hear from people who could speak directly to CCRPC's work and impact in Chittenden County related to racial equity. It was also important to hear the stories and lived experiences of people of the Global Majority and other people who have been underrepresented. TCDG conducted a qualitative study with three main areas of focus:

1. Assess the CCRPC's internal culture and practices,
2. Assess how the CCRPC is doing addressing racism and integrating an equity lens into their work, and
3. Gather ideas for improvements that the CCRPC and Chittenden County municipalities can make to create a *healthy, inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all Chittenden county residents, especially BIPOC and other people who have been underrepresented or marginalized.*

### The Equity Leadership Team (ELT)

TCDG helped the CCRPC to establish an internal Equity Leadership Team to help guide the first phase of the work. The team began meeting on June 2, 2021 and has continued to meet regularly. The role of the ELT is to engage in shared learning about racial equity; to build individual knowledge and collective capacity to inform CCRPC's equity work; to support the development of resources needed; and to facilitate communication with partners, staff, and board. Members of the ELT included CCRPC staff, CCRPC board members, and TCDG associates.

CCRPC Equity Leadership Team Members
Charlie Baker, CCRPC Executive Director Emma Vaughn, CCRPC Communications Manager

Bryan Davis, AICP, CCRPC Senior Transportation Planner  
Mike O'Brien, CCRPC Board Member - Winooski  
Jacki Murphy, CCRPC Board Member - Colchester  
Elaine Haney, CCRPC Board Member - Essex Jct.  
Justin Rabadoux, CCRPC Board member, South Burlington  
Susan McCormack, TCDG Associate/Facilitator  
Nadia Mitchell, TCDG Associate/Facilitator

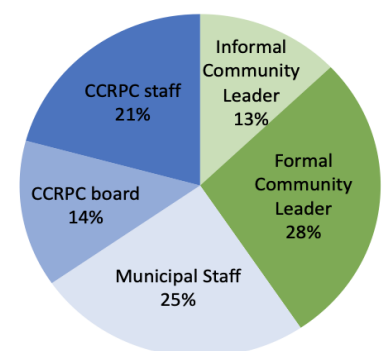
## Data Collection

The Creative Discourse Group engaged the CCRPC Board, staff and external partners in the data collection process to develop an understanding of CCRPC's current culture, practices, policies, and actions related to equity, diversity, and inclusion. The data collection process was designed to understand the behaviors and activities within the CCRPC that may be advancing or limiting their commitment to equity.

Three tools were used to conduct the organizational equity assessment: (1) A survey, (2) focus group interviews, and (3) One-on-One Interviews. Additionally, data was uncovered after theming participant's engagement during a large equity summit and a review of organizational documents was conducted to examine both formal and informal projects, policies, practices, and procedures. Survey questions, interview guides, and the summit participant guide can be found in the Appendix. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, most of the work was conducted remotely. All group interviews were held using Zoom video conferencing. One-on-one interviews were conducted via a combination of zoom, phone and in person meetings at several coffee shops around the county.

## Survey

TCDG conducted a self-facilitated, online survey with staff, board, and external partners. Respondents were Invited to participate in the survey via an email from the CCRPC Executive



Director. There were 72 responses from a range of staff, board members, and community partners (which include both formal and informal leaders).

### **Focus Group Interviews with the CCRPC Board, Staff, and Regional Partners**

TCDG hosted focus interview groups with the CCRPC board, staff, and regional partners. Each of these groups participated in 60 minute conversations with TCDG Associates to share their perspectives on the CCRPC, it's organizational culture, and it's work to become more equitable and racially just. TCDG hosted two (2) group interviews with CCRPC Staff, three (3) focus group interviews with the Board, and five (5) with external regional partners.

#### **Organizations Represented in Partner Focus Groups**

Burlington Community and Economic Development Office  
Cathedral Square  
Champlain Housing Trust  
Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity  
Chittenden Area Transportation Management Association  
Chittenden Solid Waste District  
Conservation Law Foundation,  
Community College of Vermont  
Green Mountain Transit  
Howard Center  
Hunger Free Vermont  
Local Motion  
Old Spokes Home  
University of Vermont  
VT Department of Housing and Community Development  
VT Agency of Commerce and Community Development  
VT Agency of Transportation  
VT Department of Health  
VT Housing Finance Agency

VT Legal Aid  
VT Liquor Control  
Winooski Partnership for Prevention

### **One-On-One Interviews with Informal and Formal Community Leaders**

CCRPC staff conducted 15 interviews, some with municipal staff and others with local advocates. In total, 20 people were interviewed. A series of prompt questions guided the conversations to provide insight into what led people and/or their city/town to this type of work, key issues of current focus, relationships within and external to their city/town and the CCRPC, and what they would like to see change (or what would be helpful) that would lead to equity and a sense of belonging for community members who have been marginalized.

### ***Planning for Equity Summit***

TCDG designed and facilitated a half day virtual summit - *Planning for Equity: Building Towards Racial & Economic Justice in Chittenden County*. The purpose of the Equity Summit was to build shared understanding about the impact of regional and community planning on equity, explore ways Chittenden County could intentionally plan for racial and economic equity and justice, create an opportunity for participants to discuss complex issues, generate ideas, and create momentum for change.

The summit was attended by approximately 75 participants, including CCRPC staff, board members, CCRPC external partners, formal and informal community leaders, students, community members, planners and municipal leaders.

Three goals were identified for the summit:

1. Build relationships among participants
2. Build shared understanding about racist legacy of planning and ways planning can create equity

3. Gather ideas for ways to leverage CCRPC's role and resources to move towards racial and economic justice in Chittenden County.

## **Document Review**

A sampling of documents, policies, and procedures were examined with an equity lens to determine alignment with the CCRPC stated mission and vision. The documents were read, notated, and a SWOT analysis was conducted to inform recommendations.

### **Documents Reviewed**

- ❖ [CCRPC Public Participation Plan](#)
- ❖ [2018 ECOS Annual Report – Main Document](#) and
- ❖ The latest [ECOS Annual Report](#) (2020)
- ❖ **CCRPC 2019 Title VI Annual Report for VTrans and FHWA**
- ❖ [CCRPC Bylaws](#)
- ❖ **CCRPC Administrative Operating Policies & Procedures** including the **CCRPC Procurement Policy** in part 2
- ❖ **CCRPC website**
- ❖ **Lessons Learned document from a Door to Door Transportation Survey**

## **Timeline**

Below is a timeline that outlines the data collection activities of this organizational assessment.

<b>Data Collection Timeline, Stakeholder Groups, and Data Collection Tools</b>		
<b>Timing</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Tool</b>
June 2	Launch first meeting of the Equity Leadership Team	Virtual session
Jul 1, 12, & 20	CCRPC Board (interviewed 11 board members)	Group Interview (3 sessions)
July 12 & July 26	CCRPC Staff (interviewed 15 staff members)	Group Interviews (2 sessions)

July 21 - August 11	CCRPC Partner (interviewed 24 partners)	Group Interviews (5 sessions)
September 2021	Informal & Formal Leaders (interviewed 15 leaders)	1:1 Interviews
October 5	Full CCRPC Staff and Board - Learning Session 1 of 2 based on early themes	
October 20	Full CCRPC Staff and Board - Learning Session 2 of 2 based on early themes	
July 22 -August 21	Staff, Board, and Community Partners (72 responses)	Self-administered online survey
	Municipal documents, policies, procedures, and practices	Review and examination of materials
November 6, 2021	Planning for Equity Summit	Virtual summit attended by approximately 75 people



## KEY FINDINGS, DISCUSSION, and IMPLICATIONS

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In this section we highlight a summary of findings from each component of the equity assessment: the online survey; focus group interviews with the CCRPC board, staff and community partners; individual interviews with formal and informal community leaders; themes from the *Planning for Equity* Summit, and findings from the document review.

### Survey Findings

There were 72 survey responses from a range of staff, board members, and community partners (which include both formal and informal leaders). 94% of the respondents were White or Caucasian, only one (1) respondent reported a race other than white, and three (3) others preferred not to respond to the question of race. We heard from most municipalities across Chittenden County, though most respondents were from Burlington, S. Burlington and Winooski.

Generally, survey respondents had positive impressions of the CCRPC leadership and staff (with 100% reporting a positive or neutral feeling about CCRPC).

Respondents expressed a range of views about the significance of equity work. Some have rarely discussed or thought about racial equity while others describe the work as being very important.

*"As far as I'm aware, equity has never been a topic of discussion at the committee or Select Board level [in my town]..."*

*"This work is incredibly important and we need to fully understand how racism is built into the systems we have created"*

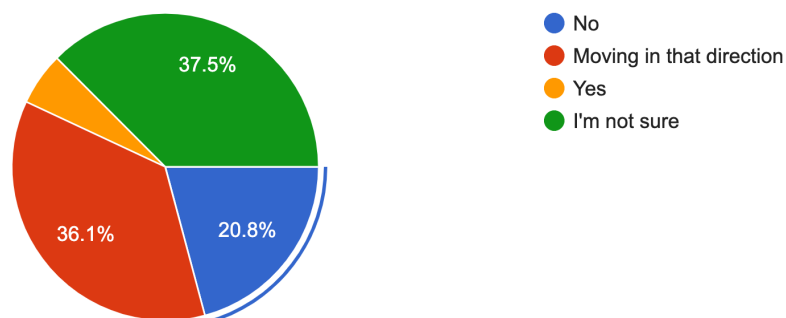
*and look very critically at how to change those systems to support collective wellbeing even when it is uncomfortable to say - we have been doing it wrong.*

Overall respondents weren't aware of CCRPC's equity work and there is a fair amount of ambiguity about the equity goals and initiatives connected with respondents' own organizations.

