



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

PAUL BRODEUR
Mayor

City Hall, 562 Main Street
Melrose, Massachusetts 02176
Telephone - (781) 979-4440

Dear Melrose Community,

I am thinking of you and your families during these very difficult and uncertain times, and I am grateful to be working with you, in partnership, to support every Melrose resident and to build a stronger and more just community.

The interconnected crises of the COVID-19 pandemic and the long-overdue national reckoning on race and equity, sparked by the killing of George Floyd and other people of color, continue to present challenges to every community in the United States. The nation has begun a necessary and very difficult introspection into racial equity and how to move forward toward a more perfect union, one where every resident is valued and shares equally in the American dream.

My administration is committed to the important mission of advancing diversity, equity and inclusion here in our City. We know that this requires a long-term, sustained, intentional effort to make lasting progress. We know that it will require the entire community to meet this challenge. It will mean starting and continuing a dialogue among all our residents, police, firefighters, City Hall staff, educators, students, businesses, and visitors, even when that conversation is challenging. Throughout this process, we will need to trust people of good faith who participate in these conversations, and we all need to listen to their perspectives.

Melrose is a great place to live, work, learn, and raise a family, and I am proud to be your mayor. We have work to do in order to achieve our goal of being “One Community, Open to All.” That’s a challenge that we all have a responsibility—and an opportunity—to meet. Together, I think we can do it.

The attached report contains our first set of actions and recommendations. It was the result of a review of policies and procedures within our City Departments. This report is a first step in moving the community forward. I invite you to read it, share it with your friends, and join the conversation. To offer comments on the report, please send an email to dei@cityofmelrose.org.

Sincerely,

Paul Brodeur

Two Weeks Toward Change

-July 24, 2020-



Two Weeks Toward Change

Table of Contents

Memorandum of Findings...	2
City Clerk...	6
Office of the Chief Financial Officer and City Auditor...	8
Department of Public Works...	9
Fire Department...	12
Department of Health...	14
Department of Human Resources and Office of the City Solicitor...	15
Department of Information Technology...	27
Melrose Public Library...	29
Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building...	32
Council on Aging and Milano Center...	35
Police Department...	38
Parks Department...	43
Office of Planning and Community Development...	44
Department of Recreation...	51
Melrose Public Schools...	55
Office of the Treasurer and Collector...	62
Veterans' Services...	63



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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor Brodeur
From: Patrick Prendergast, Chief of Staff
Re: Two Weeks Toward Change
Date: July 24, 2020

Background

While Black communities have been consistently calling for change for decades, the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, Rayshard Brooks (and others) and subsequent demonstrations have captured the attention of non-Black Americans in communities all across the country. As a result many, especially white Americans, have begun to learn more about their own biases, the ways public and private institutions have marginalized Black people and other people of color in the past, and how systemic racism and white supremacy continue to impact those communities today. As the national conversation evolves, what has become clear is the critical role local governments can play in leading much-needed progress. The 'Two Weeks Toward Change' (TWTC) initiative is the City of Melrose's first response to this urgent call for equity and justice.

Purpose

TWTC's focus is primarily on establishing a starting point or first step. Neither comprehensive nor exhaustive, this exercise asked City department heads to list their current procedures and practices, identify national best practices, and develop short, mid, and longer term plans for implementing changes where necessary.

Limitations

As a self-assessment, TWTC is necessarily limited by the perspectives and insights of the department heads completing it. Their viewpoint on their departments' operations may not reflect the experiences of all our residents or especially our Black residents as well as other residents of color.

Many of our city government policies are overseen by quasi-independent volunteer boards and commissions. Their ongoing involvement in this project will be critical in achieving sustained change that cannot be made unilaterally by the department head themselves.

Additionally, identifying national best practices in each department can be challenging. While a wealth of resources exist to help shape certain department policies and practices, other departments have struggled to identify applicable case studies and research.

Lastly, the work of the City persisted during this period. Most departments are thinly staffed and the complications COVID-19 has presented have posed significant challenges for each department. Completion of this report had to be fit in along with the usual duties and activities of each department head.

Findings

1. Historical lack of resources

The City has not substantively or consistently invested in racial equity work. One off trainings for certain personnel have been offered, but have not resulted in the creation of a consistent and active anti-racist culture across City departments. Despite many departments expressing a keen interest in engaging in this work, budget constraints have restricted the ability of previous administrations in investing in a comprehensive needs assessment, providing frequent and engaging trainings, or supporting targeted recruiting practices within underrepresented communities. Director of Human Resources Marianne Long notes that her department has essentially been level funded for the previous 20 years, and that as a result, identifying, acquiring, and offering professional development and training opportunities to staff has not been a consistent or primary focus of the department.

While the City does follow affirmative action and antidiscrimination policies, integrating the spirit of these initiatives into the daily work of each department and at each recruitment opportunity has met challenges due to a lack of resources. With most City departments being thinly staffed, filling vacant roles quickly is critical in ensuring continuity of service to residents, which puts constraints on hiring timelines. Under previous administrations, Melrose residents often received preference in hiring if all other qualifications were equal to those of competing applicants. This has led, at least in part, to a City government which is largely white, with the City of Melrose consisting of 88.9% white residents as of 2019 according to the US Census.

Most departments indicated an interest or need in establishing a City-wide or department specific updated anti-discrimination policy or statement. They also would like the opportunity to receive implicit bias or other training and to update their recruitment practices.

2. Data Collection

Understanding a problem and identifying solutions becomes especially challenging when there are limited methods of measuring the problem and outcomes of the proposed solutions. While narratives, anecdotes, and estimates may point policy makers in the right direction, it is especially difficult to communicate clearly and objectively without tracking data. A central problem is how or if City departments should collect and use demographic data. Many City departments do collect significant amounts of data and statistics, but these collection practices are often not uniform or shared between departments. Integrating the collection, management, and sharing of data into City decision making at the department level will be critical to the City's long term success. In short, we need measurable ways to track our progress.

3. Public Input Critical

One value of these self-assessments lies in how they differ or comport with public perceptions and reported experiences of our residents. It is critical that this administration includes Black voices and other residents of color to ensure that our policies are responsive. Providing multiple platforms including email, small group meetings, and one on one discussions will be central.

4. City as Employer and Service Provider: Public Safety and Housing

This review highlights the fact that City government is not merely an employer but is primarily a service provider to the residents of Melrose. Certain departments, policies, and practices shape the daily lives of residents and contribute to creating or mitigating significant structural barriers relative to access to Government services, mobility around the City, resident safety, and the affordability of the community. Public safety and housing are two areas which span multiple departments and which have direct impacts on the experiences and type of residents who live in Melrose.

A. Housing

The housing policy landscape in Massachusetts is complex and ever-changing. Here in Melrose multiple departments and boards play an interactive role in establishing City practices. The Office of Planning and Community Development, the City Assessor, the Office of Inspectional Services, along with the Planning Board, the

Zoning Board of Appeals, Health Department and others are responsible for shaping the City's role in creating the community's housing landscape.

A 2015 study commissioned by the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston revealed that while the median net wealth of white Bostonians was nearly \$247,500, Black Bostonians' median net wealth was nearly zero. The barriers toward home ownership, or in many cases simply renting, in Melrose are apparent. The City should focus on efforts to continue to diversify its housing stock, and pursue opportunities to adopt inclusive housing and zoning policies. The City's most recent master plan "Melrose Forward: Community Vision and Master Plan" contains detailed information about past progress and future possibilities.

B. Public Safety

Providing for and protecting the safety of all residents is the core responsibility of government. Ensuring that public safety officers are trusted community partners for residents of all backgrounds is critical in creating a secure and thriving City. Across the country, policing practices have disproportionately negatively impacted Black people and other communities of color. How this national dialogue influences and informs our perceptions at the local level requires us to take a methodical examination of our current public safety practices. Central to this process will be the voices of our entire community including Black residents, other residents of color, as well as the members of our police force.

5. Action Steps:

- A. The Mayor and the City Council have approved an investment of \$40,000 for the purpose of contracting with a vendor to conduct a City-wide needs assessment relative to racial equity, diversity, and inclusion. In the coming weeks, the Administration will invite community input as we solicit that service. We will seek direction relative to recruitment practices, training programs, data collection and management, and other reforms.
- B. Following the Commonwealth's certification of free cash in the fall, the Administration, in cooperation with the City Council, will commit at least \$100,000 towards the implementation of these recommendations. The FY22 budget will include specific and ongoing annual funding to support these initiatives in a sustainable manner.
- C. The Mayor will direct all department heads to execute the short term goals identified in their respective reports. Based on recommendations by the outside consultant, the Mayor, along with department heads, will implement the mid and longer term goals.
- D. Moving forward, the success of this work will hinge not only on the efforts of the City's administration, but on the actions and conversations each Melrose resident must have if our community is become more just and equitable. The Mayor invites every resident to join their City government in embarking on this work.

Office of the City Clerk
Amy Kamosa, Clerk

Mission The City Clerk’s office is the official record keeper for the City of Melrose. Our mission is to maintain and protect these records in the best possible manner while providing, fair, friendly, and exceptional service to all members of the public by providing the information in an efficient and timely manner.

Staffing There are 3 full-time staff members in the clerk’s office, 1 full-time staff member in the elections office, and 1 full-time staff member in the city council office.

Current Practices

- Procedures related to most office city clerk and elections roles are dictated by state requirements and regulations.
- The office maintains a desk top computer on the front counter to utilize when necessary for translation purposes
- The office has made nearly all transactions available online to allow residents with language barriers or disabilities to use electronic means to access information.
- The office maintains standards of service that are expected to be met for all residents.
 - Staff members own and immediately resolve resident’s problems—even when they do not originate in the clerk’s office.
 - Staff members are involved in the planning of the work that affects them and expected to continuously innovate to improve the resident experience.
 - Staff work to protect the privacy and security of our residents and work to remain sensitive to the individual needs of residents.
 - Staff are expected to greet all members of the public who enter our office.

Next Steps

- Our experience has been that residents who are new to the United States are often unfamiliar with the processes and procedures that many members of the public who are native to New England take for granted. We plan to look at our online communications through that fresh lens and modify language accordingly in order to provide the most positive and inclusive experience for all members of the public.
- We will review and correct language and documents on website for cultural sensitivity, and clarity so that all members of the public can easily and comfortable understand process and procedures for obtaining vital records.

Best Practices

- No best practice is available specifically for this work. We will review several cities and towns with larger immigrant populations to identify possible language and phrasing options.

Action Plan

- Immediate -- Review all pdf documents on website for OCR ADA compliance
- Short term (couple of weeks) – Review webpages to ensure simple step-by-step instructions are available.
- Long term (many weeks, more resources necessary) – Continue to identify language and translation needs of residents—track possible needs for translated documents to be available in the clerk’s office.

Office of the Chief Financial Officer and City Auditor
Patrick Dello Russo, CFO/Auditor

Mission: The mission of the Auditor’s Office is to provide accurate financial information necessary for making long-term economic decisions for the benefit of the citizens of the City of Melrose. Above all, it is the responsibility of the Office of the Auditor to safeguard the assets of the city. In so doing, the Office of the Auditor must demonstrate the highest degree of accountability and stewardship to the community which it serves.

Staffing: 4 Full Time Employees

Current Practices: As the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and City Auditor, I am pleased to have this opportunity to provide you with suggested community outreach protocols for this office.

It is my approach to use this initial time as a point of reflection, dialogue, and conversation within my office, about steps we can and should be taking, to ensure that all are treated equally and to strive to leave no person behind. Although this office is not generally visited by the public, and our interaction is therefore limited, we can still make improvements in the areas where we can make a difference.

Next Steps:

1. When we work with vendors, we may need to spend more time being sure we are communicating meaningfully, particularly when English may not be their first language.
2. When we seek to fill employment opportunities within our office, we need to ask ourselves “Have we reached out actively to the minority community?” to solicit interest.
3. We need to ensure that all our interactions with the public are done professionally and with a sensitivity that we recognize that some have not been treated as fairly in the past as they should have been. The words that we use therefore, are just as important as the assistance we provide.

Department of Public Works
Elena Proakis Ellis, Director

Mission: To provide service to the community in the areas of each of our divisions: Administration, Engineering, Highway, Sanitation, Parks, Forestry, Fleet, Cemetery, Water, Sewer, Snow and Ice, and Facilities.

Staffing: 68 full-time staff, partial funding of 4 additional employees

Current Practices: Being new to the Director role, and in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, I have not yet had the opportunity to implement most of the initiatives I plan to bring forward in the coming year. Those are discussed further below. However, to start with, I emailed all office staff and foremen to solicit input into this process, to ensure that everyone's ideas were being heard.

Next Steps:

1. Recruitment/hiring practices (Immediate)

As much as possible, all positions where hiring is from the outside should be advertised to ensure that we are not exclusively hiring friends and family of friends and family, or solely via word-of-mouth. This is especially true for youth hiring for summer positions. Here is an article which touches on the issue: <https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/why-social-networks-unwittingly-worsen-job-opportunities-for-black-workers/>

When we continually hire summer help from the same circles, we tend to give preferential treatment to these groups. In the long run, when students holding the same degrees graduate from college and seek full-time jobs, the ones who obtained the summer internships have better resumes and tend to get better jobs. The way to break this cycle is to advertise these positions. We are starting by ensuring that this year's summer hiring is advertised on the City's website. In the past, there has been a preference to hire Melrose residents. I do not see this as a bad thing, but it would be nice if the applicants we got and the hires we made were actually representative of what the community as a whole.

2. Collaboration in establishing department's mission statement and core values (short-term)

One of the items I had planned to enact shortly after beginning this position was distributing an employee satisfaction survey and meeting with each employee. I think it's important to hear what people's concerns and questions are, in order to ensure everyone feels this is an inclusive environment. One employee also noted that having a good mission statement would help create a shared sense of purpose. I had planned on establishing new "core values" for the department, on recommendation from another past director who I worked with about 15 years ago. Based on the employee's suggestion, I plan to roll both the core values and the mission statement discussions into the survey, so that we can collaboratively

develop both items and so employees hopefully feel additional buy-in into the process and the end results. Through this process, we can emphasize the fair, equal, and respectful treatment of others. On a related note, another employee suggested perhaps we should have different themes each month for employees that reinforce these core values, with signage around the department or other initiatives.

