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Office of Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion

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2024

Prepared By

Hazel Monae

Letter from the REDI Program Manager



What an amazing year it has been! This annual report could be 40 pages long and still would not capture the joy I have experienced while serving as the City's Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Program Manager!

Often, it can be difficult for many to imagine that working to create equitable and inclusive environments can be filled with joy, but for me it is.

There is joy in knowing that the City of Gaithersburg has made a public commitment to create equitable outcomes for all of its residents. There is joy in every interaction with the Racial Equity Core Team as we work to build the capacity of City staff. There is joy.

In this report, you'll get a small glimpse into some of the powerful and joyful experiences of the first year of the REDI office. Thank you for engaging in this essential work of creating conditions for all of us to thrive in this great City of Gaithersburg.

Peace and light,

Hazel Monae (she/her)

Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager

Values & Vision

Values

Collaborative Processes

Data-informed Strategies

Inclusive Practices

Vision

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Our vision is that Gaithersburg is a city free of racial and ethnic disparities. We will use our power and influence to advance equity starting with our own institutions and systems and expanding to support our entire community.



Report Snapshot



5

GARE Team
Members



6

REDI Educational
Opportunities



13

Core Team
Members



81

Training
Participants

2023-2024 GARE Team



In 2023, The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE), in partnership with the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), hosted its third introductory learning cohort of six metro-region governmental jurisdictions that are working to systematically advance racial equity in their respective contexts.

The City of Gaithersburg sent five employees from various departments to participate in this learning cohort – the second group to join from our City

01. Maura Dinwiddie, Sports & Youth Services Division Chief

02. Yeon Kim, GIS Division Manager

03. Tom Lonergan-Seeger, Assistant City Manager

04. John Schlichting, Director of Planning & Code Administration

2024 GARE Project

Using GARE's Racial Equity Toolkit, the Gaithersburg Racial Equity Cohort developed a project focused on creating a comprehensive program to provide equitable and engaging language access for non-English speaking residents.

Gaithersburg is the most diverse City in the nation, and we have no major race in the City that makes up more than 50% of the total population. When we look at Census information on race populations, household median income, and language spoken at home, we see a pattern emerging. We have areas with low-to-mid income, with high populations of Hispanic or non-White races, and a high percentage of people who can speak English less than well or not at all.

Given this data, we have an opportunity to reach those residents by diminishing the language barrier and helping all residents to be informed of and utilize City services offered and participate in City's meetings and events. Through a comprehensive language access program, we seek to ensure Gaithersburg's public process and decisions are more reflective of the breadth of the diverse communities and experiences of our City.

REDI Educational Opportunities

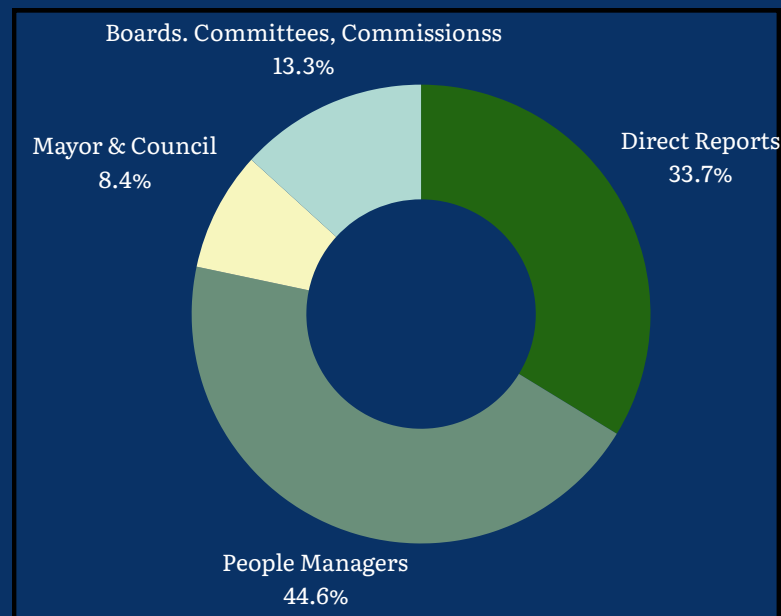


The REDI Program Manager hosted a four-part dialogue, learning and implementation series to support efforts to increase our collective capacity for racial equity, diversity, and inclusion practices within the City of Gaithersburg's departments & divisions.

