

City of Marion Equity Initiative PROGRESS REPORT

Marion is committed to creating a vibrant community; a welcoming community that is accessible, attractive and open to all residents and visitors.

2020 was a year that brought racial equity and justice issues to the forefront across our nation, and Marion was sadly reminded that no community is immune to the impacts of racism and hate. It prompted important conversations around race and equity and augmented efforts to ensure that Marion is a welcoming and inclusive community where *all* people feel safe and valued.

This report outlines the City's efforts and ongoing commitment to becoming a more diverse, high-performing and inclusive organization - all in support of our promise to be the best place in Iowa to raise a family and grow a business.



1. SAFE COMMUNITY FOCUS AREA - MARION STRATEGIC PLAN

Goal setting October 2019; Plan adopted September 2020

Under Goal 5.1: Develop optimal staffing model to provide expected level of responsiveness by Police, Fire, and Emergency Communications

Three strategies were set to serve the goal:

1. Increase the use of data analytics to improve service deployment and resource utilization
2. Partner with the community to identify and address barriers to feeling safe in Marion
3. Engage the community to identify and address barriers to inclusiveness



2. PERSONNEL CHANGES - MARION POLICE DEPARTMENT

February 2020

The Marion Police Department added two more sergeants to the Patrol Division to have three assigned to each shift. This ensures that experienced officers, with management responsibilities, are available on each shift to respond to calls which have the highest potential of becoming volatile or potentially require the use of force.



3. EXPANDED DATA COLLECTION - MARION POLICE DEPARTMENT

Spring 2020

To ensure greater transparency and accountability, the Marion Police Department updated its camera policy and data collection practices. The policy mandates that patrol officers keep their cameras in "stand by" mode whenever they are on duty. This makes it easier for officers to start recording in an emergency situation. Body cameras are now synched to dashboard cameras and will start automatically recording whenever the lights and siren of a squad car are activated in the immediate vicinity so long as they are in the "stand by" mode.



4. MENTAL HEALTH LIAISON - MARION POLICE DEPARTMENT

April 2020; Contract approved October 2020

In partnership with Foundation2, the Marion Police Department was able to embed a full-time crisis counselor as a mental health liaison within the department. This improves the Police Department's response to calls involving mental health issues by decreasing incarceration rates and increasing access to services for individuals with mental illness or co-occurring mental health and substance abuse disorders. Between the mobile crisis service and the liaison, the community is covered 24/7/365. The City is tracking data and plans to continue to assess the need for service to right-size resources.



5. USE OF FORCE POLICY UPDATES - MARION POLICE DEPARTMENT

June 2020

The City and Marion Police Department have not had any shootings, choke hold use or other improper use of force incidents, but steps were taken to ensure this would remain the case. Clarifying language was added to the Marion Police Department's use of force policy, specifically: banned choke holds unless a deadly force situation exists; mandated de-escalation techniques be utilized prior to other techniques if feasible; banned warning shots; banned shooting at moving vehicles unless occupants are shooting at others or using the vehicle as a deadly force weapon; mandated handcuffed subjects be placed in upright, standing or seated position as soon as they are secure; and required that officers intervene and report any instance they believe constitutes the use of excessive force.



6. EQUITY AND INCLUSION SURVEY

July 2020-September 2020

Using an online platform, the City conducted a community-wide survey to assess community perception and to help community leaders understand the experiences of residents from all walks of life. The survey asked about safety, fairness, respect, and how welcome people felt in Marion. There were 316 individuals who participated in the survey and helped establish a baseline for future outreach. Marion's community outreach resulted in the City being chosen as the Finalist for the 2021 Voice of the People awards for Excellence in Equity/Inclusion Engagement.



7. COMMUNITY EQUITY TASK FORCE

Established in Aug./Sept. 2020; Appointments approved in Sept./Oct. 2020

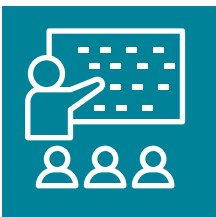
A 13-member task force and member guidelines were approved by Marion City Council in August and September 2020. Member appointments were approved in September and October 2020. The task force is set to make actionable recommendations to City Council on how the City can instill a transformative change towards equity at the individual, institutional and systemic levels.



8. COMMITMENTS TO THE COMMUNITY - MARION PUBLIC LIBRARY

August 2020

The Marion Public Library is committed to improving for staff, patrons and the community every day. This commitment to action is built into its core Mission, Vision, Values, and Strategic Initiatives and was published in August 2020. Equity is a strategic priority of the Marion Public Library, demonstrated in staff training and library programming. The library has removed barriers to service through its fine free initiative, added a variety of inclusive programs and serves as a hub and connector for those seeking human services.



9. IMPLICIT BIAS AND DE-ESCALATION TRAINING

Fall 2020

Marion Police officers participated in implicit bias and de-escalation train-the-trainer courses. Each member of the department received two hours of implicit bias training and two hours of de-escalation training in April 2021 as part of the department's annual in-service training. The second block of both disciplines will be delivered in the fall of 2021.

10. ASSESSMENT OF DATA COLLECTION CAPABILITIES

October 2020

When the Marion Civil Rights Commission requested demographics statistics on use of force data and the details on charges, the police chief pointed out inadequacies in the data due to limitations of the existing records management system. This accelerated the timeline for a new system which will be implemented over the next 18 months.