3. Communication and openness (immediate and long-term)

In order to be able to communicate with the whole department on these important initiatives, I think it is imperative that we work toward setting up all full-time employees with an email account. Thus far, employees seem to be liking the open communication I have tried to instill. For instance, I sent out the budget presentation to much of the department and noted that all were welcome to watch the hearing before the City Council. A couple of employees did watch it. I think bringing all employees of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, races, cultures, etc., more into these conversations and engaging them in the inner-workings of the department naturally leads to a more inclusive work environment.

4. Public Interaction (immediate and long-term)

One of the most important items to impress upon all DPW staff is the requirement to treat all members of the public with respect, regardless of who they are, what they look like, or even how they approach the staff. It can be very challenging to treat a resident with respect who is irate or otherwise not treating the employee with respect, but this is important. It is also important to not let biases factor into public interactions or interactions with other employees. In the long-term, it would be good to have some training in this area for employees; but I think some of the other actions will be more impactful while I am a new director, and once I have buy-in to the overall approach, the training could follow.

5. Procurement and construction (ongoing)

When the City uses certain funding sources, there are often goals for using women or minority-owned businesses. While these are oftentimes not requirements, we should try to meet these goals when feasible.

6. Public Outreach (short-term and long-term)

Showing the community at large what we do, whether through general community outreach such as the Victorian Fair or through school programming, helps to bring more people into our profession and to better advertise our programs and eventual job openings. Things like our in-class presentations, DPW Day, and other opportunities to talk to children about what DPW does will motivate the next generation of DPW employees. And showing those kids that we have employees who are different genders, sexual orientations, races, ages, etc., may encourage

some who might otherwise not think of us as a diverse group to want to be more involved in DPW. Maybe some of those same kids will end up applying for summer jobs when we advertise them. Maybe we get more female summer applicants as laborers and engineers, rather than office staff.

These ideas are just a starting point, and I welcome any other suggestions the City or public may have.

Resources:

<https://www.apwa.net/Library/Diversity%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

<https://www.eugene-or.gov/ArchiveCenter/ViewFile/Item/4799>

<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/learn-about-the-municipal-construction-affirmative-marketing-program>

Fire Department
Edward Collina, Chief

Mission:

Fire Department

To improve and safeguard the quality of life within the City of Melrose, the members of the Melrose Fire Department guarantee to the citizens and visitors of Melrose that we will provide dependable service in a responsible fashion, while showing care and compassion for those in need. As public servants, our first and foremost duty is to serve the community. We will treat those we serve fairly, regardless of their race, color, creed, sex, age, lifestyle, national origin or economic status. We will ensure that any service we provide adds value to our residents' quality of life. We also recognize the individuality of everyone who works here. We will treat one another with respect, kindness recognizing the importance of teamwork. We should foster a spirit of excellence throughout the organization so that we may better serve our citizens.

Emergency Medical Services

The City of Melrose Fire Department will provide the highest level of pre-hospital basic and advanced life support with total regard for the best possible customer service. The fundamental and unique mission of the Melrose Fire Department EMS system is to develop and continually improve a medical care system, while assuring high quality patient care and appropriate response in emergency situations. In cooperation with a private EMS provider, we have integrated and will promote all aspects of a comprehensive system of pre-hospital emergency medical care. We will also provide the highest quality continuing education for individuals who provide emergency medical services, including Emergency Medical Responders, Emergency Medical Technicians, and Paramedics.

Staffing

1 - Chief of Department

7 – Fire Captains

9 – Fire Lieutenants

40 – Firefighters

1 – Superintendent of Fire Alarm

1 – Finance Administrator

All positions are Full Time Positions. Currently we have four female firefighters on the force, all of whom have been hired within the last six years.

Current Practices and Discussion

The Melrose Fire Department recognizes there is a lack of diversity in the Fire Services in general and is committed to increasing racial and gender diversity. We are governed by Massachusetts General Law Chapter 31 in our hiring and promotional practices which may or may not be the best process to achieve true diversity. We have to diversify because it will

actually improve our organization. It will help us address the needs of the public better. We will be able to provide a greater level of service to our community that we serve when people of the department reflect the cultures, languages and beliefs of the people within our City.

Today's Firefighters are required to climb ladders, haul hose lines, carry victims out of structure fires, mitigate hazardous material releases, and respond to and treat sick and injured persons on a daily basis. Sixty five percent of our call volume is medically related where we have direct contact with residents. Firefighters need the intellectual, social, and emotional skills required to deliver medical emergency aid, support to each other through traumatic experiences, and engage intimately with the community. Firefighters embody a complex mix of skills and traits.

The Department currently lacks a complete set of written policies and procedures easily accessible to all members electronically. Policies are written and sent out via email to department members who are employed at the time of the email.

Since becoming Chief of the Department I have reissued a Customer Service policy that was originally issued October 2007 and I have issued a Code of Ethics policy in July of 2020.

Next Steps

Establishing a uniform and accountable process by which department members are able to undergo training, review orders and department policies, and facilitate ongoing bias training is a major priority. Lexipol, a software vendor, provides a product which promises to achieve this. Unfortunately due to the funding constraints the COVID-19 pandemic has placed on the City's budget, we were unable to acquire this software this fiscal year. I am hopeful resources will be available in the future to facilitate my goal for the department.

**Department of Public Health
Ruth Clay, Director**

Mission: The mission of the Melrose Health Department is to promote the personal and environmental health of the community. We achieve this through education and policy development supported by enforceable regulations and collaboration with other people and organizations.

Staffing: 1 FTE Health Director
1 FTE Sr Health Inspector
1 FTE Health Inspector
1 FTE Admin Assistant
.7 Public Health Nurse
9 FTE School Nurses including the School Nurse Leader
.5 Animal Control Officer
1 FTE Regional Tobacco Control Coordinator
1 FTE Regional Substance Abuse Coordinator
1 FTE Substance Abuse Coordinator
.3 Youth Substance Abuse Coordinator
.3 Mass in Motion Coordinator

Current Practices

The Health Department collects a variety of data including the following:

Number of burial permits
Causes of death from overdose, suicide, and other
Number of food inspections, housing inspections, camp inspections, pool inspections, etc.
Number of complaints by cause
Number of Animal Control calls by type
Number of communicable disease follow up by type
Number of immunizations by type

Each of our DPH grants which include Mass in Motion, Tobacco Control and Substance Abuse Prevention include efforts to address the topics of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

We have a 3 hour training that is mandatory for all health department employees scheduled for July 16 and July 23.

Next Steps

- a. Immediate – Participate in the upcoming training
 - b. Short term (couple of weeks) – Review the training as a department and pick one item for an action plan
 - c. Long term (many weeks, more resources necessary)
- Review our grants and evaluate the work planned for social equity

Department of Human Resources
Marianne Long, Director

Office of the City Solicitor
Robert Van Campen, City Solicitor

Human Resources Department Mission: The Human Resources Department ensures that the City of Melrose follows fair and consistent employment practices, supports employees and retirees in health and welfare benefits, complies with federal and state laws and collective bargaining agreements, and effectively communicates employment matters to all City employees.

Legal Department Mission: The mission of the Melrose Legal Department is to educate the various municipal agencies, boards and commissions it represents as to the laws applicable to the City’s operations, to solve legal problems, to provide professional advice and counsel, to foster sound decision-making and creative problem-solving and to provide legal representation, all to facilitate the City’s pursuit of its objectives. The Legal Department pursues these goals with a focus on providing excellence in services and a commitment to the highest standards of professional ethics and integrity.

Staffing Levels:

HR	Marianne Long, Director of Human Resources Polina Latta, Human Resources Manager
Legal	Robert Van Campen, City Solicitor Amy Lindquist, Assistant City Solicitor for Schools & Labor Kelly Cogavin, Executive Assistant

Part 1. Policies/Data Collection/Information Systems/Recordkeeping

The Human Resources Department collects, manages and protects information through two software programs MUNIS and Benefit Tracker. We ensure the integrity of employment and financial data such as demographic information, PTO accruals, benefits and deductions, compensation levels, leaves and employment history for all City employees and all retirees.

The Legal Department manages, collects and maintains information resulting from: (1) insurance claims submitted against the City of Melrose on behalf of individual claimants; and (2) records related to the submission and processing of any required Criminal Offender Record Information (“CORI”) background checks that are part of the City’s pre-employment screening process, which includes volunteers.

Part 1. Barriers to accessing our offices and services:

It is our opinion that there are few, if any, barriers to accessing our respective offices and services. Providing professional customer service, with courtesy and respect, to our colleagues,

employees, applicants, members of the public, retirees and residents is our first priority. Also, both departments are easily accessible online, via email and via phone.

Part 2. Inventory:

Human Resources Department:

The Human Resources (HR) Department functions as the Employer for the City of Melrose. It interacts with, supports, guides, and manages everything related to employment across departments, except the School Department.

The HR Department's responsibilities in the last ten years have substantially increased and the new risk landscape has significantly changed and yet the staffing model has remained static. This has resulted in a "log jam" effect resulting in an understaffed department functioning reactively as opposed to proactively. The department is unable to provide fundamental opportunities for training and development for the general workforce to be adequately prepared for the challenges of the 21st century. Our requests for additional staff and resources have been denied due to limited financial resources and other priorities.

The City has two competent HR professionals, yet we are strained and unable to stretch our time and resources any further to fulfill responsibilities and increased expectations with the level of detail and attention that is required. The current staffing model is unsustainable.

Therefore, we **embrace and welcome** this opportunity to focus on the City's needs as an Employer and to audit and potentially transform our practices, policies and procedures. Substantive, lasting change will require an investment of funds and staffing resources. Therefore, it must be noted that for the last twenty years the Human Resources Department has been level funded. There are four accounts in the HR budget: Advertising, Printing, Dues, and Pre-employment Exams. Note that Training and Professional Development is nowhere to be found. The remaining three budgets; Unemployment, Worker's Compensation, and Benefits are earmarked for very specific purposes.

Legal Department:

In addition to its concurrent and overlapping responsibilities with the Human Resources Department, the Legal Department singularly serves as the chief legal advisor and advocate for the City of Melrose, the Melrose Public Schools, and all elected and appointed boards and commissions thereunder.

More specifically, the City Solicitor, with the assistance and support of an able and professional staff, serves as legal counsel to the Mayor, City Council, School Committee, and all agencies and multiple-member bodies of the City. This work encompasses formulating and providing opinions on all matters in which the City is involved, in all areas of law, including compliance with any and all federal and state laws and regulations in the areas of equality, discrimination, and civil rights.

Over the past several years, the responsibilities of the Legal Department have evolved to include more direct involvement in assisting the Office of the Mayor and Human Resources

Department to ensure that all policies and procedures of the City are implemented in a fair, equitable and non-discriminatory manner.

Additionally, the Legal Department is the lead negotiator in matters of collective bargaining with all City and school bargaining units, and this includes those instances when needed Departmental reforms and/or changes are to be negotiated. This negotiating process is governed by G.L. c.150E, et. seq. (“Law”) and the Legal Department strives to serve as a zealous advocate for individual departments, while simultaneously ensuring compliance with the stringent bargaining requirements of the Law.

Part 3. Policies Documented in the Employment Manual:

The City of Melrose’s **Employment Manual** is intended to be a general guide to the employment policies of and benefits applicable to the City of Melrose employees. The Manual is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, is available to all employees on the Human Resources web page, and is reviewed with new hires during their orientation. It must be noted that the Human Resources Department has no authority or jurisdiction in the school department.

Standards For Customer Service: Introductory Section of Employment Manual
“The importance of quality customer service in local government can’t be overstated, because any given citizen only periodically comes into contact with government employees, those few experiences greatly influence that citizen’s perception of the quality of all local government services.”

Customer Service is everyone’s responsibility, not just those who staff the front information desks. Every time we interact with an individual, answer the telephone, send an email, write a letter, or attend a meeting, we are making an impression on our customers – whether they are residents, visitors, people working in Melrose, people working with our staff on a project, or even City employees. These customer service standards were created for employees to follow to ensure that the quality of service to all of our customers meets or exceeds their expectations.

All new employees are introduced to these standards as part of their orientation program.

Guiding Principles

- We are a dedicated organization committed to enhancing the quality of life in Melrose by providing premium services in response to the needs of everyone who lives, works and visits our City.
- Customer Service is the reason for our existence as a city government. Our customers have the right to respect, safety, appropriate assistance, honesty, and competency regardless of age, ancestry, color, creed, disability, marital status, national origin, presence of children, race, gender, or sexual orientation.

Standards covering all Customer Service Interactions, *Customers have a right to expect...*

- Courtesy, respect, honesty and professionalism

- That the staff person will listen to their request/question, ask for clarification if necessary and provide complete knowledgeable, accurate, precise information regarding their inquiry.
- The staff person will make a reasonable effort to provide information about the City and, as appropriate, other outside agencies related to their department's function.

Telephone/Voicemail, *Customers have a right to expect...*

- Telephones will be answered promptly (within three rings) whenever possible. We prefer a person, not a voicemail, will answer the department main number whenever possible.
- Calls will be answered in a courteous manner (with a smile).
- Employees will:
 - Listen and understand the nature of requests before transferring a call;
 - Inform callers to whom they are being transferred along with the telephone number and department of the person.
 - Explain that they cannot assist if unable to do so, offer to take a message and ensure that the caller receives a return call within 24 hours (during business hours).
 - Provide the caller with the option to go to voicemail or leave a message before transferring a call.
 - Acknowledge voicemail messages within 24 hours on regular business days.
 - Keep their outgoing voicemail greeting current by notifying the public; when out of the office, and offering an alternative number for customers to call.

