FINAL REPORT

City of Salem

EQUITY ASSESSMENT

January 19, 2024

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I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. INTRODUCTION

The City of Salem (the City) engaged Moss Adams, LLP (Moss Adams) to perform an equity assessment of a sample of its community-facing services and programs to assist the City in advancing its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts. This work included:

- Assessment of the DEI maturity of community-facing services and programs, including identification of gaps and recommendations for improvement

- Development of an equity assessment toolkit that could be used to assess DEI maturity of community-facing services and programs and identify opportunities for improvement to policies, practices, procedures, and/or outcomes

- Development of a DEI planning tool for the planning of new projects, programs, or services

- Development of recommended DEI-related performance measures

To complete this assessment, we conducted planning, information and data collection, and analysis to gain an understanding of the existing environment, identify opportunities for improvement, and provide practical recommendations. The Equity Assessment Toolkit and Equity Planning Tool for New Programs and Services (Equity Planning Tool) are separate work products and are not included in this report.

B. COMMENDATIONS

Based on the insights gathered through interviews and document review, it is evident that there are many commendable efforts relating to equity in community-facing services and programs occurring throughout the City. Some examples include:

- **Equity Roundtable:** The City convened a group of community stakeholders who are engaged in ongoing equity-related improvement work. To increase access to participation, the City provides stipends to participants for whom compensation would be a barrier to participation. The Equity Roundtable is a constructive new strategy in the City's developing approach to community engagement.

- **Language Access:** A recurring theme that arose in interviews is the City's progress around understanding and addressing language barriers that exist in the community. Recent efforts to improve access include a concerted effort to hire bilingual public-facing employees and inclusion of Spanish-language translations on many documents and City communications.

- **Commitment to Improvement:** Although the City's focus on equity is still in the beginning stages, there is a widespread acknowledgement among staff and leadership that this is a necessary and worthwhile effort.

We would like to commend City leadership and staff for their willingness to assist us in this assessment process. These commendations, coupled with our findings and recommendations, provide an overview of areas of strengths and weaknesses that can help improve operations and reduce risk at the City of Salem.

C. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Observations and recommendations are grouped into five sections: (1) Understanding Equity, (2) Designing Goals and Strategies, (3) Building Capacity, (4) Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems, and (5) Assessing Progress. Detailed observations and recommendations for all five areas are provided in Section III of this report.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS		
UNDERSTANDING EQUITY		
1.	**Observation**	Although the City recently developed an internal definition of equity, there is not yet a shared understanding of equity across the City.
	Recommendation	Clearly establish and widely share what equity means within the City's operating environment, through at least the following methods: A. Provide regular, required training to staff about equity and equity-related concepts, including training specific to the City's institutional history related to equity and the specific environment the City operates within (e.g., the policy environment, area demographics). B. Implement methods to consistently build awareness of equity that goes beyond training and supports a culture where equity is top of mind for staff providing City programs and services. C. Integrate equity into City operations and normalize conversations around equity by establishing leadership's commitment to equity, encouraging ongoing discussions around equity through a variety of communication channels, and creating mechanisms for staff to share their experiences and feedback around equity issues.
2.	**Observation**	Equity work across the City is largely self-driven, and staff in individual programs understand and apply equity concepts at varying levels.
	Recommendation	Develop a process that requires staff to use the Equity Assessment Toolkit to assess their programs on a regular basis and take action based on the results.
DESIGNING GOALS AND STRATEGIES		
3.	**Observation**	Equity-related goals and strategies are not consistently developed for programs and services, which deprioritizes service improvements related to equity.
	Recommendation	A. Establish clear Citywide goals and strategies related to equity to set priorities for the organization. B. Develop a process for supporting programs in developing program-specific equity goals and strategies, such as through implementation of the Equity Assessment Toolkit. C. Develop a process to require the use of the Equity Planning Tool when developing new or significantly revised programs or services.
BUILDING CAPACITY		
4.	**Observation**	Budgeting decisions do not consistently consider equity, which may lead to inequitable outcomes.
	Recommendation	A. Develop a tool or process for considering equity in budget decisions.

		OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
		B. Incorporate equity-related considerations when evaluating revenue strategies and conducting fee studies.
5.	**Observation**	There is limited capacity Citywide to pursue equity initiatives.
	Recommendation	A. Establish clear Citywide goals and strategies related to equity to set priorities for the organization. B. Ensure resources are allocated in a way that promotes and advances equity, which may include reallocating funds from less critical areas to those with a more significant equity impact. C. Consider appointing a centralized resource to coordinate equity-related efforts. D. Leverage relationships with community partners who share a commitment to equity for resources, expertise, and support to advance equity.
6.	**Observation**	The City's workforce is less diverse than the population of Salem, which may limit the City's ability to represent, connect with, and understand the community.
	Recommendation	A. Continue current efforts to develop targeted recruitment strategies to attract diverse talent. B. Provide training and resources to support the retention and advancement of diverse employees. C. Establish measurable goals and outcomes to track progress and ensure accountability toward increasing staff diversity. D. Continue current efforts to attract diverse talent, such as salary incentives for bilingual personnel.
		ESTABLISHING PRACTICES, PROCESSES, AND SYSTEMS
7.	**Observation**	While there are some examples of strong community engagement practices at the City, there is not a united approach to community engagement, which limits the City's ability to develop meaningful and equitable relationships with the community.
	Recommendation	Develop processes to support programs in improving community engagement, outreach, and partnerships to support positive, proactive, and equitable community involvement.
8.	**Observation**	There are limited Citywide policies and procedures in place that are designed to advance equity, which limits the City's ability to operationalize the consideration of equity.
	Recommendation	A. Determine what Citywide policies should be implemented to advance equity and implement the identified policies. B. Develop a process for supporting programs in identifying procedures, tools, and resources that should be developed to improve equitable service provision, such as through the implementation of the Equity Assessment Toolkit.
		ASSESSING PROGRESS
9.	**Observation**	Equity-related performance measures are not consistently or deliberately developed and reported Citywide or for most programs and services. This

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
	makes it difficult to understand progress or use data to inform improvements to equity-related service outcomes.
Recommendation	A. Select Citywide equity performance measures. B. Develop and implement processes to regularly assess achievement of identified Citywide performance measures and use results to make improvements. C. Develop a regular reporting structure on equity measures and consider opportunities to integrate equity reporting into staff reports to Council. D. Support programs in creating program-specific performance measures that are aligned with the City's equity performance measures.

II. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND AND PROJECT OVERVIEW

The City of Salem (the City) is the capital city of Oregon and serves a population of over 170,000 residents. The City currently employs more than 1,400 staff and provides a full range of municipal services. Guided by the aim of creating an equitable and inclusive City for its employees and residents, the City engaged Moss Adams, LLP (Moss Adams) to perform an equity assessment of a sample of its community-facing services and programs to assist the City in advancing its diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts.

According to the City's strategic plan, the City aims to ensure that City services are provided equitably to all residents. The City's definition of equity is included below, as defined in its planning documents, including its 2022 Salem Area Comprehensive Plan (Our Salem) and its 2021 Climate Action Plan:

> "Equity means all residents have the opportunity to participate and thrive in an inclusive society. This requires rectifying unequal access to resources and opportunities caused by historic and current systems of oppression and exclusion related to race, income, ability, gender, sexual identity, and other factors. An equitable community overcomes disparities by providing increased levels of support to community members based on their needs. In Salem, it is a priority to advance equity in decision-making processes and the outcomes of those processes, including policies, investments, practices, and procedures."

Our assessment was conducted as the City is facing major resource capacity limitations. The City is projecting a general fund shortfall of more than $15 million by 2026. In November 2023, the voters of Salem did not pass the Safe Salem Payroll Tax, which would have helped fill the projected budget shortfall and City leaders are currently in discussion about next steps. This report acknowledges the significant challenges posed by the City's budget shortfall and endeavors to provide recommendations within that context.

B. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

Scope

This assessment was conducted between June and December 2023. The objectives of this project included:

- Assessment of the DEI maturity of community-facing services and programs, including identification of gaps and recommendations for improvement
- Development of an equity assessment toolkit that could be used to assess DEI maturity of community-facing services and programs and identify opportunities for improvement to policies, practices, procedures, and/or outcomes
- Development of a DEI planning tool for the planning of new projects, programs, or services
- Development of recommended DEI-related performance measures

The Equity Assessment Toolkit and Equity Planning Tool for New Programs and Services are separate work products and are not included in this report.

Please note that throughout this document, the term "program" is used to refer to a service at any level and may include services that are otherwise referred to as a program, function, department, or division.

Methodology

The project consisted of four major phases:

- **Project Initiation and Management:** This phase concentrated on comprehensive planning and project management. It included selecting employees to interview, identifying documents to review, communicating results, and establishing regular project status reports.
- **Fieldwork:** This phase included interviews, document review, facilitated work sessions, and best practice research. We worked with City leadership and program staff to obtain the most up-to-date information and insights available.
  - *Interviews and Engagement:*
    - We collaborated with an eight-member steering committee of City leadership and staff to guide our work and better understand the City's overarching approach to equity.
    - We facilitated an in-person work session and a virtual work session with a larger 23-member advisory committee of City leadership and staff to gain insights into the City's strengths, challenges, and priorities related to equity and inform tool development. This group was largely made up of City leadership and staff on the City's DEI Committee, which was established in 2021.
    - We conducted interviews with 59 employees across eight programs to gain insights into how these programs were approaching equity.
    - We facilitated an in-person workshop with the City's Equity Roundtable, a group that provides input on City projects and programs and is comprised of representatives of local organizations who serve or represent underserved communities in the City, to gain insights into community perspectives on the City's approach to equity.
  - *Document Review:* We reviewed documents including organizational charts, demographic data, and planning documents.
  - *Best Practice Research:* Based on identified opportunities for improvement, we conducted research on DEI best practices.
  - *Tool Development:* We developed an Equity Assessment Toolkit and an Equity Planning Tool. These tools are separate work products but were used to guide the observations in this report and are incorporated into recommendations.
- **Analysis:** In this assessment phase, we evaluated the importance, impact, and scope of our observations within the context of the information we gathered to develop actionable recommendations.
- **Reporting:** We concluded the project by reviewing draft observations and recommendations with the steering committee to validate facts and confirm the practicality of our recommendations.

