

# City-Site Problem Identification & Resolution of Issues Together (City-SPIRIT)

This report is a compilation of issues and recommended solutions developed by leaders in  
in Easthampton, Massachusetts



Community Relations Service  
United States Department of Justice

Wednesday, June 20, 2018

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## Introduction

The United States Department of Justice (DOJ) Community Relations Service (CRS) was created by Title X of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. CRS assists state and local governments, private and public organizations, educational institutions, and community groups to resolve community-based conflicts stemming from issues related to race, color and national origin. In 2009, with the passage of the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act (HCPA), CRS's jurisdiction expanded to prevention of and response to violent hate crimes committed on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, religion, or disability. CRS's voluntary, confidential and impartial conflict resolution services aim to assist all parties involved in a conflict to improve communication, promote problem solving, improve collaboration and restore positive community relations.

As a conflict resolution agency, CRS recognizes the value of facilitating dialogue that assists communities to identify issues and address conflict. This experience led CRS to create the community leader-driven issues identification and problem solving process called "City-Site Problem Identification and Resolution of Issues Together" (City-SPIRIT). The City-SPIRIT process brings together diverse community leaders, city and county officials, law enforcement, ministerial leaders and other community leadership to identify and analyze issues impacting the community, as well as to develop solutions they deem most appropriate to resolve these issues. The process applies principles of collaborative problem solving, and community empowerment and engagement to help improve community relations.

This SPIRIT report reflects the issues identified by diverse community leaders and their recommended solutions. CRS's role in the SPIRIT process was to provide training and process expertise. Specifically, CRS provided: 1) facilitation training to volunteer facilitators; 2) and the issues identification and problem solving methodology. Please note that all information contained in this report was recorded word-for-word from the notes (flip charts) generated during the small-group breakout sessions, and only minor edits were made to ensure clear understanding of the communication. The services provided by CRS are conducted in confidence and without publicity, and CRS shall hold confidential any information acquired in the regular performance of its duties upon the understanding that it would be so held.

## Overview and Methodology

At the invitation of Easthampton, Massachusetts community leaders, CRS met with city leaders, diverse community leaders and others to identify potential services and resources to support the community. Following these meetings, it was agreed upon that CRS would convene a SPIRIT Planning Group composed of city officials, diverse community leaders, ministerial leaders, advocates and other key community leaders. This planning group developed the SPIRIT process agenda and completed important logistical and planning tasks.

Following the planning sessions, CRS provided facilitator training to six facilitators including leaders from education, business and advocacy organizations on Tuesday, June 19, 2018. The two-hour facilitation training provided volunteer facilitators with an overview of the SPIRIT process, including the process goals/objectives, facilitator roles, active listening and process logistics.

On Wednesday, June 20, 2018, CRS facilitated a SPIRIT process in Easthampton, Massachusetts. The SPIRIT process began with introductions of the facilitators and a "welcome" by the city leadership and CRS. Approximately 40 diverse community leaders from various sectors in the community including businesses, schools, advocacy organizations and faith-based leaders participated in

the process. Four groups were created to identify issues including community leaders, youth, municipal leaders and general community members. They were asked to identify strengths of the community, as well as areas of concern.

After the issue(s) identification phase of the process, CRS and the volunteer facilitators conducted an issues prioritization process. Participants were asked to vote on the issues most important to them (see votes below). Each participant was given four stickers (dots) to place their votes. Following the voting process, which illustrated what issues received the most votes, i.e., priority issues, the solutions development/action plan phase of the process was facilitated. In the afternoon, each participant received a random number between one (1) and four (4) and went to their designated room to work on developing solutions and action plans.

Working with facilitators, community leaders used a five-step problem solving process to develop solutions and action plans. At the end of the process, the proposed Easthampton Community Relations Commission (the Commission) was introduced by the mayor to the larger group. The Commission, if approved by the city council, will meet in scheduled session(s) with the city/county officials or their designee to follow up on the SPIRIT process and may implement solutions/action plans developed during the process. The Commission may also work on other problem areas, should they arise.