In Person, *Customers have a right to expect...*

- A timely and courteous acknowledgement, such as eye contact or a positive indication that the employee knows they are there, especially if the employee is on the telephone or with another customer.
- That each main informational counter will be staffed during business hours or, if staff is unavailable, will have signage referring them to the appropriate department.

In Person Contacts with Field Personnel, *Customers have a right to expect...*

- When a resident approaches a City employee who is doing work in the field, whenever possible staff will attempt to answer the question if it pertains to the employee's duties, or if the employee knows the answer.
- If a question pertains to an area outside of the employee's scope of duties or department, the employee will explain this, and will provide the resident with helpful numbers. This will provide the resident with the correct information they need to contact the department that can their question.
- If the employee cannot answer the question and it is related to their duties, employees' will offer the option to the resident of contacting a supervisor, so that supervisor can speak to the resident either by phone or by coming to meet the resident in person.

If employees are speaking with a resident who wants to make an inquiry to the Public Works Tremont Street Operations Center, they should inform them that Offices are staffed and phone lines are answered between the hours of 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM. All crews generally work a 7:00 AM to 3:00 PM schedule.

Job Descriptions: Customer Service Responsibilities and Qualification are defined in every City job description:

- **Responsibility:** Respond sensitively and constructively to citizen complaints; provide customer service with tact, courtesy, sensitivity and discretion in all dealings with internal and external customers.
- **Qualification:** Demonstrated experience in providing customer service to co-workers and residents with tact, courtesy, sensitivity and discretion.

Equal Employment/Affirmative Action: page 8 of Employment Manual

The City of Melrose is committed to the fundamental principles of equal employment opportunity for all current and prospective employees. The City's policies, procedures and practices are intended to prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, age, physical handicap, marital status, national origin, Vietnam veteran status, or sexual orientation. All employment decisions, including recruitment, hiring, upgrading, transfers, termination, compensation, training and evaluation are made by considering applicable work experience and/or job performance only.

The City has an Affirmative Action Plan on file with the Massachusetts Commission against Discrimination for recruiting minority and women applicants. The Human Resources Director for the City serves as the Affirmative Action Officer for the City.

Americans with Disabilities Act: page 8 of Employment Manual

The City of Melrose takes its obligations under the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Massachusetts disability and handicap discrimination statutes seriously. Accordingly, it does not refuse to hire, dismiss from employment, or discriminate in compensation or other terms of employment because of an otherwise qualified employee's disability. Employees must, however, be able to perform the essential functions of their jobs. It is not illegal discrimination to require that all employees, including those with disabilities, be able to perform the essential functions of their jobs, or the jobs for which they apply.

If you have any questions about the ADA, or believe that you need some type of accommodation, you should contact the Human Resources Department.

Harassment Prevention: page 8 of Employment Manual

The City is committed to maintaining a work environment in which employees are treated fairly and in accordance with all applicable laws. Through enforcement of this policy, the City strives to prevent inappropriate conduct that could be considered harassment, including sexual harassment. In addition, the City is committed to correcting any inappropriate conduct and to disciplining those who violate this policy.

All employees of the City, regardless of position, are covered by, and are expected to comply with this policy and to take appropriate measures to ensure that prohibited conduct does not occur. This policy also extends to City property, including but not limited to its telephones, copy machines, facsimile machines and computers and computer applications, such as email and internet access, which may not be used to engage in conduct that violates this policy.

Unlawful Harassment: It is against City Policy to engage in physical, visual, verbal and non-verbal conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an employee because of an employee's race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran's status, military service, age, marital status, genetic information, handicap or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance.

Examples of unwelcome conduct prohibited by this policy include but are not limited to:

- Conduct that unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, that creates an intimidating or offensive work environment, that adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities and that implicates an employee's race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran's status, military service, age, marital status, genetic information, handicap or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance
- Hostile physical contact, intimidating acts, threats of such actions or violence, or any other actions that may be considered threatening or hostile in nature and that implicates an employee's race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran's status, military service, age, marital status, genetic information, handicap or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance
- Derogatory remarks, epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, offensive jokes, teasing, the display or circulation of offensive printed, visual or electronic materials or similar misconduct that implicates an employee's race, color, religious creed, sex, national origin, ancestry, sexual orientation, pregnancy, veteran's status, military service, age, marital status, genetic information, handicap or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law or ordinance

Sexual Harassment: It is the goal of the City to promote a workplace that is free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment of employees occurring in the workplace or in other settings in which employees may find themselves in connection with their employment is unlawful and will not be tolerated. Further, any retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperating with an investigation of a sexual harassment complaint is similarly unlawful and will not be tolerated.

Definition of Sexual Harassment: Any behavior toward any employee by a manager, supervisor, co-worker or vendor, that constitutes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or the display of derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature will be considered sexual harassment when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a condition of an individual's employment;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonable interfering with an individual's work performance or creating a hostile, humiliating, intimidating or sexually offensive work environment.

To achieve our goal of providing a workplace free from sexual harassment, the conduct that is described in this policy as well as conduct, which we deem unacceptable, regardless of whether that conduct satisfies the definition of sexual harassment will not be tolerated. We have provided a procedure by which inappropriate conduct will be dealt with, if encountered by employees.

Complaints of Harassment Including Sexual Harassment

If any of our employees believes that s/he has been subjected to harassment, the employee has the right to file a complaint.

Procedures for Reporting Incidents: Any City employee believing that he or she has been the subject of harassment should create and submit a written report of any such incident as soon as possible to his or her supervisor or the Director of Human Resources. Supervisors are required to inform the Director of Human Resources upon receipt of any such allegations.

Harassment Investigation: Management will thoroughly and promptly investigate every reported incident of employee harassment. Management cannot guarantee complete confidentiality, but will do its best throughout the investigation to respect the confidences and sensitivities of all parties in the incident. The reporting employee will be afforded protection from retaliation, and the results of any investigation of alleged harassment shall be promptly communicated to the employee.

Disciplinary Action: The City takes allegations of sexual harassment seriously, and where it is determined that such inappropriate conduct has occurred, we will act promptly to eliminate the conduct and impose such corrective action, as is appropriate under the circumstances. Such actions may range from counseling to termination of employment, and may include other forms of disciplinary actions as we deem appropriate under the circumstances.

State and Federal Remedies: In addition to the above, if you believe you have been subjected to harassment, you may file a formal complaint with either or both of the government agencies set forth below. Using our complaint process does not prohibit you from filing a complaint with these agencies. Each of the agencies has a short time period for filing a claim (EEOC - 180 days; MCAD – 300 days).

The United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (“EEOC”)

John F. Kennedy Federal Building
15 New Sudbury Street Room 475
Boston, MA 02203
1-800-669-4000

The Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination (“MCAD”)

Boston Office:
One Ashburton Place - Rm. 601
Boston, MA 02108
617-994-6000
mcad@mass.gov

Springfield Office:
436 Dwight Street, Room 220
Springfield, MA 01103
413-739-2145
mcad@mass.gov

Performance Management: page 11 of Employment Manual

All employees are expected to meet acceptable standards for work performance, punctuality, attendance, and personal conduct.

Department Heads will give regular feedback, as needed, to their employees. In addition, they will conduct performance appraisals annually using uniform standards to measure performance. Supervisors will use the performance system in a manner that equitably and fairly evaluates current strengths and weaknesses to ensure maximum future performance.

A Performance Appraisal System benefits both management and individual employees by:

- Recognizing an employee's performance;
- Maintaining and improving performance;
- Providing a medium for personnel counseling;
- Facilitating proper decisions regarding probationary employees;
- Fostering fair and impartial personnel decisions;
- Providing an objective and fair means for measurement and recognition of individual performance; and
- Identifying training and professional development needs.

When an employee fails to conform to proper standards, that person should have, as stated below, notification and an opportunity to correct the deficiency. If performance does not improve, the disciplinary steps set forth in the policy below should be followed.

Supervisors are responsible for informing employees of standards, policies, and procedures. Supervisors will face problems as soon as they are identified. All problem situations will be reviewed with Human Resources at the earliest opportunity.

Documentation: Documentation serves as a guide to develop and improve employee performance. It also gives supervisors the opportunity to make employees aware of the positive and negative impact of their actions.

Generally, the following series of steps will be followed, although there will be circumstances which justify skipping steps, repeating steps, or proceeding to immediate termination.

Step 1: Verbal alert for a first offense. The supervisor and the employee discuss the performance problem and the steps needed for improvement. A memo detailing the date of the meeting is completed and is kept by the department head. This note may be sent to Human Resources either

when the verbal warning is presented or when the corrective action warning is given, as a form of back-up documentation.

Step 2: Corrective action warning for a second offense or a serious first offense requiring more than a verbal alert. All corrective action warnings are reviewed by Human Resources before being presented to the employee. The supervisor meets with the employee and, if desirable, with Human Resources. A corrective action warning becomes a permanent part of an employee's personnel file.

The supervisor and staff member review the performance problem and identify the steps necessary to correct it. The supervisor reviews the following points and includes them in the written warning:

- Statement of performance problems;
- Necessary corrective action discussed;
- Restatement of prior counseling; and
- Description of the next step in the process

Step 3: Final warning. If a problem continues, a final written warning is issued. The warning must be reviewed by the Human Resources Director before it is presented to the employee.

A meeting must be arranged with the employee, the supervisor and the Human Resources Director. The purposes of this meeting are to:

- Review the performance problem;
- Identify necessary corrective action;
- Attempt to resolve any underlying problems interfering with the employee's ability to correct the performance problem;
- Restate prior counseling; and
- Clearly state that the next step is termination

Step 4: Recommendation for release. If the desired improvements do not occur, the supervisor has no choice other than to recommend that the employee be terminated.

Immediate Release: In certain situations, the supervisor may believe that immediate termination is warranted or that some of the steps set forth above should not be used. These cases must be referred to Human Resources for immediate review.

Multiple Problems: Some employees may have more than one performance problem at a time. It is not necessary to handle each situation as though it were a single unrelated incident. Repeated infractions of different policies often point out a general inability or deliberate refusal to follow policy. These situations should be brought to the attention of Human Resources.

Those employees covered under Civil Service Laws have certain rights, including written notification, hearings, and rights of appeal in cases of transfer, abolition of position, demotion, removal, discharge, lay-off, or suspension. Employees covered by Civil Service should consult Sections 41 through 46 of Chapter 31 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

Employees covered under a specific Collective Bargaining (Union) Agreement may have different or additional procedures that apply to disciplinary actions and should therefore consult their respective agreements for provisions relative to discipline.

Part 4. Issue or Policy Area of Focus/Improvement

In conducting this internal review, our Departments determined the followings are of focus where improvement and/or change should be considered:

1. Greater efficiency in sharing and disseminating information with all employee groups and classifications.
2. Reforms to existing policies and procedures governing employee performance evaluations, and employee complaint investigation and review.

Part 5. Summary of Best Practices

Throughout our research of best practices to address inequality and racism and promote diversity, equity and inclusion, it becomes evident that a real change necessitates a sustained and thoughtful individual, organizational and community wide commitment. Municipalities that have made significant change in the direction of diversity and inclusion (D&I) have been able to do so by investing in a role dedicated to spearheading the D&I efforts. Below are some of the best practices they have developed:

1. Raise Awareness

- Initiative comes from the top-clarify the mission and values of the organization and how it translates into action. Align the values of diversity and inclusion with organizational goals.
- Challenge employees to genuinely connect and show curiosity with coworkers of diverse background
- Ask employees on their own to explore personal privileges, reactions and biases: Implicit Association Test, <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html>

2. Offer continuous training opportunities focusing on diverse groups (race, gender, religious, age)

➤ *The HR Department has had no funds for training and development for the past 10 years.*

- Address Implicit Bias and Build Culture of Inclusion
- Cross Cultural Competency and Communications
- Harassment Prevention
- Bring experienced facilitator who could create safe environment; offer engaging and interactive training; and gives actionable steps and tools to promote change.
- Offer “If-then” format that gives employees specific instructions on how to handle certain situation to eliminating racial profiling and judgmental behavior and provide exceptional customer service to all.

3. Implement bias interrupters – small, easy and simple changes that create a ripple effect within the organization’s staffing, compensation decisions, development opportunities,

promotions, choosing what roles to invest in; assignments etc. and contribute to more diverse, productive and engaged workforce.

➤ *Over the past two decades, the City of Melrose has been impacted by two significant economic downturns and cause spike in unemployment. The administration had made the decision to invest in our community and recruit local candidates. The lack of diversity in our community is reflective in the makeup of the current workforce.*

- Write “neutral” job descriptions by removing discouraging language or greater qualifications (i.e. education, driver’s license)- *to be reviewed*
- Use diverse job boards for recruiting
- Reducing referral hiring or hiring “locals” - *in process*
- Highlight employees belonging to a diverse group on employment page so that more candidates can self-identity with them and their role in the organization.
- Create a diverse hiring team with different evaluation goals (experience, technical, culture)
- Removing names, and other identifiable info from resumes and leaving only experience.
- Considering candidates with diverse educational backgrounds (not only top colleges)
- Incorporating skills tests into the hiring process
- Structured interviews: Asking every applicant the same, pre-determined questions- *already practicing*
- Taking careful notes during interview so you have information to base the hiring decision, rather than an impression- *already practicing*
- Use interview score cards for objective evaluation of competences.
- Question “culture fit” vs “culture add” – culture “add” adds different experience and perspectives.
- Set metrics to measure success of attracting diverse talent.
- Use outside tools and resources:
 - [Blendoor](#) – a mobile job matching app that hides candidate names and photos to circumvent unconscious bias in the workplace and improve diversity recruiting in tech companies
 - [GapJumpers](#) – a blind auditioning tool that allows companies to hire based on performance instead of resume keywords and pre-conceived assumptions
 - [Interviewing.io](#) – an anonymous technical interviewing platform designed to fix Silicon Valley’s ‘fundamentally broken’ talent funnel by minimizing unconscious biases
 - [Paradigm](#) – a data-driven company that draws on behavioral science research to design effective diversity and inclusion strategies
 - [Project Include](#) – an open community working toward providing meaningful diversity and inclusion solutions for tech companies
 - [Textio](#) – a language analysis platform that uncovers gendered phrases and spots biases, allowing companies to write more gender-neutral job descriptions that appeal to wider audiences
 - [Unbias.io](#) – a Google Chrome extension that removes faces and names from LinkedIn profiles to reduce the effects of unconscious bias in recruiting

- **Unitive** – a hiring platform that helps companies create job postings and structure job interviews to focus on skills instead of stereotypes

4. Nurture a welcoming culture of inclusion

- Creating and enforcing policies that promote and protect diversity and equity; anti-discrimination; anti-harassment etc.- *already in practice*

5. Great example of a comprehensive initiative offering best practices and commitment to diversity and inclusion across the organization is *County of San Diego's strategic Plan for Diversity and Inclusion 2015-2020*

https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/content/dam/sdc/diversity/documents/DiversityInclusion_StratPlan.pdf.