Case Study Methodology

We evaluated the City through the lens of the following eight programs, selected in collaboration with the steering committee as a representative sample of the types of programs and services that exist across the City:

- Center 50+
- Compliance Services
- Emergency Operations (Fire)
- Neighborhood Recreation and Sports
- Parking Services
- Parks
- Planning Services
- Willamette Valley Communications Center (911 Services)

We considered each program's alignment with the guiding principles listed below. More information about these principles is included in the Equity Assessment Toolkit:

1. **Understanding Equity:** Program staff have a deep understanding of equity as it relates to their services.
2. **Designing Goals and Strategies:** Equity is incorporated into the program's strategy, goals, and objectives.
3. **Building Capacity:** The program has created sufficient capacity for equity efforts to be successful.
4. **Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems:** Equity is meaningfully incorporated into the program's practices, processes, and systems.
5. **Assessing Progress:** The program assesses its equity efforts and uses lessons learned to adjust strategies used.

Based on results of case study evaluations, additional conversations with leadership, and review of available data and information, we prepared observations and recommendations that represent our assessment of the current state of the City's maturity as it relates to providing equitable programs and services and suggestions for where the City can focus efforts to improve equity-related outcomes. We also prepared summaries of each case study, which were used to support development of the Citywide observations and recommendations and are included in Section III of this report.

III. OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

These observations and recommendations represent our assessment of the current state of equity at the City, based on the case studies included in this assessment and suggestions for where the City can focus efforts to improve equity-related outcomes.

Observations are grouped into the five guiding principles described in the Case Study Methodology section.

A. UNDERSTANDING EQUITY

Citywide Understanding of Equity

1.	Observation	Although the City recently developed an internal definition of equity, there is not yet a shared understanding of equity across the City.
	Recommendation	Clearly establish and widely share what equity means within the City's operating environment, through at least the following methods: A. Provide regular, required training to staff about equity and equity-related concepts, including training specific to the City's institutional history related to equity and the specific environment the City operates within (e.g., the policy environment, area demographics). B. Implement methods to consistently build awareness of equity that goes beyond training and supports a culture where equity is top of mind for staff providing City programs and services. C. Integrate equity into City operations and normalize conversations around equity by establishing leadership's commitment to equity, encouraging ongoing discussions around equity through a variety of communication channels, and creating mechanisms for staff to share their experiences and feedback around equity issues.

The City must develop a shared understanding of equity across all employees and leaders within the organization to meaningfully advance DEI efforts. Effectively defining equity and equity-related concepts goes beyond developing simple definitions and requires conversations about what the terms mean within the context of the City and the services it provides.

While the City has defined equity in two planning documents, the 2022 Salem Area Comprehensive Plan (Our Salem) and the 2021 Climate Action Plan, many staff reported they were unaware of this definition. Others were aware a definition existed but did not know where to access the information. Additionally, staff understood equity-related concepts and how to apply them to the City's programs and services at varying levels (see also Understanding of Equity in Programs).

Other than a mandatory online DEI training provided at the beginning of 2023, staff reported there has been limited equity-related training at the City. It is important for regular equity-related training to be both accessible and required for staff to build foundational equity-related knowledge Citywide and to encourage staff to think critically about the decisions they make and how those decisions may unintentionally perpetuate inequities.

Additionally, conversations around equity are normalized across the City. In other words, discussions about DEI are not widespread or an integral part of the City's operations. Promoting more openness about equity can help the organization more readily identify its shortcomings and make needed changes. When equity is a regular topic of discussion, decisions are more likely to be well-informed and made with a broader range of voices and perspectives.

Without a clear and shared understanding of equity across the City, staff may interpret equity inconsistently (or not engage with the concept), which may lead to unequal outcomes across services and may hinder the City's overall efforts to advance equity. This can make it difficult for programs to effectively work together on equity initiatives and limit the City's ability to consistently prioritize equity in decision-making processes.

Moving forward, City leadership should clearly establish and widely share what equity means to the City, as well as how the concept should be applied across City programs and operations. The following sections describe steps City leadership can take to build a stronger foundation of equity-related knowledge across the City.

Standardize Equity-Related Training

The City should develop and provide regular, required training to staff about equity and equity-related concepts. This includes educating staff on the local and national history of inequities that have shaped and continue to shape the experiences of the community today. Training should be specific to both the City's institutional history related to equity and the specific environment the City operates within (e.g., the policy environment, area demographics, etc.). Equity training can take shape in many forms, such as workshops, in-person instruction, or seminars and webinars. Examples include:

- The City of Los Angeles provides all current city employees and volunteers access to Cornerstone, an online program with modules designed to enhance understanding of DEI concepts that apply to their work.
- The City of Seattle offers a variety of training modules. Some are intended for all employees, while others are intended to provide targeted training for specific groups. Topics include training on how to implement the City's inclusive outreach and public engagement policies, anti-racism basics, and how to use the City's racial equity toolkit.
- The City of San Antonio implemented the Equity Trainers Program, a "train-the-trainer" model that is aimed at building staff capacity to share the its equity curriculum.

Increase Awareness of Equity

It is also important to consistently build awareness of equity. This goes beyond training and supports a culture where equity is top of mind for staff who are providing City programs and services. Although resources at the City are currently limited, increasing awareness of equity across the City does not have to be resource intensive. Possible strategies include:

- Recording an introductory video on equity and incorporating it into required onboarding materials.
- Sending an annual email from leadership reminding staff of the definition of equity and discussing equity highlights from the year.
- Continuing to support and enhance the City's DEI Committee and Equity Roundtable, and sharing the efforts of these groups with all staff on a regular basis.
- Continuing efforts to produce the DEI newsletter currently prepared by the City's DEI Committee.

- Establishing an intranet page dedicated to equity that could include frequently asked questions and links to relevant documents.

- Developing an increased understanding of who the City serves and who does and does not have the opportunity to use and benefit from the City's programs and services. For example, the City of Tacoma identifies and tracks disparities by geographical region in an Equity Index Map that was designed to serve as a data-driven tool to see where projects, policies, programs, or services could have the largest impact on addressing inequity and where investment could provide the biggest improvement in factors that impact life outcomes. The map is informed by 32 indicators based on five determinant categories: accessibility, economy, education, livability, and environmental health.

Normalize Equity Conversations

Equity should be a regular part of conversation and conversations around equity should be supported. To better integrate equity into City discussions and normalize conversations around equity, the City can consider:

- **Establishing leadership's commitment to equity:** City leaders are responsible for beginning, normalizing, and continuously encouraging conversations around equity. Leaders should seek to set an example of integrating equity into their work by incorporating equity discussions into regular meetings, encouraging employees to share their thoughts and ideas about equity strategies, and celebrating equity-related successes when they occur. Providing training to leadership on strategic planning for racial and social equity and how to champion equity efforts can also be helpful.

- **Encouraging ongoing discussions around equity and creating mechanisms for feedback around equity issues:** Staff should be encouraged to share their experiences and feedback around equity issues. These conversations can occur through a mix of communication channels including surveys, suggestion boxes, or dedicated time in recurring meetings.

Understanding of Equity in Programs

2.	Observation	Equity work across the City is largely self-driven, and staff in individual programs understand and apply equity concepts at varying levels.
	Recommendation	Develop a process that requires staff to use the Equity Assessment Toolkit to assess their programs on a regular basis and take action based on the results.

As programs are developed or implemented, it is important for City employees to have a thorough understanding of the historical context and factors that contribute to any existing disparities related to the services they provide. Additionally, program leaders must, at a minimum, understand the diverse populations they serve and the barriers they face, whether there are disparities in outcomes across different groups, and whether different groups experience different levels of service quality.

Based on the sample of programs we reviewed, there is a lack of understanding or widespread alignment around what equity means and how it should be applied at the programmatic level. While some employees have incorporated a more developed understanding of equity into their program planning and implementation, other employees have a limited understanding of equity or believe that equity concepts do not need to be taken into consideration for their area of work.

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There was also not a clear understanding of the difference between equal access and equitable access across programs. The general sense across several programs was that their services could not be inequitable because their services are provided to all residents at the same standard, regardless of their background. While this approach is fair and equal, and programs should be commended for aiming to provide quality services to all residents, this approach does not acknowledge that providing equitable service may require proactively allocating and providing resources and services to groups differently based on their unique needs or experiences.

In addition to implementing the recommendations identified in Observation 1, the City should develop a process that requires programs to use the Equity Assessment Toolkit (Toolkit) to assess their programs on a regular basis and design and execute action items based on the results. The Toolkit was designed to support programs in better understanding and operationalizing equity in their programs. Implementing the Toolkit will require time and resources, and the City should consider this when developing a process that is manageable and sustainable given staff workloads and priorities. Some considerations include:

- The City does not currently have a DEI office or staff specifically designated to manage DEI efforts. Even without this type of centralized leadership, it will be important for the City to explicitly delegate responsibility for coordinating and managing equity assessment efforts across departments. Given current resource limitations, the City may consider phasing in implementation of the Toolkit, such as by requiring a select set of programs to complete the activities in the Toolkit each year.

- Given the lack of widespread alignment around equity, programs will likely need considerable support completing the activities in the Toolkit for the first time. The City should provide training on the Toolkit, as well as coaching from those who are leading DEI efforts at the City, such as those on the City's DEI committee.

- While requiring programs to revisit the activities in the Toolkit on an annual basis is ideal, the City may consider requiring programs to complete the assessment less frequently (e.g., every two or three years) given capacity limitations.

- Programs should be required to report their assessment results to City leadership, along with their intended strategies to improve equity in service delivery. Regular progress on action should also be reported at least annually, and City leadership should maintain a compiled source for all program progress. Using an online form or survey platform could help streamline these processes and make them more time efficient.

B. DESIGNING GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Equity-Related Goals and Strategies

3.	Observation	Equity-related goals and strategies are not consistently developed for programs and services, which deprioritizes service improvements related to equity.
	Recommendation	A. Establish clear Citywide goals and strategies related to equity to set priorities for the organization.
		B. Develop a process for supporting programs in developing program-specific equity goals and strategies, such as through implementation of the Equity Assessment Toolkit.
		C. Develop a process to require the use of the Equity Planning Tool when developing new or significantly revised programs or services.

The City has incorporated equity into its strategic plan and other planning efforts, including Our Salem and the City's capital improvement planning process. However, the City has not clearly defined equity goals and strategies, which limits its efforts to advance equity in numerous ways. Without clearly defined goals and strategies:

- There is not clear direction for programs about the City's efforts to promote equity. This limits the ability of programs to align with City goals and objectives and results in less consistency in how equity is considered and approached across programs.