## Agenda

### Easthampton, Massachusetts Wednesday, June 20, 2018

<b>8:30 – 9:00</b>	Facilitator discussion/debriefing
<b>9:00 – 9:15</b>	City/County and Community Leadership Overview
<b>9:15 – 9:30</b>	SPIRIT Overview for Participants
<b>9:30 – 10:45</b>	Issues Identification and Prioritization
<b>10:45 – 11:00</b>	Break
<b>11:00 – 11:45</b>	Report-Out #1
<b>11:45 – 12:15</b>	Voting and Prioritization
<b>12:15 – 1:00</b>	LUNCH Facilitators identify the top five issues for next phase
<b>1:00 – 3:00</b>	Problem Solving and Solution Development
<b>3:00 – 3:15</b>	Break
<b>3:15 – 4:00</b>	Report-Out #2
<b>4:00 – 4:30</b>	Closing Remarks by City/County and Community Leadership
<b>4:30 – 5:00</b>	CRS, Facilitator and Planning Group Debriefing

## SPiRiT Process

### Step 1: Strengths

The planning group identified four groups including community leaders, youth, municipal leaders and general community members to work on the issue(s) identification phase of the process. The small group facilitators began the breakout session with introductions, ice breakers, and review of the ground rules, and worked with participants to identify the community's strengths and areas of concern.

The following strengths were identified by community leaders:

#### GROUP #1 – Youth & Students

- The City of Easthampton has excellent resources
- Excellent connections
- Many independent businesses
- It is a safe city
- Easthampton is friendly
- Excellent small town feel
- Citizens are encouraged to participate

#### GROUP #2 – Community Leaders

- What is happening on Pleasant Street is very positive
- Easthampton arts community is a strength
- Outdoor recreation is a strength
- Easthampton has great sustainable agriculture
- Eclectic change and the community is always evolving
- The community is open-minded and embraces diversity
- Love the free parking
- Good “vibe” and “realness” in the community

#### GROUP #3 – Municipal Leaders

- There is excitement and buzz within the community
- Easthampton is experiencing growth
- Easthampton has an excellent sense of community
- We are building a new school
- There is a nice bike path and outstanding parks
- Easthampton is safe
- There is community collaboration
- The people of Easthampton work hard
- There are diverse businesses including farming, companies and pharmaceutical companies
- There is a good police/municipal government - community relationship
  - Police receive excellent training and complete more than the mandatory training classes
  - The majority of the Police and Fire Department went to Easthampton schools and have a vested interest in the town

#### GROUP #4 – General Community Members

- Easthampton is beautiful
- Easthampton is becoming a destination city

- The community is welcoming and neighbors know each other
- Many local business and a great city layout
- Great book store
- Easthampton is a safe place
- The community is family oriented and kid friendly
- There are community wide creative events and festivals

## Step 2: Issues Identification/Areas of Concern

The following are areas of concern identified by community leaders:

### GROUP A – Youth & Students

- Several siloed communities that do not interact
- The schools (including Easthampton High School, Williston and Treehouse) do not interact. They, like the communities, are also siloed. This is a high priority issue for the youth.
- Lack of integration in several communities within Easthampton
- Racist/Ethnocentric attitudes exist in Easthampton
- Anti-immigrant sentiments expressed from some in Easthampton
- Sense of not belonging if you are a person of color and/or an immigrant
- Unclear about how to respond to racism/bias/hate or how to report
- Easthampton can be a tense environment for immigrants, especially within Easthampton High School
- Some people and places in Easthampton are unwelcoming to LGBT & gender non-conforming people

### GROUP B – Community Leaders

- Some neighborhoods are segregated
- Old vs. New Easthampton mentality (“old guard” vs. “new guard”)
  - May be perception
  - Surprised to observe this apparent divide after the election and vote for new school
- Not enough community participation in city government and events
  - Too much focus on communicating through social media
  - Not enough transparency from city regarding events and ways to get involved
- Not “youth-friendly,” especially to those under the age of 18
- Easthampton is not the most accessible city (not enough sidewalks)
- Issues of substance abuse in Easthampton
- Racism and homophobia are not openly discussed or addressed
- Community members are unsure how to take a stand against racism and homophobia in a productive way
- Worry that the Commission will be labeled in a way that does not make it effective
- Residents are being priced out of the community (gentrification)
- Concerns that the development of Route 10 will change the dynamic of the town
- Economic pressure vs. land mass (not enough land for all the development that is happening)
- Unconscious bias exists in Easthampton
- Adverse childhood experiences (e.g. poverty) and its effects impact many in the community
- Difficult conversations (e.g. surrounding racism and homophobia) are not happening in a consistent manner
- Community members disrespect each other on social media and there is no accountability
- Lack of education around issues of “us vs. them”