Almost half of those surveyed disagreed or did not know if the CCRPC or Chittenden County municipalities incorporates the voices of marginalized residents in decision-making.

In addition, when asked if reports were explicit about race, racism and equity most survey respondents were not aware or did feel that reports are explicit about race, racism and equity aside from one respondent who pointed to the 2020 ecos' report.

Reports are explicit about race, racism, and equity.  
72 responses



*"I really appreciated the 2020 ecos' report's focus on BIPOC Vermonters/Chittenden County residents. I would like to see more data showing disparate race/ethnicity outcomes."*

Most respondents who are CCRPC staff believe that the organization is moving in the right direction with regard to reports, internal training, disaggregation of data by race and ethnicity, and resource allocation decisions that reflect the goal of decreasing disparities.

*CCRPC leaders and staff are taking steps to eliminate barriers to participation and ensure that not only all voices can be heard, but that project outcomes (in our case, recommendations in plans) minimize burdens on marginalized and/or underrepresented populations*

There are several exceptions. When asked if there is a deliberate plan in place to attract and retain staff that reflect the demographics of the County, most staff say “no” or “not sure.” In addition, one respondent shared their concern (which was echoed in the interviews) about staff members being uneasy about addressing racial equity.

*I believe there is some hesitancy from staff on discussing and addressing racial equity head on for fear of making a mistake (saying/doing the wrong thing) or alienating people with whom we serve and want to engage.*

Many respondents shared about the importance of people from excluded populations being in leadership roles and having a meaningful voice in decisions that impact them. There is also a recognition that achieving equity is a complex challenge that requires significant change.

*“I feel that increasing access and amplifying voices of those that are underserved and/or marginalized, will only be achieved by a significant overhaul of our governing system, vs simply posting meeting notices in other languages.”*

## **Focus Group Interview Findings**

### **Board**

There were a few recurring themes that emerged during the Board focus group. One was the idea that Board members who are newer might find the board space to be intimidating and overwhelming as there is a great deal of intricate and challenging information to learn when understanding regional planning. Board members expressed that within this environment, it is easy for newer members to be less comfortable and take a back seat in conversations as more experienced board members or those with more longevity on the Board speak more often. This can lead to individual Board members dominating the conversations. Board members also expressed that women are the minority in that space and there can be a discomfort with that.

When reflecting on the readiness of the staff and board to take on racial equity initiatives, there was consensus that the CCRPC staff are more willing to take on these efforts than the CCRPC Board. There was a perspective that the staff are more ready and that there might be more resistance or readiness with the board. Board members expressed that intellectually people on the Board can understand the need for equity work, however comfort with equity work isn't necessarily there. One example that was shared was the lack of interest among Board members when there was an opportunity to join a newly formed Equity Leadership committee as part of the CCRPC's work.

Reflecting on why anti-racism and equity work is important for the future of the organization, board members expressed that because Vermont is not a diverse place it is important to get educated about the different backgrounds for people to really be able to answer this question. Once education happens the board will better understand the need. Some board members discussed how discouraging it is to hear about the daily

inequity some Black people are experiencing in Vermont and the desire to know what to do about it. Another board member described the work as a necessity.

## **Staff**

Most staff report experiencing a healthy and collaborative culture at CCRPC, which includes close professional and personal relationships and plenty of autonomy. Staff members appreciate the high expectations and “compassionate leadership” of the Executive Director and find meaning and purpose in their work. Three areas of organizational trust all seem to be present (relational, competency and contractual). Staff members feel they have a meaningful voice in decisions that impact them, and describe themselves as highly collaborative. Staff report some siloing, for example between transportation and land use planners, and also report that it takes time for newer people to be accepted. One staff person said that at times, there can be a “hive mind” quality to staff interactions.

Staff members describe themselves as being supportive of equity work, but worry about their readiness to move forward. As one staff member described it, “there is more willingness than readiness.” Many staff express discomfort talking about racism and fear that they will do or say something wrong or make a mistake that causes harm to marginalized community members. Most staff members expressed a desire for more training. Several staff expressed concern about focusing explicitly on racial equity, and suggested that the organization should focus on economic equity and rural vs. urban dynamics. The staff also expressed concern about whether the board and municipalities they serve have the same level of willingness or interest in tackling equity issues. One person described feeling “queasy” when thinking about discussing these issues with the board.

The staff describe some success working with underrepresented community members, especially at the beginning phases of projects (citing partnership with Local Motion, the Equity Transportation Coalition, United Way, 189 focus groups, door to door outreach in Winooski, and the ECOS work, especially the 2013 public participation plan).

Staff have also experienced work on or familiarity with some projects that they worry may perpetuate inequities (for example, there is concern that the Champlain Parkway would bring more traffic to low income, New American communities). Several strategies to create housing opportunities (which are having success helping people afford housing) also cause concern among staff about whether there are unintended negative consequences such as gentrification of some neighborhoods or preventing people from accumulating equity in their homes.

Staff also note that even when there is initial success engaging with underrepresented people at the beginning of projects, there is less success during later phases of projects when people are invited to deliberate about specific options (which are often complex and technical). The staff also reports that there aren't currently opportunities for ongoing relationship building with underrepresented community members. Engagement opportunities are project specific and there isn't a mechanism for sustaining these relationships over time.

As an organization that has the power to plan and recommend, but not to implement, many staff embrace the idea that CCRPC's effectiveness lies in being seen as a credible and useful resource to municipalities. We've heard from staff during the interviews and other interactions an accompanying belief that the organization needs to take care not to come across as telling the municipalities what to do, but rather to offer resources in ways that encourage the municipalities to use them. This dynamic led some staff

members to wonder if CCRPC's position would make it difficult for the organization to lead on equity issues.

## **Regional Partners**

Regional partners demonstrated much energy for participating in the focus group interviews and expressed an appreciation for the opportunity to come together in this dialogue about racial equity. They identified the action in Burlington to declare racism as a public health emergency as a starting point for most of the municipalities. This was regarded as a catalyst for change for many of the organizations with Burlington because it cemented actionable steps for organizations that were beginning their equity work.

There was a mix of opinion with regards to the partner organization's perspective on the extent of their relationship with CCRPC. Regional partners either seem to share a great relationship with CCRPC or a minimal relationship, if at all. Some participants felt that small organizations that lack resources and staffing also lack the opportunity to participate or collaborate with CCRPC.

Partner organizations expressed a desire to see actions rather than continued lip service. They pointed out that meetings are hard to access and this is exacerbated by the fact that there is much jargon, a digital divide, and a lack of translated materials. Partners also expressed that there is a real opportunity for more diverse input and staffing.

Partner organizations expressed a desire for the CCRPC to create more opportunities for them to come together to discuss racial equity initiatives in the county. There was significant energy from the conversation participants to share resources, build new connections, and collaborate further to determine a direction for action and change.

## **Findings from Interviews with Informal and Formal Community Leaders**

*Note: Individual Informal and Formal Community Leader interviews were conducted by the CCRPC's Senior Transportation Planner, Bryan Davis and this summary of themes was drafted by Bryan.*

One of the interview questions noted that the murder of George Floyd raised awareness of the inequities of our current system. Some interviewees noted that these concerns [inequities] existed before the murder of George Floyd, with one commenting that “it’s too bad it took a public lynching on TV to make people realize the issues/systemic racism,” but also noted that it did raise awareness, started the conversation, and people have stepped up and changed their thinking.

People pointed out that this work has been going on for decades, but what changes have been made? From national attention on the beating of Rodney King in 1991 to the murder of George Floyd in 2020, “we need to check our progress on stated goals.” We have conversations about race, equity, etc. but “the people that show up to those events are the ones that ‘get it.’” “The people that need to hear the message aren’t there, so how do we reach people, repackage the content, and show how white supremacy culture is perpetuated and affects everyone, including white people?” One person stated that few textbooks teach about race, few parents teach about race.

Education is key. Groups, especially white people, need to understand history, educate themselves, before they can understand and direct the future in a good way. People of color don’t need to keep telling their story and reliving their trauma. White people need to learn, understand, share, unpack their own story. “Talking with white people is tiring



and they're ill informed." Black people don't bring up race because "it hurts white people's feelings." "It's tiring and emotionally draining to have these conversations."

Some towns have formed DEI committees, changed their hiring practices, asked "what can we do to diversify," etc. but one person noted that "some groups aren't moving the needle because it's hard to address an issue that you don't really know about. Don't need to listen to white people leading the effort when they haven't experienced racism. There's a fine line between being white saviors, allies, and paternalism. Ally is different from abolitionist; an ally requires an audience, needs approval from people of color. Abolitionist does the work because it's the right thing to do, not for attention. Need people to get out of the way! If you're not going to be helpful, step aside."

In their role this person must come "armed with data, history, facts to support an argument; it's hard to explain to an oppressor why they need to stop oppressing you. It's like begging for freedom, how did ancestors do it for so long, knowing there won't be a better day for generations. Stand out of the way for black and brown people to make change, stop being obstructionist."