- Accountability and transparency are limited because it is more difficult for residents, organizations, and other stakeholders to monitor the City's progress when it is unclear what the City is hoping to achieve. Additionally, engagement with community members and stakeholders may be limited if they do not understand the City's vision and priorities. Establishing clear goals and strategies can improve trust with the community by establishing realistic goals and expectations that the community can monitor.

- It is more difficult to allocate resources efficiently because equity priorities are unclear. This is particularly important in a resource-constrained environment.

- Effective decision-making is hindered because goals cannot be monitored to understand progress and inform policy decisions.

Equity-related goals and strategies are also not consistently developed for programs and services, which means equitable service provision and outcomes are not reliably or explicitly integrated into program strategy or measurement. A lack of equity-related goals and strategies at the program level can also result in service improvements related to equity not being prioritized.

Equity-centered goals and strategies are more fully developed for planning-related services, such as Planning Services and Parks projects, but less developed for service-oriented programs, such as Neighborhood Sports and Recreation or Emergency Operations. Some programs, such as Parking Services, do not have any developed goals or strategies—equity-related or otherwise.

Establish Goals and Strategies

To provide clear direction to programs about equity and promote consistency, the City should first establish Citywide equity goals and strategies to set priorities for the organization. Examples include:

- The City of Portland provides a good example of citywide racial equity goals and strategies.
- The City of Minneapolis' goals in its Strategic and Racial Equity Action Plan are a good reminder that equity-related goals can be simple. The stated goals of the plan are to make their workforce more diverse, spend money with more types of businesses, use data that looks at different races when making decisions, and better connect with different communities through boards and commissions.

After the City has established Citywide equity goals and strategies, City leadership should support programs in developing program-specific equity goals and strategies. These goals and strategies should be strategically designed to align with the overarching goals of the City and to address specific equity barriers that are relevant to each program or service.

The City of Chicago provides a good example of department-level equity goals in its Racial Equity Report. To set the department-level goals, the City of Chicago's Equity and Racial Justice Office oversaw the development of at least three distinct strategies per department aimed at driving racial equity. At the end of the fiscal year, these strategies were assessed and reported as fully completed, partially completed, or remaining incomplete. This example shows that equity-related goals do not need to be overwhelming. Departments can design goals that feel achievable, and making progress towards those goals is considered a positive outcome.

The Equity Assessment Toolkit can support the City's efforts in designing goals and strategies at all levels. The Toolkit guides staff through the process of assessing the current state of a program or service, including identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement. These gaps and opportunities should be used to inform program-level goals and strategies, as well as to identify overarching themes beyond the ones detailed in this report that would make effective Citywide goals.

The City should also require the use of the Equity Planning Tool when developing new or significantly revised programs or services. The Equity Planning Tool is intended to guide program and service development with equity-related principles at the forefront. It is designed to be used to define equity as it pertains to the program and define program goals, strategies, and outcomes through an equity lens.

C. BUILDING CAPACITY

Budgeting

4.	Observation	Budgeting decisions do not consistently consider equity, which may lead to inequitable outcomes.
	Recommendation	A. Develop a tool or process for considering equity in budget decisions. B. Incorporate equity-related considerations when evaluating revenue strategies and conducting fee studies.

Equity is not a clear factor in budgeting conversations throughout the City, which staff report is largely due to resource constraints. This can lead to inequitable outcomes, especially in a resource-constrained environment where improvements must be prioritized and difficult decisions concerning cuts to programs and services are sometimes necessary. Because the budget is a reflection of the City's values and its plans for the future, it is imperative that budgeting processes incorporate equity

from the beginning. Many cities have adopted processes and tools that specifically incorporate equity considerations into budgeting decisions. Some examples include:

- The City of San Antonio, which created a budget equity tool to integrate explicit considerations of racial and economic equity into its budget development process.

- The City of Philadelphia, which created a process for incorporating equity into its budget process that included, among other activities, requiring city departments to submit responses to racial equity-focused questions in their budget submissions.

- The City of Austin, which created an equity assessment tool for departments that includes a section on budget that asks departments to assess their budget and determine how funds could be re-allocated to advance racial equity.

- The City of Chicago, which created a budget equity process to assess and enhance racial equity progress and is intended to communicate strategy in alignment with data.

- The City of Portland, which created a budget equity assessment tool comprised of a set of a questions designed to guide city bureaus and their Budget Advisory Committees in conducting a comprehensive evaluation of the prioritization and inclusion of equity within bureau budgets.

Equity has also reportedly not been considered in the City's historical fee studies or other processes to set fee amounts. Fines and fees can have disproportional and negative impacts on historically marginalized groups. Several best practices suggest incorporating equity into all revenue strategies, including reforms of fines and fees:

- The Urban Institute discusses strategies that include measuring annual percentage changes in overall dependency on fines and fees, examining which activities are funded by fines and fees, and investigating the population demographics showing who bears the payment burdens.

- The National League of Cities discusses the importance of understanding the data surrounding specific fines and fees in order to understand who is impacted and what reforms are needed.

To reduce the likelihood that budget and resource decisions will lead to inequitable outcomes, the City should develop a tool or process for considering equity in budget decisions. In developing an effective tool, the City should consider incorporating equity considerations when the City's annual proposed budget is being developed by the City Manager, the Budget Office, and City departments. The budget tool or process should consider and be catered towards the work the City and its individual programs are doing relating to equity and funding should be dedicated based on factors like need, progress, and impact. The City should also incorporate equity-related considerations when evaluating revenue strategies and conducting fee studies. This includes reviewing data surrounding fines and fees and understanding the impact of fines and fees on different groups in the community.

Capacity Limitations

5.	Observation	There is limited capacity Citywide to pursue equity initiatives.
	Recommendation	A. Establish clear Citywide goals and strategies related to equity to set priorities for the organization.
		B. Ensure resources are allocated in a way that promotes and advances equity, which may include reallocating funds from less critical areas to those with a more significant equity impact.
		C. Leverage relationships with community partners who share a commitment to equity for resources, expertise, and support to advance equity.
		D. Determine what resources and staffing are necessary and available to effectively implement equity-related work (including any selected recommendations made in this report).

The City is projecting a general fund shortfall of more than $15 million by 2026. Resource limitations have restricted the City's ability to invest resources, personnel, and energy into equity efforts. Additionally, equity has not been consistently prioritized across programs—partially because staff are stretched thin and focused on meeting the day-to-day demand for their services. Interviewed staff frequently reiterated the prohibiting effects the City's budget has had on their programs, which has contributed to the City's limited ability to proactively and effectively address equity concerns. Examples include:

- Staff in 911 Services reported they do not have the personnel to consider much other than the immediate tasks at hand. Staff reported that many employees work overtime and are unable to be out of the office without having significant impacts on program operations. While the program has implemented some important equity-related practices, including increasing language access and accessibility to its services, these capacity challenges have otherwise prevented the program from proactively assessing and evaluating other equity-related needs that may exist.

- Staff in Emergency Operations reported there has been a notable increase in efforts to diversify the talent pool through initiatives such as community engagement in high schools and posting job openings on a wider range of websites. These efforts were reportedly successful, drawing in a diverse group of applicants, but due to budget restraints, hiring had to be paused. Emergency Operations reported the program has had to shift its focus away from building capacity and concentrate on maintaining capacity.

- Like 911 Services and Emergency Operations, Center 50+ reported having a small staff with limited capacity. Their primary efforts and focus have been on logistics, rather than on more proactive efforts to advance equity.

Given the City's current resource environment, it is important for the City to focus and prioritize its efforts. To do so, the City should:

- Set clear organization-wide goals and strategies related to equity (see also Equity-Related Goals and Strategies). Setting clear goals and strategies will align the organization around an established set of priorities and focus areas. Additionally, this will provide transparency to the community about the City's direction and resource allocation. A common theme from our meeting with the Equity Roundtable was that it is important for the City to be transparent and honest regarding its capabilities and limitations in advancing equity to build trust in the community.

- As part of its efforts to better consider equity in budgeting decisions, ensure resources are allocated in a way that promotes and advances equity, which may include reallocating funds from less critical areas to those with a more significant equity impact. Such efforts could be supported by the development of a tool or process for considering equity in budget decisions (see also Budgeting).
- Leverage relationships with community partners who share a commitment to equity for resources, expertise, and support. Working with community partners is an effective way to increase capacity for services in a resource-constrained environment. For example, Center 50+ is working to expand its curriculum by engaging with community partners to develop culturally relevant cooking classes.

In addition to the above strategies to focus and prioritize equity efforts, the City needs to determine what resources and staffing are necessary and available to advance equity efforts and effectively put into practice any recommendations made in this report that are selected for implementation. Resources and capacity were a top concern of the leadership, staff, and community stakeholders engaged throughout this project. While the City hired a DEI coordinator in fiscal year 2022—a position that could support this work—this position is currently vacant, and the City has not decided whether this position will be refilled given its current budget challenges.

A potential solution suggested by the City's advisory committee that supported this assessment was to identify an individual in each department who can champion equity efforts and serve as a resource to others in their department. These individuals could also collaborate and work together on Citywide equity initiatives to help the City advance in this area. This model has been implemented by other organizations, including the City of Tacoma who has a group of internal equity advocates from each department—Equity Champions—who are working together to operationalize equity across all departments. For this model to be successful, City leadership must invest in the continued training and development of these individuals to support their competency in leading discussions and efforts related to advancing equity.

Internal Diversity

6.	Observation	The City's workforce is less diverse than the population of Salem, which may limit the City's ability to represent, connect with, and understand the community.
	Recommendation	A. Continue current efforts to develop targeted recruitment strategies to attract diverse talent. B. Provide training and resources to support the retention and advancement of diverse employees. C. Establish measurable goals and outcomes to track progress and ensure accountability toward increasing staff diversity. D. Continue current efforts to attract diverse talent, such as salary incentives for bilingual personnel.

A workforce that is representative of the City's communities and more closely reflects the diverse needs and perspectives of these communities is more likely to proactively identify where efforts are needed. According to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, diversity and inclusion can increase a government agency's capacity to serve and protect people who have a variety of experiences or backgrounds, as well as enhance its ability to be receptive of differences. In addition, research shows

that staff diversity can positively impact productivity, decision-making, and financial success in public service workforces.[1]

The diversity of the City's workforce is less than that of the Salem community. According to data provided by the City, while it has increased the ethic/racial diversity of its workforce since 2019, its workforce is not representative of its population. Staff also reported a lack of diversity in City leadership and on City Boards and Commissions.