Similarly, the City identified a need for more detailed data associated with the hiring and discipline of employees. The City assessed its software capabilities for applicant tracking and determined that there is a need for adding an HR solution to collect the data. The City is in the process of acquiring a solution with additional capabilities to allow for better tracking and reporting. Note: The City's employment application does ask about race and ethnicity; however, they are optional questions.



11. ADDED PUBLIC POLICE REPORTS TO CITY WEBSITE - MARION POLICE DEPT.

October 2020

The Police Department discussed the design of a transparency hub web platform, and the department's plans for community engagement. The proposed project would include diversity and use of force demographics dashboards and is intended to be a resource for presenting crime stats and calls for service in a user-friendly format. The interactive page is on hold to be designed in conjunction with a new Records Management System, however transparency information was added to the Documents & Reports page of the Police Department's site and is updated monthly to provide an overview of department activities, citations and other statistics.



12. PROCUREMENT OF A NEW POLICE RECORDS MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE

November 2020

Initial assessment identified a need for purchasing new records management software. The budget was approved as part of the CIP Budget in January 2021. Shortly after, Tyler Technologies met with individuals representing key functional areas within the Police and Fire Departments to identify technology gaps that hinder dispatch, recordkeeping, patrol, investigations and reporting. Review focused on current operations, the systems used to automate those functions, challenges users face with the existing software and the goals of a software replacement including need for analytics and reporting. A service agreement with Tyler Technologies valued at \$1.2 million was unanimously approved by City Council in August 2021. An implementation kickoff meeting is set for Sept. 2021.



13. INITIAL TASK FORCE WORK PLAN & SUB-COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

November 2020

The first task force meeting occurred at the end of 2020. The group's mission, values, and priorities were discussed. Seven priorities were identified and grouped into three categories as they pertain to the community and the City organization. They include:

Policy

- Establish a framework to look at all policy decisions through an equity lens
- Police operations
 - Profiling
 - Review board

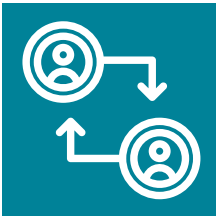
Practice

- Community policing
- Connecting with youth

Perception

- "Shadow" over the Police Department
- Welcoming & inclusive community - outward facing
- Visibility of diversity with a sense of safety

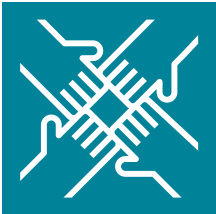




14. RESEARCHED BEST PRACTICES ON CHANGE MANAGEMENT

February 2021

City leadership reviewed and discussed an International City/County Management Association (ICMA) report on how American local governments are actively addressing social and racial inequity in their communities. The report considers the challenges and opportunities faced by public administrators when adopting an equity lens in their day-to-day operations. The task force reviewed the ICMA's Equity and Inclusion Toolkit, the Government Alliance on Racial Equity (GARE) toolkit and Equity Change: A Model, Framework and Tool were also discussed. The task force recommends that a tool be incorporated through all phases of change to align organization and individual decisions.



15. TASK FORCE SCOPE OF WORK

February - May 2021

Multiple conversations occurred at the staff level and among the task force related to problem definition, the role of the city and how to approach addressing equity at individual, structural and community levels. Consensus was built around the importance of managing culture, working with community partners to close the feedback loop and educating the community.

Staff further discussed scope of work to come up with a framework and how an equity lens might be applied to policy review. An RFQ was developed to engage a consultant.

In April, the mission statement was approved by the task force.

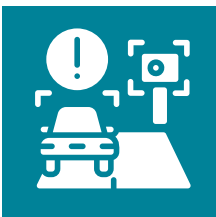
"Marion's Community Equity Task Force exists to ensure Marion embraces diversity and inclusion. A group of diverse community members and city employees have come together to cultivate and advance more equitable and inclusive policies, practices and processes in the city. This task force aligns with the city's goal of creating a vibrant community: a welcoming community that is accessible, attractive and open to all residents and visitors."



16. CITY ENGAGED EQUITY & INCLUSION CONSULTANT

May 2021

The City retained Tom Newkirk as a consultant to assist the City with its efforts towards advancing equity and fostering inclusion in its policies and practices. The consultant is facilitating conversations with the task force and reviewing policies and practices.



17. PROPOSED ORDINANCE FOR AUTOMATIC TRAFFIC ENFORCEMENT

May 2021

The Marion Police Department researched and proposed adding Automatic Traffic Enforcement (ATE) cameras within the city limits. The proposed ATE system is a progressive and a proactive solution to balance the need for traffic enforcement while simultaneously abating racial profiling concerns in areas covered by ATE systems. As proposed, the system would address speeding and red-light violations.



18. CHANGE IN RESPONSE PROTOCOLS - MARION POLICE DEPARTMENT

June 2021

The Marion Police Department changed its response protocols in June 2021 to when/how it responds to calls from the Four Oaks residential site in Marion. The department no longer will respond to attempt to apprehend residents who walk away from the Four Oaks facility or Learning Resource Center nor will it respond to enforce internal rules or policies unless a crime is/has been committed, a teen is violent or someone is a danger to themselves or others.



19. CITY IMPLEMENTS PLAN TO REVIEW PERSONNEL POLICIES

June 2021

In September 2020, the City hired an HR director tasked with creating more centralized policies and practices. The goal is to ensure consistency in hiring and discipline practices throughout the organization. As such, the department has developed a plan to review all personnel policies for consistency with federal and state laws (via legal) and for risks of bias or impact based on race, gender and other protected groups. The review will take several months.