

THE CITY OF ASHEVILLE

ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2021-22

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Annual Report Overview	3
Asheville City Government	4
Vision Statement	6
Reparations	8
Reimagining Public Safety	11
Utilization of ARPA Funding	14
Employee Compensation	18
Fiscal Year 21-22 Statistics & Notable Accomplishments	21
Looking Forward: Strategic Alignment in Fiscal Year 22-23	24



ANNUAL REPORT OVERVIEW

The City of Asheville's fiscal year runs from July 1 to June 30 each year. Fiscal Year 2021-22 was a productive year where staff started to "normalize" operations as we became more equipped to respond to the ongoing challenges associated with the COVID-19 epidemic, staffing shortages, and increasing demands for City services. The Fiscal Year 2021-22 Annual Report highlights many of the achievements and successes from throughout the year, and the work that was done to fulfill the City Council's vision and priorities. This report reflects the City of Asheville's commitment to providing superior services to our constituents, residents, businesses, and visitors.

ASHEVILLE'S FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The City of Asheville operates under a council-manager form of government.

The City Council is made up of a mayor and six council members who are elected at-large for four-year, staggered terms. The mayor, who is chosen on a separate ballot, presides over City Council meetings and serves as the ceremonial head of government. The Asheville City Council establishes the city's policies.

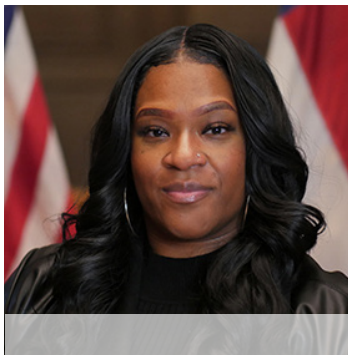
The City Council appoints a city manager who oversees day-to-day city operations and executes Council-established laws and policies. The city manager also ensures the entire community is being served.



ASHEVILLE CITY COUNCIL



Esther E. Manheimer
Mayor



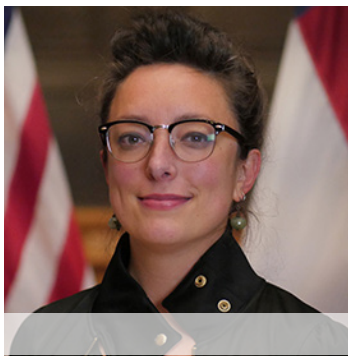
Sheneika Smith
Vice Mayor



Sandra Kilgore
Council Member



S. Antanette Mosley
Council Member



Kim Roney
Council Member



Sage Turner
Council Member



Gwen Wisler
Council Member

Debra Campbell
City Manager

Brad Branham
City Attorney

Maggie Burleson
City Clerk

ASHEVILLE'S VISION 2036 STATEMENT

In January 2016, the Asheville City Council created a 20-year vision for the City. This Council vision reflects Asheville's unique character and the aspirations for the community. The Council uses this vision along with 8 core focus areas as a guide when developing policies and priorities.

VISION

Asheville is a great place to live because **we care about people**, we **invest in our city**, and we celebrate our natural and cultural heritage. Our city is for everyone. Our urban environment and **locally-based economy support workers, entrepreneurs and business owners, families and tourists**, and people of all ages. Cultural diversity and social and economic **equity** are evident in all that we do. Our neighborhoods are strong, **participation** in civic life is widespread, and collaborative **partnerships** are the foundation of our success.

FOCUS AREAS

- Equitable and Diverse Community
- Well-planned and Livable Community
- Transportation and Accessibility
- Clean and Healthy Environment
- Thriving Local Economy
- Quality Affordable Housing
- Connected and Engaged Community
- Financially Resilient City

FISCAL YEAR 2021-22
COUNCIL PRIORITIES

At the City Council annual retreat held March 31 and April 1, 2021, City Council reaffirmed its commitment to its Vision by identifying four key priorities to focus on during Fiscal Year 2021-22. Those four priorities included:



REPARATIONS



REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY



UTILIZATION OF ARPA FUNDING



COMPENSATION

This report will highlight the work accomplished toward these four priorities and the City Council's vision.



