

**MOTION:**

**June 16, 2020  
Regular Meeting  
Res. No. 20-**

**SECOND:**

**RE: DEVELOP AN EQUITY AND INCLUSION FRAMEWORK AND POLICY AND INCLUDE THE CONSIDERATION OF EQUITY IN COVID-19 RECOVERY PLANNING AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE 2021-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN**

**ACTION:**

**WHEREAS**, Prince William County is a community of choice with a strong and diverse economic base; where individuals and families choose to live and businesses to locate; and

**WHEREAS**, our community is racially, ethnically, economically, and socially diverse and, over time, has become a minority-majority community demographically; and

**WHEREAS**, community conditions that affect individual opportunity and well-being on income distribution, health, economic opportunities, mobility, education, community engagement, and housing exist among minorities within the Washington Metropolitan Area, including among Prince William's population; and

**WHEREAS**, the County's goal is not only to treat all its residents equally but to reduce any disparities and to proactively give all our residents opportunities to participate fully in the benefits, programs, and services that the County offers; and

**WHEREAS**, inclusion requires not only equal treatment but equitable tools in policies and practices to assess how we deliver our services, who benefits from them, who are affected by them, and who participates in their planning; and

**WHEREAS**, for this resolution, equitable tools are defined as information and processes used to identify social and racial disparities that will guide recommendations that encourage positive impacts and/or mitigate adverse effects; and

**WHEREAS**, equity is defined as all populations having access to community conditions and opportunities needed to reach their full potential and to experience optimal well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of County Supervisors issued a directive on June 2, 2020, for staff to include an equity lens in all planning and service delivery;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby directs staff to develop a framework for becoming a more inclusive and equitable Prince William County that includes the development of equitable lenses or tools to assess our programs, planning, and processes, which will reflect the importance of equity and inclusiveness for Prince William County;

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**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Prince William Board of County Supervisors hereby directs that equity be considered in the development of the COVID-19 pandemic recovery plan and 2021-2024 strategic planning process, and in all future reviews of County planning processes.

**Votes:**

**Ayes:**

**Nays:**

**Absent from Vote:**

**Absent from Meeting:**

**For Information:**

Human Rights Director

**ATTEST:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Clerk to the Board**



# STAFF REPORT

<b>Board Meeting Date:</b>	June 16, 2020
<b>Agenda Title:</b>	Develop an Equity and Inclusion Framework and Policy for Review; and Include Consideration of Equity in the COVID-19 Pandemic Recovery Planning and the Development of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan
<b>District Impact:</b>	Countywide
<b>Requested Action:</b>	Adopt the resolution to develop an Equity and Inclusion Policy.
<b>Department / Agency Lead:</b>	Human Rights
<b>Staff Lead:</b>	Raul Torres, Director

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

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The Board of County Supervisors issued a directive on June 2, 2020 to County staff to provide a presentation and resolution to include an equity lens for all County planning and service delivery.

In cities and counties throughout the United States, minorities are more likely to suffer from racial and social disparities, among others, in health, education, mobility, justice, and housing. The current COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light racial and social disparities that have exacerbated the effect of the pandemic among minorities in the Washington Metropolitan Region, including Prince William County, where the community is racially, ethnically, economically, and socially diverse, and over time has become a majority-minority community.

Local governments are in a unique position to advance racial and social equity in their communities, but such advancement requires intentionality. To address this situation, Prince William County will need to embark on a planning process that culminates in a proposed policy with goals and objectives to eliminate and/or mitigate the adverse effects of racial disparities and social disparities that may exist in our planning, programs, and services. The policy will provide a methodology by which to assess all County plans and initiatives for equity and inclusion.

Staff recommends that the Board of County Supervisors approve the resolution to develop a framework for an equity and inclusion policy and to require the consideration of equity in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery planning and in the development of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

## **BACKGROUND**

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Prince William County is a diverse community and was among the first Virginia jurisdictions to achieve majority-minority population status. Equity and inclusion are national, regional, state, and local initiatives embraced by many local governments, regional organizations, the Commonwealth of Virginia and eleven jurisdictions in the Washington metropolitan area, including the counties of Fairfax, Arlington, Loudoun and the City of Alexandria. The American Planning Association adopted equity planning guidelines for its members in 2019. The County's Comprehensive Plan update, which is currently underway, has been informed by these equity guidelines.