- The “grey box” in identity education
- Some neighborhoods are perceived as “bad”
  - Inaccurate perceptions surrounding safety
  - Lack of neighborhood pride
  - Lack of respect of cultural differences among neighborhoods

#### GROUP C – Municipal Leaders

- Lack of awareness of what the inequities are in Easthampton
  - Not always aware of the demographics
- The changing demographics of Easthampton are affecting lifelong residents (‘50s/’60s golden age)
- Some lifelong residents feel they are being forced to change and also feel like they are being ignored
- Some in Easthampton are resistant to change
- There is an “Us vs. Them” mentality and a presumption by each side of this attitude
- There is a “How I’ve always done it” mentality (resistance to change)
- Women and youth are not taken seriously or given as much respect as men or older community members
  - “Girls shouldn’t…”
  - “You’re only 20 years old, why are you telling me…”
- There is a “Good Old Boy” network mentality in Easthampton
- The “old guard” is not on the same page or up to speed with others in the community
- There is frustration with forced changed
- There are generational challenges around different priorities
- There is sometimes tension because of background differences (newer residents) and multigenerational families (families that have lived in Easthampton for many years)
- Economic impact, due to cost of living, on fixed-income residents
- Easthampton is changing and some are feeling a sense of loss over traditions and old buildings that will be repurposed or demolished
  - Example: One new business is a tattoo parlor which is great for the economy; however, a tattoo parlor does not reflect the values of the “old guard”
- There is limited exposure to the LGBT community which leads to automatic judgment
- Limited exposure to people of color/anyone who is different (color, orientation, language)
- White, Christian, English-speaking ‘norm’ is “shoved down their throat” – lack of relationship building or acceptance of differences
- Not enough “meet & greets”/socializing with different communities so end up only interacting when there’s conflict
  - Cookout with a cop is one of the few “meet & greet” events currently happening
- Not enough opportunities for “old guard” and newer residents (of various backgrounds) to interact/socialize
- There is a very vocal but small group that can cause conflict within Easthampton or create a presumption of a silent majority
- Not enough exposure to new things/different communities in Easthampton
- Too much anonymous participation online (social media) but not enough face-to-face/real life participation
- Lack of affordable housing for older folks who can’t maintain a home by themselves
- Negative perceptions of affordable housing such as only low-income individuals who do not work live there
- Lack of communication about the upside of affordable housing (such as lower taxes and grant

money) – several community members fear the unknown

- ServiceNet house on Park Street is one example
- Many residents do not know how to have their voice heard and there is a lack of community participation at Easthampton board meetings. There is a lack of understanding as to how city government works and how residents can meaningfully contribute.
- Older residents vs. Millennials – social media platforms are becoming more prevalent means of communication and not all residents are comfortable with this method of communication
- It is not always clear who is in need of housing
- There is a long waitlist for affordable housing because there is a housing shortage
- Many individuals and families are priced out of living in Easthampton
- There are limited rental units available in Easthampton
- Easthampton is no longer a “first time” homeowners town/bidding wars are typical
- Lack of affordable “first time” housing units
- Seniors are not leaving their homes
- Since the mill closure, Easthampton is more of a bedroom community
- More professionals (with larger incomes) are moving to Easthampton which causes the home values to go up and prices some people out of living in the community
- Too many unhealthy interactions on social media directed toward the police/municipal government. These online interactions do not reflect the more positive face-to-face interactions with the community.
- Lack of understanding within the community about why officers do what they do
- There is a perception within the community of a lack of diversity in recruitment and hiring of city workers
- Challenges on marijuana retail shops

