



Advisory Council on Reparations

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

4 PM – 5:30 PM

Meeting in person and via Zoom

[Join by Zoom](#)

Passcode: 710245

MARCH MEETING AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. March 4, 2025
4. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)
5. Council Response to Public Participation
6. Continued Council Introductions
 - a. Derrick Jackson, Racial Equity Officer
 - b. Councilor Introductions
7. Strategic Framework Discussion
8. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)
9. Adjourn



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FEBRUARY DRAFT MINUTES

1. Call to Order
2. Attendance
 - a. Present: Alfreda Rooks, Anna Taylor McCants, Naomi Norman, Debi Khasnabis, Asha Jordan, Leo Pittman, Conan Smith
 - b. Not Present: Bri Carpenter, Justin Hodge, Michael Steinberg, Daniel Fryer
3. Approval of the Meeting Minutes
 - a. November 19, 2024
 - i. Moved by: Debi Khasnabis
 - ii. Seconded by: Leo Pittman
 - iii. Approved by consensus
4. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)
 - a. Emma Merritt-Cuneo, ICTJ
 - b. LaSonia Forte, Saline
5. Council Response to Public Participation
6. Council Introductions
 - a. Derrick Jackson, Racial Equity Officer
 - i. DJ: Intentional choice to take this role, very excited to do the work of reparations in Washtenaw County.
 - ii. AR: Do you think there will be pushback around racial equity based on some of the things that are coming out of Washington DC right now?

- iii. ATM: Excited that you are in this position, the ACR lacks strategic vision and oversight.
- iv. DJ: COVID hit right as REO office was formed, therefore the office focused on ARPA dollars instead of the actual equity work. There are a lot of people who were excited about the REO office but now feel frustration and disbelief that the work is possible.
 - 1. We are now walking in a different battlefield due to the federal landscape.

b. Councilor Introductions

- i. Alfreda Rooks, Director of Community Health Services at University of Michigan Medicine. Working to bridge health accessibility in Washtenaw County. Working on place-based investment in community health priorities.
- ii. Debi Khasnabis, Professor of teacher education at University of Michigan. Focuses on racism, colonialism, trauma from a systemic perspective. The work on reparation is exciting and important to her.
- iii. Conan Smith, Michigan Environmental Council Executive Director. Comes from a family of civil rights leaders, his grandfather is the only black mayor of Ann Arbor. Looking to pass on the Chair role.
- iv. Naomi Norman, Superintendent of Washtenaw Intermediate School District. Has led work to create equity for children of color in Washtenaw County. Believes that you have to personalize the work and take responsibility for your role in harm.
- v. Anna Taylor-McCants, Executive Director of FedUp Ministries. Lutheran Pastor. Trying to outline policy agenda for food insecurity in Washtenaw County. Believes that the reparations council can work with food policy council to make an impact in racial disparities in food insecurity.
- vi. Asha Jordan, visual artist. Uses art to help heal mental health
- vii. Leo Pittman, Assistant Manager at The Ride. Passionate about equity in transportation in Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti.

7. 2024 Wrap Up & 2025 Goal Setting

a. Strategic Plan Structure

- i. CS: background learning, getting a baseline on the state of reparations across the country.
 - 1. It is important to identify the harm that the county caused in order to tie to the redress so that there is no legal challenge.
 - 2. Community Engagement process is bidirectional. We as a council are learning and pushing out our lessons, and we are learning from the community and it frames our work.
 - 3. Strategic Plan focuses on Research and Community Engagement. Worked closely with University of Michigan.
 - a. AAACF wants to understand what harms have been perpetrated in our community in order to address gaps in those spaces.

- b. University of Michigan is ready to offer research assistants to the cause.
- c. County is a partner as well. Intentional approach to equity.
 - i. OCED is an area that has been doing equity work as well. **Opportunity Index- conversation around is this the right construct?**
 - 1. DJ: University of Michigan shared their harms report for the Detroit Reparations Taskforce.
 - 2. Not as much work has been done historically around Washtenaw County, but this is a good roadmap for what we could do in Washtenaw County.
 - 3. <https://rackham.umich.edu/harms-report-detroit-reparations/>
 - 4. CS: We will have to craft a report for the Board of Commissioners.
 - 5. ATM: We have also done outreach within the county that fits our experience background, but we also decided we needed to focus on 1-2 areas of harm in order to address them in order to move forward.
 - 6. DJ: How can we learn about the functions of County government and how can we address reparations within its role?
 - ii. CS: Budget for the reparations work. How can we move this work forward without a budget?
 - iii. DJ: For a lift like this, the work is impossible to fully accomplish without staff that is fully dedicated to it.
 - iv. CS: There is an eagerness to match funds, but not put funds in first.
 - v. AR: What is the first task of this council? Is it to create a strategic plan for the ACR or for the REO?
 - vi. DJ: Thinks it is both, two documents that align.
- b. AJ: For Ann Arbor's bicentennial I was commissioned to do an art piece called "Lost Ann Arbor" which was about the lost spaces of black individuals in the city.
- c. AR: History Alive, Debby Mitchell Covington