Part 6. Long-term Action Plan for Implementation (more resources necessary)

- Greater information sharing for all employees, staff and municipal clients.
- Ongoing dialogue with employees about diversity in the workforce and need for greater focus on sensitivity to resident needs.
- Ongoing effort to seek legislative changes in the areas of collective bargaining law and laws governing municipal governance. These changes would be necessary to assist Melrose, and other municipalities, in ensuring needed reforms can be implemented without the undue delay typically caused by antiquated and anti-employer laws.
- Implementation of a recurring, sustained program of implicit bias training for all City and School staff.
- Improvements of protocols governing recruitment to ensure efforts are focused as broadly as possible so as to attract a more diverse pool of candidates.
- Creation of more formal procedures around employee complaints and the method for handling them.
- Update all policies to include protections for gender identity.

Department of Information Technology
Neal Ellis, Chief Information Officer

Mission: The IT Department for the City of Melrose supports all municipal and school IT needs throughout the city.

Staffing: 7 full time employees

Current Practices:

Currently, we are serving disadvantaged families by distributing Chromebooks during the COVID19 pandemic.

- Increases Equity among all students
- We worked with principals to contact families who they knew would be in need. This family population was largely made up of English Language Learners whose families may not have been able to understand the communications sent by the district in English.
- Many of these families had difficulty attending a pickup session due to work conflicts so we offered personal appointments to obtain a Chromebook. We had 8 days total of distribution.
- The School Metco Director, Amy Jackson, also picked up Chromebooks from us and gave them to Metco students.
- We distributed MiFi Wireless units to families:
 - These are essentially cell phones that broadcast wireless to devices
 - These were given to students who did not have internet at their homes to use a device given to them by the city.
- Our staff consists of 7 total FTE including one U.S. military veteran, one Vietnamese-American and one female employee.
- Built into our 1:1 Chromebook initiative, was an extensive plan to allow disadvantaged students and families to purchase a Chromebook at a reduced price or borrow a new device to use and take home.
- We are purchasing enough Chromebooks this summer to create a 1 student to 1 Chromebook ratio in our elementary schools. This will allow all students to have equal access.
- We are going to be providing all teachers with a laptop so that they can work from home when needed to accommodate whatever family situation they have as well as be mobile and collaborate more often.

City - Current Work

- We currently use ProAV for all of our projector installation and projector purchases. We are also hiring them to install a digital sign in the Melrose PD. They are a woman-owned business.

Next Steps:

- Increase the number of businesses that we purchase from that are owned by women or people of color.
- Attend diversity training offered by HR or seek out diversity training outside of that offered by HR.
- Contact organizations who specialize in helping underserved populations in the IT labor market to provide interns to Melrose IT or to provide candidates for an open position.
- Review survey data acquired by HR on the diversity of the current workforce in the City and aim to fill in the gaps where diverse employees can join IT.
- Generally spread the message that the culture of my department is inclusive and intolerant of any prejudice.

Melrose Public Library
Linda Gardener, Director

Mission:

Current Mission: The mission of the Melrose Public Library is to inform, enrich and empower all citizens by providing and promoting free access to the universe of information and ideas.

NOTE: As the use and meaning of “citizens” in recent times has become less understood as relating to a global citizenry of humankind, we at the library have become increasingly concerned that it could unintentionally create the reverse of the welcoming environment we value. During our latest Strategic Planning process this, along with the mission statement and its meaning for Melrose as a whole, was a topic of considerable discussion resulting in the following Mission, approved by the Library Board of Trustees and effective July 1, 2020. We also developed a first-time Vision Statement, as a companion statement.

New Mission

Melrose Public Library's staff, building and collections provide a portal for all to explore, imagine and engage. The library is where literacy, local history and community connect!

New Vision

Melrose Public Library-- where people of all ages, experiences, abilities and beliefs can belong. As a 21st century community institution with roots in the late 19th century, the library is grounded in the present and has its sights set on the future. Carefully curated resources provide wide access to books, media, and technology. Skilled and welcoming staff design innovative programming to foster individual growth and enhance community engagement. The Melrose Public Library offers places to meet, study, read, engage in civic discourse, and share all our stories.

Current Staffing Levels: The library currently has 13 full time staff members (including one vacancy) and 10 regularly scheduled part time staff, totaling just under 2 FTE in their regular hours. There are also library page staff, who perform tasks such as reshelving library material and helping to prepare new material for circulation, and minimal fill-in staff. During the school year, the library is regularly open 64 hours per week. During the shutdown, staff have continued to provide direct services for at least that number of hours not only through 24-- hour access to digital materials, but also through monitoring of email accounts and phone messages, and responding to patrons. Library programs have also continued at their usual day and evening times in the virtual environment.

1. List of written procedures and data collected by the office.

Links to the Policies, Procedures and Strategic Plan for the library can be found on the library's website. The library collects significant data regarding circulation statistics through the NOBLE library consortium, as well as maintaining general statistics regarding program frequency and attendance, numbers of reference questions received, and overall attendance in the library. Data is governed by confidentiality and privacy policies and MA General Law; personal data is highly protected. Examples of policies include:

- Collection Development Statement
- Standards of Conduct Policy

- Social Media Policy
2. List the steps or actions your office has already taken to ensure accessibility, equity and inclusion.
 - Challenged Material Policy
 - Diversity Book Lists
 - Updated Summer Reading Lists (in process)
 - New Strategic Plan (2021 – 2025)
 - Diversity-focused programming

3. Issue or policy area you chose to focus on improving and why
Collection Development Statement. This is our oldest policy that has not been revised or discussed. Our practices have evolved, and while it is written with a solid foundation, it must include intentional diversity of collections, both to reflect the community and to reflect the larger global community. A modern collection should reflect both the mirrors of the community (books that reflect your own demographic) and windows to other communities (books that expose you to other places and cultures). Finally, while a modern public library provides many services, the collections of materials whether physical or digital, and the access to knowledge and literacy that they provide, continue to be the cornerstone of who we are. Our policy should reflect this importance.

4. Summary of best practice, link or copy attached.

Our process will be guided by the values set forth in the American Library Association’s Library Bill of Rights and their interpretation of the Bill as regards Diverse Collections. Additionally, we would like to work with the ALA Resolution on Monetary Library Fines as a Form of Social Inequity and Economic Barriers to Information Access: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights.

5. Action plan to implement
 - a. Immediate –
 - Discuss this process with library staff as a whole; share report with staff.
 - Establish committee of library staff members to read existing policy, including both professional and paraprofessional staff.
 - b. Short term (couple of weeks) –
 - Review identified best practices.
 - Review comments from the Melrose community from the recent Strategic Planning survey that were specific to collections.
 - c. Long term (many weeks, more resources necessary) –
 - Actively encourage feedback from people of color in the community regarding deficiencies and strengths in the collection.
 - Create a new Collection Management Policy, to be reviewed and approved by the Library Board of Trustees.
 - Ensure that all staff, not just librarians with collection development responsibilities, are familiar with the policy.

- Commit to regular review of Melrose demographics to ensure accurate perceptions of the community.
- Incorporate language committing to a fine-free environment when possible to eliminate economic barriers to access.
- Seek out diverse authors and publishers.
- Establish periodic reviews of Policy to ensure it is up to date.

This is an important and necessary conversation to be having. While each department has individual ways in which we can improve and promote our commitment to diversity and inclusion, there should also be a level of consistency City-wide in how we approach our residents and each other. It is my hope that the City will also choose to work towards developing a City-wide Nondiscrimination Policy, as well as establish consistent and regular city-wide implicit bias training on an initial, and then ongoing, basis. It is key that the energy we feel today is not diminished over time, as the need will always exist.

Soldiers' and Sailors' Memorial Building

Kathy Pigott-Brodeur, Executive Director

Mission: The mission of the Soldiers' & Sailors Memorial Building is to provide the city with a commemorative monument to the patriotism of service men and women from Melrose who died for their country. It is also a cultural center for the community. It is available for meetings of the veterans and also for commemorative ceremonies marking certain dates in the history of the Veterans of the United States as well as inaugural ceremonies for the city of Melrose.

Staffing: The Staff consists of one Executive Director and (4) part-time non-benefit eligible Operation Assistants. The Executive Director is responsible for day to day operations and the management of the Operations Assistants. The staff performs all custodial and daily maintenance of the building. A requirement for working at Memorial Hall is strong customer service skills. Our staff understands it may be our 200th event of the year but is it the first, and usually, only event for our customers.

The SSMB Board of Trustees consist of 5 members, at least two of whom shall be veterans. The Board of Trustees sets building policies and has fiduciary responsibility for Melrose Memorial Hall.

Data

All Applicant/Renters of Memorial Hall, regardless of rental fees paid, must sign a Memorial Hall Rental agreement, (attached) and abide by all the Rules and Regulations set forth in the agreement. The agreement contains contact information for the organization and/or person renting the facility including their name/organization name, address, phone number and email address. Additionally, it includes the date/times of event(s), onsite contact person, nonprofit status, ticket prices renter charges, and rental fees.

Policies

Melrose Memorial Hall is owned by the City of Melrose and all staff are employees of the city. Therefore, all employees are bound by the policies set forth in the City of Melrose employee handbook.

Memorial Hall is a public facility therefore must rent to all, as long as they complete the rental application, and agree to the policies set forth.

Best Practices:

- As a result of our marketing outreach and strong customer service skills, our clientele is culturally diverse and come from beyond the city limits of Melrose.
- Memorial Hall strives to treat all customers equally and fairly.
- All customers of Memorial Hall must abide by the rules and regulations set forth in our rental policy, regardless of rental fees paid.
- Memorial Hall staff enforces these policies at all events with everyone onsite.

- All Memorial Hall staff must take the yearly conflict of interest and ethics online MA State training.
- All staff are reminded daily and at all quarterly staff meetings that all customers must be treated fairly and equitably.
- Under no circumstances are staff, vendors, renters, or attendees allowed to use offensive language while onsite. When an issue occurs, the person is asked to immediately leave the facility.
- Memorial Hall has very limited onsite signage (mostly instructional and in our dressing rooms). To communicate more efficiently, we work with all our customers to ensure this signage is translated as needed.

Standard Event Industry Non-Discrimination Policy:

The Executive Director researched industry standard NDPs which she adapted for Memorial Hall (below). This policy needs to be reviewed and approved by the City of Melrose City Solicitor. Preferably this policy should become city wide and posted in all facilities.

DRAFT Nondiscrimination Policy

We want all who enter our facility to feel welcome and included. Accordingly, we prohibit discrimination against renters, staff, guests, or vendors based on race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, ancestry, disability, marital, family, pregnancy status, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, veteran or citizenship status, age, or any other characteristic protected under applicable federal, regional, state, or local law. Such discrimination includes, but is not limited to, refusing to provide or accept services or any other conduct that improperly takes into account these characteristics. We will, at our discretion, take steps to enforce this policy, up to and including suspending access to our facility and cancelation of contracts of those renters, staff, guests, or vendors who violate this policy. We reserve the right to suspend any access to our facility and cancel the contract of anyone who engages in offensive and detrimental behavior, including behavior that shocks, insults, or offends the community and public morals and decency, including through making racist, discriminatory, or offensive comments on our property and elsewhere or by taking actions that would tend to reflect poorly on us.

IMMEDIATE PLAN OF ACTION:

- Meet with entire staff to review Memorial Hall policies and request their input to policy changes.

SHORT TERM PLAN OF ACTION:

- To keep the community and our surrounding neighbors updated, the Executive Director is presently writing a media outreach plan to actively publicize the upcoming events at Memorial Hall on a timely basis

- To ensure confidentiality, we may set up a confidential email as a means to report any issues/complaints our guests may have while in attendance. This policy would be posted in the Main Lobby, on our website and in our customer correspondence:
 - *If you experience discrimination in the course of conducting business with Memorial Hall, please send an email to memorialhall@cityofmelrose.org, with the subject “Nondiscrimination Policy,” so we can investigate and take appropriate measures.*

LONG TERM PLAN OF ACTION:

- Translate the rental agreement into various languages for our present customers, (immediate need is 4 languages).
- With the city’s assistance, set up a translation system we can use to more easily communicate with all our customers. This system may be a 3-way phone communication, (MH Staff, customer, and translator). It MUST be available on nights and weekends as that is Memorial Hall’s prime time.
- Finalize and post the City of Melrose Non Discrimination Policy in Memorial Hall Main Lobby and website.
- Work with the City of Melrose and the SSMB Trustees to Include the finalized City of Melrose NDP in the Memorial Hall rental agreement
- Memorial Hall Staff Bias Training: As the staff is part time (nights and weekends), this training must occur on the weekends, NOT M-F daytime hours.
- Annually review all Memorial Hall policies with City Solicitor to ensure they are current, accurate, and in compliance the city policies.

Council on Aging and Milano Center
Stacey Minchello, Executive Director

Mission: To advocate for senior citizens and sponsor services and programs that promote their health and well-being and help them live with dignity.