#### GROUP D – General Community Members

- Lack of affordable housing options for seniors and individuals on fixed-incomes in Easthampton
- Increased taxes are a hardship for people with fixed-incomes
- New vs. Old resident divide (“old guard” vs. “new guard”)
- Some residents feel targeted by the police (based on looks, especially people of color and sexual orientation)
- Social media negatively impacts the community (gossip, threats made, some rely on social media too heavily for all community information)
  - Lack of personal accountability for communication (e.g. say things on social media that one would not say in face-to-face conversation)
- Racism
- Lack of diverse representation in city government and education (especially lack of racial diversity)
- Some community members feel they have a lack of voice or input in the decision making process
- As a community, Easthampton must acknowledge the power structure and recognize the imbalance of power as a systemic issue
- High number of students living below the poverty line (one statistic shared was 30% of students in Easthampton live below the poverty line)
- Public spaces (e.g. city hall, public safety building and other civic buildings) are not open and welcoming to all community members
- Lack of accountability around issues of diversity and equity (ex: at the high school no one is taking responsibility or being transparent/clear); issues are brushed under the rug
- Lack of community involvement
  - Low civic engagement

- Obstacles to engagement include transportation, family dynamics, work schedules and money; these obstacles often are not acknowledged
- Lack of accessibility to places via public transportation
- Mental health issues not adequately addressed through outreach efforts and some are concerned for their safety
- Lack of access to resources and information to get resources (e.g. social service assistance, financial assistance, etc.)
- Misperception of what affordable housing is and of who relies on affordable housing (many think that only drug dealers, gang members and “low lives” rely on affordable housing)
- Threats made towards those who rely on affordable housing
- Affordable housing perceived as an issue of color
- Housing prices and cost of rent has gone up making it difficult for long-time residents to remain in Easthampton
- In the high school, remarks are made to individuals seen as Muslims, “go back to your country,” and “you are a terrorist.”
- In community, people have heard, “I am not waiting in line with her” at a local store toward Muslims and people of color.
- Some students are targeted (by students and teachers) - when they speak multiple languages it is automatically assumed English is their second language and that their English is not fluent.
- Unequal punishment is handed out by the high school administration (race and gender)
- People of color and immigrants who have lived in Easthampton for many years have been asked, “Where are you from?” and “Do you need help?” because they look different or have an accent; this creates an unwelcoming environment for these Easthampton residents
  - Unwelcoming to Latinos because of this (language, looks, etc.)
- Bias treatment based on race or sexual orientation is not addressed or taken seriously in the community.

### Step 3: Issues Identification Small Group Report Outs

After the issues identification phase of the process, each small group was asked to select two (2) community leaders to report out to the large group. The small groups were re-convened into the large, general session group. Each group gave a short presentation on their identified strengths and issues/areas of concern.

### Step 4: Voting and Prioritization

After the small group report outs, each participant received four (4) dots. The participants were asked to place their dots by the issues most important to them. The issues were then consolidated and prioritized based on participant votes.

The following are the consolidated votes by community leaders:

Issue/Area of Concern	Number of Votes
1. “Siloed” communities (Treehouse, Easthampton High School, Williston) and lack of contact/integration	5 votes

2. Racism/Ethnocentrism/Anti-Immigrant sentiments → creates sense of not belonging/unease; not knowing what to do/who to report it to	12 votes
3. Racism – not addressing racism (and sexual orientation); brushing aside these issues particularly at the high school	3 votes
4. Tension at immigration/immigrants (e.g. kids at EHS)	2 votes
5. Lack of awareness of what the inequities are and of demographic changes in Easthampton	4 votes
6. Police targeting certain groups based on race, sexual orientation, or how someone looks	3 votes
7. Some people/in some spaces there's less than a welcoming atmosphere for LGBT and gender non-conforming people	4 votes
8. Childhood adversity, issues of poverty and accessibility, and drug use and lack of youth resources	6 votes
9. "Us vs. Them" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. "old" vs. "new" – lack of a way to address and identify</li> <li>b. Unconscious bias</li> </ul>	11 votes
10. "Us vs. Them" – presumption of this attitude on both sides	2 votes
11. 'New' vs. 'Old' residents – division	16 votes
12. Lack of avenues to engage community members in crucial conversations on important topics impacting the community <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Obstacles: fear, apathy, inertia, lack of education and access</li> </ul>	20 votes
13. Anonymous participation online but do not show up in real life to participate in city government/events	5 votes
14. Lack of civic/community involvement and relying on social media vs. direct communication	21 votes

15. Unsure how to address problems associated with income inequality, cost of living and neighborhood stratification in Easthampton	10 votes
16. Perception that affordable housing is only for low-income individuals; lack of common definition for “affordable housing”	13 votes
17. Increased taxes and the impact on people with fixed-incomes, including some seniors	9 votes
18. Presumption of a silent majority	2 votes

**Step 5: Problem Solving and Solution Development**

For the solution development phase, community leaders were asked to develop solutions for the top three to five issues identified by participant votes. Community leaders were randomly divided into four (4) equal number groups. During this phase of the process, community leaders utilized the five-step problem solving process to develop solutions and action plans.