ETHNICITY/RACE	CITY WORKFORCE*	CITY POPULATION**
American Indian and Alaska Native	1.1%	1.0%
Asian	2.1%	3.3%
Black or African American	0.7%	1.4%
Hispanic or Latino	10.7%	22.4%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	1.0%	1.8%
Two or More Races	2.8%	10.2%
White	81.6%	75.3%
Female	30%	49%
Male	70%	51%

*Based on voluntarily reported data, 2023

**Based on 2021 American Community Survey, U.S. Census Bureau data

While diversity has been a consideration in many programs' recent recruitment strategies, it has not necessarily been a priority. Some programs expressed increased focus on improving diversity in staffing their programs, specifically in recruiting bilingual talent. Additionally, in recognition of gender disparity among sworn officers, the police department signed onto the 30x30 Pledge in March 2023, an initiative aimed at increasing the representation of women in police recruit classes to 30% by 2030. Overall, however, efforts across the City are inconsistent and seem largely driven by individual program leadership rather than by a greater Citywide emphasis.

City management should establish what an ideal diverse workforce looks like for the City of Salem, recommend it to City Council, and enact goals and a framework for how to achieve it. This could include:

- **Developing targeted recruitment and retention strategies to attract diverse talent:** Developing an inclusive and diverse workforce requires a targeted outreach and recruiting strategy. Strategies can include partnering with community organizations that serve diverse populations, ensuring pay equity, using inclusive, gender-neutral language and referencing equity

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[1] Mission Square Research Institute, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Public Service Workforce

in the City's job postings, prioritizing internships and apprenticeships throughout the City to attract young professionals, and providing diversity training to hiring managers.

- **Providing training and resources to support the retention and advancement of diverse employees:** It is important to pair recruitment efforts with creating a welcoming and inclusive environment that retains diverse staff who join the City. Retention strategies can include creating a psychologically safe workplace, providing mentorship and sponsorship programs, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture.

- **Establishing measurable goals and outcomes to track progress and ensure accountability toward increasing staff diversity:** The City already collects staff demographic data to set achievable goals and track the progress made toward those goals. For example, the City might set the goal that departments increase the diversity of employees on staff each year with a five-year goal tailored to each department. The City can also consider monitoring turnover rates by demographic and collecting employee feedback on inclusion.

Budgetary and resource constraints have also reportedly prevented additional hires who may have increased internal diversity. To address this issue, the City should establish a Citywide initiative to prioritize diversity in hiring and promotion, with an allocated budget item to support these efforts. These efforts may require exploration of reallocating existing resources to support diversity-related initiatives and prioritizing staff diversity, equity, and inclusion in the City's budgeting processes. The City should also continue current efforts to attract diverse talent, such as salary incentives for bilingual personnel.

D. ESTABLISHING PRACTICES, PROCESSES, AND SYSTEMS

Community Engagement

7.	Observation	While there are some examples of strong community engagement practices at the City, there is not a united approach to community engagement, which limits the City's ability to develop meaningful and equitable relationships with the community.
	Recommendation	Develop processes to support programs in improving community engagement, outreach, and partnerships to support positive, proactive, and equitable community involvement.

The City is hiring a Chief Communications Officer and expanding efforts to improve community engagement. Additionally, in interviews with the programs studied for this assessment, it was clear that most programs have at least an informal approach to community engagement at various stages of program provision. However, there is not a united approach to community engagement across the City and there is no guidance available at the City level to help program leaders understand how to incorporate community engagement, forge long-term relationships with community groups, or understand where gaps in community engagement may exist. In addition, many interviewed staff shared that they do not have the resources or time to engage the community to the extent that they would like. These challenges pose the following risks:

- City programs or policies may be implemented with insufficient or incomplete community feedback

- Some community groups may be too heavily relied upon for feedback to City services and there is a lack of internal coordination to identify when employees in different areas of the City are reaching out to individual groups

- Some community groups may not have their feedback sufficiently incorporated

- Community members who are significantly more involved with the City may have an outsized impact compared to community members who are intimidated by involvement or who otherwise find the City to be inaccessible

Additionally, while community engagement efforts related to planning are more proactive, engagement with the community around service provision is largely done reactively. For example, due to resource constraints, Compliance Services and Parking Services are complaint-driven and these programs reported limited capacity to proactively engage with residents. Developing more proactive approaches to community outreach, such as educational campaigns in targeted areas to reduce complaints before they happen, could improve outcomes. Using data to assess where disparate outcomes exist could inform where the City should target these efforts (see also Performance Measurement and Reporting).

Programs are also not consistently using community feedback to inform changes to programs and services. This feedback could bolster programs' ability to analyze barriers, create effective strategies, and gain community approval of implementation plans. The City administers an annual statistically significant resident survey that could be leveraged by programs to understand community perceptions, in addition to any feedback collected at the program level.

Although there are opportunities to improve internal coordination in this area, there are many areas across the City where community engagement is a priority and progress is occurring. For example:

- Planning Services has convened an ongoing Equity Roundtable of community stakeholders who meet regularly to provide feedback on equity-related issues at the City.

- Parks is planning to update the Parks Services Master Plan beginning in 2024. Interviewed employees reported the team's intention to build tools into the planning process for community feedback on the Master Plan.

- Center 50+ relies on numerous community partnerships to reach new patrons and has begun to rely on those partnerships to inform the development of culturally relevant programming.

As the City continues to mature its approach to community engagement, it will be paramount to develop processes that foster deeper, stronger, and more wide-reaching relationships, as well as a consistent approach to community engagement Citywide. The City's processes should ultimately support programs in improving community engagement, outreach, and partnerships to support positive, proactive, and equitable community development.

Examples of similar processes at other jurisdictions and organizations include:

- The City of Seattle has developed an Equitable Community Engagement Ethos that outlines the vision, values, principles, tools, and outcomes that guide community engagement for its staff.

- The Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences maintains a Community Engagement web page that establishes what community engagement is, why it matters, and provides a framework for staff conducting community engagement.

- The Municipal Research and Services Center (MRSC) publishes a database of Community Engagement Resources that curates policies, practices, and tools for community engagement, including many examples.

Policies and Procedures

8.	Observation	There are limited Citywide policies and procedures in place that are designed to advance equity, which limits the City's ability to operationalize the consideration of equity.
	Recommendation	A. Determine what Citywide policies should be implemented to advance equity and implement the identified policies. B. Develop a process for supporting programs in identifying procedures, tools, and resources that should be developed to improve equitable service provision, such as through the implementation of the Equity Assessment Toolkit.

There are limited Citywide policies in place designed to advance equity, which limits the City's ability to operationalize the consideration of equity. Additionally, without standardized direction and guidance, individual programs are left to develop their own approaches to equity, which has contributed to inconsistent approaches (e.g., related to language access and community engagement) and a lack of coordination across the City. Ultimately, a lack of policies means there is no assurance that the approach to equity is consistent between programs, and most equity-related interventions that do occur are reactive.

Additionally, while there were some examples of existing equity tools in place, particularly related to planning (e.g., the City's Equity Scoring Tool for Capital Improvement Projects), programs largely lack formalized procedures and tools to operationalize equity in their programs. Program staff in many City services, such as Compliance Services, Parking Services, Emergency Operations, and others, have a high degree of discretion when providing services day to day. These types of environments make it especially important to have formalized policies, tools, and resources to guide staff in service delivery and promote consistent approaches. Without such resources, there is limited assurance that staff are consistently implementing decisions across different groups in the City, even with the best of intentions.

To aid in developing a consistent approach to equity, the City should first identify and implement Citywide policies that will advance equity. Examples of policies the City could consider adopting include:

- A policy requiring certain DEI-related training on a regular basis (see also Citywide Understanding of Equity).
- A policy requiring programs to use the Equity Assessment Toolkit to assess their programs on a regular basis and take action based on the results (see also Understanding of Equity in Programs).
- A policy requiring the use of the Equity Planning Tool when developing new or significantly revised programs or services (see also Equity-Related Goals and Strategies).
- A policy requiring the consideration of equity in budget proposals (see also Budgeting)

- A policy providing requirements and guidance around community engagement (see also Community Engagement).

- Policies requiring programs to provide accessible and equitable services, such as policies related to communication. For example, the City of Austin has a language access policy that requires all City departments to provide equitable access to services and information to everyone living in, working in, or visiting Austin, regardless of their ability to speak English.

- A policy that emphasizes the City's dedication to creating a diverse and inclusive workplace, which might include strategies for recruitment, retention, and advancement of employees from various backgrounds (see also Internal Diversity).

The City should also develop a process for supporting programs with identifying procedures, tools, and resources that should be developed to improve equitable service provision at the program level. The Equity Assessment Toolkit was designed to identify gaps and opportunities within departments and can be used for this purpose.

E. ASSESSING PROGRESS

Performance Measurement and Reporting

9.	Observation	Equity-related performance measures are not consistently or deliberately developed and reported Citywide or for most programs and services. This makes it difficult to understand progress or use data to inform improvements to equity-related service outcomes.
	Recommendation	A. Select Citywide equity performance measures. B. Develop and implement processes to regularly assess achievement of identified Citywide performance measures and use results to make improvements. C. Develop a regular reporting structure on equity measures and consider opportunities to integrate equity reporting into staff reports to Council. D. Support programs in creating program-specific performance measures that are aligned with the City's equity performance measures.

While a large amount of Citywide equity-related data or data exists that could be used to inform equity, equity-related performance measures are not consistently or deliberately developed and reported on Citywide or for most programs and services. Interviewed City staff also reported there is not currently a full understanding of community demographic data that would aid in developing many equity-related measures. These conditions make it extremely difficult to understand the City's overall progress related to equity. Additionally, without clear process to measure and assess progress, it is difficult for the City to identify areas of needed improvement. To mitigate these challenges, the City should select performance measures and regularly assess and report on its progress toward achieving the identified performance measures.

The City should select performance measures that align with its goals and objectives. The list below includes suggested performance metrics for the City. Suggested metrics were developed based on a review of measures used by other cities, alignment with the City's goal areas, strategic priorities listed in its 2021–2026 Strategic Plan, and ease of measurement (e.g., whether the City could leverage

data that is already collected). Performance metrics should be disaggregated by various demographics to understand the impact in the community.