REPARATIONS

At their July 14, 2020 meeting, the Asheville City Council became one of the first local governments in the United States to approve a resolution supporting community reparations for Black residents. The resolution calls for the City Manager to, "establish a process within the next year to develop short, medium and long term recommendations to specifically address the creation of generational wealth and to boost economic mobility and opportunity in the black community."

In an effort to repair the harm done by decades of discrimination, the City Manager and City staff have recommended a three-phased process that includes:



1. Information Sharing and Truth-Telling



2. Formation of a Reparations Commission



3. Finalize and Present the Report

Information Sharing and Truth-Telling Speaker Series

In June 2021, a series of local and national speakers came together to share information and conduct facilitated discussions with community members about past policies and practices, present trends and disparities, and future initiatives.

Information received during this series was used to inform the next steps of the Reparations process, including the development of the Reparations Commission and the scope of work.

Formation of the Commission

In September 2021, the Asheville City Council authorized the City Manager to hire a firm to serve as the Reparations Process Project Manager, following a formal solicitation and selection process. The project team was brought on to provide project management, facilitation, research infrastructure, resource affiliation, and community engagement support and act as liaisons for the Community Reparations Commission as it discusses and develops recommendations.

The Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Commission approved a 25 member commission; 15 representatives are from seven legacy neighborhoods including: Burton Street, East End/Valley Street, Heart of Chestnut, Shiloh, Southside, Stumptown, and public housing communities. The remaining members of the Community Reparations Commission represent the five impact focus areas were approved by the City Council with five seat appointments and five seat appointments by the Buncombe County Commissioners.

In March 2022, the Asheville City Council and Buncombe County Board of Commissioners announced appointments to the Reparations Commission.

Reparations Commission Members
as of March 2022

Dr. Dwight B Mullen - Chair
Dewana Little - Vice Chair
CiCi Weston
Dr. Tamarie Macon
Joyce Harrison
Dee Williams
Raynetta Waters
Christopher Gordon
Shantelle Simpson
Kelsey Simmons
DeWayne Barton
MZ Yehudah
Keith Young
Glenda McDowell
Bernard V. Oliphant
Renata Conyers
Norma S. Baynes
Bobbette K. Mays
Mildred Nance Carson
Roy Harris
Thomas Priester
Kimberly Jones
Shaunda Jackson
Angela Young
Aleesha Ballard

Alternates:
Shekiki Jiles-Baten
Dee Burrus
Tiffany DeBellot
Stephanie Lee
Osundu McPeters
Dwayne Richardson

Since the appointment of members, the commission has been meeting monthly where they have made several significant recommendations to secure funding and establish processes for future reparations initiatives.



City of Asheville Reparations Investments	
Fiscal Year 2021-22	$2.1 million
Fiscal Year 2022-23	$500,000

Staff will include at least $500,000 for reparations in future budgets, subject to financial feasibility and eventual final budget approval by City Council.

Buncombe County allocated $2 million for reparations in its Fiscal Year 2022-2023. The Board of Commissioners voted to add $500,000 to future reparations budgets with an annual increase of two percent.

What's Next - Reparations

The Reparations Commission is empowered to make recommendations that will make significant progress toward repairing the damage caused by systemic racism.

The task is to issue a report, slated for spring or summer of 2024, for consideration by the City and other participating community groups for incorporation into their respective short, medium and long-term priorities and plans.

Because of the ongoing work of the Reparations Commission and the importance of making amends for the historic wrong that has been done to Asheville's Black community, the Asheville City Council included Reparations as a continued priority for FY2022-23.

REIMAGINING PUBLIC SAFETY

Reimagining Public Safety means examining how the City of Asheville structures departmental responsibilities and community partnerships to holistically address public safety in our community.