The five-step problem-solving method

1. Identify the problem
2. Brainstorm possible solutions
3. Pick the best solution(s)
4. Develop a plan of action and implement the solution
5. Follow-up on the success of the implementation

The following solutions were developed by community leaders:

**GROUP #1**

**1. Us vs. Them/New Guard vs. Old Guard and unconscious bias (resistance to change)**

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to define</li> <li>• Make sure people have access to community information               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Besides social media and websites</li> <li>○ Robocall for meetings or ability to call into</li> <li>○ Create a 411 call number for Easthampton news and events</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Community education about civility and respect – find other grants and collaborators (e.g. Generosity &amp; Gratitude grant with CES)</li> <li>• Teach Empathy               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Campaign with words or images</li> <li>○ Community read events at library</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Advertise that most of us are “in the middle” (not “us vs. them”)               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Stop labeling campaign</li> <li>○ Social norms marketing campaign to embrace the positive</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

- Events and opportunities for connection around a common event (like high school sports); not specifically about communication
  - Get feedback from teachers about what works and what doesn't through an online survey or focus group
- Use opportunities, like a halftime break, to make positive connections or emphasize a community issue
- Build on existing events like cookout with a cop and cultural chaos and have more of these types of events
- Improve city website so it is easier to find meeting agendas and have a calendar of events
  - Make the website mobile optimized, responsive and easily searchable
- Create a shared community cookbook
- Have an "International Block Party" to celebrate the different cultures in Easthampton
- "Live and let live" – everyone is okay, including those not interested in socializing/leaving their house
- Neighborhoods should hold block parties to get neighbors talking to each other
  - During city-wide tag sale – have a map and people can sign up
- Use events with food to celebrate different cultures
  - Include places like Treehouse – positive promotion – Treehouse is a national model right in Easthampton
  - Including Treehouse will help to make the kids feel just as good outside of Treehouse as they do inside
  - Publicize the current events, like local church polish festival
- Educate the community (businesses, city departments) about trauma/become a trauma-informed community (Easthampton Healthy Youth Coalition can support; also get Chamber of Commerce support)
- Collect data on ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences)
- Showcase our successes – Cottage Street housing (blended mixed levels; tax credit apartments)
- Art & Empathy – add other issues like LGBTQ
  - Work with ECA+ (Easthampton City Arts+)
- Have community read events (especially a memoir to learn about different experiences – immigrants, LGBTQ, etc.)
- Photo-voice project – "Who is Easthampton?" or "We are Easthampton"
  - Include: Mayor, Easthampton City Arts+, Youth artists, Galleries, Artisans, Gay Straight Alliance at High School, Artisans, Easthampton Healthy Youth Coalition
  - Arts Walk
- Advertise at other events, to promote other community events
- Use Facebook or the city website to promote ALL events (currently city events posted different places, such as on the Police Department's page/not centrally located)

## 2. Unwelcoming environment for LGBT and gender non-conforming individuals

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't ask a transgender individual about transitioning</li> <li>• Trainings to learn about gender issues</li> <li>• Be conscious of how we act in public spaces</li> </ul>

- Create the opportunity and safe space to ask questions
- Make sure we have strong policies
- Ask LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people how they want to be treated and what to educate about
- Do not assume that all LGBTQ and gender non-conforming people are the same or want the same things (avoid tokenism)
- Conduct active bystander training – how to be an ally
- Civility and dignity campaign
- Pledge campaign to be an active bystander (Northampton Human Rights Campaign did this)
- “Safe zone” stickers for windows
- Recognize how much tolerance we already have here
- Start education surrounding LGBTQ issues earlier in the schools
- Have a liaison with police from this group to create relationships
- Have the mayor publicly support the issue
- Have Pride march in Easthampton
- Have ongoing training for police
- Promote what we’re already doing (e.g. Human Rights Resolution, training, accepting ways, etc.)
- Make sure there are groups at the schools (like Gay Straight Alliance)
- Create safe space for reporting (maybe human rights commission or non-police related place)
- Create unisex bathrooms in every public bathroom (municipal buildings and local businesses)
- Mentoring at-risk youth or even other people who need it (community service support → join with Council on Aging)