There have been local issues that have sparked community awareness, debate, and in some cases division. Many communities pursued raising Black Lives Matter flags to show solidarity in addressing system racism. This seemingly simple act revealed the detailed local processes (i.e., systems) that must be followed to use public spaces and resources for a display. In more than one case, the flagpole itself was an issue: could it be used, what are the rules, is it tall enough to accommodate multiple flags, particularly during half mast occasions. In addition, how long the BLM flag could fly was an issue, as well as unfortunate timing of removal that coincided with the Juneteenth celebration. In some places BLM flags/signs have been vandalized or stolen.

In other instances, actions by local leaders, police, and school boards created opportunities for reflection, discussion and action (critical race theory, homophobic social media post, ticketing of black man but not others). Some people noted that even with these opportunities for deeper community conversations, those didn't happen due to a lack of local leadership. New advocate groups formed in some communities in response to those actions, and in others existing groups provided an organized forum for response and support. There were conflicting viewpoints between municipal staff and advocates about where power lies, who is actually supportive, and is the work getting done.

Municipal staff and advocates alike reflected that people, groups, and departments are working in silos, but the issues are cross-cutting. People expressed a desire for their community to be, and how to articulate that it is safe, welcoming, inclusive, and equitable. Some towns have formed DEI committees, changed their hiring practices, asked "what can we do to diversify," etc. Organizations need to think differently. One example is UVM Medical Center hiring a consultant observer to participate in the hiring process, pointing out biases along the way and offering feedback and suggestions.

Some people commented that in their communities not everyone recognizes the need for change; there's a need to be ready for opposition to this work. There are people who don't want change, who think things are fine, who don't think racism is in their community. They don't recognize they're racist because of the lack of education, the systemic nature of racism. People don't know they're causing harm. How to repair the harm? This work may not get done in our time but is important.

### ***Planning for Equity Summit Findings***

The *Planning for Equity* Summit convened a diverse group of about 75 people including CCRPC staff, board members, CCRPC external partners, formal and informal community

leaders, students, community members, planners and municipal leaders. Participants engaged in shared learning and engagement to build understanding about the impact of regional and community planning on equity. The summit participant guide was translated into Swahili and Arabic and live interpretation was offered throughout the entire event in both languages as well.

Despite the virtual format via Zoom and the technical challenges that can arise during meetings with this format, engagement during the Summit was consistently robust and energetic. During the Summit, participants reviewed local equity and justice projects in Chittenden County, learned about the racist legacy of planning, and heard more about the role of RPC's.

Participants engaged in small group conversations three different times during the Summit within designated groups, which helped them to build community as they participated in the Summit activities. During these small group conversations participants grappled with the issue of racial disparities in Vermont housing and homeownership. Participants also generated recommendations for actions CCRPC and its partners can take to help Chittenden County make progress towards building racial and economic justice. The top themes that emerged from these participant dialogues are categorized below and the entire reporting of themes can be found in Appendix E.

### **Issue Analysis: Racial Disparities in Vermont Housing**

Participants were given the opportunity to analyze the issue of racial disparities in Vermont housing and homeownership with an equity lens and identify conditions holding this problem in place, with the intent of gathering feedback to inform CCRPC's thinking about how to embed an equity lens in their planning work. The top five conditions identified by participants holding the problem in place include

1. Housing

2. Zoning and Development
3. Bank Lending Structures and Practices
4. Community and Stakeholder Engagement
5. NIMBY (Not in my Backyard)

## **Housing**

Participants overwhelmingly identified housing as a condition that is holding the problem in place. Although cost and access to housing were noted most frequently, participants also noted housing policy, stigma towards renting, and second home ownership as contributing factors to the housing challenges in Chittenden County.

*"Housing is expensive because developers are made to pay for sidewalks and parks as part of their developments. This is something we do in New England, not other places in the country. Impact fees, open land requirements, sidewalks, roads, etc. cause the price of housing to be very high because developers pass on this cost to the home buyer. Then there are association fees that the people in the new developments pay for maintenance. Municipalities also have to hire more people and buy more equipment to maintain all the new paths and sidewalks. In Denver, homeowners are responsible for clearing the sidewalks in front of their homes or after a certain amount of time receive fines."*

## **Zoning and Development**

Many participants of the Summit indicated that Zoning and Development laws contribute to holding the problem in place. It was noted that Zoning laws are designed to restrict and can be prohibitive. Participants reflected that preferences for single-family homes and larger lot sizes are factors that can be changed to encourage more multi-unit housing to be built which will help the housing supply challenge.

*"Zoning is prohibitively restrictive. To incorporate diversity and tackle housing affordability, zoning needs to change."*

### **Banking/Lending Structures and Practices**

Banking and lending structures and practices were noted by several Summit participants as a condition that holds the problem in place. Lack of credit history, creative lending practices, and regulation were mentioned as contributing factors in preventing immigrants and BIPOC individuals from access to home loans.

*"Banks won't loan money to you if you don't have a credit history but as an immigrant how do you get that?"*

### **Community/Stakeholder Engagement**

Several Summit participants believe that robust community and stakeholder engagement can have a positive impact and help gather creative ideas and solutions to many of the problems that affect the BIPOC community. It was also noted that concrete investments such as stipends and flexible scheduling must be made to ensure robust and regular community engagement.

*"People that have needs are working more, but can't speak out b/c working"*

### **NIMBY**

The Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) phenomenon was noted by several Summit Participants as a condition that is holding the problem in place. Often residents of a neighborhood, who will likely have more resources, challenge affordable or denser housing in their local area which contributes to the lack of diversity.

*“Because of homogeneous neighborhoods, it makes it challenging to see how other neighborhoods are faring.”*

### **Participant Generated Strategies for Change**

Participants were asked to share their ideas for actions or strategies that CCRPC and its partners can take to help Chittenden County make progress towards building racial and economic justice. The top five recommendations or actions for change identified by participants include

1. Community/Stakeholder Engagement
2. Embedded Equity Work
3. Local/Municipal Initiatives
4. Policy Change
5. Zoning and Development

### **Community/Stakeholder Engagement**

Engaging community members and stakeholders was the strategy most commonly noted by participants. There are barriers that exist which limit public participation in the planning work that happens in communities. Participants shared specific suggestions to overcome these barriers such as: providing stipends, reaching out to specific groups, providing translation services, and offering multiple ways for people to participate.

*“We need to have honest conversations on race and increased engagement of BIPOC residents in planning.”*

### **Embedded Equity Work**

The next strategy that was mentioned most commonly by participants was the need to embed equity work throughout organizational structures. Equity audits and the

application of an equity lens should be applied to all aspects of planning and development, and that the CCRPC could potentially assist municipalities with this work.

*"Incorporate our equity goal within other goals (housing, economic development, transportation), rather than simply having equity as its own goal tacked on to the end of a list."*

### **Local/Municipal Initiatives**

In addition to ensuring an equity lens is applied to all future planning and development work, participants noted the need for local/municipal committees or groups that would provide oversight. Committees such as the Burlington Racial Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee were referenced.

*"It would be great to hear more about the accomplishments of various committees or boards that are addressing racial equity at a municipal level."*

### **Policy Change**

Making lasting, systemic change also requires work at the policy level. Specific examples included changes to Act 250, the banking and lending system, and protection for renters.

*"[The] system needs to change, not the BIPOC community. Change the system so that BIPOC can feel more comfortable and not like they need to go super far out of the way to just get the same benefits as someone who is Caucasian."*

### **Zoning and Development**

Many participants also identified areas for improvement in current zoning and development rules and regulations. Examples included: Easing requirements for water

and sewer permitting, making it easier to build accessory housing units and looking at municipal minimum lot size requirements.

*"In addition to tax incentives, maybe direct construction subsidies for affordable and accessible units"*

## **Document Review Findings**

A review of internal documents was conducted to examine CCRPC policies, practices and procedures with an equity lens. Generally, this review aligned with TCDG's experience of the organization during the qualitative data collection process. The review revealed that the organization has made some gradual progress in including an equity perspective in their processes.

One main example of this is the ECOS Report. The original 2018 report failed to account for the historical disparities experienced by people of the global majority and generally does not delineate to help us understand the ways marginalized groups of people are impacted. The 2020 ECOS Report does however represent a shift and explicitly named racial disparities and social justice as issues to focus on. This updated report does a better job and displays that the organization is moving towards where they need to be.

There is a great opportunity to revisit the top actions coming out of the ECOS report specifically with an equity lens and reevaluate what actions should look with equity being centered in the process. The ECOS scorecard broadly shows good outcomes however, if the information isn't reflective of diverse populations, the grade reflects dominant culture and accepting this scoring is dangerous without disaggregation. It will be important in the future that all CCRPC reports disaggregate data by race/ethnicity, class, etc.