Over the course of the series, there was at least one representative from every City Department.

In March 2024, the City hosted The Racial Equity Institute's Groundwater Training with over 80 attendees from our City Boards, Committees, Commissions, Mayor & City Council, and City staff.

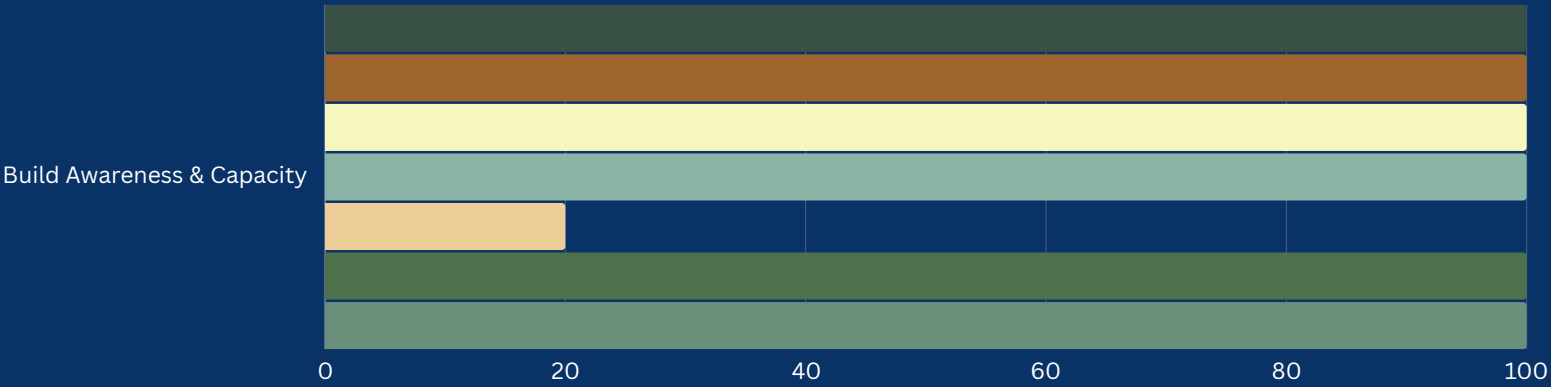
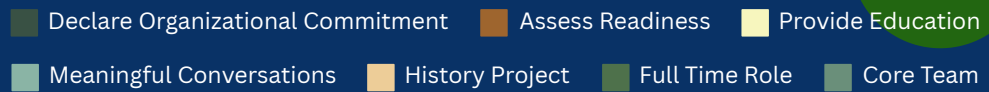
Additional educational opportunities were extended to the Racial Equity Core Team and individual department leaders.



Many of these highlights are now showcased on the new [Office of Racial Equity webpage](#) on the City website. Along with updates from our Strategic Plan and Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan, the site includes resources for residents to explore an [interactive REDI story map](#) webpage highlighting Gaithersburg's commitment to racial equity.

Racial Equity Awareness & Action Plan

Build Awareness & Capacity



Key Updates from Strategy One

- In July 2023, the first annual REDIness survey was shared to collect baseline information about our organizational readiness for Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI).
 - 87.2% of respondents would describe the City of Gaithersburg as a diverse, equitable and inclusive workplace.
 - 90% of respondents think it is valuable to examine and discuss racial equity, diversity & inclusion concepts at work.
 - Of those surveyed, 65% are already actively involved in advancing racial equity, diversity & inclusion in the workplace.
- In January 2024, the City established The Racial Equity Core Team (Core Team) to support department/division REDI work. The 13 Core Team members represent:

City Attorney's Office (CAO)
 City Manager's Office (CMO)
 Communications & Public Engagement Division (CPED)
 Community & Neighborhood Services (CNHS)

Human Resources (HR)
 Parks, Recreation & Culture (PRC)
 Planning & Code Administration (PCA)
 Police Department (PD)
 Public Works (PW)

Racial Equity Core Team



The 13-person Core Team, formed in connection with, and in support of, the City's Racial Equity Diversity & Inclusion Program Manager position, serves as a cross-departmental steering committee that coordinates and supports REDI work within City departments and divisions.