### 3. Income inequality & high cost of living / affordable housing

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop creative ways to abate taxes, like fundraising events</li> <li>• Integrate senior housing</li> <li>• Utilize old school buildings for affordable/senior/intergenerational housing</li> <li>• Have more broad intergenerational events and programs in the city (e.g. Flywheel (indoor cycling), Council on Aging)</li> <li>• If old buildings (including school buildings) cannot be saved/repurposed for housing, use money from the sale of buildings to offset taxes for low-income residents or to support other community services</li> <li>• Reach out to developers to get input on how to optimize value/\$</li> <li>• Clearly convey cost-benefit analyses</li> <li>• Find ways to increase supply of affordable housing and starter housing for young adults</li> <li>• Earn tax credit by doing community work and service</li> <li>• The community needs to understand who builds affordable housing and how it is funded. We must educate the community that developers require incentives and tax credits in order for any community to ever get affordable housing; they go hand in hand, one doesn’t happen without the other.</li> </ul>

## GROUP #2

### 1. Income inequality & high cost of living / affordable housing

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Look to repurpose old school buildings – renovations for senior/affordable housing</li><li>• Look for new growth opportunities to provide that next step for seniors</li><li>• Create more public resources/spaces<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Maker spaces</li><li>○ Library of things</li><li>○ Neighborhood public garden – Northampton Garden Tours</li><li>○ Public hall – place for community gatherings/events</li><li>○ Permaculture in the city (ex: Feasthampton)</li></ul></li><li>• Collect good/better data around income inequality &amp; affordable housing/economic impact study<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Partner with UMASS (University of Massachusetts)/PVPC (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission) to collect and analyze the data as well as use for guidance</li></ul></li><li>• Look at current zoning regulations and potentially revise to encourage development in Easthampton (parking, setback rules, “tiny houses”)</li><li>• Reinvigorate FUTURE USE COMMITTEE to explore redeveloping public buildings (schools) – Facilitate public input session &amp; discussion</li></ul>

### 2. Racism, Ethnocentrism/Anti-Immigration sentiment (feeling unwelcome)

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Have more diverse representation in committees like this (City-SPIRIT) &amp; other civic events/boards</li><li>• Second language offerings to help bring down communication barriers; more learning opportunities for second language for public safety and municipal employees to bring down communication barriers</li><li>• Have different community groups co-sponsor events</li><li>• More outreach by the Catholic Church to bring in Hispanics and other communities</li><li>• Emphasize innovative and entrepreneurial opportunities in Easthampton (remote workers, microbusinesses)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Easthampton medial profiles</li><li>○ Recognition for what’s already happening</li><li>○ SPARK (located in Holyoke, MA) – organization that helps entrepreneurs and small business owners to be successful; goal of SPARK is “to strengthen and grow Holyoke’s economy from within, helping its often-underrepresented residents tap into their potential to create business and social ventures in the city and region.”</li><li>○ Invite VVM (Valley Venture Mentors)</li></ul></li><li>• Williston – Easthampton HS – look for opportunities for cooperation</li><li>• Create more opportunities for direct, meaningful, non-threatening contributions (forums?)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Opportunities to talk about “the elephant in the room” along with social events</li></ul></li><li>• Research points of contact between different communities (where this “unwelcome” feeling is being created)</li></ul>

- Have “Ambassadors”
- Partnership with relevant groups to do research
- Have a proactive statement of who we are as a community (what do we stand for, what are our values)
- Who we are as a community member, not “This is Easthampton” (don’t assume we speak for everyone)
- Revisit Master Plan
- Partner with Easthampton media to do profiles