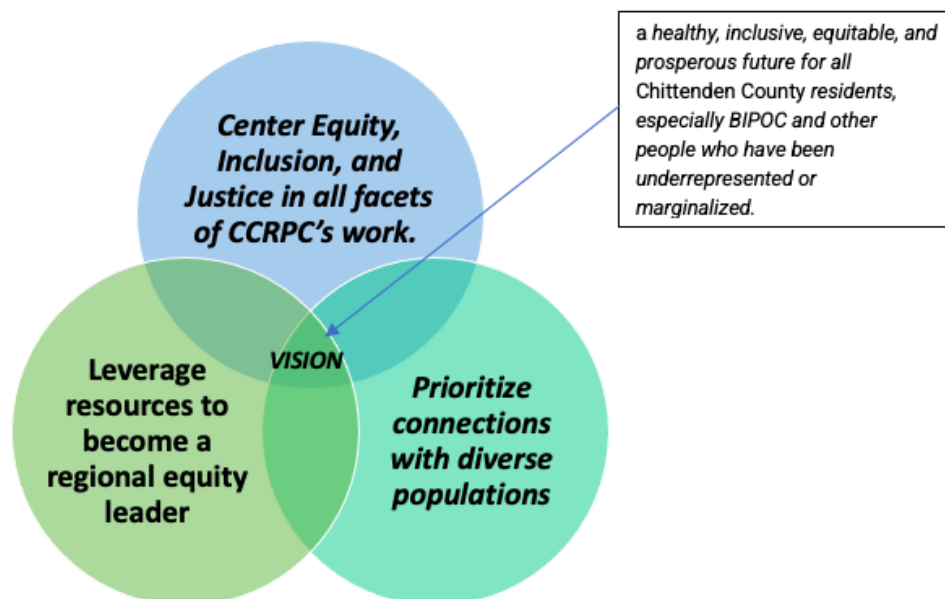


The Public Participation Plan was established with a diverse group of community leaders that outlined ways the CCRPC should ensure robust public involvement in the planning process. This was an incredible body of work and highlights the common pitfall of engaging a diverse group of stakeholders to help solve complex problems but not using this work as a strong catalyst to advancing equity initiatives. There is an opportunity to revisit this work to glean wisdom and perspectives about how the CCRPC moves forward currently.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

This organizational equity assessment investigated the perspectives of many people connected to the CCRPC. In order to achieve the vision of *a healthy, inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all Chittenden County residents, especially BIPOC and other people who have been underrepresented or marginalized*, there is a need to radically shift dominant culture across the region, and engage with municipal leaders and formal and informal community leaders to systematically dismantle white supremacy ideologies in planning across the region and begin to focus on issues of justice. The Creative Discourse Group recommends three (3) focus areas:

- ❖ Center justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion in every facet of CCRPC's work.
- ❖ Prioritize connections with people of the global majority and those who have been marginalized.
- ❖ Leverage and share CCRPC's power and resources to become a regional racial equity leader.



## **Center Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Every Facet of CCRPC's Work.**

Organizations that work to incorporate justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as part of their fabric are better positioned to meet the needs of the communities they serve. To move toward communities that are more equitable and racially just, the CCRPC needs to embark on the journey in a deeply engaged manner. This would allow the organization to weave equity initiatives into the fabric of the organization and view this approach as an integral concept to be considered in all that the organization does. Possible action steps could include the following activities.

### **1. *Hire an organizational leader dedicated to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion work***

An organizational equity leader will bring a unique set of skills to ensure the organization makes the transformative change needed to shift organizational culture, priorities, and outcomes. A skilled and innovative leader is needed to transform CCRPC's desire for this work to real commitment and action that improves outcomes for all people in Chittenden County, especially BIPOC and other people who have been traditionally marginalized. This recommendation is the responsibility of the Board for budgeting and Executive Director for hiring.

### **2. *Expand and diversify the Equity Leadership Team***

CCRPC should expand the Equity Leadership Team that was formed to help with Phase 1 of CCRPC's equity work. The Equity Leadership Team could include members of partner organizations as well as informal community leaders.

Overall, the Equity Leadership Team should be representative; reflecting as much as possible the demographics of Chittenden County's population. The equity leadership team would meet regularly to support the work of the newly hired equity director, serve as a liaison between newly convened work groups, existing committees and the board, and provide a mechanism to both support CCRPC's

work and to hold the organization accountable for continuing to move the work forward. This would be the responsibility of the CCRPC Board.

**3. *Provide ongoing Education and Training for CCRPC Staff and Board.***

In order to equip the CCRPC board and staff to have effective discussions about race, racism, and equity and to be able to connect in a sustainable way with a broader, increasingly diverse community, additional education and training opportunities should be offered. Regular and ongoing trainings provides an opportunity for CCRPC staff, board, and partners to build relationships, communicate across roles, and hear different perspectives and experiences. In particular, small group dialogue was consistently regarded as a meaningful way to engage in learning so future learning should allow significant time for group work and discussion. Additional learning is also important as CCRPC explores new frameworks for their planning and decision-making processes.

While there is a plethora of topics the organization can dig into, a few example include:

- ❖ Deepened understanding of the racist legacy of planning in Vermont
- ❖ Practice talking about racism
- ❖ How to be a good partner with underrepresented people
- ❖ Inclusive equitable community engagement
- ❖ More in depth individual work

This work would be the responsibility of the consultant team with direction from the Equity Leadership Team and direction or assistance from the newly hired organizational equity leader.

**4. *Establish a process for conducting a mini-equity audit ahead of all key decisions and at the beginning of projects and initiatives***

Applying a racial equity lens must start at the beginning of a process and not at the end. CCRPC should update the Public Participation Plan equity impact assessment process and the set of equity questions that are consistently asked and answered at the beginning of each project or initiative across the organization. This would ensure that the voices of those with lived experiences and those most impacted by the decisions are centered rather than organizational leaders who do not hold this knowledge and experience. CCRPC should consider a wide range of questions to help the organization lead with a racial equity lens, always keeping in mind who is most impacted, who is part of the decision-making process, who is being left out, and who has been historically negatively impacted by the issue. This could be done by a Public Participation Plan (PPP) work group which would be established by, and make recommendations to, the Equity Leadership Team (ELT).

**5. *Build in robust investments for engagement and relationship building at the front end of all projects.***

Organizations tend to hoard power and typically neglect to create opportunities for people most impacted by their initiatives to weigh in and help shape the activities of the organization. The CCRPC should co-create the activities it embarks on with people who have been traditionally marginalized that are most impacted by the organization's activities. To do this, CCRPC should invest additional time and resources to engage with community members of the Global Majority, community members who hold marginalized identities, and people who are most likely to be impacted by particular projects. Staff should be expected and empowered to build ample time and resources for engagement into project proposals (also see the recommendations below). This would be part of the decision making during development of the annual work program by the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Committee with review by the Equity Leadership

Team (ELT). This should also be included by staff when applying for grants or considering work for municipalities and partners.

## **Prioritize Connections with People of the Global Majority and Those Who Have Been Marginalized or Underrepresented.**

Organizations historically have relied on expert administrators and professional stakeholders to guide their work and decision making process. This has resulted in a dynamic that prioritized power and expertise over the wisdom and lived experiences of individuals who are most directly impacted by the system. It is exactly those individuals who have traditionally had their voices marginalized that organizations need to hear from to learn about their lived experiences and gain knowledge to inform organizational priorities and action steps.

There have been moments when CCRPC has found effective partners and strategies to help them engage with marginalized populations. However, the process hasn't resulted in lasting relationships or opportunities for an ongoing feedback loop to inform the broader work of the CCRPC beyond the parameters of a particular project. Creating opportunities for staff to work closely and build relationships with people who are more representative of the communities CCRPC serves is a critical step toward advancing racial equity in Chittenden County. CCRPC leadership, staff, and board will not only gain invaluable knowledge from underrepresented populations of people but will also have an opportunity for the very personal journey of encountering new narratives depicting the varied ways people experience the world.

It will be important to think about how to build reciprocity into this so that these relationships don't become extractive relationships that only benefit CCRPC. A great example of this experience is shared by CCRPC Senior Transportation Planner, Bryan

Davis in a piece he wrote about his experience connecting with formal and informal local leaders during this assessment. He wrote:

*These were powerful, personal conversations. It was apparent that the work to address racial equity, to dismantle systemic racism, is constant, tiring, frustrating, and can be lonely. I became more aware of the difference in how white people move through their day compared to people of color. It's truly a different lived experience, and hearing personal stories made me better understand the traumas, the microaggressions, the reliving of so many experiences even through these interviews. In asking our questions I could hear in myself all the other white people asking people of color to explain themselves, where are the needs, what can we do, how can we help? And then be reminded that the responsibility is on me, on us. Don't be in front, be side by side, or out of the way. At the end of the day, "white people can just walk away," as one person stated. But how can I, how can we walk away once you know the truth, the history, the now?*

Bryan's words illustrate the transformative impact connecting with others can have on our perspectives and thus desire to achieve racial equity. Recommended action steps include:

**1. Restructure CCRPC meetings to decentralize dominant culture and to encourage the board and staff to go where people are and invest time in relationship building.**

Too often the lived experiences of marginalized people are undervalued. Committees and councils have not traditionally created an atmosphere that is welcoming to diverse community members. They hold meetings in formats that uphold dominant culture and utilize much jargon, acronyms, and procedures such as "Robert's Rules of Order" that are confusing and inaccessible to marginalized people. Making changes to these procedures and processes and even disrupting the typical meeting structures and locations is critical to shift away from dominant culture as the norm and instead create new norms where community

members, especially people of the global majority, and other marginalized groups are regarded as the experts.

Further, CCRPC staff and board should go where the people are that they want to engage with. This might mean attending community gatherings where BIPOC people are present, or being in partnership with BIPOC led organizations to host special engagement opportunities to hear from these communities and even hosting CCRPC meetings in these spaces. In either of these cases, it will be imperative that the CCRPC staff and board commit to dismantling the typical ways of preceding and consider alternative processes and formats that uplift ways of being and knowing by BIPOC people. Specific recommendations should be included in the update to the Public Participation Plan (PPP) led by the PPP workgroup with review by the Equity Leadership Team (ELT) and adoption by the CCRPC Board.