This effort provides an opportunity for us, as a community, to explore the traditional roles and responsibilities assigned to different departments. One aim of Reimagining Public Safety is to explore the concept of changing how we think about policing, our police force and their responsibilities. Shifting duties that might be better carried out in other ways or with other partnerships, allows Police to focus on their main goal of protecting the community from crime.

The City of Asheville has taken measures to continue to support this priority. In September 2020, staff incorporated community input to inform proposals and programs that are reframing how Asheville provides public safety services to the community.

- **Noise complaints and Animal Control moved from Asheville Police Department (APD) to the Development Services Department.** In FY 2021 $110,000 in funding was moved from APD to the Development Services Department (DSD) to provide support for the Animal Control and Noise Ordinance Enforcement programs
  - Through Reimagining Public Safety, DSD is the main point of contact for noise related complaints.
    - In the past year, DSD closed 71% of the total noise complaints, while APD closed 29% of the total noise complaints.
    - In previous years, APD was responsible for responding to and closing 100% of the noise complaints.
    - APD will continue as the primary response to after hours (after 9:00 p.m.) noise complaints as available and when safety protocols are required.
  - Chronic complaints and violations have decreased due to objective decibel standards, clear prohibitions, and staff outreach efforts.
  - Fewer noise complaints have been received through the police non-emergency line.

Non-emergency Line Received Complaints	
Sept. 1, 2020 - Aug. 31, 2021	1,366
Sept. 1, 2021 - Aug. 31, 2022	1,045
% Decrease	24%

- **City Council approved an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) with Buncombe County to Consolidate 911 Services effective January 1, 2022.**
  * The 911 consolidation achieved the following key objectives:
    - Elimination of call transferring
    - More consistent and effective service delivery
    - Greater opportunities for interagency response and backup
    - Better data sharing between agencies and responders in the field
    - Greater opportunities for alternate response methods through consolidated training and procedures

- **The Office of Data and Performance (ODAP) was created in December 2020 with the mission to empower the community and City staff to use data for equitable outcomes, accountability, and communication.** Over the past year, ODAP has been involved in external and internal activities to advance its mission, council priorities and goals of reimagining public safety. ODAP highlights include:
  - **Homelessness System Performance Measures Dashboard** launched to capture data on who is experiencing homelessness in Buncombe County, what their characteristics and needs are, and how they interact with community services.
  - **ARPA Project Evaluations and Performance Management** - Worked closely with the ARPA grants manager to develop a fair process for evaluating project proposals and to establish a methodology for managing the performance of those projects going forward. Many of these projects address key goals for reimagining public safety.
  - **Court Text Reminder System** - Worked with Buncombe County as part of the Safety and Justice Challenge to facilitate integration of Code for Asheville's Buncombe County Court Reminders system into court and jail systems. The application is now promoted during court, and will soon be integrated into the jail booking and release processes.
  - **Reparations Baseline Data** - Compiled 50 datasets from City and external sources to share with the Reparations Commission as a baseline for the reparations work.

These are some of the examples of how the City of Asheville has worked to make Reimagining Public Safety a livable concept. The City, its staff, and the City Council are committed to the ongoing work to reimagine public safety in Asheville.

What's Next - Reimagining Public Safety

Reimagining Public Safety is a long-term commitment to redefine how and who responds to public safety issues while also identifying root causes behind concerns. Reimagining means redefining which agencies, ideally a coordinated team with unique areas of expertise, are best to respond to any given community issue.

