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MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 2, 2020

TO: Mayor Troxell and City Councilmembers

THRU: Darin Atteberry, City Manager 

FROM: Travis Storin, Interim Chief Financial Officer 
Jacqueline Kozak-Thiel, Chief Sustainability Officer 

RE: Leadership Planning Team inquiry about equity in the 2021 Budget

At the Leadership Planning Team meeting on Monday October 26, a memo was requested outlining budget requests (aka Offers) in the 2021 Budget that further equity efforts/goals, as well as similar budget Offers that are anticipated in the near future.

Bottom Line

This adapted one-year budget cycle included the testing of a rapidly prototyped equity lens to provide the Budget Lead Team with considerations and opportunities for advancing equity in the organization and the recommended budget. It also clearly highlighted that the City of Fort Collins does not yet have a systematic approach to applying an equity lens to the budget process and resulting investments. Based on community feedback this year, it is clear the City needs to intensify the focus on equity throughout our community via the strategic planning and budgeting processes. There are several offers across Service Areas that are directly linked or in support of Council's Equity and Inclusion Priority and Strategic Objective 1.4, regarding advancing equity so that a person's identity or identities is not a predictor of outcomes.

2021 Offers Supporting Equity Goals

Attachment #1 displays Offers included in the budget and how each one relates to the indicated Council Priority. A list of Offers was originally included in the cover memo that was delivered with the 2021 Recommended Budget. The list in the attachment includes some additions.

Evaluating Equity in the City's Process for the 2021 Budget

Over the summer, the City's internal Racial Equity Rapid Response Team applied a rapidly prototyped and streamlined equity lens to the adapted budget for 2021 drawing on

examples from other communities. Due to time constraints, every offer was not analyzed and instead the team sought input from department heads and service area directors via a series of equity prompts designed to illuminate areas of the budget where equity gains were possible. The equity prompts addressed considerations for impacts to communities of color, low income communities, minority and women owned businesses, staff impacts and more.

The process surfaced areas of opportunity throughout the organization to more proactively embed equity considerations into both the City's service delivery and approaches to workforce development and retention. Key learnings include:

- Approaching equity and inclusion holistically across the organization would help mitigate uneven capacity for the work and allow for more systemic and sustainable gains.
- Opportunities exist for a more diverse workforce overall, and especially actions inviting and fostering diversity in leadership positions.
- Equitable engagement strategies are a significant part of embedding equity and inclusion into key processes, programs, and policies; in a financially and legally constrained environment, this will be challenging – resourcing for this would help.
 - Examples of resourced needs for equitable engagement include translation of materials and interpreter use, providing childcare, providing food and providing other support to overcome barriers to participation.
 - Non-resourced methods include strengthening staff capacity on how to better invite and foster opportunities for inclusion of marginalized voices in engagement and decision-making processes.
- Trainings needed on racial justice work and applying an equity lens
- Strengthening understanding of equity needs for all marginalized and under-resourced populations.
- Increasing engagement with minority-owned businesses while respecting legal mandates for nondiscriminatory practices
- Increase available data and training on equitable data governance and usage in informing equity impact analyses and decision-making.

Future Cycles: More Systematic Use of an Equity Lens

The rapid prototyping process used for the 2021 budget cycle highlighted ways in which the organization may want to approach future cycles. Key lessons learned include:

- Starting the process at the onset of development of Offers. This could include embedding equity questions and considerations into the budget request narrative template.
- Ensuring appropriate time for robust community engagement and participatory community budgeting during all stages of budgeting for outcomes work.
- Ensuring there is a certain level of public engagement continuity between budget cycles and Strategic Plan
- Promoting internal collaboration with respect to public engagement projects to better streamline and coordinate efforts
- Ensuring mutual understanding of equity work and how budgets can work to cause either equity advancement or regressive impacts.