**2. *Participate in opportunities led by people of the global majority and people who hold marginalized identities.***

Organizations need to shift from being exclusive to being inclusive. One way to exercise this is to engage in experiences that defers to the expertise of marginalized communities. CCRPC should accept opportunities and requests to participate in events convened and hosted by BIPOC organizations and partners who work with BIPOC and marginalized communities. These kinds of opportunities will help build relationships and understanding and broaden CCRPC perspectives. They also serve to disrupt the centralization of dominant culture and creates a space where marginalized culture is uplifted as the authority. The executive director, equity staff leader, and staff would implement this recommendation and communicate with organizations that CCRPC is interested in participating in their events.



**3. Create opportunities for affinity group work and opportunities for this work to intentionally inform CCRPC decisions.**

Affinity groups\* of BIPOC and people who hold marginalized identities can offer powerful experiences for participants, lead to the emergence of new leaders, and generate innovative thinking and solutions to inform decision-making . As CCRPC creates opportunities for affinity group work, they also should consider how the ideas generated in these groups directly and intentionally inform decisions made by CCRPC. These could include funding priorities or accountability metrics.

CCRPC might also consider how to implement a minimum required percentage of people who hold marginalized identities as part of decision making units. This could be led by the Public Participation Plan (PPP) workgroup with recommendations coming out of these affinity spaces being implemented by the Equity Manager. Decisions on how to integrate with decision making bodies would be based on recommendations of the Equity Leadership Team (ELT) and a decision by the board.

*\*Affinity groups are opportunities for people who hold similar marginalized identities (or intersections of identities) to explore, unpack, and engage in conversation about the various dynamics, beliefs, and thoughts that shape their experiences as members of a community that has been systematically excluded. These groups are safe spaces for processing, healing, or a deep interrogation of beliefs. These can also be spaces to generate recommendations for change that are informed by people's lived experiences [adapted from: <https://www.hsph.harvard.edu/diversity/resources/anti-racism/affinity-group-dialogues/>]*

**4. Find opportunities to uplift and celebrate the work of BIPOC led organizations on your website and in your communication with municipal leaders and partners**

As the CCRPC holds much power and a broad footprint in Chittenden county, they should also utilize this power and positionality to uplift and support BIPOC led organizations. This can serve as a way to demonstrate reciprocity in the relationships with particular groups as well as create opportunities for

relationship building with these groups. This will be implemented by the equity staff leader and communications manager.

## **Leverage and share CCRPC's power and resources to become a regional equity leader**

The CCRPC is in a unique position, as far as reach and resources, to serve as a hub for advancing racial equity work in Chittenden County. Partners expressed a desire to see the CCRPC lead in this way and CCRPC board members expressed a desire to see the organization lead broader education and training opportunities. Recommended action steps include:

### ***1. Host ongoing learning opportunities for regional leaders***

The CCRPC also has a great opportunity to serve as a thought leader in the region by creating opportunities to bring partners and municipal leaders together to learn about the history of inequities, promising strategies - from truth and reconciliation, to different planning and engagement techniques, to reparations.

### ***2. Convene regional leaders formally and regularly.***

The CCRPC can play a role in helping regional leaders stay accountable to the equity commitments they are making by convening regularly occurring check-ins. This could begin with a spring convening of participants who took part in the November 6 *Planning for Equity* summit to offer an opportunity to continue to make progress on priorities identified during the summit.

### ***3. Support local equity efforts that are taking root in municipalities across Chittenden County***

CCRPC has an opportunity to create (or co-create with partners) peer learning opportunities that bring people across the county together to share stories, successes and challenges related to their racial equity and economic justice

work. CCRPC can also help municipalities identify potential funding sources to support both formal and grassroots equity work.

These recommendations would be carried out by CCRPC staff, primarily the newly hired equity staff lead; partners; consultants; and content experts with the guidance of the Equity Leadership Team (ELT) and participants.

### **Implementation Strategy: Convene Diverse Work Groups**

In order to make progress on these three key recommendations, CCRPC should convene several diverse work groups. Workgroups could include diverse groups of people, representing a broad array of positions and roles within Chittenden County. Participation from people who hold positions within CCRPC and partner municipalities is important; however, engagement from formal and informal community leaders, students community members, and other people of the global majority or that hold marginalized identities is the critical component to this work and must be prioritized.

Workgroups should meet over time to research best practices, make recommendations and inform priorities around engagement, action steps, resource allocation. Work groups could address issues related to housing, zoning and development, community and stakeholder engagement. Additionally, work groups can be engaged to help CCRPC with some of the internal equity work we have suggested in the recommendations above.

## **Conclusion**

These recommendations invite CCRCP to embark on a journey to, in the words of Heather McGhee, *“challenge ourselves to live our lives in solidarity across color, origin, and class”* and to *“disrupt the very notion that those who have more money are worth more in our democracy and our economy.”* If CCRPC is successful, the work will position Chittenden County to *“emerge from this crisis in our republic with a new birth of freedom. Rooted in the knowledge that we are so much more, when the we in we the people is not some of us, but all of us. We are greater than and greater for the sum of us.”*

## APPENDIX A: Survey Questions

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### Equity Assessment

Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPC) is building its capacity to work toward a healthy, inclusive, equitable, and prosperous future for all Chittenden County residents, especially BIPOC and people who have been underrepresented or marginalized.

Your responses to this anonymous survey will inform recommendations to the CCRPC staff and board. In addition, survey results will inform the agenda for a Chittenden County Equity Summit on November 6, 2021. Parts of this survey are adapted from a self-assessment tool from Race Matters: The Annie E Casey Foundation.

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\* Required

1. Please indicate your affiliation. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ CCRPC staff
- ☐ CCRPC Board
- ☐ Municipal Staff
- ☐ Informal Community Leader
- ☐ Formal Community Leader (elected or appointed official)

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2. Please indicate the municipality you are most connected to. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ BOLTON
- ☐ BUEL'S GORE
- ☐ BURLINGTON
- ☐ CHARLOTTE
- ☐ COLCHESTER
- ☐ ESSEX
- ☐ ESSEX JUNCTION
- ☐ HINESBURG
- ☐ HUNTINGTON
- ☐ JERICHO
- ☐ MILTON
- ☐ RICHMOND
- ☐ SHELBURNE
- ☐ SOUTH BURLINGTON
- ☐ ST. GEORGE
- ☐ UNDERHILL
- ☐ WESTFORD
- ☐ WILLISTON
- ☐ WINOOSKI

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

3. How important is it to your municipality or organization that everyone has equitable access to opportunities in your community? \*

*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

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4. How important is it for your municipality or organization to work for racial justice? \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not important	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very important

5. How would you describe your municipality or organization's willingness to take risks when talking about racism and inequities? \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Not at all willing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very willing

6. Comments

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Experiences with CCRPC

7. Overall, what is your impression of CCRPC? \*

Mark only one oval.

☐ Negative

☐ Neutral

☐ Positive

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8. How often do you make use of CCRPC reports and other resources? \*

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Never	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Very often

9. CCRPC incorporates the voices of marginalized residents in decision-making. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree  
☐ I don't know

10. Through its work, CCRPC reduces barriers and creates equitable outcomes for BIPOC and marginalized Chittenden County residents. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree  
☐ I don't know



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11. Through its work, CCRPC creates a sense of belonging in Chittenden County. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Strongly Disagree  
☐ Disagree  
☐ Agree  
☐ Strongly Agree  
☐ I don't know

Experiences  
with your own  
organization or  
municipality

Please answer these questions based on your experiences with your organization or municipality. If you are a CCRPC staff or board member, please answer these questions based on your experiences with CCRPC.

12. Staff, stakeholders, and leaders are skilled at talking about race, racism, and their implications. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

13. Staff have the ability to learn from and relate respectfully with people from diverse cultural, racial and ethnic groups. \*

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

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14. Staff separates data by race in analyses. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

15. Reports are explicit about race, racism, and equity. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

16. Processes are in place to ensure that the voices of those most impacted by decisions are heard. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

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17. The goals of reducing barriers to opportunity and racial disparities are reflected in resource allocations. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

18. The organization is fully accessible (language access, website access, access to public spaces). \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

19. The organization has a deliberate plan to attract and retain staff that reflect the demographics of the community. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No  
☐ Moving in that direction  
☐ Yes  
☐ I'm not sure

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20. The organization has regular trainings and discussions at the staff and/or board levels about removing barriers to opportunity and reducing racial disparities both internally and externally. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No
- ☐ Moving in that direction
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I'm not sure

21. The organization has a mechanism in place to address complaints about barriers to opportunity and racial inequities in the workplace. \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ No
- ☐ Moving in that direction
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ I'm not sure

22. We invite you to elaborate on your answers to the questions above.

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Equity Assessment

23. Is there anything we didn't ask that you feel is important for us to know?

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24. If you could change one thing to lead to racial equity and better outcomes for all marginalized residents in Chittenden County, what would you change?

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Demographic  
Questions

We want to make sure our work is informed by a representative group of respondents. Please help us know how we are doing by answering the following questions.