- Crime rate reduction

- Equitable emergency response time

- Increase in affordable housing units

- Unemployment reduction

- Percentage of owners paying more than 30% of income on a mortgage

- Percentage of renters paying more than 30% of income on rent

- Median household income

- Percentage of residents who live within a quarter mile of a park

- Percent of population earning less than the federal poverty limit

- Workforce diversity citywide and by department

- Leadership diversity

- Retention and turnover of city staff

- Representation in decision-making (i.e., council diversity, boards and commissions diversity)

- Average hours spent per staff member in equity-related training

- Ease of finding information to resolve City issues

- Percent of residents who are very or somewhat satisfied with overall City services

- Perception that City services are distributed fairly

The City should also have a clear understanding of the demographic makeup of its residents to provide important context for understanding its selected metrics. Given the City is in the relatively early stages of operationalizing equity and building an understanding of how to drive equity in its programs and services, the City can initially select a subset of the above metrics. As the City advances its equity efforts, it should continue to refine its performance measures to ensure it is holistically measuring achievement of its set goals and priorities and to incorporate community input. Once Citywide metrics are selected, the City should support programs in creating program-specific performance metrics that are aligned with the City's overall metrics.

After performance measures are selected, the City should develop and implement processes to regularly assess achievement of identified Citywide performance measures. For each selected performance metric, the City should clearly define the purpose of the metric, the unit of measurement (e.g., percentage, number, ratio, etc.), the methodology for calculating the metric, the source of the data, the target or benchmark the City is aiming to achieve (e.g., a 5% increase), how frequently the metric should me measures or assessed, and responsibility for achieving the metric. For example, the City of Issaquah developed a Performance Measurement Matrix as part of its Performance Measurement Plan[2] that details Citywide performance measures, the definition and reason for measuring each measure, the action to be taken based on the measure, and the target, historical data, and data source.

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[2] The City of Issaquah's Performance Measurement Plan is located on their Performance Dashboard.

The City should also establish a process for reporting on equity measures. The City should develop a regular reporting schedule (e.g., monthly, quarterly, annually) and consistently report on performance measures to show trends over time. Ideally reports should be available online in a central location that is easy to access and understand by members of the public. The City may also consider opportunities to integrate equity reporting into pre-existing staff reports to Council. Examples of reporting structures in other cities include:

- The City of Tacoma identifies and tracks disparities by geographical region in an Equity Index Map. The map is informed by 32 indicators based on five determinant categories: accessibility, economy, education, livability, and environmental health.

- EquityNYC reports the status of racial and social equity in New York City with over 80 indicators across eight domains including education, health and wellbeing, housing, empowered residents and neighborhoods, economic security and mobility, core infrastructure and the environment, personal and community safety, and diverse and inclusive government.

- The City of Baltimore produces the Baltimore City Annual Equity Report, which is largely composed of individual programs, services, departments, and team's self-assessments.

IV. CASE STUDY RESULTS

A. PURPOSE OF CASE STUDIES

We used case studies to support our evaluation of the City's DEI maturity as it relates to providing services to the community. In collaboration with City leadership, we selected eight programs as a representative sample of the types of programs and services that exist across the City. The lessons learned through the case studies can be applied across the City and were used to inform the observations and recommendations in Section III of this report.

B. SELECTED PROGRAMS

The following eight programs were included in this assessment:

Program	Mission and Services
Center 50+	Provides life-enriching opportunities for adults aged 50 and over and their families through activities, services, and involvement in the community.
Compliance Services	Promotes safe and desirable neighborhoods by investigating reports of specific code violations. Priority is given to reports where public safety and health are at risk.
Emergency Operations	An all-hazard response agency that mitigates emergencies involving fire, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and urgent medical situations.
Neighborhood Recreation and Sports	Hosts activities in parks for all ages.
Parking Services	Manages and regulates parking throughout the downtown area and residential districts.
Parks	Responsible for maintenance and management of the City's public park system, which includes 90 parks on over 2,335 acres across the City.
Planning Services	Aims to enhance the quality of life for residents and promote a livable, vibrant city by facilitating and implementing the community's vision for Salem through a number of services including reviewing development proposals, conducting long-range projects to guide growth and development patterns, and protecting historic resources.
Willamette Valley Communications (911 Services)	Provides call-taking and dispatch services to individuals who are experiencing a crisis or emergency situation.

C. CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

We considered each program's alignment with the following guiding principles. More information about these principles is included in the Equity Assessment Toolkit.

1. **Understanding Equity:** Program staff have a deep understanding of equity as it relates to their services.
2. **Designing Goals and Strategies:** Equity is incorporated into the program's strategy, goals, and objectives.
3. **Building Capacity:** The program has created sufficient capacity for equity efforts to be successful.
4. **Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems:** Equity is meaningfully incorporated into the program's practices, processes, and systems.
5. **Assessing Progress:** The program assesses its equity efforts and uses lessons learned to adjust strategies used.

For each of the principles above, we evaluated each program's maturity using the below four-point rating scale.

1. **Beginning:** The principle may be considered or addressed by members of the program, but efforts are early or too uncoordinated to meaningfully contribute to the goals of the principle. The program should focus on building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services.
2. **Developing:** Efforts to achieve the principle may be ad hoc and uncoordinated, but meaningfully contribute to the principle. The program should leverage existing efforts to develop a more coordinated and structured approach to providing equitable services.
3. **Integrating:** The principle is addressed consistently and in a coordinated fashion. Relevant efforts are planned and incorporated into formal processes as applicable, but may not include all elements of best practice. The program should build on existing efforts to make its efforts more impactful and effective.
4. **Leading:** The principle is fully addressed and fully integrated into processes, resulting in the principle being fully achieved. The program also incorporates best practices (going beyond simply satisfying the requirements) and continuously improves by using lessons learned to adjust its approach. The program should work to share its approaches and techniques with others.

D. CASE STUDY RESULTS OVERVIEW

In the following table, each program's maturity related to equity has been assessed according to the four-point rating scale described above. Each program was assessed individually, in comparison to the rating scale, rather than being compared to each other. This table is intended to be a snapshot of the current state of equity-related activities and thinking across the City and is not a statement on the quality-of-service provision by each program. This assessment was used for us to understand and evaluate the maturity of each program's thinking and activities around equity.

Principle	Center 50+	Compliance Services	Emergency Operations	Neighborhood Recreation and Sports	Parking Services	Parks	Planning Services	911 Services
Understanding Equity	D	B	B	B	B	D	I	B
Designing Goals and Strategies	D	B	B	B	B	B	I	B
Building Capacity	B	B	B	B	B	B	I	B
Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems	B	B	B	B	B	B	I	B
Assessing Progress	D	B	B	B	B	B	B	B

Key			
B – Beginning	D – Developing	I – Integrating	L – Leading

E. CASE STUDY DETAILED RESULTS

Results for each program reviewed are presented below.

Compliance Services

Program Information
• **Program Name:** Compliance Services
• **Program Description:** Promotes safe and desirable neighborhoods by investigating reports of specific code violations. Priority is given to reports where public safety and health are at risk.

Overall Results
Overall, Compliance Services is in the beginning stages of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Equity principles are considered or addressed by members of the program, but efforts are early or too uncoordinated to meaningfully contribute to improving and advancing equity. Compliance Services should prioritize building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services. This could include:
• Providing equity-related training
• Holding a team discussion or appointing a committee to discuss equity-related considerations specific to Compliance Services and identify actionable items for improvement
• Reviewing demographic data to better understand who the program serves and enhancing knowledge of the specific needs of different groups in the community

Principle 1: Understanding Equity
• Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all residents and providing services fairly across all groups. However, there was limited awareness of key equity concepts and the City's definition of equity. While the program largely responds to code violations reactively (i.e., when complaints are submitted), there was not a clear understanding of the demographic makeup of residents served or of potential equity-related issues that could or do exist in the program, such as barriers to access or disparities in outcomes or service quality across different groups.
• While the program reportedly has a robust training program, there was no equity-related training provided to staff, other than the City's required training.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies
• The program does not have clearly defined goals or outcomes for equity and does not have a well-defined process for collecting community feedback on program goals and strategies.
• The program has developed some strategies to improve equitable access, such as providing services to Spanish-speaking individuals with limited English proficiency. However, the program has not developed robust strategies for improving equity, such as holistically identifying residents who do not have easy access to the program or taking action to support equitable distribution of resources.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- The program has not designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of the strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- As noted previously, the program has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to its services. However, the program has not specifically allocated budget based on an understanding of equity related concerns or needs in the program, or allocated resources to equity-related administration tasks, such as tracking equity efforts, or providing staff development related to equity. Additionally, program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- While the program has adopted equity-related strategies around language access, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. Some opportunities for improvement include:
  - Developing processes for more proactively engaging with the community about code enforcement. Reactive code enforcement disadvantages individuals who are not comfortable making complaints or navigating government systems. Developing more proactive approaches to community outreach, such as educational campaigns in targeted areas to reduce complaints before they happen, could improve equitable outcomes. Geographic and other demographic data can be used to assess where disparate outcomes exists and where efforts should be targeted.
  - There is a high degree of discretion in providing day-to-day enforcement services. These types of environments make it especially important to have standardized and formalized policies, tools, and resources to guide staff in effective and equitable service delivery and promote consistent approaches in decision-making and actions. Standardized processes should consider both encouraging enforcement officers to perform their work consistently and effective monitoring processes to support identifying opportunities for improvement. For example, processes might include periodic supervisory review of a sample of enforcement cases for consistency.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program does not formally or consistently use data to assess changes in equity-related program outcomes or to understand whether outcomes are different across different groups in the community. Proactively using data can support code enforcement departments in improving equitable outcomes. For example, a report by the Cities for Responsible Investment and Strategic Enforcement on equitable code enforcement highlighted how complaints may be instigated by racist sentiments, which disproportionately puts tenants of color at risk of displacement. Cities can use data on properties and complaint patterns to conduct targeted in-person outreach and reduce risks in this area.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program also does not consistently use community feedback to inform changes to its services, which could bolster the ability of the program to analyze barriers, create effective strategies, and gain community approval of implementation plans.

Center 50+

Program Information
Program Name: Center 50+
Program Description: Center 50+ (the Center) provides life-enriching opportunities for adults aged 50 and over and their families through activities, services, and involvement in the community.

Overall Results
Overall, the Center is developing its maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Program staff appear to be aware of equity principles and are working towards incorporating equity-related principles into practices and processes, and the program has particularly strong community relationships. However, as a small and largely volunteer-driven program, capacity to incorporate equity into goals, strategies, and assessment efforts is limited. The Center should prioritize building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services, particularly as it relates to the intersection of age with other demographic characteristics, such as race. This could include: ● Holding regular team discussions or appointing a committee to discuss equity-related considerations specific to the Center and identify actionable items for improvement ● Establishing a framework to monitor and evaluate the progress of equity-related initiatives and outcomes

Principle 1: Understanding Equity

● Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all and creating a welcoming and inclusive space with diverse offerings. Commendably, there is a clear focus and understanding at the Center on access as it relates to age and physical ability and offering classes that fit a range of budgets. These are important equity-related priorities for the Center given its focus on serving adults aged 50 and over. However, staff are in the beginning stages of contemplating potential barriers to access and inclusion beyond factors related to age and income, and there is not a clear understanding of the program's approach to equity related to race. Better understanding the program's impact in this area represents an opportunity for the program to improve its ability to serve residents equitably.