### 3. Unwelcoming environment for LGBT and gender non-conforming individuals

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Have more specific forums for this community – have specific stories of discrimination and how they have felt unwelcome</li> <li>● Feathampton (exists) permaculture</li> <li>● Identify a sister city/exchange city</li> <li>● Have community dinners</li> <li>● Look for ways to help market/promote festivals/events and draw more people and enhance the offerings</li> <li>● Screen relevant films on subject related to racism/anti-immigration/LGBTQ issues (film festival?) &amp; have panel discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Ex: Former white supremacist presentation at Flywheel</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Diversity groups/panels between schools (elementary, middle, high school, Williston) – opportunities to come together, present information to public safety/government (be educated on their perspective)</li> <li>● Utilize city councilors as ambassadors (appreciation for communication some councilmembers currently provide)</li> <li>● Have a dedicated social media coordinator for Easthampton</li> </ul>

### GROUP #3

#### 1. Us vs. Them/“New Guard” vs. “Old Guard” and unconscious bias (resistance to change)

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Find a way to identify common needs/shared goals</li> <li>● Visioning process</li> <li>● Find a ways that we are one community</li> <li>● Identify ways to meet halfway</li> <li>● Be one Easthampton</li> <li>● Show that new residents are just as invested in the community</li> <li>● Film or art series that honors where we have been and where we are now</li> <li>● Time to move on without “old guard”</li> <li>● Find people from “old guard” to bridge between “old” and “new”</li> <li>● Give a voice to both groups to help “old guard” accept change</li> </ul>

- Validation of concerns → get away from comfort zones
- Find ways to assure the “old guard” gets news about the town (outside of social media)
- Acknowledge that change is difficult, inevitable and necessary
- Bring people from “old guard” into conversation
- Determine how to introduce change in an incremental way because we can’t change all at once
- Acknowledge “old guard” can sometimes sacrifice other’s safety/autonomy for their own beliefs/rigid way of thinking
- Get the commission that is formed, or form a group of citizens, to meet the “old guard” and “new guard” in their places (i.e., Silver Spoon & Flywheel) and have organic conversations to help meet halfway. Look for ways to get the “old guard” and “new guard” together to better understand each other.
- Move on

## 2. Lack of community engagement (off social media) due to barriers and accessibility

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barrier: Stereotyping</li> <li>• Barrier: Unable to attend due to childcare/eldercare or transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hire a teenager (or provide community service credit) to provide childcare at the meeting for every city meeting</li> <li>○ Have a brief summary of the meeting readily available</li> <li>○ Have the ability to Skype into the meeting</li> <li>○ Livestream public city meetings</li> <li>○ Go to where the people are to get a better sense of community – don’t assume everyone needs to attend meetings to connect with the city (Facebook pages)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barrier: Do not understand city government process so do not participate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have cards so you can write down thoughts instead of speaking in public</li> <li>○ Make information more accessible – have information on city Facebook page; streamline city Facebook pages</li> <li>○ Upgrade the content of the Summit</li> <li>○ Post agendas at the library and in the high school newspaper</li> <li>○ Promote Civics 101 class and provide a tax break to residents who complete</li> <li>○ Publish different profiles of the different committees</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barrier: Lack of agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Find ways to make clear that all engagement matters</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barrier: Lack of racial diversity in city government and the school (administration &amp; teachers) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Increase efforts to recruit people of color into these positions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barrier: Lack of religious diversity (in terms of places to worship) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have councilperson record community concerns</li> <li>○ Apply for grants</li> <li>○ Each committee builds in time to get the word out</li> <li>○ Hire someone</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Barrier: Lack of voting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Have online voting</li> <li>○ Close businesses on election day</li> <li>○ Ability to register to vote online</li> <li>○ Lower the local voting age to 16</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

### 3. Racism, Ethnocentrism/Anti-Immigration (feeling like don't "belong")

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Barrier: Lack of religious diversity (in terms of places to worship)<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ May be beyond our scope – could have religious community events</li></ul></li><li>• Barrier: Lack of racial diversity in government and schools<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Actively hire people with different language skills</li><li>○ Hire a person of color for Superintendent/more people of color in positions of power</li><li>○ Word position descriptions in a way that encourages people of color to apply; accountability to people of color in the community</li></ul></li><li>• Barrier: Stereotyping/We celebrate multiculturalism and diversity in a way that results in tokenism<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Implicit bias training</li><li>○ Engage in friendly matter</li><li>○ Don't just have dedicated "ethnic" days</li><li>○ Silence is violence</li><li>○ Conduct community bystander training</li></ul></li><li>• Barrier: People may not know how to react when they encounter people that are different<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Art/community project that brings out these issues in a non-confrontational way</li><li>○ Need to identify the sectors of the community that need to embrace this to create the cultural shift</li></ul></li></ul>