- Embedding more time in the process for departments to revise offers based on feedback of submissions.
- Explicitly stating the value of equitable budgeting practices and what the City hopes to gain by engaging in such a process.
- Making sure diverse perspectives within a department participate in identifying the equity opportunities and impacts; more time built into the process will allow for this.
- Host workshops to introduce equitable budgeting concepts, processes, and examples
- Evaluate appropriate ways to consider equity in purchasing practices, to be reflected as part of BFO offer scoping and development
- Continuing to create educational content to help community members better understand the budget process and impact

We are committed to learning from the process this year to inform future cycles and the recommended 2022 Budget. We also look forward to utilizing the results of the equity indicators project to prioritize the work funded by ongoing, enhancement and redeployment Offers. Also, the Community Impact Ad Hoc Committee will be discussing peer learning and ideas related to creating an Equity Office at their November 23 meeting.

It is standard process to solicit and implement process improvements ideas after each BFO cycle. That continues this year with a team focusing on equity, how to solicit community ideas for such Offers and improving the effectiveness of our outreach and messaging.

Additionally, the City of Fort Collins has been accepted to a Bloomberg Philanthropies program called the 'City Budgeting for Equity & Recovery Program.' Fort Collins is one of 30 cities accepted to the program based on an application submitted earlier in the summer. The program's goal is to help cities confront budget crises while strengthening their commitment to equity in the wake of COVID-19. It is intended to help cities develop and implement plans to drive financial recovery and ensure that their budget crises do not disproportionately harm low-income residents and communities of color.

The following Offers support the two Council Priorities shown related to equity, along with a statement of how each Offer supports the priority.

Council Priority: Equity and Inclusion

Definition: Implement the usage of an equity lens, including staff and Council training, develop indicators and metrics and consider a resolution regarding antidiscrimination.

Offer HPG 4.2 Ongoing: IT Applications - E-Government Services

This offer helps ensure access to the City's website, through a focus on accessibility, usability and compliance of the City's various webpages. Additionally, the E-gov team helps to make important meetings and engagement opportunities, such as participating in a Zoom Council meeting, prominent on multiple webpages.

Offer HPG 9.2 Ongoing: Communication and Public Involvement Central Communications

This offer houses the City's primary communications team, which is responsible for leading and collaborating with other staff for the engagement efforts of many key priorities that impact historically underserved groups. This often involves producing materials and graphics in Spanish, and the team also handles most priority and emergency communications of the City, helping to ensure that all residents are able to get the information they need to respond accordingly.

Offer HPG 9.3 Ongoing: Inclusive Public Engagement

This money funds the public engagement specialist, who works to advise the organization on how best to engage with historically underserved groups. This individual maintains key relationships with cultural brokers in the community and is involved in much of the City's broader equity work.

Offer SAFE 18.1 Ongoing: Police Office of the Chief and Administration

- The Spanish language team helps to ensure that staff is able to better communicate with Spanish speaking residents of Fort Collins
- The Hiring team works to make sure that we recruit from diverse communities and they track those numbers

Offer SAFE 18.3 Ongoing: Police Special Operations Division

- The District one staff commonly works with the transient populations,
- The School Resource Officers, works with students in schools all across the City
- The Crisis Negotiation Team often engages with those having a mental health crisis
- Campus West helps reach out to the underrepresented student population

Offer SAFE 18.4 Ongoing: Police Criminal Investigations Division

- Victim Services works with victims to assist in their pursuit of justice.

Offer HPG 24.3 Ongoing: City Manager's Office - Policy, Legislative, Compliance & Performance Excellence Div.

This offer helps to fund the lead specialist in employee relations, who manages the City's equal opportunity, and ADA/Title VI compliance program, and also manages the ethics reporting and investigation process. This work is critical to employees and community members being able to feel safe in reporting potential incidents of noncompliance or discrimination.

Offer C&R 50.13 Ongoing: Reduced Fee Scholarship Program

The Recreation Department offers Reduced Fee opportunities for qualifying low income residents to be able to use of our recreation facilities and programs with a discounted rate.

Offer ECON 26.5 Ongoing: Economic Health Leadership

The Economic Health Office (EHO) team is supporting equity in a number of ways. The team has committed to providing all materials in Spanish and will be working to translate its online resources to ensure they are available in both languages. Additionally, the team is working to connect with business owners who have historically not taken full advantage of EHO resources.