● The program operates with limited staff capacity and largely relies on volunteers and contracted agreements for program delivery. There is limited equity-related training provided to staff or volunteers. Additionally, there was limited awareness of the City's definition of equity amongst interviewed staff, and awareness of equity was largely dependent on the maturity of each individual's equity related thinking (rather than being incorporated into policies and training).

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

● Given the Center's mission, its goals and objectives are largely focused on equity as it relates to serving older adults. Additionally, the program has developed some strategies to improve equitable access as it relates to serving residents at all budget levels and all levels of mobility. Examples include offering online classes, providing a mobile senior center that visits clients in their homes, and delivering services such as art kits and exercise programs to residents as needed. However, as noted previously, the program is only in its beginning stages of

contemplating racial equity. Given the Center's focus on serving older adults, it is important for the program to consider the intersection of other identities with age, such as the intersection of age and race, to truly begin to understand its impact in the community and develop goals and objectives to serve residents equitably.

- Staff consider community engagement to be an essential piece of the program's design. The program involves resident voices in goal development by maintaining a community Advisory Board (a group that provides feedback on program operations) and collecting community feedback through comment cards and surveys to identify gaps in services. Additionally, the program maintains membership with national industry organizations, like AARP and the National Council on Aging, to stay informed on overall needs and trends related to aging.

- The program has not yet designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of the strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- The Center has devoted resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to services, such as providing fee waivers to low-income residents. Additionally, staff reported recent hires speak Spanish and Russian, which has improved services to individuals with limited English proficiency who speak these languages. However, these efforts have been largely ad hoc, and there is an opportunity for the program to more strategically consider and prioritize where to invest resources to produce equitable outcomes. Additionally, the program has not specifically devoted resources to equity-related administration tasks, such as tracking equity efforts, or providing staff development related to equity and program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.

- The program has minimally incorporated equity considerations into its budget, in part by dedicating resources to communicating broadly with the public about the services available from the Center in magazines, radio, social media, and in communities across Salem. However, equity has not been a significant component of budget planning.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- Despite many equity-related strategies already mentioned throughout this assessment, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. Additionally, the program has not developed or implemented equity-specific tools to provide structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity, such as tools for considering equity in program development or dashboards that allow staff to monitor equity-related metrics.

- While the Center reportedly works with more than 40 community partners and has developed strong relationships with many of these partners, staff reported the Center is in the relatively early stages of developing relationships with community groups that are representative of the City's diversity. Although staff capacity is a limitation, it is especially important for the program to build meaningful and sustained relationships with community partners who represent those historically underserved by the Center.

- As noted previously, the program communicates about its services broadly across the City. However, the program has reportedly not considered specifically targeting communications toward populations who could benefit from their services but have historically been excluded.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The Center collects feedback about instructors, courses, and class schedules and incorporates that information into decision-making. Staff report a focus on maintaining strong relationships with patrons to support a culture of ongoing feedback and communication. The Center also collects demographic data from those who participate in its programs and services. However, staff do not strategically collect or use data to understand where gaps in equity may be occurring or to identify how its programs and services are affecting different groups of older adults, such as older adults of different races or ages. Additionally, the program does not formally or consistently use data to assess changes in equity-related outcomes, or to understand whether outcomes are different across different groups in the community.

Emergency Operations

Program Information
Program Name: Emergency Operations Division (Emergency Operations)
Program Description: An all-hazard response agency that mitigates emergencies involving fire, hazardous materials, technical rescue, and urgent medical situations.

Overall Results
Emergency Operations is in the beginning stages of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Equity principles are considered or addressed by members of the program, but efforts are too early or uncoordinated to meaningfully contribute to improving or advancing equity. Emergency Operations should prioritize building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services. This could include:

- Providing equity-related training
- Holding team discussions or appointing a committee to discuss equity-related considerations specific to Emergency Operations and identify actionable items for improvement
- Reviewing demographic data to better understand who the program serves and enhancing knowledge of the specific needs of different groups in the community

Principle 1: Understanding Equity

- Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all residents, going above and beyond for residents in need, and providing services fairly across all groups. There was widespread agreement amongst interviewed personnel on the importance of treating everyone equally and responding to emergency scenes without discrimination. However, there was a limited understanding of key equity concepts or the City's definition of equity amongst interviewed staff. Staff reported there is not a shared understanding of equity across the program. Additionally, there was not a clear understanding of the demographic makeup of residents served or of potential equity-related issues that could exist in the program, such as barriers to access or disparities in outcomes or service quality across different groups.
- While the program has a robust training program, there was no equity-related training provided to staff, other than the City's required training.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- Despite limited resources, the program has commendably developed strategies to improve equitable access, such as improving services for individuals with limited English proficiency. However, the program does not have clearly defined goals or outcomes for equity and lacks a well-defined process for collecting community feedback on program goals and strategies. Additionally, the program has not designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- As noted previously, the program has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to its services. However, the program has not specifically allocated budget

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- based on an understanding of equity related concerns or needs in the program, or allocated resources to equity-related administration tasks (such as tracking equity efforts or providing staff development related to equity). Additionally, program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.
- Emergency Operations has reportedly made notable efforts to diversify recruiting and hiring practices to hire a more representative staff, as well as increase the bilingual capabilities of the program. However, budget limitations reportedly prevented these efforts from being implemented.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- Despite some equity-related strategies already mentioned throughout this case study, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. The program's guiding document for service delivery, "The Right Thing," does not contain guidance related to providing equitable services. Additionally, the program has not developed or implemented equity-specific tools to provide structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity, such as tools for monitoring equity-related metrics. Given the high degree of discretion in providing day-to-day emergency services, it is especially important to have standardized and formalized policies, tools, and resources to guide staff in equitable service delivery and promote consistent approaches in decision-making and actions.
- Historically, the program engaged in community outreach, particularly with local schools. Due to limitations in capacity, these efforts have been scaled back in recent years and have not been prioritized for underserved areas of the community with the most need.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program does not formally or consistently use data to (1) assess changes in equity-related program outcomes or (2) to understand whether outcomes, such as those related to providing timely and high-quality responses, are different across different groups in the community. Proactively using data can support emergency services departments in improving equitable outcomes.
- The program also does not consistently use community feedback to inform changes to its services, which could bolster the ability of the program to analyze barriers, create effective strategies, and gain community approval of implementation plans.

Neighborhood Recreation and Sports

Program Information
Program Name: Neighborhood Recreation and Sports
Program Description: Hosts activities in parks for all ages.

Overall Results

Overall, Neighborhood Recreation and Sports is in the beginning stages of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Equity principles are considered or addressed by members of the program, but efforts are too early or uncoordinated to meaningfully contribute to improving or advancing equity. Neighborhood Recreation and Sports should prioritize building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services. This could include:

- Providing equity-related training
- Holding a team discussion or appointing a committee to discuss equity-related considerations specific to Neighborhood Recreation and Sports and identify actionable items for improvement
- Reviewing demographic data to better understand who is and who is not participating in its activities and enhancing knowledge of the specific needs of different groups in the community

Principle 1: Understanding Equity

- Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all residents and providing services fairly across all groups. Commendably, staff reported they aim to provide affordable and accessible activities for residents, including for those who are differently abled, and staff expressed a willingness to make accommodations as needed. However, there was limited awareness of the City's definition of equity and staff reported there is not a shared understanding of equity across the program. Additionally, the program has not holistically considered equity issues that may exist in the program, such as those related to race.
- There was not a clear understanding of the demographic makeup of residents served. While there was some awareness of equity-related issues specific to the program, there was not a holistic understanding of the potential equity-related issues that could or do exist in the program (e.g., barriers to access, disparities in outcomes, service quality across different groups).
- There has not been any equity-related training provided to staff, other than the City's required training.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- The program has commendably developed strategies to improve equitable access, such as providing fee waivers to low-income residents and providing ASL interpreters. However, the program has not defined explicit goals for improving equity. Additionally, the program does not have a well-defined process for collecting community feedback on program goals and strategies to ensure they are aligned with the needs of residents. Defining equity-related goals and strategies can help ensure that all staff members are working towards equity in similar ways and help staff articulate decisions that center equity.
- The program has not designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of the strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- As noted previously, the program has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to its services. However, the program has not specifically allocated budget based on an understanding of equity related concerns or needs in the program, or allocated resources to equity-related administration tasks, such as tracking equity efforts, or providing staff development related to equity. Additionally, program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.

- Neighborhood Recreation and Sports, like other programs, does not have a framework for determining where to cut services when budgets are cut. This is particularly critical given that Parks and Recreation programs are often the recipients of the biggest budget cuts when revenues decline. [3] While program staff may not have control over budget cuts, staff may have input into how cuts are allocated (e.g., which services or activities are cut). It is important to have a framework to weigh programmatic and service adjustment decisions that identifies factors that may result in (1) unequal access to services, (2) the quality of services differing for different groups, or (3) different outcomes for those who are served by the program.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- Despite some equity-related strategies already mentioned throughout this case study, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. Additionally, the program has not developed or implemented equity-specific tools to provide structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity, such as tools for considering equity in activity development or implementation or dashboards that allow staff to monitor equity-related metrics.

- Given resource limitations, program staff reported they engage in limited outreach to the community or to community partners. Additionally, while the program strives to serve all residents equally, considerations regarding barriers or what may prevent specific individuals, communities, or groups from participating in activities are not undertaken. Garnering community feedback from underserved communities to develop an understanding of these barriers and how to address them can support improved outcomes.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program does not formally or consistently use data to assess changes in equity-related program outcomes or to understand whether outcomes, such as those related to providing just and fair access to recreation activities, are different across different groups in the community. Proactively using data can support recreation programs in improving equitable outcomes.

- The program does not consistently use community feedback to inform changes to its services, which could bolster the ability of the program to analyze barriers, create effective strategies, and gain community approval of implementation plans.

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[3] See Local Government Officials' Perceptions of Parks and Recreations report located on nrpa.org

Parking Services

Program Information
Program Name: Parking Services
Program Description: Enforces parking throughout Downtown and residential districts.