Staffing:

1. Executive Director –full time, 35 hours
2. Administrative Assistant/Program Coordinator-full time, 35 hours
3. Senior Center Coordinator- part time, 20 hours
4. Outreach Social Worker- part time (vacant), 5 hours
5. Office Assistants (2) - part time, 20 hours total
6. Dispatcher- part time, 18 hours
7. Mini Bus Drivers (7)-part time, 40 hours total

Current Practices:

A. Overview:

The Melrose Council on Aging (MCOA) is the community based elder affairs department of the City of Melrose. It is governed by a board appointed by the Mayor. The MCOA manages the Milano Center, a public community center for anyone over the age of 60 years. The FRIENDS of the Milano Center are a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization that financially supports the Milano Center. MCOA also manages a transportation program for older Melrose adults for local doctors' appointments, shopping trips and social outings. MCOA administers the Melrose Emergency Fund which is open to all Melrose residents regardless of age. MCOA administers the Property Tax Workoff Program. MCOA participates in a community network of partnerships: Melrose Helps, Servant's Hearts Pantry, Mystic Valley Elder Services, Melrose Housing Authority, Congregational Retirement Homes, Red Cross, Faith Communities, and all city departments and city initiatives.

1. Mission Statement:

The MCOA Board of Directors ("Board") is currently amidst a strategic planning project (SPP). SPP meetings are held bi-weekly on Wednesdays at 9:30 am via Webex. The mission statement is in the process of being updated. Emphasis on using the term, older adults in place of senior citizen is being considered. The Board is aware of the Two Weeks to Change challenge and actively participating.

2. Board of Directors:

The current Board has five members. It is the desire of the Board to request that the Mayor fill future vacancies with Directors that represent the composition of the city's ethnicities.

3. Volunteers:

The Milano Center supervises 38 volunteers in many capacities. Positions include front desk receptionists, event assistants, shopper assistants, and meal servers.

B. Policies & Procedures, Data Collection

1. Policies and Procedures

The MCOA realizes that policies and procedures need to be reviewed and updated. This project will be incorporated into the SPP. The Milano Center follows a policy called “Standards of Independence” which has been derived from the Executive Office of Elder Affairs consultants and area COAs. It depicts the expectations of our participants. We acknowledge that we need to adopt a “Bill of Rights” for our participants. A grievance policy exists; however it needs to be linked with a “Bill of Rights”. A non- discrimination posting should be adopted from an approved universal city policy.

We host events, workshops, rides, and service appointments where seats are reserved or tickets are sold on a first come first serve basis.

We actively seek out vendors using an RFP process if required. We invest additional efforts in reaching out to local, female owned, and minority owned businesses.

2. Data Collection

“My Senior Center” is a web-based software system utilized to store the consumer’s information for tracking of activities, contact info and emergency contact info, etc. Forms will be reviewed to see if they need updating to reflect optional ethnic, financial, and disability/condition disclosures. An opportunity to improve is to focus on outreach tracking outcomes in order to verify that our activities and programs are geared to different cultures, generations, and communities.

3. Existing steps to equity, accessibility, and inclusion

- Title IIIb Community Services Grant: “A Welcoming Place for All”
- Parameters in place for “First Come, First Serve” events
- Communications were sent to SPP to add access barriers to the working committee to revamp.

Next Steps:

Expand and test access

Our literature, announcements and flyers are in English only and distributed through a small list of channels. We need to review and set a wider channel that is more encompassing of all people, especially those with limited language capacities and/or disabilities.

A. Teachable moments

We pride ourselves in providing great friendly customer service while respecting confidentiality. We would better serve our consumers if our staff

had sensitivity training. We need to send a message to our staff that we are here for them not only as teachers, but as learners too. We need to become a community welcoming center for all that promotes listening, while simultaneously understanding the historical generational biases of opinions. Thus, we will become a dynamic energy that creates teachable moments for our elders and participants...all.

We embrace a “no wrong door policy” that assists all those in need by connecting them with available resources/options. We need to train our associates on how to access interpreter services inclusive of sign language.

- B. Host events that promote collaborations of community diversity, inclusion, and equality. Prioritize a strategic initiative to partner with social change groups, the Human Rights Commission, government officials, and forward-looking businesses and faith communities.

4. Best Practices

- Massachusetts Councils on Aging is a resource to use for accessing COAs that have rolled out their center as a “welcoming place”.
- Research progressive states for best practices
- Utilize UMASS Boston as a resource for demographics as well as the gerontology research.
- Reach out to the LBGT Aging Project

5. Action Plan

a. Immediate

- Complete grant application
- Summarize areas of focus and send to the SPP
- Continue to research best practices
- Set a date to review policies by priority
- Staff conversations and share resources

b. Short term

- i. Set up discussions with Age Strong Boston, Duxbury Senior Center and Worcester Senior Center
- ii. Make connections with partner agencies
- iii. Contact UMASS Boston
- iv. Seek entertainers and guest speakers for events

c. Long term

- Host events, trainings, and workshops
- Measure outreach outcomes annually

Police Department
Chief Michael L. Lyle

Mission: It is essential that police services be administered in a manner that fosters public respect, confidence and acceptance. The Melrose Police Department pledges to maintain the highest standards of integrity, ethics, excellence and teamwork in the performance of their mission while at the same time protecting the Constitutional rights of the citizens. Our mission is to strengthen public confidence in the organization, develop and maintain positive relationships with the community and promote the concept of teamwork for the benefit of all, while at the same time promoting a safe and friendly community through enforcement and education.

Staffing:

Chief of Police	1
Lieutenants	4
Sergeants	10
Sgt. Investigator	1
Detectives	3
Prosecutor	1
Officers	27
Parking Officers	2
Office Manager/Assistant	1.5

Training:

Police training for municipal police departments is the responsibility of the Massachusetts Municipal Police Training Committee (MPTC). The statutory mandate (MGL c.41, sec. 96B) of the Committee includes developing and delivering training, setting and enforcing training standards, and providing record keeping services regarding training to Municipal Police Departments statewide. These responsibilities are to be carried out in a way that ensures community oriented professionalism throughout the organization.

All municipal officers must complete 40 hours of mandatory in-service training per year. The training year 2020-2021 provides the following.

- Legal Updates (Full Day)
- Defensive Tactics (1/2 Day)
- Officer Health and Wellness (1/2 Day)
- Implicit Bias (1/2 Day)
- Domestic Terrorism (1/2 Day)
- Responding to COVID-19 and states of emergencies (1/2 Day)
- Local Option (1/2 Day)

In addition, officers are required to complete the annual firearms training and requalification requirements. CPR and first aid training are also required pursuant to MGL chapter 111 §201. Both of these do count towards the overall 40-hour training requirement, as does any other police related training, regardless of the provider and regardless of whether it is classroom or internet-based.

The Committee makes decisions regarding in-service training for chief.

List of Written Police Policies:

Description	Description
Electronic Recording Of Interrogations/interviews	Mutual Aid
Community Policing Civilian Ride Along Program	Patrol Operations
Strkes And Labor Disputes	Electronic Communications
Nemlec Special Operations	Eyewitness Identifications
Nemlec Response	Post-shooting Incident Procedures
K-9 Unit	Comp Time
Internal Affairs (citizen Complaints)	Disciplinary Procedures
Cellular Telephone Usage	Anti-harassment
Public Information	Sick Leave(Patrol)
Traffic Police Escorts	Selection
Traffic Collision Investigation	Background Investigations
Vehicle Inventory	Notification Of Chief Of Police
Uniform Mototr Vehicle Citation	Bank/hold Up Alarms
Traffic Motor Vehicle Stops	Missing Persons / Amber Alerts
Processing Of Traffic Citations And Parking Violation Notice	Missing Children
Parking Enforcement	In Car Video Recording
Towing	Vehicle Maintenance Report
Overnight Parking	Vehicular Pursuits
Collection And Preservation Of Evidence	Seatbelts
Wildlife Problems	Uniform And Equipment
Evidence And Property Management	Bullet Proof Vests
Non-criminal Marijuana Citation	Use Of Informants
Applications For Restitution In Criminal Prosecutions	Criminal Investigation

List of Recently Updated Police Policies in PMAM

- BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS
- BLOODBORNE PATH SYRINGE PICK-UP
- ADMINISTRATION OF NASAL NALOXONE
- DEFIBRILLATORS
- MPD-DHS-ICE
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE INCIDENTS
- U-VISA
- HATE CRIMES
- JUVENILE ARREST PROCEDURES
- DETAINEE TRANSPORT
- VICTIM/WITNESS ASSISTANCE

DETAILS

SAFE STORAGE OF FIREARMS

USE OF CJIS & CORI

USE OF FORCE

USE OF FORCE REPORTING

ACTIVE SHOOTER AND HOSTILE EVENT RESPONSE PLAN (ASHER)

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES W.H.O. DECLARATION OF A PANDEMIC

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY PROTOCOL

OPERATIONS RELATED TO COVID 19

OPERATIONS RELATED TO COVID 19 (UNATTENDED DEATHS)

MARIJUANA POSSESSION AND USE

LOCAL POLICE COMPLIANCE WITH IMMIGRATION DETAINEES FOLLOWING SJC DECISION AND LUNA V. COMMONWEALTH

The approved policies are stored in a named user system/platform called PMAM. **PMAM HCM** is the Departments' Human Capital Management (HCM), Learning, Training, Compliance/Accreditation platform. It provides revision control and ensures integrity and consistency across policies, documents and training.

Please note that all collective bargaining unit contracts (including the superior officers and the patrolmen) are posted on the Human Resources page of the city website.

Accessibility, Equity and Inclusion

Accessibility: A Call Box is located outside the station for all people with physical limitations that cannot climb the 3 flights of stairs safely. If an individual with physical limitations is arrested or a victim of a crime, police or EMS personnel will carry the individual in to the station.

Equity: Melrose Police Department is a civil service (HRD) agency, and we recruit strictly through police exams and their final test scores. Lists are generated by HRD Civil Service and we hire based on those lists.

Inclusion: We are guided by the "Law Enforcement Inclusion Act of 2019"

<https://www.congress.gov/bill/116th-congress/house-bill/4168>

Next Steps

It has been the goal of the Melrose Police Department under my leadership to reach the national standards level of police certification and accreditation. With the current staffing levels in the Melrose Police Department, this is a daunting and unending program that requires a labor intensive commitment by the City of Melrose. The national accrediting body is The Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA®). CALEA was created in 1979 as a credentialing authority through the joint efforts of law enforcement's major executive associations:

- International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP)
- National Organization of Black Law Enforcement Executives (NOBLE)
- National Sheriffs' Association (NSA)
- Police Executive Research Forum (PERF)

Standards for national accreditation as established by the CALEA provide the framework for standards in the Massachusetts Police Accreditation Program.

Accreditation is the higher of the two program awards consisting of 382 standards: 257 are mandatory; 125 are optional. Mandatory standards that do not apply to the agency are waived. Only a percentage of the optional standards must be met; the percentage is based on agency size.

The **Certification** Program consists of 159 standards, all of which are mandatory. Since these 159 standards are part of the 257 mandatory standards for accreditation, certification is a significant milestone towards accreditation. It is the policy of the Commission that agencies must successfully achieve certification before being assessed for accreditation.

One can learn more about the accreditation and certification process at the Commission's website: <https://masspoliceaccred.net/>

Summary of Best Practice

Recently due to state mandates and pending legislation, the Use of Force Policy has been amended. The amended policy includes banning choke holds, restricting officers from discharging their firearm at moving or fleeing vehicles, officers will identify themselves prior to discharging their firearm, a police officer that is in a position to do so will intervene a fellow officer who is using unreasonable force. The intervening officer has a position with an affirmative duty to act

Action Plan to Implement

- Policy has been issued to the Melrose Police Department on June 19, 2020

- The officer complaint/compliment form has been amended and posted on the department website.
- The Department will continue our practice of community meetings and our annual “Coffee with a Cop” program when the COVID pandemic will allow.
- The Department is required to submit an annual report every year. Those reports will be posted on the department website beginning 2018.
- The Department will continue post daily calls-for-service logs on the department website.

Parks Department

Joan Bell, Superintendent of Mount Hood and Public Open Space

Mission: It is the mission of the Melrose Parks Department to continuously endeavor to protect, preserve, and expand our park resources, and to maintain and develop them to the highest and most current standards of safety, cleanliness, diversity, enjoyment, and accessibility for all.

Staffing: 2 full time employees.

Current Practices

- When planning upgrades to playgrounds or constructing new playgrounds we look at the various needs of our park visitors. The City has added in recent years pour-in-place rubber to two of our busiest parks, making them much more accessible to adolescents with disabilities and to aging adults. At the Common, we added a carriage parking area for caregivers pushing strollers.
- Thinking of multigenerational users in the parks, we have added picnic and seating areas inside playground areas as well as benches with charging stations, providing all people a place to recreate with friends and family.
- Our community gardens realized there was an issue with the community elder housing groups that wanted to be a part of the garden. Some of them couldn't access the plants from their wheel chairs or couldn't bend low enough to work in it. We added double high boxes; they now have access to planting and growing fresh vegetables. It promoted acceptance and understanding and brought new social interaction to the entire group.
- Mt. Hood has offered a city-sponsored intellectual disability golf program for many years.

Next Steps:

a. Short Term

Having our user guides and permits available in multiple languages.

b. Mid Term

Acquire demographic data on park users to inform policies.

c. Long term

Work with the Mayor's office, City Solicitor, and Park Commission to develop a park inclusion policy for all our parks and open spaces

Office of Planning and Community Development Denise Gaffey, Director and City Planner

Mission:

It is the mission of the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) to protect and enhance the quality of life in Melrose. To accomplish this mission, OPCD provides long-range planning, reviews and recommends changes in zoning, administers affordable housing activities, applies for and administers grants and community development programs, manages the capital improvement program, implements special projects and oversees certain capital construction projects. OPCD supports the work of several Boards and Commissions in the City and reviews all major land use proposals, including subdivision plans and residential and commercial development proposals. OPCD manages sustainability and energy efficiency initiatives and provides mapping and GIS (Geographic Information System) support for all City Departments.