Offer ENV 27.2 Ongoing: Waste Reduction and Recycling

The update to the Road to Zero Waste Plan is occurring through the Our Climate Future process that focuses on equity in process and outcomes. Development of future policies and programs, including those to address macro plastic pollution, will be developed with an equity lens to the extent possible.

Offer ENV 27.3 Ongoing: Air Quality

In addition to providing outdoor air quality programs, data and services, it includes the Healthy Homes program that supports underserved communities and those with respiratory issues by recommending low-cost or no-cost solutions for common indoor air quality issues. The program provides DIY and phone assessments and Spanish materials to lower barriers to access, and provides resource materials in an effort to make the program resources more accessible.

Offer ENV 27.4 Ongoing: Climate Commitment

Climate change is rooted in societal systems that have led to disparities along race, class, and other dimensions. These inequities are exacerbated by climate change, where vulnerable populations are often hit first and worst. Through Our Climate Future, the City is prioritizing actions that address equity, reduce emissions, and enhance resilience - leading to better outcomes for all.

Offer ENV 27.5 Ongoing: Municipal Sustainability

This offer supports staff to coordinate the Citywide implementation of the Municipal Sustainability and Adaptation Plan, which includes a goal for the municipal organization to lead by example as an inclusive, diverse, and equitable workplace.

Offer NLSH 28.1 Ongoing: Social Sustainability Leadership / Equity / Housing & Homelessness

This offer furthers the City's equity goals by delivering programs and services that are at the heart of the City's delivery of social and human sustainability services with the mission to support a diverse and equitable community for all residents. The Social Sustainability Department was created to have an enhanced focus on many aspects of social health, including equity and inclusion as one of the key themes of its first strategic plan. Also included in this offer is working with a consultant to manage identify, gather, and manage data collection that will ultimately lead to the creation of equity indicators that will be tracked for increased transparency and accountability.

Offer NLSH 28.2 Ongoing: Human Service Programs & Affordable Housing

Offer NLSH 28.7 Continuing Enhancement Human Services Program Grant Funding

Same response for both Offers 28.2 and 28.7: These offers further the City's equity goals by ensuring funding support to our community's nonprofit providers and affordable housing projects to ensure services and housing are accessible to all in our community, especially those who are historically marginalized and underrepresented.

Offer SAFE 18.26 Redeploy: Police Campus West and Bike Patrol to Homelessness Coordinator (1.0 FTE), Street Outreach and Restorative Justice

Offer NLSH 28.4 Continuing Enhancement Homelessness Initiatives

Same response for both Offers 18.26 and 28.4: These offers further the City's equity goals by providing funding and dedicated staff to ensure services and coordination for homeless services in our community which is directly linked to furthering equity and access for people who are typically marginalized, disadvantaged, and overrepresented in the homeless community.

Offer NLSH 28.6 Enhancement: 1.0 FTE - Citywide Housing Plan & Implementation and Housing Manager

Citywide Housing Plan and Implementation and Housing Manager – This offer furthers the City's equity goals by dedicating a position to develop and deliver the Housing Strategic Plan centered in equity and in alignment with community goals, and establish clear goals, targets, strategies, roles and definitions achieving affordable and achievable housing, and coordinating the Council Ad Hoc Committee to support the plan's development. Strategies that prioritize equity (ensuring all community members have access and ability to have their housing needs met) and other community goals, such as carbon neutral housing stock, will be identified in the process.

Offer ECON 26.9 Redeploy: Economic Recovery Support

A significant portion of this redeployed work will focus on developing resources, funding translation, and other access tools for small businesses. The objective is to increase access for businesses owned by community members who have historically not accessed these types of City resources.

Offer ECON 26.10 Redeploy Economic Recovery Staff

The purpose of this redeploy offer is to hire a full time contractual position intended to engaged directly with minority-, women-, low-income, and veteran-owned businesses. A strong preference will be to identify and hire a bi-lingual individual who can support engagement with our Spanish speaking population in their preferred language. This will be an extension of the work funded through CVRF dollars at the end of 2020.