Overall Results
Overall, Parking Services is in the beginning stages of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Equity principles are considered or addressed by members of the program, but efforts are early or too uncoordinated to meaningfully contribute to improving and advancing equity. Parking Services should prioritize building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services. This could include: ● Providing equity-related training ● Holding a team discussion or appointing a committee to discuss equity-related considerations specific to Parking Services and identify actionable items for improvement ● Reviewing demographic data to better understand who the program serves and enhancing knowledge of the specific needs of different groups in the community

Principle 1: Understanding Equity
● Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all residents and providing services fairly across all groups. However, there was limited awareness of key equity concepts and the City's definition of equity. Additionally, there was not a holistic understanding of the potential equity-related issues that could exist in the program, such as barriers to access or disparities in outcomes or service quality across different groups. ● While the program reportedly has a robust training program, there was no equity-related training provided to staff, other than the City's required training.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies
● The program does not have clearly defined goals or outcomes for equity and does not have a well-defined process for collecting community feedback on program goals and strategies. ● The program has developed some strategies to improve equitable access, such as providing services to individuals with limited English proficiency. However, the program has not developed robust strategies for improving equity, such as holistically identifying residents who do not have easy access to the program or taking action to support equitable distribution of resources. ● The program has not designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of the strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity
● As noted previously, the program has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to its services. However, the program has not specifically allocated budget based on an understanding of equity related concerns or needs in the program, or allocated

Principle 3: Building Capacity

resources to equity-related administration tasks, such as tracking equity efforts, or providing staff development related to equity. Additionally, program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- While the program has adopted equity-related strategies related to language access, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. Some opportunities for improvement include:
  - Developing processes for more proactively engaging with the community about parking rules and requirements. Developing more proactive approaches to community outreach, such as educational campaigns to promote parking compliance, could improve equitable outcomes.
  - There is a high degree of discretion in providing day-to-day enforcement services. These types of environments make it especially important to have standardized and formalized policies, tools, and resources to guide staff in effective and equitable service delivery and promote consistent approaches in decision-making and actions. Standardized processes should consider both encouraging enforcement officers to perform their work consistently and effective monitoring processes to support identifying opportunities for improvement. For example, processes might include periodic supervisory review of a sample of enforcement cases for consistency.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program does not formally or consistently use data to assess changes in equity-related program outcomes or to understand whether outcomes are different across different groups in the community. Proactively using data can support parking enforcement departments in improving equitable outcomes.
- The program also does not consistently use community feedback to inform changes to its services, which could bolster the ability of the program to analyze barriers, create effective strategies, and gain community approval of implementation plans.

Parks

Program Information
Program Name: Parks
Program Description: Responsible for the maintenance and management of the City's public park system, which includes 90 parks on over 2,335 acres across the City.

Overall Results
Overall, Parks is in the beginning stages of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Equity principles are considered or addressed by members of the program and leadership is developing processes that explicitly incorporate equity. However, Parks should prioritize designing goals and strategies that clearly prioritize equity and developing an assessment practice to monitor equity progress. This could include:

- Explicitly incorporating equity into goals and outcomes throughout the program
- Developing a framework that incorporates equity to weigh programmatic decisions
- Using existing data to assess equity-related program outcomes.

Principle 1: Understanding Equity

- Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all residents and providing services fairly to all groups. Additionally, some staff understand key equity concepts and equity-related issues that could exist in the program, such as barriers to access or disparities in outcomes or service quality across different groups. However, this awareness appeared to be stronger for those involved in parks planning and is not necessarily shared across all staff. Overall, awareness of equity varied according to each individual's knowledge and there was limited awareness of the City's definition of equity. The Government and Alliance on Race and Equity provides examples of parks departments that have worked to understand equity concepts in parks through the lens of racial equity.
- There was not a clear understanding of the demographic makeup of residents served, or the specific needs of different groups in the community, though staff reported this awareness is developing.
- There is not currently any equity-related training provided to staff, other than the City's required training.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- Parks staff reported they will begin the process of updating the Parks Master Plan in early 2024 and a major goal of that process will be to incorporate equity. However, the program does not currently have clearly defined goals or outcomes for equity and does not have a well-defined process for collecting community feedback on program goals and strategies. This is particularly important to reflect the reality that some areas require more investment of resources than others to remain clean, safe, and accessible.
- Staff reported they often consider which residents do and do not have access to Parks (for instance, staff often choose accessible picnic tables when ordering equipment for public areas) but this attention to accessibility is not explicitly included in any program strategies and is not correlated with any established outcomes.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- The program has not designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of the strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- Parks has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to services, such as purchasing accessible parks equipment and translating materials into languages other than English. However, these efforts have been largely ad hoc, and there is an opportunity for the program to more strategically consider and prioritize where to invest resources to produce equitable outcomes. Additionally, the program has not specifically devoted resources to equity-related administration tasks, such as tracking equity efforts or providing staff development related to equity, and program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.

- Parks, like other programs, does not have a framework for determining where to cut services when budgets are cut. This is particularly critical because Parks and Recreation programs are often the recipients of the biggest budget cuts when revenues decline. [4] While program staff may not have control over budget cuts, staff may have input into how cuts are allocated (e.g., which services or activities are cut). It is important to have a framework to weigh programmatic and service adjustment decisions that identifies factors that may result in (1) unequal access to services, (2) the quality of services differing for different groups, or (3) different outcomes for those who are served by the program. This is particularly important given the history of unequal access to urban parks and green spaces in the United States, and best practice suggests that investments in communities with the greatest deficits should be prioritized.

- Parks runs a robust volunteer program that engages community members in maintenance and restoration tasks. Although many Parks volunteers are demographically homogenous and tend to be retirement age, the program is reportedly making a concerted effort to diversify its volunteer pool by developing relationships with school districts and neighborhood associations in underrepresented geographic areas.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- Despite some equity-related strategies already mentioned throughout this case study, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. Additionally, the program has not developed or implemented equity-specific tools to provide structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity, such as tools for considering equity in program development or dashboards that allow staff to monitor equity-related metrics. Due in part to this gap, staff noted that louder residents often get more services, and that community awareness of available services is an opportunity for improvement.

- Given resource limitations, program staff reported they engage in limited outreach to the community or to community partners. Additionally, while the program strives to serve all residents equally, considerations regarding barriers or what may prevent specific individuals, communities, or groups from participating in activities are not undertaken. Garnering community

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[4] See Local Government Officials' Perceptions of Parks and Recreations report located on nrpa.org

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

feedback from underserved communities to develop an understanding of these barriers and how to address them can support improved outcomes.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program does not formally or consistently use data to assess changes in equity-related program outcomes or to understand whether outcomes are different across different groups in the community. Opportunities to proactively use data include:
  - Measuring and reporting on the quality, type (e.g., dog parks, picnic areas, gazebos, vacant land), and number of parks and public spaces by zip code to understand where inequities in access and quality exist and to inform planning and resource prioritization
  - Comparing the detailed data that is collected on the urban canopy with average area income to understand where inequities in green spaces and the tree canopy exist
  - Measuring the condition of assets and maintaining an asset inventory on assets such as playgrounds, picnic tables, and accessible paths to identify gaps and inequities, and serve as a method of maintenance prioritization (staff report that this is a top priority in the upcoming planning effort)
- Parks regularly collects community feedback about priorities through online surveys, door hangers, and open houses. However, there are opportunities to develop Parks' community outreach practice, such as incorporating questions about interactions (how people are treated in local parks and how welcome they feel in those spaces) and representation (if people see their culture and history represented and valued in local parks) to deepen the quality of equity-related feedback.

Planning Services

Program Information
Program Name: Planning Services
Program Description: Aims to enhance the quality of life for residents and to promote a livable, vibrant city by facilitating and implementing the community's vision for Salem through a number of services including reviewing development proposals, conducting long-range projects to guide growth and development patterns, and protecting historic resources. Planning Services manages both long-range planning that is focused on planning with a long-term horizon and establishes a vision for future development and growth and current planning which is focused on addressing immediate development and land use issues for proposals that are currently in progress.

Overall Results
Overall, Planning Services has a somewhat developed and integrated level of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity into its programs and services, with some opportunities to improve. Equity is well integrated into many aspects of Planning Services, particularly for long-range planning efforts, which include historic and archeology projects. Long-range planning efforts appear to consider equity and relevant efforts are planned and incorporated into formal processes. There are opportunities to better understand and develop equity-related concepts into current planning services to ensure these services are equitable. Additionally, Planning Services should prioritize developing a process to measure and assess its equity-related efforts over time, including establishing and monitoring measures or indicators of success over time and making improvements based on the results.

Principle 1: Understanding Equity
● In general, many program staff have a strong understanding of key equity concepts and the City's definition of equity. This awareness appears to be stronger for those involved in long-range planning and is not necessarily shared across all staff. Since long-range planning often considers the lasting impacts of development decisions on equity and sustainability and generally requires extensive community engagement, there is a deeper understanding of equity in the context of long-range planning services than for current planning services.
● Planning Services led the development of the City's Comprehensive Plan, Our Salem, which developed the definition of equity used at the City.
● While some staff have completed equity-related training, there was no equity-related training provided to staff, other than the City's required training. Regular equity-related training is particularly important in Planning, given the significance of planning activities in the community and the potential for planning practices to have a disparate impact on certain communities.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies
● The City's Comprehensive Plan, Our Salem, defines the goals and policies that guide future growth and development in the Salem urban area, and thus, guides many of the program's activities. The plan includes a guiding principle specific to equity and several other guiding principles incorporate equity concepts (e.g., access, diversity). Additionally, Planning Services develops communication and outreach plans into each of its long-range projects to support engagement of diverse communities in planning and goal development.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- While equity is well-incorporated into many of the program's goals and strategies, there are opportunities to consider how to better incorporate equity-related goals into current planning services. This could be achieved by investigating what barriers to access may exist for residents engaged or impacted by current planning services and whether different groups have different outcomes or experiences in service quality. There are also opportunities for Planning Services to better define the expected outcomes of its efforts to measure success more effectively.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- Planning Services has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies, including efforts to improve language access and efforts to increase communication about planned development to renters, though these efforts have reportedly mostly been funded through vacancy savings. The program has also been able to receive funding for specific long-range planning efforts that involve equity considerations and community engagement.