Local governments are in a unique position to advance racial and social equity in their communities, but such advancement requires intentionality. In 2018, the County Executive and his staff attended the kickoff of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOG) race and equity initiative for local governments. MWCOG has partnered with the Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) to create cohorts to discuss how local governments could advance equity on issues of race and social disparities within our region. Prince William is preparing to participate in the 2020 cohort, which is scheduled for late summer.

Prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County Executive had planned to request a directive from the Board of County Supervisors to institute a planning process that would culminate in a proposed policy with goals and objectives to eliminate and/or mitigate the adverse effects of racial disparities and social disparities that may exist in our planning, programs, and services. The policy will provide a methodology by which to assess all County plans and initiatives for equity and inclusion.

The COVID-19 pandemic has focused attention on health disparities for all residents of the United States, particularly those with chronic conditions. The 2019 Community Health Assessment Report, prepared by the Prince William Health District, noted that there are significant health outcome disparities in the Prince William district for chronic health conditions, economic stability, healthcare access, and mental health. According to the report, these significant differences in health outcomes are dependent on race, gender, age, income, zip code, and education.

The existing health outcome disparities identified in the 2019 assessment have come to the forefront as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and should inform the development of current and future planning efforts. The COVID-19 pandemic recovery planning is underway and should be guided by the existing community health data. It is important that an equity lens be utilized to inform recovery decisions. Work is also resuming on the development of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan, which was delayed due to the onset of the pandemic. Given the Board's recent actions to increase human services programming in response to the pandemic, the Strategic Plan development process should also include equity and inclusion considerations.

## **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

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Staff recommends that the Board of County Supervisors approve a resolution to develop a framework for an equity and inclusion policy and to include the consideration of equity in the COVID-19 pandemic recovery planning and in the development of the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

**Service Level / Policy Impact**

The adoption of this resolution will initiate a planning process to develop a methodology to eliminate and/or mitigate the adverse effects of any racial and social disparities that may exist. It will develop equitable lenses, which are information and processes used to identify racial and social disparities. These assessments will inform recommendations that will encourage positive outcomes and/or mitigate adverse effects. These equitable tools will address issues of who benefits, who is burdened, and who participates in the planning of our policies, programs, and services. By incorporating these lenses, Prince William County will intentionally commit to becoming more inclusive and equitable and, therefore, will increase the quality of its services to the community.

**Fiscal Impact**

No additional costs will be incurred by the County with the adoption of a resolution to direct the County Executive to develop a framework for inclusion and equity; and by requiring equity as a consideration for the COVID-19 pandemic recovery planning and the 2021-2024 Strategic Plan.

**Legal Impact**

The Board has the legal authority to adopt the proposed resolution.

**STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Raul Torres | (703) 792-4680  
rtorres2@pwcgov.org



## An Inclusive & Equitable Prince William County

Raul Torres, Director  
Human Rights  
June 16, 2020



### Desired Outcome



- Develop a framework that establishes goals and objectives for a more equitable approach to decision making; i.e. to address and/or mitigate any adverse effects of racial and social disparities in our planning, programs, and services.

## Equity: What Does It Mean?



- All populations having access to community conditions and opportunities needed to reach their full potential and to experience optimal well-being
- Commitment to promote fairness in the formation of public policy

## Developing Equitable Lenses & Tools



- Information and processes used to identify any racial and social disparities
- These inform recommendations that encourage positive outcomes and/or mitigate adverse effects
- Equitable tools address the issues of who benefits, who is burdened, and who participates in the planning of our policies, programs, and services

## Regional Efforts Underway

- **GARE AND MWCOG**
- The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) partnered with the Washington Metropolitan Council of Governments (MWCOG) to launch a race and equity initiative in our region
- Cohorts are being formed to discuss how local governments could advance equity on issues of race and social disparities within our region
- Prince William County will participate in the 2020 cohort, scheduled to begin later this summer

## Today's Requested Action

- Adopt the proposed resolution directing the County Executive to develop a framework for becoming a more inclusive and equitable county
- This framework will provide a methodology by which all Prince William County programs, planning and processes will be assessed for equity and inclusion