The importance of this commitment to public safety is reflected in the adoption of Reimagining Public Safety, once again, as one of the City Council's six Strategic Priorities for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

On-going for FY 2022-23

- Support for APD related to intervention and community outreach. This will be accomplished by working with Buncombe County's Community Safety Initiative and other nonprofit groups in Asheville.
- Collaboration between APD, Human Resources and Finance to enhance APD's retention and recruitment strategies in an effort to make APD a more competitive organization to recruit new officers. Approximately $300,000 in vacancy savings will be used for the following:
  * 5% ongoing supplement for advanced certifications
  * New hiring bonus structure that is paid in 3 equal payments: at hire, at 6 months, and after 1 year:
    - Referral of new hires ($1,000)
    - New hires into academy ($3,500)
    - Certified officer new hires ($5,000)
  * Relocation assistance and additional leave may be available
- The Asheville Fire Department is collaborating with Buncombe County on a Community Response Team that will address overlapping community needs related to the unsheltered, behavioral health and substance abuse.

UTILIZATION OF ARPA FUNDING

In 2021, the Federal Government passed the American Rescue Plan Act allocating $65.1 billion to help communities recover from COVID-19. The City of Asheville received $26 million dollars in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding. This federal recovery funding was made available to governmental agencies to respond to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19, to contain the impacts of COVID-19 on our communities, residents, and businesses, and to lay a foundation for a strong and equitable recovery.

During Fiscal Year 2021-22, the City Council had the important task of deciding how to best leverage the use of these ARPA funds to assist with COVID-19 recovery in the community. ARPA funds are a one-time grant and the funding is separate from the standard ongoing City budget process. The Federal Government provided guidance about how this money can be used and when projects must be started and completed. The City of Asheville is committed to investing these funds in projects that meet the City Council's approved guiding principles and categories for ARPA funding:

Guiding Principles

- Use an equity lens
- Invest in resilience
- Align with Council strategic priorities
- Focus on measurable impact
- Leverage partnerships
- Consider the long term



Categories

- Affordable housing
- Homelessness services
- Small business recovery
- Workforce development
- Food systems
- City infrastructure
- Domestic violence prevention and assistance
- Community communication

On November 15, 2021, the City of Asheville received 70 applications for ARPA funding.

A team of staff reviewed all the proposals and evaluated them based on the following criteria:

40% **Equitable Community Impact**

40% **Project Plan and Evaluation**

20% **Organization Qualifications**

On May 10, 2022, the Asheville City Council adopted a resolution authorizing the City to execute the agreements for the fulfillment of the American Rescue Plan Act funding recommendations.



ARPA Funding Allocations

Agency	Program	Allocated Funding
City of Asheville	Emergency Non-Congregate Homeless Shelter	$3,446,212 *(spent)*
City of Asheville	Public Portable Toilet/Handwashing Service	$90,000 *(spent)*
Homeward Bound	Acquisition of the Days Inn	$2,000,000 *(spent)*
City of Asheville	Parking Revenue Loss	$1,600,000 *(spent)*
City of Asheville	Memorial Stadium	$2,500,000
City of Asheville	FY23 General Fund Budget	$2,008,000
City of Asheville	FY23 Transit Fund Budget	$300,000
City of Asheville	ARPA Administrative Cost	$750,000
Step Up on Second Street	Ramada Inn	$500,000
City of Asheville	Inclusive and Accessible Governmment	$514,120
YMI Cultural Center	Community Engagement for Equitable Response	$800,000
We Give a Share	Southside Kitchen	$90,000
Eliada Homes Inc.	Homeless Services Program	$473,050
City of Asheville	Litter and Cleanliness Program	$500,000
Eagle Market St. Development Corp.	HELP2Day	$143,128
Food Connection Inc.	Mobile Meals Expansion	$221,676
Sparc Foundation	Domestic Violence Intervention Program	$153,483
Thrive Asheville	Increasing Access to Affordable Housing	$135,000
City of Asheville	Downtown Restroom	$650,000
Helpmate	Emergency Shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors	$2,000,000
Mountain BizCapital	Mountain Community Capital Fund	$1,293,000
The Mediation Center	Continuum of Victims' Services	$900,000
Homeward Bound	Permanent Supportive Housing Expansion	$999,900
Habitat for Humanity	Equity & Resiliency Thru Affordable Home Ownership	$600,000
Green Built Alliance	Clean Energy Upgrades for Low-Income Housing	$250,000
ABCCM	Transformation Village Housing for Women and Children	$999,900
Pisgah Legal Services	Housing & Income Stability	$1,000,000
Grand Total		**$24,917,469**
Total ARPA Funding Received		**$26,293,853**
Remaining yet to be allocated		**$1,376,384**