- Some program staff are leaders in equity and community engagement in the City, and other programs turn to them for advice and support. Additionally, Planning Services initiated and staffs the Equity Roundtable, which comprises representatives of local organizations that serve or represent underserved communities and provides input on planning, housing, transportation, and other City projects and programs. The Equity Roundtable is the first community engagement program with an available stipend for participants with barriers to participation. The program also created a monthly Tribal Roundtable to improve communication with tribes and provide them an opportunity to engage with developers about projects that have the potential to impact cultural resources that are significant to the tribes.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- Planning Services has incorporated equity into many of its practices, including through efforts to understand existing inequalities, engage with stakeholders, and establish guiding principles for its long-range planning processes. Additionally, the program has reportedly developed meaningful relationships with community partners and adopted practices to improve language access, though program staff recognized additional improvements could be made in these areas. Planning Services also recently updated its policy to provide notice of land use actions to tenants within a notice area. Previously, notices were only provided to property owners.

- There are opportunities for Planning Services to expand on their current efforts and continue to make progress in this area, by establishing measurable outcomes that inform the state of equity in the City over time (see also Assessing Progress below). Such efforts could inform where additional improvements are needed.

- As previously noted, there is less application of equity concepts in current planning services, and the program should explore potential equity-related challenges in this area and make a plan for addressing any identified issues.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- Planning Services has the most opportunity to grow in this principle. Equity-related data is not shared internally or externally to support continued improvement and accountability. While the program has used and shared demographic information to inform planning discussions, the program does not have consistent processes in place to collect and analyze data related to its

Principle 5: Assessing Progress
programs and services to understand its impact on diverse communities and inform needed improvements.
• While Planning Services engages with diverse communities to inform its efforts, the program does not collect community feedback to assess effectiveness.

Willamette Valley Communications Center (911 Services)

Program Information
Program Name: Willamette Valley Communications Center (911 Services)
Program Description: Provides 911 call-taking and dispatch services to individuals who are experiencing a crisis or emergency situation.

Overall Results
911 Services is in the beginning stages of maturity as it relates to operationalizing equity. Equity principles are considered or addressed by members of the program, but efforts are too early or uncoordinated to meaningfully contribute to improving or advancing equity. 911 Services should prioritize building foundational systems and processes to better understand equity in its services. This could include:

- Providing equity-related training
- Holding team discussions or appointing a committee to discuss equity-related considerations specific to 911 Services and identify actionable items for improvement
- Reviewing demographic data to better understand who the program serves and enhancing knowledge of the specific needs of different groups in the community

Principle 1: Understanding Equity

- Program staff expressed a commitment to providing high-quality services to all residents, going above and beyond for residents in need, and providing services fairly across all groups. However, there was limited awareness of key equity concepts or the City's definition of equity amongst interviewed staff. Additionally, there was not a clear understanding of the demographic makeup of residents served or of potential equity-related issues that could exist in the program, such as barriers to access or disparities in outcomes or service quality across different groups.
- While the program has a robust training program, there was no equity-related training provided to staff other than the City's required training. Additionally, staff noted that staffing and workload challenges have prohibited some staff from completing the City's required training.

Principle 2: Designing Goals and Strategies

- Despite limited resources, the program has commendably developed strategies to improve equitable access, such as improving services to individuals with limited English proficiency and implementing text to 911 services. However, the program does not have clearly defined goals or outcomes for equity and lacks a well-defined process for collecting community feedback on program goals and strategies. Additionally, the program has not designed measures to track progress related to equity and has not clearly delegated responsibility over the implementation, tracking, or administration of strategies, activities, or action plans related to equity.

Principle 3: Building Capacity

- As noted previously, the program has devoted some resources to equity-related strategies that increase access to its services. However, the program has not specifically allocated budget based on an understanding of equity related concerns or needs in the program, or allocated resources to equity-related administration tasks, such as tracking equity efforts, or providing

Principle 3: Building Capacity

staff development related to equity. Additionally, program staff have not been assigned responsibility for advancing equity.

Principle 4: Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems

- Despite some equity-related strategies already mentioned throughout this case study, the program has not formally incorporated equity into its program policies, processes, or systems. The program has not holistically considered whether its policies and practices disproportionately favor or disadvantage any groups or whether its services are distributed fairly and accessibly across the City. Additionally, the program has not developed or implemented equity-specific tools to provide structure for institutionalizing the consideration of equity, such as tools for monitoring equity-related metrics. Given a significant aspect of the program's service is making dispatch decisions in a limited amount of time and with limited information, it is particularly important for the program to have formalized policies to promote equitable service delivery. For example, policies could require training in key areas (e.g., cultural competence, mental health) to promote consistent and equitable approaches in decision-making and actions.

- Given staffing limitations, 911 Services engages in limited outreach to the community. Additionally, while 911 Services strives to deliver the best possible services to anyone who calls, considerations regarding barriers or what may prevent specific individuals, communities, or groups from calling are not undertaken. Analyzing call trends and garnering community feedback from underserved communities to develop an understanding of these barriers and how to address them can support improved outcomes.

Principle 5: Assessing Progress

- The program does not formally or consistently use data to assess changes in equity-related program outcomes or to understand whether outcomes, such as improved call response times, are different across different groups in the community. Proactively using data can support dispatch centers in improving equitable outcomes. For example, some jurisdictions, like the City of Austin, embedded mental health clinicians into call centers after identifying a high number of calls were related to mental health crises.

- The program does not consistently use community feedback to inform changes to its services, which could bolster the program's ability to analyze barriers, create effective strategies, and gain community approval of implementation plans.

V. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The following recommendations are listed in order of priority (critical, high, medium, or low) as defined by which activities are both high impact and high urgency. This implementation plan should be viewed as a living document that City leadership will discuss, reorganize, and adjust to create a feasible timeline.

The party listed under Primary Responsibility is the leader in coordinating activities to accomplish the line item. This party may or may not directly execute the work detailed but will be responsible for moving the work forward. Involved Parties are groups or individuals who should be informed, consulted, or responsible for elements of accomplishing the work.

This implementation plan has been designed with the City's resource constraints and the upcoming budget shortfall in mind. All items, including those listed as low priority, will be important to execute eventually. Recommendations that are absolutely necessary to begin with are categorized as Critical Priority.

The City should take an approach to this work that feels manageable. It would be better to phase in these recommendations over a period of years than to take on too much and overwhelm leadership and staff. The City can fill out the Time Horizon column with a timeline that feels reasonable, though some suggested starting places have been incorporated, with Year 1 focusing on laying groundwork and later years expanding to develop program-specific frameworks and reporting structures.

#	CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	INVOLVED PARTIES	TIME HORIZON
Phase 1						
1	Designing Goals and Strategies / Building Capacity	Establish clear Citywide goals and strategies related to equity to set priorities for the organization.	Critical	City Council, CMO	Department Directors, DEI Committee, Equity Roundtable	0–6 months to establish, then updated annually or biannually
2	Assessing Progress	Develop Citywide equity performance measures.	Critical	City Council, CMO	Department Directors, DEI Committee, Equity Roundtable	0–6 months to establish, then updated annually or biannually

#	CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	INVOLVED PARTIES	TIME HORIZON
3	Building Capacity	Determine what resources and staffing are necessary and available to advance equity efforts and effectively implement the recommendations made in this report.	**Critical**	City Council, CMO	N/A	0–6 months
4	Understanding Equity	Provide regular required training to staff about equity and equity related concepts, including training specific to the City's institutional history related to equity and the specific environment the City operates within (e.g., the policy environment, area demographics).	**Critical**	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing
5	Understanding Equity / Designing Goals and Strategies / Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems	Implement the Equity Assessment Toolkit to: • Require staff to assess their programs on a regular basis and take action based on the results—as noted in the report, this can be done in a phased approach by selecting a sample of programs each year • Support programs in developing program-specific equity goals and strategies • Support programs in identifying procedures, tools, and resources that should be developed to improve equitable service provision	**Critical**	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing

#	CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	INVOLVED PARTIES	TIME HORIZON
6	Building Capacity	Develop a tool or process for considering equity in budget decisions and ensure resources are allocated in a way that promotes and advances equity, which may include reallocating funds from less critical areas to those with a more significant equity impact.	Critical	CMO, Finance	Department Directors, DEI Committee, Equity Roundtable	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing
7	Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems	Determine which Citywide policies should be implemented to advance equity and implement the identified policies.	Critical	CMO	Department Directors, DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing
Phase 2						
8	Assessing Progress	Develop and implement processes to regularly assess achievement of identified Citywide performance measures and use results to make improvements.	High	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing
9	Assessing Progress	Develop a regular reporting structure on equity measures and consider opportunities to integrate equity reporting into staff reports to Council.	High	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing
10	Understanding Equity	Implement methods to consistently build awareness of equity that goes beyond training and supports a culture where equity is top of mind for staff providing City programs and services.	High	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing

#	CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	INVOLVED PARTIES	TIME HORIZON
11	Understanding Equity	Integrate equity into City operations and normalize conversations around equity by establishing leadership's commitment to equity, encouraging ongoing discussions around equity through a variety of communication channels, and creating mechanisms for staff to share their experiences and feedback around equity issues.	High	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing
12	Building Capacity	Develop targeted recruitment strategies to attract diverse talent. Continue efforts to attract diverse talent, such as salary incentives for bilingual personnel.	High	HR	Department Directors	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing
Phase 3						
13	Building Capacity	Provide training and resources to support the retention and advancement of diverse employees.	Medium	HR	Department Directors	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing
14	Assessing Progress	Support programs in developing and measuring program-specific performance measures that are aligned with the City's equity performance measures.	Medium	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing
15	Establishing Practices, Processes, and Systems	Develop processes to support programs in improving community engagement, outreach, and partnerships to support positive, proactive, and equitable community involvement.	Medium	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing

#	CATEGORY	RECOMMENDATION	PRIORITY	PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY	INVOLVED PARTIES	TIME HORIZON
16	Building Capacity	Leverage relationships with community partners who share a commitment to equity for resources, expertise, and support to advance equity.	Medium	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–12 months to establish, then ongoing
Phase 4						
17	Designing Goals and Strategies	Develop a process to require the use of the Equity Planning Tool when developing new or significantly revised programs or services.	Low	CMO, Department Directors	DEI Committee	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing
18	Building Capacity	Establish measurable goals and outcomes to track progress and ensure accountability toward increasing staff diversity.	Low	HR	Department Directors	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing
19	Building Capacity	Incorporate equity-related considerations when evaluating revenue strategies and conducting fee studies.	Low	CMO, Finance	Department Directors, DEI Committee, Equity Roundtable	0–6 months to establish, then ongoing