Staffing:

Director and City Planner – full time
Senior Planner – full time
Accounting Manager/GIS Analyst – full time
Sustainability Manager – full time (30 hours)
Planning Coordinator – part time (24 hours)
Conservation Agent – part time (8 hours)

Current Practices:

Regulations

Many of the City's planning functions are dictated by the Regulations that have been adopted by the City Council over the years, and are based on State Statutes (i.e., enabling legislation). All of these regulatory documents are made available on the City website for residents and property owners to access remotely. The regulations include:

- Melrose Zoning Ordinance (MZO)
- Melrose Subdivision Rules and Regulations
- Melrose Historic District Ordinance
- Melrose Wetlands Ordinance

Planning Documents

OPCD undertakes long range and strategic planning studies and initiatives that are designed to document existing conditions, evaluate trends, research best practices and develop goals and strategies to enhance the community and promote particular policy objectives. Community involvement is critical to the success of these initiatives and OPCD ensures that a variety of engagement tools are used in the planning process. Recent studies include:

- **Melrose Forward: A Community Vision and Master Plan** – The Melrose Forward Master Plan was adopted by the Planning Board in June 2017. It is a comprehensive update of the Master Plan that was created in 2004. The 2004 Plan is also noteworthy because it was the first Comprehensive Plan completed by the City in over forty years.

The 2004 Master Plan was widely referenced by City officials and was pivotal in shaping the City's progress between 2004 and 2017. It was updated in 2017 with more current demographics and trends, and new goals that represent the priorities of today's residents. Both plans provide an extensive analysis of the communities' characteristics, including important demographic information. The Melrose Forward Master Plan serves as the City policy document guiding decisions related to growth and preservation for years to come.

- **Open Space and Recreation Plan** – OPCD updates the Open Space and Recreation Plan every seven years. This plan provides guidance for the preservation, enhancement, and expansion of open space and recreational opportunities in the City. It was most recently updated and approved in 2015 by the State's Division of Conservation Services, which is required in order for the City to receive funding for park and open space improvements.
- **Commuter Rail Corridor Study** – The Commuter Rail Corridor Study was conducted by MAPC in October 2013 in order to investigate opportunities and impediments for growth and development along the Tremont/Essex Street Corridor, an area adjacent to the Haverhill Commuter Line with easy access to downtown, schools, and recreational opportunities. This study paved the way for the creation of the Rail Corridor Overlay District in 2014.
- **Parking in Downtown Melrose Study** – Completed in March 2012 by Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, the Parking in Downtown Melrose report was created to provide a framework for managing downtown parking to best ensure that the parking needs of residents and visitors are being met. This study revealed that there is actually an excess of parking spaces downtown during most times of day, and that occasional pressure on spaces could be addressed with adjustments to the parking management system.
- **Main Street Corridor Study** – Melrose collaborated with the Towns of Reading and Wakefield and MAPC to develop the Main Street Corridor Study. Released in January 2012, this plan looked at ways to improve upon the existing transportation network by reducing automobile traffic and promoting commuter rail, walking, bicycling, and bus transportation. Many of the recommendations have been implemented as a part of the City's Complete Streets Initiative.
- **Wayfinding Master Plan (Report pending)** – A Wayfinding Master Plan is currently being developed by Selbert Perkins Design as a part of the Wayfinding and Creative Placemaking Initiative. This report will highlight strategies related to signage for improving the resident and visitor experience in Melrose, better directing the public around, and encouraging active transportation.

OPCD is about to embark on a Housing Production Plan (HPP) with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC). We are currently finalizing the Scope of Work and the project will be kicking off this summer. Advancing equity and affordability in Melrose will be a main goal of the HPP and we are anticipating a robust community outreach process that engages hard-to-reach populations. An advisory committee will be established to share information on housing in the city, provide input on plan components, conduct outreach for public events, and provide support

at these events. Events will likely occur virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but this approach will be reevaluated when and if in-person meetings can be held safely.

Current Practices to Promote Accessibility, Equity, and Inclusion

Zoning/Permitting

- Zoning regulations and the permitting process are not always intuitive. Applicants who are residents, business owners, or property owners try to navigate the process themselves or hire an attorney to help them through the process. Staff in OPCD take the time to assist applicants both in person and over the phone with completing application forms and explaining the permitting process. There is also a cover sheet to the application forms which we have prepared to provide a detailed explanation of the process. The application materials are provided in paper copies and on the website through fillable forms.
- The members of the Boards and Commissions that we support understand that they are evaluating proposals on their merits based on the findings in the applicable regulations and not on the applicants.
- The MZO has been amended several times since the adoption of the 2004 Master Plan to allow for significant density around Oak Grove, the commuter rail corridor, and the commuter rail stations. These amendments promote housing near public transit and services, which helps control certain household costs. In addition to promoting density, which responds to the pressing need for housing and helps keep housing prices from growing even more dramatically, recent zoning amendments provide for a range of housing types, including smaller housing unit options that are more affordable than single-family homes.
- We post minutes from our Board and Commission meetings on the City website as soon as they are approved, and we create links to significant development proposals that are under review by the different Permit Granting Authorities so residents can more easily engage in the permitting process.
- We have advocated for Zoning Reform at the state level, which is critical to addressing inequities in zoning and land use policy, and we have advocated for passage of Governor Baker's Housing Choice legislation.

Affordable Housing Related

- Melrose adopted a progressive Inclusionary Zoning regulation in 2004. This regulation requires developments to contribute affordable units as part of their market-rate developments. Since 2004, approximately 120 units of affordable housing have been added to the City's Subsidized Housing Inventory through this mechanism.
- OPCD oversees the affordable housing lottery process and assists with marketing and promoting the units within Melrose and beyond the City's borders to ensure broad and diverse participation.
- The Inclusionary Zoning requirement was amended in 2019 and the percentage contribution increased to 15%, which is generating more affordable units in Melrose and

provides for a cash contribution when the formula results in a fraction less than 1/2 (fractions of 1/2 or more are rounded up to the next whole number).

- Due to our efforts at promoting housing production, the City was recognized as a Housing Choice community in the inaugural year of the program and awarded with a competitive capital construction grant. OPCD recently submitted an application to the Housing Choice Program for renewal of our Housing Choice designation which we were then subsequently awarded.
- OPCD sits on the Board of the North Suburban Consortium and votes on affordable housing projects within the member communities (Malden, Everett, Chelsea, Revere, Winthrop, Arlington, Medford and Melrose). OPCD advocates for HOME funding for affordable housing projects in Melrose through this engagement as well, and works directly with organizations such as the Melrose Affordable Housing Corporation to navigate the HOME process.
- OPCD supports 40B proposals when they promote inclusion and affordability and are in the best interest of the community, such as the 40B application for the Single Room Occupancy (SRO) development on Vine Street several years back.

Long-Range Planning/Special Planning Initiatives

- OPCD makes a strong effort to reach out to underserved populations and engage across the entire community when undertaking long range studies and special initiatives.
- OPCD staffed a booth at the Melrose Victorian Fair and the International Welcome Reception to gather ideas from residents to incorporate into the Melrose Forward Master Plan to capture a wider audience that would not typically come to a night meeting for such a project. In addition, there were focus groups with seniors at the Milano Center to ensure that the senior demographic was represented in the Plan.
- For the current Wayfinding and Creative Placemaking Initiative, OPCD held a series of focus groups with a range of stakeholders across the community, engaged with an array of community groups and civic leaders to spread the word about the survey and the community meeting (with record participation), and expanded the Call for Art to include artists outside of Melrose to encourage a greater diversity of projects and ideas.

Conservation and Sustainability Related

- A Trail Stewardship Program was created in 2018 to assist in gathering information on who uses the trail network, identify dumping and overlooked areas, solicit feedback from the community, and encourage community engagement in conservation management/wetland protection.
- An inventory of existing trails has been conducted and an indication of terrain difficulty has been added to trail maps. Trail stewards have improved trail markings/signage on some trails to provide for greater accessibility.
- Staff provide extensive outreach to the community to engage in conservation and sustainability activities, including staffing a booth at the Victorian Fair and Healthy Melrose on an annual basis. At these events, we gather feedback from community, collect email addresses, and provide information on initiatives and events of community interest.

Issues or Policy Areas Identified for Improvement

- Review and amend the zoning regulations to promote greater affordability and diversity. Ideas to consider include allowing for the:
 - Construction of houses or alteration of existing houses that allow for incremental expansion and match the existing fabric of the city, without having to go through the Variance process.
 - Expansion of what is allowed in the home occupation regulations to allow for additional economic opportunities.
 - Reduction of barriers to establishing in-law apartments in the MZO to allow for multigenerational living.
 - Creation of accessory dwelling units (ADUs) to provide more affordable rental opportunities in Melrose.
 - Reduction or elimination the 70% local preference for affordable housing units to encourage more people from outside Melrose to move here.
 - Rezoning of the UR-A and UR-B Zoning Districts so single-family housing is only allowed as of right in the SR and SR-A Zoning Districts.¹
 - Removal of discriminatory family definitions from the MZO that do not reflect what many modern households look like.

- Create an addendum to the Melrose Forward Master Plan to specifically make a goal of addressing inequality and discrimination and listing the housing, transportation, economic development, open space, and infrastructure changes that should be made to achieve this goal. Past discriminatory redlining practices should also be acknowledged.²

Best Practices

- Staff in OPCD are members of the American Planning Association (APA) and benefit from the studies they commission and the conferences they support in the region to provide for professional development in the planning field.
- APA has developed a *Planning for Equity Policy Guide* which is particularly informative and provides best practices across the range of policy areas that professional Planners intersect with. In addition, APA’s Planning Advisory Service has issued a report entitled *Planning With Diverse Communities* which highlights the importance of planning with diverse communities and provides tools and techniques to help planners better serve diverse constituencies equitably and effectively.
- The Metropolitan Area Planning Council is another source that OPCD works with regularly to learn from our peer communities and to take advantage of the data collection, research, and analysis that MAPC performs across the planning spectrum. Equity figures

¹ “...single-family zoning has damaged the environment by encouraging suburban sprawl and car reliance, worsened affordability by restricting housing supply, and undermined inclusion by keeping lower-income households out of high-opportunity neighborhoods” ([link](#)).

² Melrose was one of 239 cities in the United States that were mapped by the Home Owners Loan Corporation (HOLC) for “residential security” between 1935-1940. Redlining policies have had lasting effects in Melrose and Greater Boston that persist today ([link](#)).

prominently into MAPC's planning processes and in the policies they promote within the Greater Boston region.

Next Steps:

Immediate:

1. Continue to review literature for best practices that can be adopted in Melrose.
2. Assist with the adoption of the Affordable Housing Trust Fund.
3. Schedule a meeting of the Zoning Subcommittee and begin to develop possible zoning amendments for consideration.
4. Review the Scope of Work being considered for the upcoming Housing Production Plan Project to ensure that equity and affordability are prioritized.

Short-term:

1. Help identify diverse members to serve on the Affordable Housing Trust and identify procedures for the Trust that will consider prioritizing projects that meet certain diversity and equity metrics.
2. Convene the Zoning Subcommittee of the Zoning Board of Appeals to work on zoning amendments that promote greater affordability and diversity.
3. Convene the Master Plan Committee to evaluate progress to date and to discuss an approach to developing an addendum that creates new goals and action items around promoting equality and combating discrimination.
4. Evaluate the affordability and accessibility of the sustainability and energy efficiency programs we promote. Consider if we are reaching a broad cross-section of the community, who we might be missing, how we can reach renters as well as homeowners, and if the programs can be made more affordable for lower income residents.

Long-term:

1. Propose zoning amendments for consideration and approval by the City Council, as discussed above.
2. Develop a Master Plan Addendum as discussed above.
3. Develop a Housing Production Plan with emphasis on underserved populations and providing greater affordability.
4. Expand the definition of Environmental Justice beyond the EEA 2017 Policy which identifies just two small tracts in Melrose where the Steele House and Congregational are located. The most recent update of the MVP program defines Climate Vulnerable Populations as "those who have less physical and/or socioeconomic resiliency due to factors such as access to transportation, income level, disability, race, health status, or age." More data is needed to identify who and where climate vulnerable residents live in Melrose.

Suggestions for City-Wide Implementation

- Establish a formal policy to promote diversity in the makeup of City staff and Boards/Commissions and actively work to attract people of color to sit on Boards/Commissions
- Provide diversity and inclusion training for staff and board members, such as that offered by One Square World.

- Offer translation and accessibility services if requested for public meetings.³
- Implement inclusive contracting/procurement (ex. bid discounts, requirements that bidders be MBEs or make good faith efforts to hire MBE subcontractors for an invitation to bid).
- Map out a plan for adoption of the Community Preservation Act (CPA). Without an ongoing source of funding, which the CPA is guaranteed to provide, the Affordable Housing Trust will have limited efficacy over time.

³ Consider MassDOT and MBTA's language: This meeting is accessible to people with disabilities and those with limited English proficiency. Accessibility accommodations and language services will be provided free of charge, upon request, as available. Such services include documents in alternate formats, translated documents, assistive listening devices, and interpreters (including American Sign Language). For more information or to request reasonable accommodation and/or language services, please contact MassDOT's Director of Civil Rights by phone at (857) 368-8580, TTD/TTY at (857) 368-0603, fax (857) 368-0602 or by email to MASSDOT.CivilRights@dot.state.ma.us

Department of Recreation
Frank Oliveri, Director

Mission: The Melrose Recreation Department creates high quality recreational programs and events that are affordable, safe, and fun for residents of all ages and abilities. Through our programming we provide resources and opportunities to strengthen our community while promoting social, cultural, and physical well-being.

Staffing: 2 full time, 2 part time employees year round, and additional seasonal staff as needed.

Current Practices

On average our department has over 8,000+ residents participate in our programs and events per year. Some of our largest programs include Melrose Youth Basketball (1000+ participants, 200+ volunteers), Melrose Flag Football (300+ participants, 50+ volunteers), and Middle School Afterschool Athletics & Clubs (600+ participants, 25+ volunteers). In total we have 300+ community volunteers and 90+ seasonal/part-time workers helping us make our programs run. Additionally, we usually provide 100+ scholarships per year for families who are experiencing financial hardships. Our department is a face for the City and on the front lines of working and interacting with our residents ranging from ages 2 – 90. On a daily basis we can have contact with hundreds of residents.

