

## LaRock Hudson, 2021 EDI Fellow for Lancaster PA



### **Project Overview and Role:**

The Comprehensive Plan Equity and Community Outreach Fellow will be directly involved with the City's Comprehensive Plan. Specifically, the Fellow will be tasked with supporting the integration of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility into the 2-year planning process. Throughout the summer, the Fellow may collaborate with a variety of stakeholders, including: staff from multiple departments at the City of Lancaster, two teams of professional planning and engagement consultants, a resident committee, community leaders and stakeholders, and the general public. In collaboration with City staff, the Fellow will also participate in the Fellow will

also participate in the development and implementation of the communications and public engagement strategy, which the Fellow will have opportunities to assist City Planning staff in presenting to the City's Executive Leadership Team, Planning Commission, and City Council.

### **What did you learn from the project?**

There was a plethora of knowledge I was able to acquire from my position within local government. The most important things would have to be:

1. Government needs to be more intentional about developing relationships with residents and would-be community partners.
2. Marginalized people in institutional work need ready-made support systems from the beginning to the end of career navigation, from the application process to the exit procedure. Until the institutional structure is accustomed to building the partnerships and engaging with the public as a procedural norm, this need will exist.
3. Those in legislation and policy-making have an immediate need for the knowledge and unconventional design thinking BIPOC and other marginalized people bring to the table with their life experiences.
4. The need for on-going Trauma-informed training amongst all institutions in order to better communicate with and serve people.
5. It does not take years of schooling to be an agent of change, or to be a voice that influences the next 20 years of change. It takes the fortitude and determination to be the change you want to see, and others to see the power of that determination, as USDN did for me.

### **What was the impact of your work?**

Success markers for this project have been unconventional, and not always apparent. This also begs the question, how do we quantify relationships and relationship building? Inclusion would mean to look at residents beyond the census tract and demographic numbers. Due to adverse relations between some communities and the government's role, a major indicator for this project has been overall collaborative engagement. The overall goal for the life of the project is 10% of the residents in a city of 60k, roughly about

6000-7000 individual direct contact interactions. Currently, we have slightly over 1700 direct contacts with a diverse range of residents. Through the application of multiple tracking methods, we have been able to identify exactly those groups of residents we have not fully interacted with. Analyzing the data collected in the first round of engagement has allowed more deliberate focus directly on those sub-groups within the greater community structure going into the second phase of engagement which will include Fall/Winter 2021.

Being a community advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion, and being in a professional position with that lens as the mandate, put me in a unique circumstance. In addition to breaking the engagement stigma of the residents towards the city officials, there has been the duality of teaching government officials how to alleviate those stigmas. This spoke to me on the higher level of needed culture change on the inside, to allow both parties to reach the goal of collaboration they both seek so desperately.

### **Any links to project deliverables?**

*Project Specific*

- <https://lancaster-pa.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=40db7a5e435948afb035039769418adc>
- <https://engage.cityoflancasterpa.com/en/folders/planning-our-future-Lancaster>
- <https://www.ourfuturelancaster.com/>

### **Media**

- **A New Plan for Lancaster City | City of Lancaster, PA (cityoflancasterpa.com)**
- **Lancaster city to begin creating new comprehensive plan for community development | Local News | lancasteronline.com**
- **Citizens can shape the comprehensive plan that will shape Lancaster - One United Lancaster**
- **The 1993 comprehensive plan: How it changed Lancaster - One United Lancaster**
- **Bike lanes, new housing, parking and more: Lancaster city takes input on key 20-year plan | Local News | lancasteronline.com**