#### GROUP #4

### 1. Lack of community engagement (off social media) due to barriers and accessibility

Solution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Create a text alert system for outreach regarding voting, schools, traffic, community/city council meetings, parking/water bans &amp; create the ability to customize which alerts to receive</li><li>• Have more social/community events, especially with cultural/interest groups (food, etc.)</li><li>• Expand platforms for communication/use varied types<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Instagram, Twitter, Print, Mail, Cable Access</li><li>○ Bulletin boards to post information in different languages</li><li>○ Robocalls/text alerts to tell people about upcoming votes<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ May be a way to customize alerts (school, show, voting, events, paving/road work, water ban)</li></ul></li></ul></li><li>• Conduct community outreach about issues and when/where to talk about</li><li>• Create fun/interactive incentives for participation; within comfort zone, non-threatening and inclusive</li><li>• Address accessibility issues (e.g., Braille/foreign languages)</li><li>• Send a welcome postcard when new residents move to Easthampton</li><li>• Outreach by the mayor, city employees, police, city council members, school committee members to the different communities in Easthampton (e.g. religious, schools, students, etc.)</li><li>• Be persistent in engaging people</li></ul>

## 2. Income inequality & high cost of living / affordable housing

### Solution

- Have city wide master plan; have experts weigh in; communicate it to broader community
- Look to other cities/towns who have experienced similar growth and have navigated similar issues – success stories?
- Planning board hold informational sessions – share education about what is affordable housing and who uses it to defeat stereotypes, requirements, history
- Engagement with government agencies such as HUD (Housing and Urban Development) and VA (Veterans Affairs) to improve housing options
- Lower other costs (e.g., Charter/cable) – get contracts that improve our bottom line/reduce cost of living in Easthampton
- Rely on experts/economists before launching \$ projects (projects that cost money)
- Consider economic diversity in city planning/master plan and engage development professionals/experts in the planning process
- Publicize the master plan

## 3. Racism, Ethnocentrism/Anti-Immigration (feeling like don't "belong")

### Solution

- Dialogue about “what is racism” at the community level; make this part of the conversation and create opportunities to ask questions and dialogue
- Public acknowledgement when mistakes are made; “I’m sorry”
- Cultural events celebrating heritage, “tell your story,” and festival of nations
- Incorporate issues of diversity into classroom curricula – “breaking down barriers,” books, etc.
- Have the police/law enforcement outreach to the community – get to know people; police officers come to the high school
- Foster open/frank dialogue about race/racism in the schools; start early in curriculum
- Increase awareness of representation of different immigrant groups in Easthampton and what they have to offer
- Increase number of books in libraries in other languages; also books depicting diverse people and families
- Have bricks and/or benches in public spaces honoring different cultures
- Have immigrant/diverse cultural food day
- Heritage potluck or festival of nations (food, music, education)

### Step 6: Solution Development Small Group Report Outs

Following the solution development phase, the small-groups were re-convened into the large, general session group. Each small group gave a short presentation on their specific recommendations and implementation strategies to address the issues identified.

## Step 7: Easthampton Community Relations Commission

The process ended with positive exchanges between all participants. Easthampton, Massachusetts leadership introduced the proposed Easthampton Community Relations Commission which is scheduled for a public hearing and vote by the City Council on July 11, 2018. The Commission, if approved, will include 11 members and will have formal meetings and be tasked with the prioritization and implementation of several solutions developed by the community leaders during the City-SPIRIT.

## Step 8: Resources and Next Steps

If requested by community leaders, CRS will provide additional resources, including **Non-Profits, Advocacy Organizations, University referrals, Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS), and Office of Justice Programs (OJP).**

Additionally, at the request of community leadership and pending available resources, CRS will provide facilitation services to the Easthampton Community Relations Commission and city/county leadership during their first action planning sessions.

### CRS Contact

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