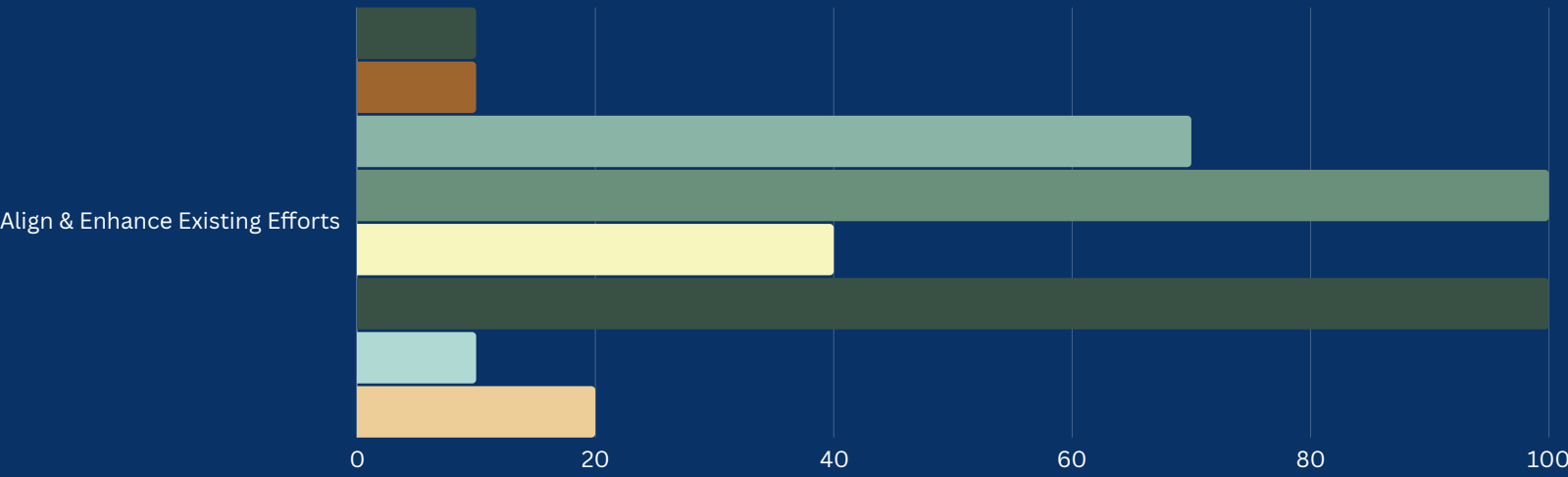
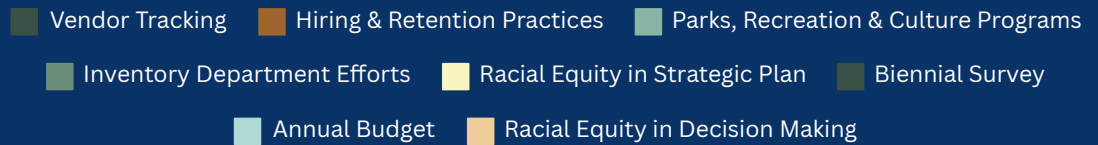
Back Row (left to right): Maura Dinwiddie (PRC), Marvin Martinez (PW), Sarah Fleming (HR), Mary Armbruster (CNHS), Jason DeMarchi (PRC), Nancy Schumm (PW), Rabia Amin (PCA)
Front Row (left to right): Courtney Davis (CPED), Lesly MacDonald (CNHS), Hazel Monae (CMO), Frank Johnson (CAO); Not Pictured: Ricky Tabb (PD)

Racial Equity Awareness & Action Plan

Align & Enhance Existing Efforts

Key Updates from Strategy Two

- To inform the Racial Equity Awareness & Action plan, the REDI Program Manager conducted an inventory of existing internal equity efforts underway in City departments.
- In partnership with Parks, Recreation & Culture staff, The REDI Program Manager conducted a review of program registrations data.