25. Which categories would you use to describe yourself? Please select all that apply. \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ American Indian, Indigenous, First Nation, or Alaska Native  
☐ Asian, Pacific Islander or Desi American (APIDA)  
☐ Bi/Multiracial  
☐ Black or African American  
☐ Hispanic, Latinx, or Spanish origin  
☐ White or Caucasian  
☐ A race(s) race, ethnicity or origin not otherwise listed above  
☐ Prefer not to say

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

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26. What is your gender identity? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male
- ☐ Non-binary
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

27. What is your sexual orientation? \*

*Check all that apply.*

- ☐ Asexual
- ☐ Bisexual
- ☐ Gay
- ☐ Heterosexual
- ☐ Intersexual
- ☐ Lesbian
- ☐ Transgender
- ☐ Queer
- ☐ Prefer not to say

Other: ☐ \_\_\_\_\_

28. "What is your annual household income?" \*

*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Less than \$25,000
- ☐ \$25,000 - \$50,000
- ☐ \$50,000 - \$100,000
- ☐ \$100,000 - \$200,000
- ☐ More than \$200,000
- ☐ Prefer not to say

## **APPENDIX B: Interview Guides**

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### **CCRPC Equity Audit | Staff & Board Interview Guide**

#### **Part 1: Internal Assessment (Culture & Readiness)**

1. What is it like to work at CCRPC/serve on the board?
  - a. Share name, length of time on board and what gives you a sense of belonging or connection with CCRPC? What causes you to feel like you don't belong?
2. How would you describe the readiness of CCRPC to undertake work to create a more equitable and racially just Chittenden County? [In answering, think about how prepared or skillful are the staff and board.]
  - a. How prepared are staff/board members to have conversations about race, racism and equity?
  - b. How skillful is the staff/board when working with people from a variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds? What has gone well? What has been challenging?
  - c. In your view, why is anti-racism and equity work important for the future of the organization? If you don't think this work is important for the future of CCRPC, why not?

#### **Part 2: CCRPC Work & Operations**

1. Invite people to share examples of times when CCRPC has been successful either centering the voices of marginalized communities in their work, or has successfully addressed the needs, hopes and concerns of marginalized communities.
2. Invite people to share an example of a time when CCRPC may have caused harm to marginalized communities or organizations that serve marginalized communities
3. Share an example of a time when CCRPC intentionally incorporated an equity lens into their work
4. Share an example of a time when CCRPC has worked effectively with a partner organization to create equitable outcomes

#### **Part 3: Closing Comments & Recommendations**

1. If you could change one thing to improve CCRPC's ability to plan in a way that leads to racial equity, and better outcomes for all marginalized residents in Chittenden County, what would you change?

**CCRPC Equity Audit | Partner/Municipal Interview Guide**

**Part 1: Partner/municipal efforts to work towards racial justice and equity.**

1. A year has passed since the murder of George Floyd. This event along with the disproportionate impacts of the pandemic on marginalized populations, led to a renewed sense of urgency among many people in Chittenden County to address racial injustice and inequities. When it comes to your organization/municipality, how are these concerns showing up (if at all)?
2. What is your experience working with and/or addressing the needs of marginalized communities?
  - a. In what areas do you notice the biggest gaps or inequities? What is your sense of why these gaps exist?
  - b. In what ways do the existence of these gaps impact your organization's/municipality's decision making about how to invest resources?
  - c. Please describe a time when you worked to ensure that BIPOC or other marginalized people had a meaningful voice in decisions that are being made. What went well? What was challenging?

**Part 2: Experiences working with CCRPC related to inequities**

1. In what ways, if at all, has your partnership with CCRPC (or using CCRPC resources) either *helped you* in your equity work with marginalized communities *interfered* in your equity work with marginalized communities?
2. What opportunities or challenges do you see when you think about working together with CCRPC to create equity and racial justice?
  - a. If you haven't yet partnered with CCRPC, how do you envision collaborating with CCRPC in ways that would create equity and racial justice?

**Part 3: Closing Comments & Recommendations**

**10 min**

1. If you could change one thing to improve CCRPC's organization, or ability to plan [OR the way we plan] in a way that leads to racial equity, and better outcomes for all marginalized residents in Chittenden County, what would you change?



## APPENDIX C: Planning for Equity Participant Guides

### PARTICIPANT GUIDE: CCRPC Planning for Equity Summit November 6, 2021

#### Summit Agenda

Time	Activity
8:45	Gather
9:00	Welcome
9:15	Introductions - <b>Table Conversation 1</b>
9:30	Working Towards Equity & Justice in Chittenden County: Snapshot of Local Efforts
9:45	Undoing the Racist Legacy of Planning
10:05	Break
10:10	Issue Discussion - Planning for Equity - <b>Table Conversation 2</b>
10:55	Break
11:00	Role & Impact of Regional Planning Commissions & CCRPC
11:20	Recommendations for CCRPC - <b>Table Conversation 3</b>
11:50	Closing
12:00 noon	Adjourn

#### Table Conversation #1 - Introductions

15 min.

**PURPOSE:** Create an opportunity for participants to begin to get to know each other. To create space for each participant to have an opportunity to speak (warm up everyone's voices).

1. Review **suggested group agreements\*** and make adjustments as needed
  - o Stay engaged

- Speak your truth
- Expect discomfort
- Expect and accept non-closure

2. Introductions

- Name
- Municipality where you live or work
- One thing they love about where you live or work
- One challenge facing your community
- 

*\*These suggested group agreements are from [Courageous Conversations](#)*

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## **Table Conversation #2 - Issue Discussion**

*45 min.*

**PURPOSE:** *Provide an opportunity for people to analyze a planning challenge with an equity lens. To gather feedback to inform CCRPC's thinking about how to embed an equity lens in their planning work*

1. Briefly review the group agreements

- Stay engaged
- Speak your truth
- Expect discomfort
- Expect and accept non-closure

2. Review the issue brief below

3. Discussion prompts

- When it comes to disparities in housing, what are some of the conditions that are “holding the problem in place” in Chittenden County?

- Imagine five years have passed and we have successfully addressed the housing crisis in Chittenden County. There are a range of good housing options for people who live here, and we have closed the racial disparity in home ownership among Black and white residents.
- Given our analysis of conditions, and our vision for the future, share your ideas for the next steps we should take to make progress.

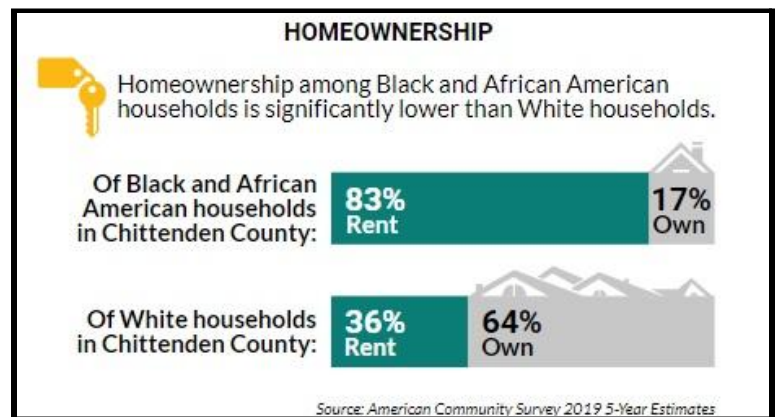
## ISSUE BRIEF: RACIAL DISPARITIES IN VERMONT HOUSING & HOMEOWNERSHIP

### CCRPC *Planning for Equity* Summit

November 6, 2021

**Vermont has vast racial disparities in housing, with a nearly 50% difference in the homeownership rate between Black and White families.**

The housing crisis in Chittenden County is even more urgent for BIPOC residents, and particularly Black Vermonters. Of thousands of homeowners in Burlington, for example, only 17 identify as Black. In the county, 64 percent of White households own their homes, compared to only 17 percent of Black households.



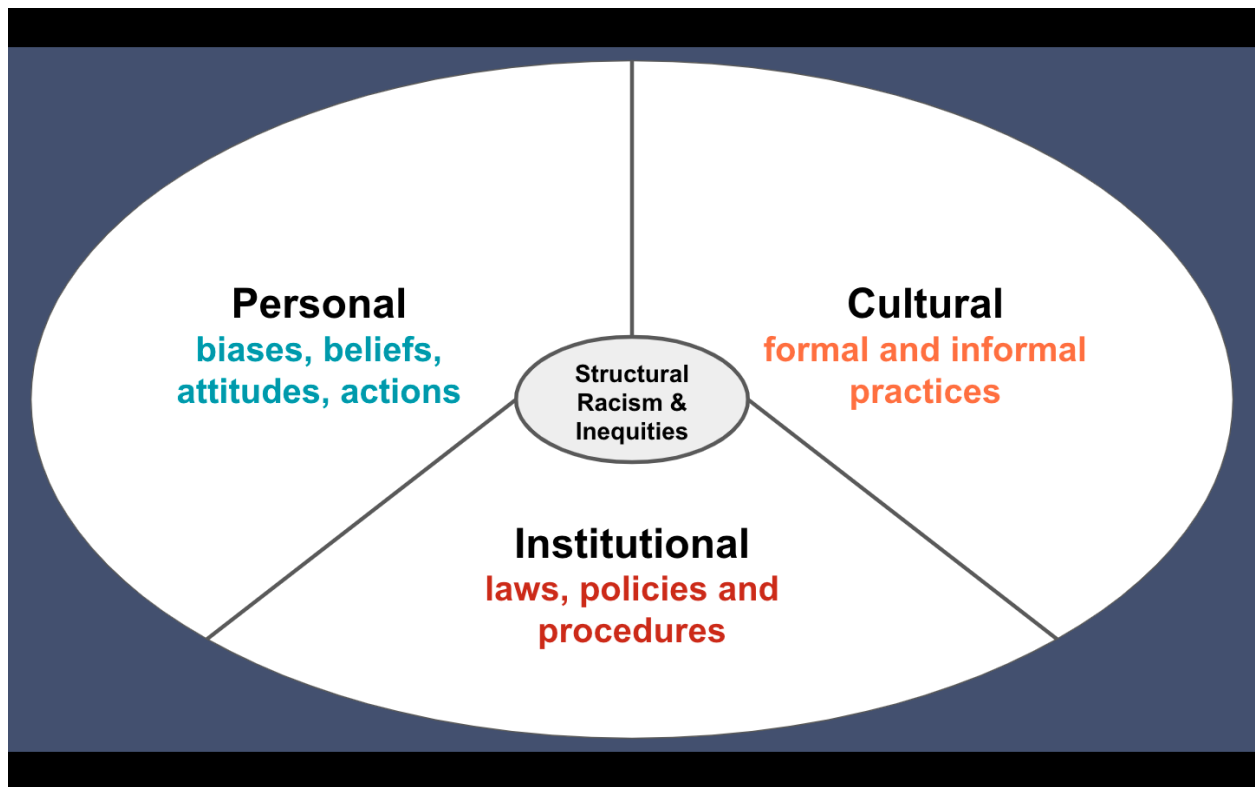
Black Americans have historically been denied access to housing, homeownership, and home loans due to government policies such as redlining, urban renewal, and race-based housing covenants. This has been the case across the country, New England, and even Vermont.

