



Buncombe County Board of Commissioners

Request for Board Action

Meeting Date: 6/15/2021

New Business

Department: County Manager's Office

Presenter(s): Chris Bubenik, Recreation Services Planner
Leonard Jones, Community Development Specialist
DK Wesley, Assistant County Manager

Contact (s): DK Wesley, Assistant County Manager

Subject: Buncombe County Racial Equity Action Plan (REAP) Adoption

Brief Summary:

In July 2019, the Board of County Commissioners (Commission) began work to develop the county's first multiyear strategic plan. After a robust community input and feedback effort, the Buncombe County Strategic Plan 2025 was adopted on May 5, 2020. It included equity as not only a county value but also a foundational focus area. This came about from the Commissioners listening to Buncombe County residents who during the strategic plan community sessions called for its inclusion in great numbers.

On August 4, 2020 the Commission passed two resolutions: 1) resolution Declaring Racism a Public Health and Safety Crisis –via a recommendation from both the Health & Human Services Board and the Justice Resource Advisory Council 2) resolution apologizing for the atrocities of the past and present and directing county to work with the City of Asheville to create a Community Reparations Commission and develop a plan to make progress in this area. These actions coupled with the deep racial disparities that exist in Buncombe County led that Equity & Inclusion Workgroup to lead with racial equity and accordingly develop a Racial Equity Action Plan.

Over the last sixteen months, the Equity & Inclusion Workgroup has worked to develop the draft plan. After significant progress on this draft on December 7, 2020, the workgroup team leads presented a preview of the plan to the Commission and sought any additional guidance. The Commission reiterated its support and the workgroup started a robust, months long organizational and community input and feedback campaign. The draft plan was updated based on feedback and is being presented to the Commission for final consideration and approval. If approved, the County Manager's Office will lead the development of a detailed roadmap for implementation, including the development of performance measures and progress reporting.

Recommended Motion & Requested Action:

Approve countywide Racial Equity Action Plan and direct staff to begin implementation

County Manager's comments and Recommendation:

County Manager recommends approval.