Department Highlights



1 Finance & Human Resources: *Language Access Efforts*

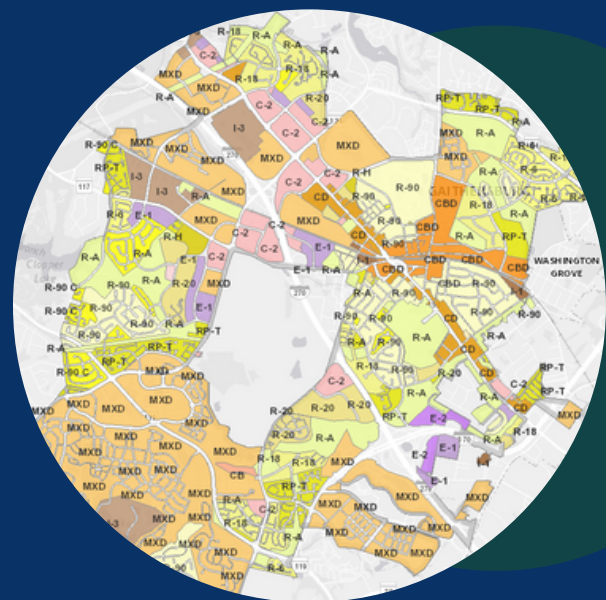
In 2023, the GARE Racial Equity Cohort adopted a project to provide equitable and engaging language access for all Gaithersburg residents.

In partnership with the Finance & Human Resources departments, we conducted a survey of our current language stipend program and began our efforts to secure a language translation service provider.

2 Planning & Code Administration: *Retool Gaithersburg*

Congratulations to the Planning Department for their work on Retool Gaithersburg. We commend their efforts to create an accessible and inclusive process and product through the re-writing of Gaithersburg's Zoning Ordinance.

The team's work demonstrates Gaithersburg's commitment to ensuring equitable outcomes and practicing inclusion in various forms.



Staff Experience



In my role as a resident, manager and co-worker it is important that we don't just celebrate our City's diversity, but that we properly and effectively serve all our residents.



Jason DeMarchi, Casey Community Facility Manager



The City's REDI work has positively impacted my work in several ways. I have a more refined perspective on racial equality, diversity, and inclusion. As a communications professional, I am always thinking about audiences. The City's REDI work has given me greater insight into the many identities that our residents hold and how to better represent those identities in my work."



**Courtney Davis, Communication & Public Engagement
Division Manager**





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Appendix

- A. Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan (pages 15-19)
- B. Language Access Strategic Plan Action Items (page 20)
- C. Racial Equity Core Team Information (page 21)



A. Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan

Adopted by the Mayor and City Council in 2021, the Racial Equity Awareness & Action Plan provides a framework to progress the work and recommendations of the Metropolitan-Washington Council of Government's Gaithersburg Racial Equity Cohort. The plan identifies key actions we will implement to build awareness and capacity in the organization, align and enhance existing internal efforts to advance racial equity, identify key equity opportunities in each department, and explore community partnerships and alliances to leverage and scale the work across the community.

This foundational work will serve as the basis of the development of a Racial Equity Plan that will focus on the steps the City must take to eliminate systemic and institutional racism in its policies and programs.

It is important to recognize the City of Gaithersburg's long-standing commitment to values of equity, fairness, inclusion, and justice. We also believe in the public sector for the public good, and as disparities in our community persist and grown wider, we are compelled to do all in our power and influence to advance equity starting with our own institution and systems.

Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan Goal 1

Build Awareness & Capacity

The City will normalize and operationalize understanding of institutional and structural racism among people who work for and represent the City of Gaithersburg, including City staff, Mayor and City Council and Boards, Committees, and Commissions. Through collective and continuous learning, the City will build internal capacity to effectuate transformational racial equity work.

- Strategy 1.1 Declare Organizational Commitment to Advancing Racial Equity
- Strategy 1.2: Assess and Analyze Organizational Readiness
- Strategy 1.3: Provide Racial Equity Education
- Strategy 1.4: Provide opportunities for meaningful conversations about race and equity
- Strategy 1.5: Begin research of Gaithersburg's racial equity story
- Strategy 1.6: Create a dedicated full-time position to coordinate and advance racial equity work
- Strategy 1.7: Establish a Racial Equity Core Team to support and advance racial equity work across departments

Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan Goal 2

Align & Enhance Existing Efforts

The City will leverage and support preexisting internal equity efforts, align them with the citywide approach to maximize impact. The City will incorporate racial equity principles into City planning, budgeting, and decision-making processes.

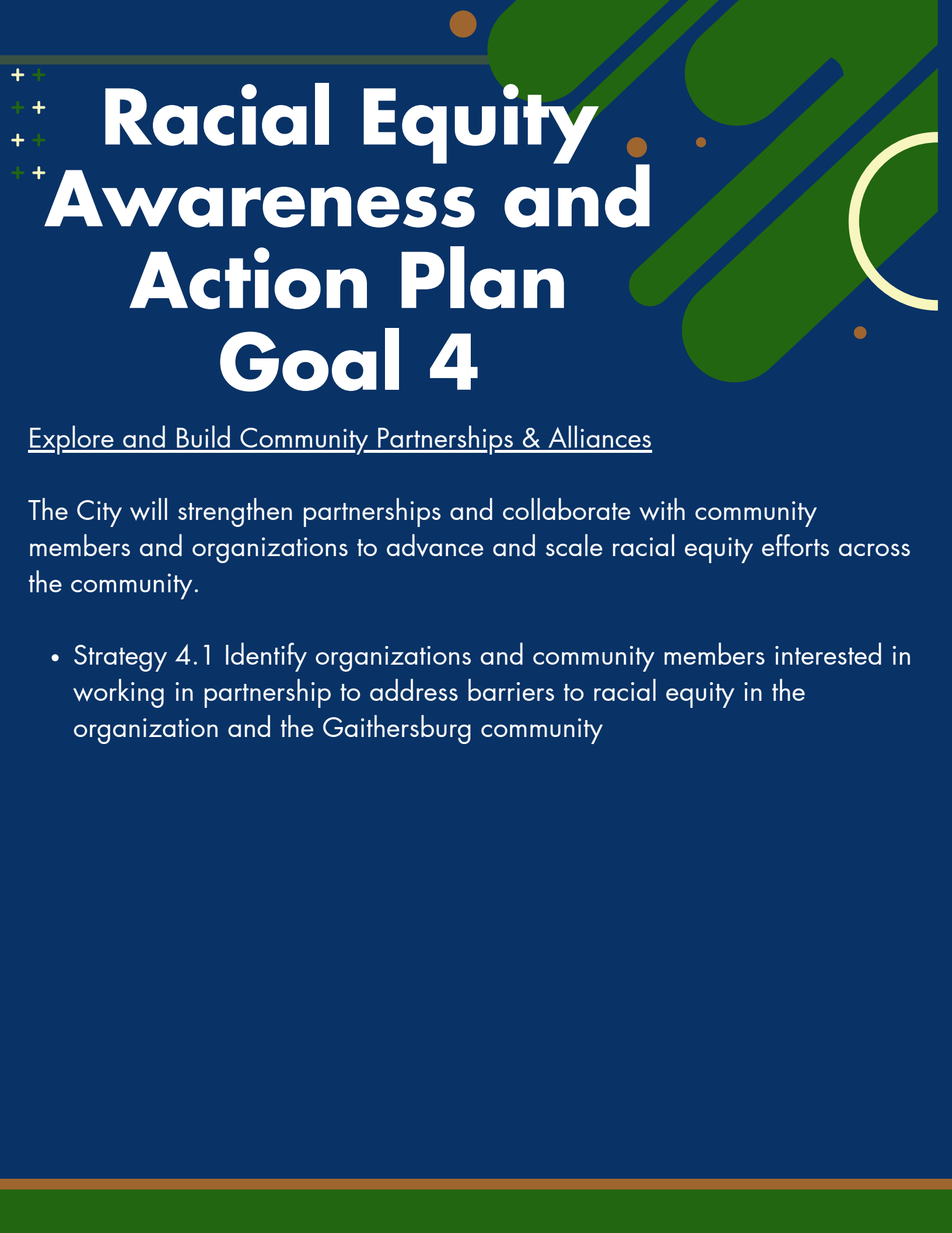
- Strategy 2.1 Continue data collection efforts started by the MWCOG Gaithersburg Racial Equity Cohort to inform the Racial Equity Plan
- Strategy 2.2: Inventory existing internal equity efforts underway in departments occurring across the City to share across the organization, align resources, build capacity and inform the Racial Equity Plan
- Strategy 2.3: Begin integration of racial equity into the Strategic Directions Plan
- Strategy 2.4: Add racial equity questions into the biennial Community Survey Strategy
- 2.5: Begin integration of racial equity into annual Budget and Capital Improvement Plan Strategy
- 2.6: Begin to strategically integrate racial equity into the City's decision making processes, as well as existing programs, and policies