While some factors are beyond our control, we can help solve the problem. Solutions may include regulation at the local and state levels (for example, changing local zoning laws). Solutions could include decisions about how and where to spend public dollars (for example, increasing investments in co-housing and land trusts). Solutions could include education and awareness building efforts, advocacy and more.

*Systems change is about shifting the conditions that are holding the problem in place.*



*John Kania, Mark Kramer, Peter Senge*



### Table Conversation #3 - Strategies for Change

30 min.

**PURPOSE:** Gather ideas from participants about strategies CCRPC should consider to create equitable outcomes for Chittenden County residents.

1. Share your ideas for actions or strategies that CCRPC and its partners can take to help Chittenden County make progress towards building racial and economic justice.

**Things to consider when brainstorming ideas.**

- ❖ Which actions would help build the relationships needed to achieve equitable outcomes?
- ❖ Which actions ensure that people who have been marginalized have a meaningful voice in decisions?
- ❖ Which actions help distribute power?
- ❖ Which actions assure accountability?

2. Once all the ideas have been shared, name individuals, groups, or potential partners that should be part of the effort to help carry these ideas out.

***Thank you for sharing your perspective and being part of the conversation!***

## APPENDIX D: Suggestions from Focus Groups & Interviews

### Specific Suggestions from Staff

- Invest more time and money in engaging with the community (especially underrepresented community members) at the beginning of projects
- Conduct a region wide survey of marginalized communities to better understand issues people are facing
- Integrate an equity impact assessment tool in their work
- Form an ongoing committee or staff person whose focus is on equity
- Increase the diversity of board and staff
- Better collaboration among municipalities.

*NOTE: Staff were frank in their acknowledgement that there was a person on staff engaging in racial equity work with the organization several years ago, but there wasn't interest from municipalities or readiness on the part of some staff to make use of what was being offered. Staff also acknowledge the challenge of diversifying the board and staff because of stability and low turnover.*

### Specific Suggestions from the Board

- Education for the Board to understand and be aware of what the cultural & experiential differences are, and what marginalization is, how it happens, and how it can be reduced.
- Investing funds in outreach to achieve greater participation that is meaningful and not performative.
- Meet people where they are and not expect people to come to the board meetings to engage.
- Create a subcommittee of the RPC to focus on this work
- Create a subcommittee of the board to talk through issues and then share them with the board. This could also be a pipeline/pathway for new board members.
- Write positions into the bylaws that there is diversity within groups. (examples given included elderly and youth)

- Board members wonder whether it is possible to think of ways to reframe long term planning so it is relevant to people with immediate needs.

### **Specific Suggestions from Partners**

- More diverse input and staffing
- Use the Community Planning Toolbox used by other RPC's
- Trainings for staff and board
- Evaluate pay structures across groups
- Create opportunities through committees to collaborate with staff and community partners.
- Include a land acknowledgement and tribal recognition as this planning work is being done on stolen land.
- Reduce the digital divide and outreach beyond the internet
- Provide clearer information on grant processes
- Partners also recommended several resources
  - [The Color of Law](#) by Richard Rothstein
  - [21-Day Racial Equity Habit Building Challenge](#) by Food Solutions New England
  - [Local Planning for Food Access a Toolkit for Vermont's Communities](#) by Farm to Plate
  - [Black Space Manifesto](#)
  - [Cycling Industry Pledge](#) by Radical Adventure Riders
  - [UVM Gund Institute for Environment: Diversity & Inclusion](#)

### **Specific Suggestions from Community Leaders**

#### **Developing relationships**

- Need to get people of color involved, have a relationship with them and their groups.
- Developing relationships takes time, there's no timeline, it's just ongoing.
- Build trust, go to where people are. Hold meetings in neighborhoods, in housing complexes.
- Need to host diverse entertainment and diverse foods to attract diverse participation.
- When you do the same things and get the same results, you can't complain that you're not getting different people and results.



- You need to offer stipends, provide rides, form meaningful partnerships with those communities. Get in on the ground level with groups like new Afghan refugees (and others) right when they get here, not just when we need something from them.
- Relationships need to be organic and ongoing, intentional and sustained.
- Be vocal and communicate to community members so that the public knows that your organization is committed to racial equity, so that partners, consultants, towns, etc. know this is your priority. Even in communities that may not like what we're doing. Don't just say you're going to do the work. Words have to be followed by action, and policies need to reflect that change, AND be implemented. Policies need to outlive current staff/leadership.

Some specific recommendations from one person:

- invite people to participate earlier in the process, before decisions are made.
- need diverse input for those decisions – have people like New Americans at the table.
- look around the table to see who is missing, and ask those people to participate
- there are many conversations – we need implementation!

**Municipal needs/opportunities:**

- Need DEI mission, vision, equity statement and leadership (not just support) to back it up.
- Dedicated budget for consultants, (mandatory) trainings and support
- Need policies and practices to attract and retain people of color to serve on boards, committees and commissions. These roles can serve as stepping stones into other roles.
- People of color need seats at the table because they bring different perspectives. BIPOC people go through the world in a different way, which has value. White people are more comfortable around other white people.
- How to get public meetings more accessible: provide locations with virtual access, food, child care, etc.
- How to educate people, especially people of color, on local candidates running for office and to understand their impact on communities if elected.
- This work needs to be part of the evaluation process. What are our goals, and how are we getting there?

**Regional needs/opportunities:**

- Would be helpful to learn where the other communities are at, and share resources – speaker series, etc. Lunch and Learn on best practices. Sharing stories, opportunities, and successes.

- Better hiring pipeline for BIPOC talent. [Employers] need to do the work to build credibility. Provide examples of employers who pay higher wages and take care of employees.
- CCRPC could offer convening and sharing, and put like-minded communities together.
- Providing a model charge for a committee would be helpful. Have someone that staff could reach out to for trainings or resources, and help create a road map for the work.
- CCRPC could help with regional messaging of issues in County through an equity lens. Density, zoning, housing, climate change, etc. – these are important conversations, how to present/message through an equity lens. Talk about interim zoning and how this impacts equity, and the climate crisis. And on a regional scale, from the regional perspective, with a message around “this is what you need to do...”
- Desire for space and opportunity for continued dialogue because this work is for the long haul and isn’t going away.
- Create or provide outlets and newsletters for other communities? Like Nepali, Swahili, etc. What about creating a “day in the life of a New American” series.
- Post meetings and other project info in grocery stores, in different languages. Provide international food at meetings/events. Example of Nepali dance troupe that attracted a lot of people to an event.
- Some communities are too small to sustain and nurture this work, so maybe the regional level could help with this.
- Need training for town staff, and how to have these conversations.
- It would be great for white leaders to come together to share, discuss, learn from each other
- Would be helpful for towns to work together, regional training, regional leadership training, evaluations of work, some sort of accountability. Would be great if we had a Chittenden County board that was looking at these issues with 1-2 reps from each community.
- Mandatory leadership training should be policy, countywide board from people in towns doing this work.

## APPENDIX E: Planning for Equity Summit Themes

### RECOMMENDATIONS/POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR CHANGE

Participants were asked to share their ideas for actions or strategies that CCRPC and its partners can take to help Chittenden County make progress towards building racial and economic justice.

#### Community/Stakeholder Engagement (15 comments)

Engaging community members and stakeholders was the strategy most commonly noted by participants. There are barriers that exist which limit public participation in the planning work that happens in communities. Participants shared specific suggestions to overcome these barriers such as: providing stipends, reaching out to specific groups, providing translation services, and offering multiple ways for people to participate.

*"We need to have honest conversations on race and increased engagement of BIPOC residents in planning."*

#### Embedded Equity Work (10 comments)

The next strategy that was mentioned most commonly by participants was the need to embed equity work throughout organizational structures. Equity audits and the application of an equity lens should be applied to all aspects of planning and development, and that the CCRPC could potentially assist municipalities with this work.