Offer ENV 61.3 Ongoing: Natural Areas Public Engagement

Natural Areas utilizes volunteers to collaborate extensively with public schools and other organizations to provide learning opportunities, hiking and nature experiences, and volunteer projects to a diverse spectrum of residents. Several programs are oriented to provide nature experiences to community members who may not have as much accessibility as others, such as programming offered in conjunction with the Boys and Girls Club.

Offer C&R 39.1 Ongoing: Community Parks and Facility Ground Maintenance

Community parks are readily accessible to all residents; there are no admissions costs to use playgrounds, dog parks, picnic areas, trails and a host of other amenities. Maintenance of these facilities keeps them safe and in good repair for all users.

Offer C&R 39.2 Ongoing: Neighborhood Parks Maintenance

Neighborhood parks, not unlike community parks, are used extensively by adjacent neighbors but also neighbors from throughout the community. The parks are free to use and have been extensively enjoyed by the community during the pandemic.

Offer C&R 39.3 Ongoing: Hard Surface Trail Maintenance

The paved trail system is heavily used and provide one of the best opportunities for the community to exercise, safely socialize, and enjoy nature.

Offer NLSH 42.1 Ongoing: Urban Forest Management

The urban forest canopy provides numerous aesthetic and environmental benefits throughout Fort Collins to all neighborhoods.

Offer Trans 41.2 Ongoing: Streetscape Maintenance

Streetscape maintenance benefits the entire community with positive impacts by reducing runoff, sustaining an urban canopy and increasing property values through enhanced aesthetics. Safety and transportation are at the forefront of the program.

Offer NLSH 33.1 Ongoing: Low Income, Senior and Disabled Resident Rebate Program

Since 1984, the City has offered a sales tax rebate on food for low-income residents. This ongoing offer would continue to provide grocery tax relief for low-income residents of Fort Collins.

Offer SAFE 48. 5 Ongoing: Municipal Court Services – Specialized Services

This offer funds our probation and special agency session services. Both of these areas reach an underserved population and assist defendants in accessing necessary resources. Historically, almost all participants in special agency session are experiencing homelessness.

Council Priority: Equitable Participation in Culture & Recreation Programs

Definition: Understand current state of participation in cultural and recreation programming and subsequently make adjustments to current practices to improve equitable participation through potentially expanded programming and targeted support.

Offer NLSH 28.1 Ongoing: Social Sustainability Leadership / Equity / Housing & Homelessness

- Duplicate Offer from above

Offer C&R 50.11 Ongoing: Recreation Administration

Recreation administration is the “back of house” support for all recreation programs that are widely enjoyed by the community. This also includes administration of the reduced fee program through eligibility, household member enrollment, reporting, and scholarship disbursement.

Offer C&R 50.12 Ongoing: Community Relations and Marketing Services

Community engagement and marketing are crucial to helping the community take advantage of, and to be aware of, the wide variety of benefits and programs associated with the Recreation department. In addition, community engagement is crucial to the ability of the City itself to better understand how to better serve the community.

Offer C&R 50.7 Ongoing: Adaptive Recreation Opportunities (ARO)

Adaptive recreation help make recreation facilities and programs universally available to the special needs community.

Offer ENV 61.3 Ongoing: Natural Areas Public Engagement

- Duplicate Offer from above

Offer C&R 64.1 Ongoing: The Lincoln Center

The Lincoln Center plays a crucial role in hosting and presenting performing and visual arts from diverse cultures and perspectives that can be enjoyed by all community members.

Offer C&R 64.2 Ongoing: The Gardens on Spring Creek

The Gardens offers the “Gardens for All” access program (similar to the Museum’s “Opportunity Fund”) to provide robust free or reduced costs engagement opportunities for participation.

Offer C&R 64.3 Ongoing: Fort Collins Museum of Discovery

The Museum offers permanent and traveling exhibits that are widely enjoyed by the community; the “Opportunity Fund” program makes it feasible for anyone to visit that may have limited resources or abilities. In addition, the museum currently is hosting “Mental Health: Mind Matters,” an exhibit about the understanding and acceptance of mental health – the exhibit is free to the public.

Offer C&R 64.7 Ongoing: Art in Public Places Artwork

Art in Public Places is the epitome of an egalitarian approach to art where place-based art is provided throughout the community for all to enjoy.