



Equity Advisory Group Findings, Community Discussion

Presented at Munson-Williams-Proctor Arts Institute, October 20, 2021

Quality of Life and Neighborhoods

What the Advisory Group Found

Barriers:

- Structural Barriers/Root Causes that Contribute to Poverty
 - Income and tax inequality
 - Stagnating low wages
 - Reduced public investment
 - Inadequate public benefits, detrimental exclusions, and restrictions
 - Lack of access to quality education
 - Lack of access to affordable health care and housing
 - Institutional racism
 - Criminalization of the poor
 - Restrictive immigration policies
 - Predatory practices
- Exclusionary and Restrictive Practices and Policies
 - Truancy and zero tolerance policies that lead children to drop out of school
 - Traffic fines and fees leave 500K without a valid license
 - Government fees and fines that must be paid in lump sum
 - Making criminals out of victims like young people trafficked into prostitution, gang activity
 - Releasing prisoners without education, skills, money, housing, health care or identification
 - Erecting barriers to employment, benefits, and housing for former felons
 - Putting children into foster care because the parent is poor

Suggestions:

- Complete a current housing needs assessment to include available and healthy housing
- Increase pathways to equitable housing options and homeownership including educational component outlining the benefits and sustaining homeownership
- Connect residents and assets/resources through impact centers
- Explore and expand wellness and recreational assets
 - Nutrition
 - Cultural sensitivity

What the Community Told Us

Obstacles:

- Discrimination
- Political and financial support
- Pristine housing units exposed by condemned properties



- Response to housing grievances
- Homelessness, mental illness, drug addiction, gun violence
- Lack of resources for:
 - Healthy food
 - Youth
 - Preventative services
 - Investments
- Lack of agencies such as Boys & Girls Club (West and East Utica), YWCA Girls Programs, and Neighborhood Centers
- Language barriers and access to resources
- Access to Healthcare Providers that accept Medicare and Medicaid
- Urban Renewal

Solutions:

- Create and provide educational opportunities such as:
 - Parental classes
 - Homeownership
- Improve infrastructure such as transportation, street cleaning, and sidewalk repair
- Rehab and refurbish residential and abandoned homes
- Implement Homeless First programs
- Provide wrap around services
- Read book “My Grandmother’s Hands”

Quotes:

“We need a Human Rights Commission.”

“75% of the hardest to house population are released from Program.”