*"Incorporate our equity goal within other goals (housing, economic development, transportation), rather than simply having equity as its own goal tacked on to the end of a list."*

#### Local/Municipal Initiatives (10 comments)

In addition to ensuring an equity lens is applied to all future planning and development work, participants noted the need for local/municipal committees or groups that would provide oversight. Committees such as the Burlington Racial, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Committee were referenced.

*"It would be great to hear more about the accomplishments of various committees or boards that are addressing racial equity at a municipal level."*

#### Policy Change (10 comments)

Making lasting, systemic change also requires work at the policy level. Specific examples included changes to Act 250, the banking and lending system, and protection for renters.

*"[The] system needs to change, not the BIPOC community. Change the system so that BIPOC can feel more comfortable and not like they need to go super far out of the way to just get the same benefits as someone who is Caucasian."*

### **Zoning and Development (7 comments)**

Many participants also identified areas for improvement in current zoning and development rules and regulations. Examples included: Easing requirements for water and sewer permitting, making it easier to build accessory housing units and looking at municipal minimum lot size requirements.

*"In addition to tax incentives, maybe direct construction subsidies for affordable and accessible units"*

### **Education and Communication (5 comments)**

Several participants pointed out the need to educate the public, planners and commissioners, in a clear, transparent way that avoids jargon, provides a shared understanding of the issues, and offers concrete examples of what change could look like.

*"Understanding of fair housing laws is crucial (can the CCRPC help?)."*

### **Concrete Investment (5 comments)**

Several Summit participants suggested concrete investments as a strategy for change. Examples included using funds from the American Rescue Plan on equity issues, hiring an organization to give equity related feedback on projects and initiatives and more general investment on housing and schools. Participants encouraged the city of Burlington to consider making concrete investments in equity related programs, such as affordable housing and schools with the millions of ARP funding.

*"The areas where rich people are living are nicer -- roads are nicer. Go where we live and the roads are bad and it is not as nice. Why? Need better planning. Understand that infrastructure is not changing but give help to people. Disparities in housing and health."*

### **Board/Leadership Diversity (5 comments)**

Participants of the Summit relayed the need for more diversity on local boards and municipalities and emphasized the importance of including voices of folks with lived experience in positions where local policies are made. It was also noted that compensation is a key component of ensuring diverse participation.

*"Undo structural racism within government by having people of color as decision makers in those governmental systems."*

### **Accountability (3 comments)**

A few Summit participants raised the importance of accountability and asked that processes that are in place be reviewed at regular frequencies with an equity lens. A desire to hold city, municipal and state governments accountable to equity policies that currently exist was also shared by participants.

*“There needs to be more accountability in the design (referring to Burlington’s REIB Dept or the States Office of Equity and Inclusion) that currently exists for “quasi” government entities at the county level.”*

### **Environment v Housing (2 comments)**

There were a few comments from participants related to environmental preservation and how they interact with development. Innovative solutions are needed to balance the need for dense, mixed-use communities to address the housing affordability and shortage in Vermont with environmental and climate concerns.

### **Transportation (2 comments)**

Participants noted that transit-oriented development in our downtowns and village towns can help address housing challenges by allowing for the creation of more housing options in walkable communities that are accessible to public transit. A suggestion was also made for CCRPC to review other transportation organizations in similar settings for ideas and best practices.

### **Uncategorized (5 comments)**

The following suggestions were made by participants that did not fall into any specific category noted above, highlighting the participants’ desire to have CCRPC prioritize equity in their work.

- Compounding effect. Even if you change what’s happening today, it will take generations to take effect
- Once CCRPC has capacity, support folks sitting in staff and volunteer spaces with a specific focus on equity work with others in the region similar to the housing commission convening (e.g. equity commission convening or equity liaisons convening)
- Revolution!
- No development in Vermont. Kids say it is a dead state. We need development or kids will leave.
- Affinity spaces – safe spaces for LGBTQ/BIPOC groups

## **CONDITIONS HOLDING THE PROBLEM IN PLACE**

Participants were given the opportunity to analyze a planning challenge with an equity lens and identify conditions holding this problem in place, with the intent of gathering feedback to inform CCRPC’s thinking about how to embed an equity lens in their planning work.

### **Housing (27 comments)**

Participants overwhelmingly identified housing as a condition that is holding the problem in place. Although cost and access to housing were noted most frequently, participants also noted

housing policy, stigma towards renting, and second home ownership as contributing factors to the housing challenges in Chittenden County.

*"Housing is expensive because developers are made to pay for sidewalks and parks as part of their developments. This is something we do in New England, not other places in the country. Impact fees, open land requirements, sidewalks, roads, etc. cause the price of housing to be very high because developers pass on this cost to the home buyer. Then there are association fees that the people in the new developments pay for maintenance. Municipalities also have to hire more people and buy more equipment to maintain all the new paths and sidewalks. In Denver, homeowners are responsible for clearing the sidewalks in front of their homes or after a certain amount of time receive fines."*

### **Zoning and Development (10 comments)**

Many participants of the Summit indicated that Zoning and Development laws contribute to holding the problem in place. It was noted that Zoning laws are designed to restrict and can be prohibitive. Participants reflected that preferences for single-family homes and larger lot sizes are factors that can be changed to encourage more multi-unit housing to be built which will help the housing supply challenge.

*"Zoning is prohibitively restrictive. To incorporate diversity and tackle housing affordability, zoning needs to change."*

### **Banking/Lending Structures and Practices (7 comments)**

Banking and lending structures and practices were noted by several Summit participants as a condition that holds the problem in place. Lack of credit history, creative lending practices, and regulation were mentioned as contributing factors in preventing immigrants and BIPOC individuals from access to home loans.

*"Banks won't loan money to you if you don't have a credit history but as an immigrant how do you get that?"*

### **Community/Stakeholder Engagement (7 comments)**

Several Summit participants believe that robust community and stakeholder engagement can have a positive impact and help gather creative ideas and solutions to many of the problems that affect the BIPOC community. It was also noted that concrete investments such as stipends and flexible scheduling must be made to ensure robust and regular community engagement.

*"People that have needs are working more, but can't speak out b/c working"*

### **NIMBY (6 comments)**

The Not in My Backyard (NIMBY) phenomenon was noted by several Summit Participants as a condition that is holding the problem in place. Often residents of a neighborhood, who will likely have more resources, challenge affordable or denser housing in their local area which contributes to the lack of diversity.

*“Because of homogeneous neighborhoods, it makes it challenging to see how other neighborhoods are faring.”*

**Policy Change (5 comments)** Participants noted several places where policy change is needed in order to alleviate the racial disparities in housing and home ownership in Vermont. Updating curriculum, planning for growth and more equitable housing and development policies were noted examples.

*“Policy change is needed...[but] policy change is slow”*

**Education and Communication (4 comments)** Participants pointed out that there is a lack of consumer education about processes like banking/lending, as well as a need to help people understand the ways that structures and past practices like zoning regulations have created unequal access to housing.

*“People get angry and want change, but then zoning changes...are resisted by the community...”*

**Environment vs. Housing (4 comments)** A number of participants identified the struggle between preservation and development that exists in Vermont.

*“Can we be green and have development? We want green spaces, but we also need development to address the affordability crisis.”*

**Income (2 comments)** The disparity in income between BIPOC and white Vermonters was identified as a condition that is holding these issues in place.

*“[My] income is not allowing me to get the housing we want.”*

**Uncategorized (14 comments)** The following suggestions were made by participants that did not fall into any specific category noted above, highlighting the wide range of conditions that contribute to racial disparities in Vermont housing and home ownership.

*“There is so much happening in our system...this is a long game”*


- Need help with heating costs, help to fund schools.
- Consumers have real power.
- Vermont is owed a lot of money that could be given to communities. Tina Cook is building the data and evidence to show us. PA is doing a good job of allowing the money to flow to communities.
- How do we level the playing field and open opportunities to everyone from a local standpoint?
- Politics are messy, how do we get direct action?
- Race and national origin can be used as one of several factors for determining program services, benefits, loans, grants, etc. It cannot be the primary or only factor for consideration. Quotas are not ok.
- Rural towns have difficulty with applying some of these efforts/communicating across isolated areas.
- Continued devaluation/disinvestment in/for communities with people of color by white people/acceptance of the status quo.
- Legacy/history of racism perpetuating the situation.
- County level government is non-existent, non-elected.
- There is a psychological impact from all of this.



## APPENDIX F: Resources from *Planning for Equity Summit*

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### Housing & Land Ownership

-  [Housing Segregation and Redlining in America: A Short History | Code Switch | NPR](#)
- [Discrimination in Deed: Housing Covenants in VT](#)
- [Mapping Prejudice: What are Covenants](#)
- [Debate over conservation vs housing development comes to a head in South Burlington](#)
- [Segregation in Vermont continues through restrictive housing policies](#)
- [Black Land Loss Statistics from the USDA](#)
- [How Property Law Is Used to Appropriate Black Land](#)

### Community Land Trusts

- [King County Equity Now](#)
- [Land, Community and Local Control](#)
- [Champlain Housing Trust](#)

### Examples of Progress

- [New Communities Inc](#)
- [Digital map for reparations for Black & indigenous farmers](#)
- [LA Equity Index](#)
- [Fifty Years Ago, Fed Up With the City's Neglect, a San Diego Community Rose Up to Create Chicano Park, Smithsonian Mag](#)
- Making Planning Public
  - [Uphams Corner Street Lab](#)
  - [M/B/T/A Lab](#)
  - [People's Redevelopment Authority](#)