What's Next - Utilization of ARPA Funding

As the majority of the $26 million in ARPA funding has been allocated, City staff has begun the implementation phase. This includes working in collaboration with funding recipients to finalize contracts and reporting structures with a continued focus on successful outcomes. City staff will partner with funding recipients to assist in navigating the federal rules, regulations and obligations that come along with ARPA funding.

Information about ARPA funding will be shared with the community during the implementation phase through an online dashboard, presentations to City Council and posts on the City Source Blog.

This influx of funds will benefit the community and aid in the recovery from the budgetary, economic, and financial impacts of the pandemic.

** ARPA funds will be used by Homeward Bound of Western North Carolina to convert the Days Inn Motel into 85 units of permanent supportive housing and on-site support services specifically for people experiencing chronic homelessness in Asheville and Buncombe County.*



EMPLOYEE COMPENSATION

In Fiscal Year 2019-20, the City contracted with the Archer Company to complete a Total Compensation Study. There were two phases to the study; the first was an analysis of the impact of raising minimum pay to $31,200 for a 40-hour work week. That phase was completed and implemented in Fiscal Year 2019-20. The second phase, which included an analysis of positions, classifications, salaries, and benefits throughout the City in comparison to the market, was completed in Fiscal Year 2020-21. The Fiscal Year 2021-22 annual operating budget fully funded the implementation of the Archer Compensation Study recommendations for employees on the public safety pay plans and increased compensation for all other employees. The cost of implementing these recommendations was approximately $7.9 Million Citywide with around 87% or $6.9 million of this increase going to employees earning less than $60,000 annually.

The increased compensation resulted in the following impacts to key classifications of employees:

FY 2021 - 2022

Department	Adjustment
Fire	Average of 16% increase
	Starting pay increase of 30%
Police	Average of 13% increase
	Starting pay increase of 19%
All Other Departments and/or civilians	Minimum of 2.5% increase

The Fiscal Year 2021-22 operating budget also included eight weeks of paid parental leave and six weeks to care for a qualified family member with a serious health condition. The City also added two additional paid holidays in Fiscal Year 2021-22, Juneteenth and Veteran's Day.




FedEx

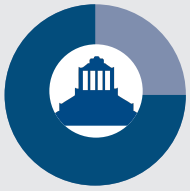



THE CITY OF
ASHEVILLE
PUBLIC WORKS
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES
HEROES
WORK HERE
Thank You
Essential
Workers

What's Next - Employee Compensation

The recruitment and retention of highly qualified staff will continue to be an area of focus for the City of Asheville. The Fiscal Year 2022-23 adopted budget further expanded employee compensation with the following increases:

- Ensures all full-time employees earn at least $35,360 annually, with an additional adjustment in January 2023 to $36,816 annually.
- Provides staff with a 5% increase if hired on or before December 31, 2021, or a 2.5% increase if hired after that date.



Throughout the fiscal year, staff will continue to review classification and compensation to address compression issues and ensure the City maintains a competitive total compensation package. Additionally, the Human Resources team is leading efforts to improve professional development and employee training opportunities.