Data Collection

The Recreation Department collects data on every individual who registers for our programs. We collect basic information such as name, address, phone, DOB, grade, and emergency contacts. Every time someone registers for a program, we receive updated information in their account. Participants have the opportunity to update their information whenever they log into their accounts. We safely store this information in our registration software system. Our system is web based and supported by an outside vendor company. All information collected is kept confidential. Attached is our general registration form with data fields.

Program Structure

The Recreation Department offers programs in two different ways.

1. **In-House Programming:** In house programming is when our department creates and runs its own programs. We create and structure the program by hiring staff, ordering supplies, providing equipment, and writing up the program description.
2. **Vendor Programming:** Vendor programming is when our department partners with an outside company to run a specialized program, clinic, or camp. These companies handle all aspects of providing the structure of the program, running the program, and staffing. The Recreation Department role is to handle advertising and registrations. These programs use a fixed revenue share between both parties. Melrose Recreation Department

Current Practices to Promote Equity, Inclusion, Diversity

The Melrose Recreation Department is proud to promote inclusivity in our programs regardless of race, gender, age, ability, or economic status. Our programs are open to all of our residents and we encourage everyone to join us who is looking to be social and have fun while being active in the community.

Given the nature of our department our main goal is to try and connect individuals to an activity that they may enjoy with others. An important aspect of this is to train staff and volunteers of the mission and welcoming culture of our department. Through the years we feel we have worked very hard on promoting inclusivity with our programs, events, staff, and volunteers. We know that still more can be done and we strive to improve in new areas through implemented new policies, procedures, and partnerships.

The following is a list of established policies and practices followed by our department:

Recreation Scholarships

Our department has had a long standing policy that all residents should have an opportunity to participate in community programs regardless of their economic status. To better support our families we have established policies for offering recreation scholarships to those in need. We do this in two distinct ways.

Economic Hardship

Anyone interested in participating in a program who is unable to afford it is able to contact us regarding either a full scholarship or a partial scholarship. We request basic documentation from the family to support that they are in need. After review we will do everything we can to get that individual into the program of their choice. If they are requesting assistance for an in-house program, we almost always can grant their request. If it is a vendor program we will typically try to work with the vendor to get that individual into the program either at no cost or a drastically reduced cost.

Free or Reduced Lunch Program

Anyone who attends the Melrose Public Schools who qualifies for the Free or Reduced Lunch Program is eligible to receive recreation scholarships. They need to provide documentation from the School Department verifying that they qualify. Once we have this paperwork, we are able to provide a scholarship. If they are requesting assistance for an in-house program, we almost always can grant their request. If it is a vendor program, we will typically try to work with the vendor to get that individual into the program either at no cost or a drastically reduced cost.

METCO Program (Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity)

The Recreation Department has partnered with the METCO Program at MVMMS and Melrose High School on a needed or requested basis. We have worked in the past with the METCO Coordinator to help students and families participate in recreation programs when they have expressed interest to our department. When we are working with a METCO student we have always tried to work around their needs and their schedule

regardless of if they are looking to participate or be hired for work. We feel it is important to be flexible based on their needs regarding availability, transportation, and interests due to their extra challenges of living outside of Melrose. Our goal has always been to assist METCO students in the best possible ways. This includes providing reduced registration fees, full and partial scholarships, providing flexibility based on their schedule of when they can attend programs or work shifts, and trying to provide late afternoon or evening transportation home after participating in an activity.

Inclusive Programming

The Recreation Department believes that all of our programs are open to all individuals regardless of their abilities. We have always had a long standing practice of including any participant who may have a disability to join us in our activities. We work with individuals to modify our programs so they can participate in a way that works for them. We do not have trained staff or volunteers in many of their specific needs to offer the most efficient services, but our open hearts and accepting culture always include everyone. We strongly encourage anyone interested in a program to contact us regardless of any concerning limitations.

Next Steps

The Melrose Recreation Department knows that there are always areas that can be improved upon when it comes to equality and inclusion within our department. After careful review of our policies and practices, we have identified areas that we feel we can focus on improving for the betterment of our community. We feel we can make great strides and improvements with the METCO program. We know that we can improve our communication with the METCO coordinator and the students/families in the program. We can make better efforts in promoting programs, open positions while hiring, and some of the services and benefits we can provide such as scholarships, paid positions, flexibility, and transportation. We believe that these students are a part of the Melrose community and we can make better efforts to make sure they feel that they are welcomed within the Recreation Department.

The following section is the plan that the Recreation Department plans to implement.

Immediate

An immediate action that we will take is reconnecting with the METCO Program Coordinator. We will take the initiative to reach out to the staff to express our goal in building a strong, long lasting relationship. The initial first steps are listed below:

- Set up a meeting to discuss the current state of the METCO program
- Build a relationship with the new METCO Coordinator
- Discuss the needs of the office, students, and families for the upcoming summer months, 20-21 school year, and challenges they face due to COVID-19.

Short Term

As a short term goal, we will prepare to launch a new initiative for the start of the 20-21 school year.

- The initiative will focus on creating a better communication system with the coordinator, students and families regarding programs we are offering, upcoming job postings, and the services we can provide to help assist students.

- We will propose to hold an information session for students and/or parents who may be interested in our initiative. This could be provided either in-person or virtually.
- We will propose to offer information materials via email to students and/or parents who may be interested in our initiative.

Long Term

A long term goal is to have necessary and consistent services for students to make participating and working for the Recreation Department more feasible.

- To receive grant funding to support transportation services for METCO students only.
- Having guaranteed reserved seating for middle school and high school students on transportation shuttles in the late afternoons, evenings, and weekends.
- Shuttles will prioritize bringing students from work/activity to their home door safely without transfers or riding public transportation.

Resources

The following is a summary of some of the best practices being followed by other Recreation Departments within the State of Massachusetts.

An email was sent out to try and gather more information from 20+ communities surrounding the greater Boston area. This was done by reaching out to other Parks & Recreation professionals through the Massachusetts Parks & Recreation Association (MRPA). MRPA is a strong network of proactive leaders who dedicate themselves to their field.

We received feedback from two communities regarding their relationship with their METCO program:

Lexington

Lexington does not have anything formal in place. However, METCO students are given the residency rate for their programs. This also provides access to financial aid as a resident and employment opportunities.

Lincoln

Lincoln works closely with their METCO program but do not have any written policies. METCO students attend afterschool programs and have developed a busing program to get them out to summer camps. They provide busing for 4 weeks of camp. Families are invited by the METCO director. They focus on families that qualify for free and reduced lunch. Pick up/drop off is at the Franklin Park Zoo. They pay the bus monitor to work at the camp each summer... the program is grant supported and they reduce the camp fees to make the finances work. Families pay about \$350 for all 4 weeks.

Melrose Public Schools
Cyndy Taymore, Superintendent

The Mission of Department:

Vision Statement (voted 6/27/17): Every student will be an engaged, challenged, enriched, and self-directed learner.

Mission Statement (voted 6/2/17): The Melrose Public Schools will provide and sustain a thriving and dynamic teaching and learning environment, preparing every student to excel in their authentic life and global citizenship, as supported by an engaged community.

List of written procedures and data collected by the office. Add links or copies of policies/procedures as attachments to this memo

- The October 1st data for the school is represented by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education at the [following link](#).
- Melrose Public Schools belongs to the consortium of districts, the Massachusetts Partnership for Diversity in Education. A job fair was scheduled for March 2020 which was canceled because of school closure. See [flyer](#).
- Melrose Public Schools Anti-Harassment Policies and Procedures
 - [Statement on Racial Justice](#)
 - [Statement of Inclusivity 4.2017](#)
 - [Discrimination and Harassment Grievance Procedures](#)
 - [Policy JICFB: Bullying Prevention](#)
 - [Melrose Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan](#)
 - [Bullying-and-harassment-incident-reporting-form-rev-10-2016](#)
 - [MPS Anti-Harassment Statement](#)

List the steps or actions your office has already taken to ensure accessibility, equity, and inclusion.

- As remote learning began, Melrose Public Schools outlined [guidance](#) for equity and inclusion during the period of school closure.
- Melrose Public Schools along with MAPLE have engaged in giving feedback on their framework on how to insure equity during remote learning.
- In the spring of 2020, the high school reviewed the demographics of every course level, College Prep, Honors, and Advanced Placement. Placement decisions were reviewed to support equal access.
- Melrose High School outlined and planned to unlevel all ninth grade classes for the 2020-2021 school year. Here is a [link](#) to proportional scheduling data compiled for 2019-2020 used to guide this work.
- The Melrose Public Schools administered a cultural proficiency survey to staff as a [self-assessment tool](#) this spring. The data was not collected but instead used to have self-reflection. As outlined below in the strategy overview, the intent is to administer again next year. The administration team, school counselors, social workers and school psychologists met to analyze examples of surveys and develop a survey for Melrose. Here is the [presentation](#) used with staff to explain this framework.

- Melrose High School is in the process of completing its Decennial Accreditation through New England Association of School and Colleges, Inc. In April of 2019, a visiting team of educators from across New England conferred with Melrose’s self-assessment ratings of meeting or higher in the following related standards (see: <https://cpss.neasc.org/standards/2020-standards> for more information):
 - 1.1 The school community provides a safe, positive, respectful, and inclusive culture that ensures equity and honors diversity in identity and thought.
 - 1.3 The school community takes collective responsibility for the intellectual, physical, social, and emotional well-being of every student and can demonstrate how each student is known, valued, and connected to the school community.
 - 1.4 The school community’s professional culture demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement through the use of research, collaborative learning, innovation, and reflection.
 - 1.5 The school’s culture promotes intellectual risk taking and personal and professional growth.
 - 1.7 The school culture fosters civic engagement and social and personal responsibility.
 - 3.1 The school engages all stakeholders in the development and implementation of a school improvement/growth plan, which reflects the school’s core values, beliefs about learning, and vision of the graduate.
 - 3.2 Educators engage in ongoing reflection, formal and informal collaboration, and professional development to improve student learning and well-being.
 - 3.5 School-wide organizational practices are designed to meet the learning needs of each student.

Despite being rated highly in these areas, a team of MHS educators is in the process of creating long-term plans to ensure continuous improvement and growth.

Curriculum

- The Curriculum Review Working Group this year asked each department to review its curriculum for cultural bias and inclusion. Information on [these reviews](#) are presented here. Here are links to each department's curriculum review: [ELA](#), [History](#), [Math](#), and [Science](#).
- The Curriculum Review Working Group developed a [checklist tool](#) to support the review of curriculum materials. It was the intent to share this tool widely with teachers this spring. However, due to the school closure, this next step is on hold to the fall. The Melrose Public Schools had already begun to look at textbook audits using the [DESE tool](#). ELA, Science, Math and Social Studies all had begun this work, which unfortunately was paused due to the school closure.
- The Melrose Public Schools has begun to align our social studies curriculum with the Massachusetts History and Social Science Curriculum Frameworks. A major focus of the alignment is also inclusion of the Social Justice Standards as released by Teaching Tolerance. This summer into next year, the district will continue to revise and create units that meet the new standards and provide for civic action that is informed with a social justice lens.

- Two new courses were introduced this past winter for the 2020-21 school year to the MHS Program of Studies, “Leaders in Civic Action” that addressed the state law that all students are completing a Civic Action project that follows the six step process as outlined by the state. The course will foster leaders that are responsible, proactive, and informed global citizens who are empathetic, curious, open-minded with a growth mindset, and who take ownership of their impact on others and the world.
- A similar Civics Action Project was added to the 8th grade Civics course curriculum. Additionally a 6th grade Challenge Course was added; “Social and Environmental Justice” that will offer students the opportunity to investigate various historical and regional effects of changes in climate and their impacts on environments and societies from ancient civilizations to today’s global community.

Systems

- The Melrose Public Schools underwent Tiered Focused Monitoring by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the area of Civil Rights during the 2019-2020 school year. The Melrose Public Schools was found to be in compliance with the regulatory requirements. A copy of the report can be found here: [Melrose Public Schools Tiered Focused Monitoring](#).
- The Melrose Public Schools developed [Annual Institutional Self-Evaluation Procedures](#) in the Spring of 2020 and will continue implementation of these procedures during the 2020-2021 school year. The Melrose Leadership Team along with feedback from different groups [developed protocols](#) this past winter for equity data walks and equity focused walk-throughs. Because of the school closure, these were not fully implemented. These will continue into next year.
- The educator evaluation rubrics for teachers and administrators include components relevant to cultural proficiency. All teachers and administrators receive feedback on these standards each year. See [DESE for evaluation rubrics](#).
- We have increased the district’s capacity to meet the social emotional learning needs of students. This includes a continued commitment to restorative practices which we believe will support the difficult conversations about race needed by our staff and students. See [link](#) to resources we have begun collecting.
- We applied for a [grant](#) of \$25,000 to support the use of restorative circles across the district with students, staff, and families. We are also planning to apply for a Teaching Tolerance grant to support these efforts. The district also applied for two institutes offered next year by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education focused on cultural proficiency.

Professional Development

- Melrose Public Schools has been providing professional development on an ongoing basis to address issues of equity and inclusion for the past 8 years. Please [see list](#) of offerings focused on diversity since 2014. Please [see list](#) focused on SEL since 2014.
- Melrose Public Schools already had planned a focus on equity this spring and summer, which is outlined in these documents. See professional development offerings for the [spring 2020](#) and the [summer 2020](#).
- An [Equity Book](#) study with the choice of 5 different books was already planned for this summer.

- English teachers at the middle and high school had planned a book study of identifying young adult literature for this summer using 6 different texts and developing materials for use next year.