8. Public Participation (up to 3 minutes per speaker)

9. Adjourn

- a. Adjourned through consensus



WASHTENAW COUNTY ADVISORY COUNCIL ON REPARATIONS A ROADMAP TO REPARATIONS

OUR CHARGE

The Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners created the Advisory Council on Reparations to advise the Board of Commissioners and the public on the development of a Washtenaw Reparations Plan. The plan will highlight ways that County policies have harmed Black lives and include specific actions to address redress in the sectors of homeownership and access to other quality affordable housing, increasing business ownership and career opportunities, strategies to grow financial equity and generational wealth, closing the gaps in health care, education, employment and pay, neighborhood safety and fairness within criminal justice.

Recommendations we make will be directly related to harm perpetuated by Washtenaw County government or Washtenaw County government's complicity in harms caused by other governmental bodies.

CORE VALUES

- **Justice:** We are committed to fairness and equity.
- **Transparency:** We will conduct our work openly and honestly.
- **Community-Centered:** We will actively engage and prioritize the voices of the Black community in Washtenaw County.
- **Restorative Approach:** We seek not only to repair past harms but also to foster healing and reconciliation.
- **Accountability:** We will hold ourselves responsible for the commitments of this plan, and we will seek to hold accountable the systems that have perpetuated racial disparities.

FOCUS AREAS

- Homeownership and access to other quality affordable housing
- Increasing business ownership and career opportunities
- Strategies to grow financial equity and generational wealth
- Closing gaps in healthcare, education, employment, and pay
- Neighborhood safety and fairness within criminal justice

Strategic Goals and Action Items

The following goals and action items are based on several documents: Original ACR Resolution, report from ICTJ, ACR strategic plan slides, Racial Equity in Washtenaw and the Role of Reparations.

Goal 1: Develop a shared understanding of historical and ongoing racial harms and effective reparations strategies, ensuring that all council members have the knowledge and language necessary to collaboratively develop a comprehensive and impactful Washtenaw Reparations Plan.

- **Action Items:**
 - Invite subject matter experts in relevant fields (history, law, reparations, county departments) to provide presentations and answer questions.
 - Create ways for community members to share their experiences and perspectives, ensuring that council learning is grounded in the lived realities of those impacted by racial harms.
 - Ensure council members have access to and review key reports, articles, and case studies on reparations, including examples of reparations efforts in other communities, as well as challenges in implementing reparations efforts, such as legal doctrine, political support, and public response.
- **Measure of Success:** Quality of reparations plan, Increased participation.

Goal 2: Define "reparations" for Washtenaw County.

- **Action Items:**
 - Review existing definitions of reparations.
 - Consider the historical context and specific needs of Washtenaw County.
 - Engage with the community to gather input and feedback.
 - Develop a clear, actionable definition of reparations.
 - By **[Date]**, adopt a formal definition of reparations to guide the council's work.
- **Measure of Success:** Community feedback, formal adoption of a definition.

Goal 3: Conduct research to identify, analyze, and document the harms caused by discriminatory policies in Washtenaw County Government. (*Subcommittee on research*)

- **Action Items:**
 - Hire consultant to compose in-depth analysis of harms.
 - Identify and gather data on the focus area.
 - Conduct community meetings to gather oral histories and personal accounts.
 - By **[Date]**, complete a comprehensive research report on the harms caused by discriminatory policies enacted by Washtenaw County.
- **Measure of Success:** Completion of research report, community feedback.

Goal 4: Develop a public engagement and education plan. (*Subcommittee on public engagement*)

- **Action Items:**
 - Identify key stakeholders within community.
 - Create engagement strategy.
 - Develop a website and social media presence.
 - Conduct community presentations and outreach.
 - Host community education session(s) on reparations.
 - Create mechanism for departmental education.
 - By **[Date]**, launch a public engagement and education campaign.
- **Measure of Success:** Website traffic, social media engagement, community feedback.

Goal 5: Develop a system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the reparations plan.

- **Action Items:**
 - Identify key metrics and data sources.
 - Develop a system for collecting and analyzing data.
 - By **[Date]**, present a progress report to the Board of Commissioners.
- **Measure of Success:** Presentation of progress report, feedback from the Board of Commissioners.