On-going for Fiscal Year 2022-23

- $75,000 investment in Asheville Fire Department for Advanced Emergency Medical Technicians (AEMT) pay supplement for staff who have this certification

Fiscal Year 21-22 Statistics and Notable Accomplishments

Below are a few statistics highlighting City of Asheville's core services in Fiscal Year 2021-2022:

Fire	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Number of calls answered	18,915	19,214	19,788

Police	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Calls for service*	77,524	70,511	60,387
FY 22 is down 17% from previous year likely due to changes in reporting standards where citizens are asked to report certain incidents through the P2C platform. *Excludes officer initiated and canceled calls			

Transit	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Total ridership	1,516,580	1,531,665	1,446,637
FY 22 down 6% from previous year due to service cuts in the spring and summer of 2022 because of a labor shortage			

Water	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Gallons of water treated	7,442 million	7,898 million	8,135 million
FY 22 up 3% from previous year			

Parks & Recreation	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Unique program participants	2,828	693	1,982
FY 22 up 65% from previous year due to COVID restrictions in FY 2021			

Development Services	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Construction permits issued	10,890	12,619	12,717
FY 22 up 14% from FY 2020			

Public Works	FY 2020	FY 2021	FY 2022
Trash collected (tons)	23,245	24,198	23,506
Recycling collected (tons)	9,257	9,502	8,313
Recycling waste diversion rate*	28.48%	28.2%	26.13%
FY 22 trash collection and recycling down 3% and 14% respectively from previous year due to more people working from home in FY 2021. *percentage of waste diverted from the landfill due to recycling			

Other Notable Accomplishments

- Over 1.5 million people participate in programs or attend events at city facilities, including the Harrah's Cherokee Center - Asheville, ExploreAsheville.com Arena, Thomas Wolfe Auditorium, WNC Nature Center, McCormick Field, Aston Park Tennis Center, John B Lewis Soccer Complex, Asheville Municipal Golf Course and events permitted by the City's Office of Outdoor Special Events.

- Urban Centers rezoning initiative managed by the Asheville Department of Planning & Urban Design will encourage mixed use development and housing along high frequency transit routes.

- The Mountain Community Capital Fund, a loan guarantee fund for small businesses has provided $1.5 million in loans since the fund originated in 2019.

- 26,384 linear feet of end of life water pipes were replaced.

- Significant progress was made on several bond projects including expansion of the Dr. Wesley Grant, Sr. Southside Community Center, design for New Haw Creek Road sidewalks and other transportation projects, and affordable housing at 319 Biltmore Ave.

- The City of Asheville generated 214.32 Megawatt hours (MWh) of renewable energy, reducing 152 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO2e).

- The added capacity within the Communication and Public Engagement Department assisted in the following investments to strengthen community resilience by supporting leadership and capacity building in historically disenfranchised communities.
  - $40,100 invested in communities through Neighborhood Matching Grants.
  - $60,950 additional funds allocated to approved projects.
  - Grant recipients reported success in bringing their neighbors together through this program.

- A Neighborhood Matching Grants Program was launched by the Communication and Public Engagement Department.
  - Build neighborhood capacity and increase civic participation, Empower neighborhoods to self-determine improvement projects, Create and strengthen partnerships between the city government and community groups
  - 13 Neighborhoods Awarded Grants
  - $60,950 awarded and of that $32,234 was dispersed through the end of the 2021-2022 fiscal year. Several projects are still underway and their funds will continue to be dispersed in the next fiscal year.

- Using the Affordable Housing Bonds, the Housing Trust Fund, American Rescue Plan funds and the Land Use Incentive Grant program the city funded 257 affordable units in FY 2022.

Looking Forward: Strategic Alignment in Fiscal Year 2022-23

In FY 2022-2023, the Asheville City Council identified six strategic priorities to inform where city staff should focus efforts for the upcoming fiscal year:

- Reparations
- Reimagining Public Safety
- Improve and Expand Core Services
- Equitable and Affordable Housing & Stability
- Houselessness Strategies
- Neighborhood Resilience

The addition of Improve and Expand Core Services highlights the vital operational work provided by City staff that contributes to quality of life in the community through the planning and provision of key infrastructure, public safety, and recreational amenities.

Using the six strategic priorities as a guide, staff is developing enhanced reporting tools and performance measures to more effectively report progress on the implementation of City Council's priority direction.



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