Issue or policy area you chose to focus on improving and why

As a public school, MPS is subject to state and federal regulations regarding equity, opportunity, and access. Moreover, we undergo several reviews on a rotating basis that assess our compliance with regulations. These assessments include Tiered Focused Monitoring every three years (six year cycle with mid cycle targeted review), NEASC accreditation (every 10 years), yearly reporting to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regarding demographics, course offerings, and enrollment. Regardless of our success with DESE audits and reporting requirements, the district remains committed to improving the capacity of its educators and students to be culturally aware and responsive, to provide an inclusive education in which all students have voice and choice, and to develop school environments in which all feel respected and supported. To that end we will build on the robust professional development that we have been providing for eight years, add regular opportunities to have difficult conversations, and create means for students to participate in problem solving issues identified by the difficult conversations.

Summary of best practice, link or copy attached.

The Melrose Public Schools is committed to using restorative practices including community circles to engage in difficult conversations about race and racial justice to help us heal and grow.

Action plan to implement

a. Immediate

- Create safe, brave spaces for students and teachers to discuss race and racial justice. See [link](#) for resources created up to now. Here is a link to the [calendar](#) of discussions thus far. Each of the discussions is formatted as a community circle, as we wish to model for educators the process to use with students.
- Paraprofessionals have also been participating in professional development on the topic to support their understanding of issues of equity. [See list](#) of training during school closure..

We are all impacted by the topic of race right now in our country, and **we all need to begin difficult conversations**...in every state, in every community, in every home. On Sunday, June 7th and Wednesday, June 10th at 8 PM, please join us as we continue to have this necessary conversation around what race means. Come to one or both of the circles. Each will be different.

The discussion will be in the format of a circle and all Melrose staff members are welcome. Please RSVP using [this link](#).

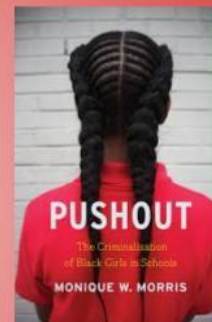
If you have any questions regarding the circle, please reach out to Jessica Patti at jpatti@melroseschools.com



Join your @MelrosePS colleagues in our *Summer Movie Series*
Show, Know & Grow.



Currently playing...



How do I join in?

1. [Sign up here](#) to let us know which circle(s) you will be joining. (Each circle will have different sets of questions. Join one or both!)
2. [Head to this link](#) to watch the documentary streaming free on PBS.
3. Join us [in this Meet](#) on Thursday, June 11th and/or Tuesday June 16th at 4:00PM.

b. Short term (couple of weeks)

Melrose Public Schools teachers are engaging in a summer book study on equity. See [link](#) for books and format. As explained above, we will be engaging in a variety of summer professional development this summer.

The poster features a background of a road winding through a green landscape under a blue sky with clouds. A cartoon character of a woman with glasses and a blue shirt is in the center. The text 'Equity on the Road' is at the top left, with the subtitle '...an MPS Summer Book Study' below it. To the right, a blue box contains registration information. At the bottom, a black box titled 'Book Choices' lists five books with their authors.

Equity on the Road

...an MPS Summer Book Study

JOIN US

Participants must register via Aspen first **and then** choose their book using [this link](#). Books will be made available for pick up at Central Office. This will be communicated by mid-May. Any questions regarding book choices, registering, or PD expectations should be directed to Jessica Patti at jpatti@melroseschools.com.

** Information on PD specifics will be sent via email in the last week of school.*

Book Choices

Not Light, but Fire: How to Lead Meaningful Race Conversations in the Classroom By: Matthew Kay	"Multiplication Is for White People": Raising Expectations for Other People's Children By: Lisa Delpit	Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain By: Zaretta Hammond	Teaching When the World is On Fire By: Lisa Delpit	For White Folks Who Teach in the Hood...and the Rest of Y'all Too By: Christopher Emdin
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Melrose Public Schools will use [this movie series](#) to build continued conversations through the summer with faculty. Each discussion will be formatted as a community circle and held virtually.

c. Long term (many weeks, more resources necessary)

[Strategy Overview three year plan](#) includes explicit objectives towards cultural responsiveness. While many of the objectives relate to the district's goals for providing for inclusive and culturally responsive environments, below are highlighted specific goals, objectives, and action steps.

Goal 3: Responsive and Inclusive Environment:

Design safe, supportive, and student-centered schools in which all students, staff, and members of the community can thrive.

- 3.a.1.2-Implement tools to measure potential cultural bias in protocols, practices, and instructional materials. Address needs identified through additional materials, resources, and professional development. Complete at least one equity walkthrough in each building.

Objective 3.c: Support culturally proficient and responsive communication with students and families regarding student learning and performance in an effort to promote student ownership of learning.

- 3.c.1.1-Implement self-assessment by educators using equity tools including cultural bias tools and equity walks to identify strengths and needs. Plan to address specific areas of need. Implement at least one equity walk at each school during the school year.
- 3.c.1.2-Support collaboration with diverse family communities with specific outreach efforts including METCO, ELL, and Special Education Advisory Councils.
- 3.c.1.3-Increase opportunities for teachers and staff to build cultural competence through professional development.

Objective 3.d: Vet any and all resources for bias, preconceived notions and cultural responsiveness in order to provide a safe, supportive, and student-centered environment.

- 3.d.1.1-Using the textbook inventory tool, review books and cultural materials for cultural proficiency and bias. Identify specific content areas, departments, or schools with needs and plan to address needs.
- 3.d.1.2-Support curriculum development opportunities for students to engage in perspective taking from a variety of lenses including those of culturally diverse groups.

Goal 4: Professional Culture and Community Engagement:

Foster a professional learning community that promotes ongoing personal and collaborative growth to support teaching and learning.

- 4.a.1.1-Support collaboration with diverse family communities with specific outreach efforts including METCO, ELL, and Special Education Advisory Councils.
- 4.a.1.2-Support self-assessment of all educators using equity tools including bias tools and equity walks to identify strengths and needs in communication with families. Plan to address specific areas of need. Implement at least one equity walk at each school during the school year.
- 4.a.1.4-Create opportunities through professional development that allow staff to share openly and safely perspectives on issues of diversity across race, culture, gender, religion, and sexual orientation.

Office of the Treasurer and Collector
Art Flavin, City Treasurer/ Collector

Mission

The Office of Treasurer/Collector is responsible for the billing, receipt, investment and disbursement of all City funds. Every dollar that comes in or goes out of the city passes through these offices. The mission is to achieve these responsibilities while providing the highest level of customer service and support to ALL of the City's constituencies (i.e. taxpayers, ratepayers, employees, retirees, and vendors), as well as satisfy the legal requirements set forth in Massachusetts General Laws and the City's orders. The staff consists of a Treasurer/Collector, an Assistant Treasurer, a Payroll Coordinator/ Treasury Clerk, 1 Head Clerk and 2 Senior Clerks. All salaries are funded in the departmental budget.

Current Practices:

- The environment, where most of our contacts come to us, our mission statement and our customer service orientation demands we treat all equally. Reinforce these ideals with all of the office staff.
- The review of the current vendors we use for Equal Rights Opportunity.
- The policy of requiring a new vendor to have an ERO will begin immediately.

Next Steps

- We have been unable to find links to policies as granular as to the function of our office. We are attaching a link that suggests department leaders receive mandatory racial inequality training which probably should be required of all staff eventually.
https://www.washingtonpost.com/local/md-politics/local-governments-are-trying-to-fix-racial-inequity-but-the-path-forward-isnt-clear/2019/08/18/4a7d93ee-beb6-11e9-9b73-fd3c65ef8f9c_story.html
- At times there may be a language barrier that can cause frustration on both ends when trying to communicate with a customer. An interactive translation service would at times be useful but that would probably be expensive and should be a city-wide resource available to our offices.
- We deal with a variety of vendors from banking to printers to collection agencies. We have assumed they are equal opportunity organizations. We will institute a policy that states the vendor must provide documentation to that as well as review our current roster.
- The installation of a camera to record physical interactions/transactions would provide us with an impetus to avoid a situation where we might be perceived as not being inclusive as well as protect us from false accusations should they occur.
- Recording of all phone calls to and from the office would provide the same as above, if legal. This again, would likely be a citywide policy we would participate in.

Veterans' Services

Karen Burke, Veterans' Services Officer

Mission: To advocate on behalf of all the district's veterans and provide them with guidance on local, state and federal benefit programs and quality support services, and to direct a financial assistance program for those veterans and their dependents who are in need.

Staffing: Melrose is the hub of the Melrose-Wakefield-Saugus Veterans Services District. The Veterans' Services office for Melrose is made up of one full time employee who serves as District Director and as the Melrose Veterans' Services Officer (VSO). The office also has a part time Veterans Administrative Assistant. Wakefield and Saugus each have part time VSOs who are City of Melrose employees and fall under the District Director.

Current Practices:

District Goals and Objectives are:

1. To execute timely and accurate benefit delivery for all veterans seeking help from the Federal, State and Local branches of government.
2. To provide dignity, compassion, respect, and privacy to all veterans seeking assistance.
3. To empower veterans through technology, information sharing and networking; when they can assist themselves and their fellow veterans by connecting to services.
4. To continue the fight against homelessness and joblessness within the veteran community.
5. To be honest and forthright with our veterans, researching the correct answer and providing results as quickly as accuracy allows.
6. To see the office as a base of operations, not a home, bringing services to the veteran wherever they are needed.

The Melrose Veterans' Services office works under the guidelines of the Massachusetts Department of Veterans' Services and remain active members of the Massachusetts Veterans' Service Officers Association (MVSOA). We follow MA General Law Chapter 115 and 108 CMR (Code of Massachusetts Regulations) to execute the Chapter 115 Veteran Benefit Program. This program is executed locally and approved at the State level. Demographic data is collected during the application process but is not mandatory for approval. We utilize a system referred to as VSMIS to enter applicants for benefits. The application is entered locally and approved at the State level. Financial assistance is provided to those who qualify. All information is entered into the VSMIS system which generates the authorized amount to pay based on the 108 CMR. Demographic data that is collected but not required includes sex, ethnicity, race and special situation (physical/mental impairment, hearing or visually impaired, interpreter required and sign language).

In addition, we assist veterans in applying for other state and federal benefits that are available to them following the guidelines of Federal, State and Local laws and regulations. We follow Federal law and guidelines to assist veterans apply for Federal VA benefits.

Within the district we have both male and female VSOs. If we have a veteran who would be more comfortable speaking to a particular gender VSO we can make arrangement within the district to provide this for the veteran. If the composition of the team was ever changed, we could still provide this utilizing other local VSOs. For example, if a neighboring VSO has a veteran who would prefer to work with a female VSO to submit their VA claim, I would be able to help the male neighboring VSO. As active members of the MVSOA we all work together to support the veterans of Massachusetts.

Veterans Advisory Board

The Veterans Advisory Board is made up of a representation of veterans in the community. The code that defines the Advisory Board is as follows:

§ A-218 Veterans' Services Advisory Board.

State law reference: MGL c. 115, § 12.

- A. Established. There shall be a Veterans' Services Advisory Board consisting of 15 members.
- B. Authorities and responsibilities. The Veterans' Services Advisory Board renders such assistance to the Veterans' Agent relative to the provisions of services to veterans as said Veterans' Agent may request.
- C. The Veterans' Services Advisory Board is an advisory multiple-member body of the City.

Next Steps:

Short Term:

1. Review and update the MWS Veterans' Services Mission Statement to reflect our practice, that all are welcome. I initially wanted to place this as an immediate goal but feel strongly that creating a mission statement requires time, reflection and review to ensure we produce a product that reflects appropriately our mission. As the hub of the Veterans' Service District I plan to vet the mission statement across all 3 communities.
2. Update Veterans' Services website. Include more robust information that spells out criteria for Chapter 115 benefits and eligibility to have veteran status.
3. Help veterans utilize the VA's Office of Resolution Management (ORM) External Complaints Program website. The ORM is the VA's liaison with the Department of Justice for addressing issues of discrimination in federal programs and activities. Through this program civil rights discrimination complaints may be filed against the VA under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1096 and other similar statutes such as Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Age Discrimination Act of 1975, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and various Presidential Orders. Add a link on our website to the [VA's ORM External Complaints](#) program.

Long Term:

1. Be granted better office space to provide the environment that our veterans deserve. The current environment does not provide any privacy. Both medical information and personal financial information are frequently discussed in the office with veterans

and their families. We are mandated to maintain confidentiality in the work we do. It is critical to provide those visiting the office a private space to discuss these things with their VSO. These discussions are what guide the VSO to identify the benefits that can best assist the veteran.

2. Provide training and discussion among the District VSOs regarding any inequality in the VA system a veteran may feel they are a victim of. Help claimants appeal decisions they feel are wrong and connect them with legal services if needed to help fight against an inequality that has happened. Stay knowledgeable in the latest benefits available and research the VA is doing. For example, studies like this one linked below. Recommend to the MVSOA and DVS they include a topic that covers this in future training conferences.
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328815068> Addressing the impact of racism on veterans of color A race-based stress and trauma intervention
3. Currently all of our websites have information provided in English. This is identified as an area for improvement. The goal would be to provide a way for information to be accessed in different languages.
4. Identify the appropriate way for a veteran to file a complaint against the MA State benefit program (Ch. 115) or the Veterans' Services Office. Currently veterans or their families can contact Massachusetts Department of Veterans Services or the Mayor's office if they have a concern. If Melrose creates an email or office such as the VA's Office of Resolution Management, Diversity & Inclusion (ORMDI) a link could be added to the City of Melrose website directing citizens where to file a concern or complaint. I would also put the same link on the Veterans dropdown of the City of Melrose website. I would recommend that the City of Melrose establish a "Resolve a Concern" button on the website to simplify the process for residents. I am using the "[Resolve a Concern](#)" page at the Air Force Medical Service as a guideline.

I would recommend similar wording to theirs; Residents have the right to make recommendations, ask questions, or file grievances to the City of Melrose Community Advocate or their City Councilor. Establishing a private way for residents to express their concerns will expand our ability to continue the conversation and actively listen to the residents we serve.