++ ++ ++ ++ Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan Goal 3

Identify Equity Opportunities in Each Department

The City will identify opportunities for advancing racial equity in every City Department. Departments will learn to critically analyze decisions to understand potential disparate impacts of new programs and policies.

- Strategy 3.1: Implement a departmental self-assessment to identify areas of focus and serve as guidance for departments to begin or continue equity work and will set the foundation for equity-related goal setting that will flow into the Racial Equity Plan
- Strategy 3.2: Pilot using racial equity tools in the development of new programs or policies



++ ++ ++ ++ Racial Equity Awareness and Action Plan Goal 4

Explore and Build Community Partnerships & Alliances

The City will strengthen partnerships and collaborate with community members and organizations to advance and scale racial equity efforts across the community.

- Strategy 4.1 Identify organizations and community members interested in working in partnership to address barriers to racial equity in the organization and the Gaithersburg community



B. Language Access Strategic Plan Action Items

Strategic Outcome Area: Safe and Welcoming Community

Engage and empower diverse groups to enhance participation in City government, programming, and opportunities that enhance quality of life.

- 1.3.7 Review and evaluate City's current language stipend program for effectiveness
- 1.3.8 Secure a language translation services program or vendor to provide non-English language access for residents
- 1.3.9 Using a cultural competency framework, design and evaluate the action steps to develop the capacity of City staff's language skills for use in language access program
- 1.3.10 Create comprehensive program to create equitable and engaging language access for non-English speaking residents

++ ++ ++ ++ C. Racial Equity Core Team Scope of Work

The Core Team serves as a cross-departmental steering committee that coordinates and supports REDI work within City departments and divisions. The inaugural Core Team will assist with the implementation of the Racial Equity Awareness & Action Plan and will be tasked with developing department specific opportunities for engaging REDI work.

The Core Team envisions a Gaithersburg in which employees, residents, businesses, and community members participate in earnest, truthful dialogue and engage in process/procedures that create a racial equity culture. The Core Team strives to equip the organization with the tools needed to facilitate conversations that will lead to all stakeholders having equitable access to opportunities and resources.

The Core Team has three sub-teams that support our efforts:

- Department Team- This team provides department/division-specific educational opportunities that increase the capacity of City staff.
- Resource Team- This team conducts research and provides relevant resources for internal REDI work and resident-facing learning opportunities.
- Training Team- This team provides various opportunities for City staff, Boards, Committees and Commissions to engage in meaningful conversations about race and equity.