

**MINUTES OF BOC WORK SESSION
COBB COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MAY 23, 2023
1:30 PM**

The Work Session of the Cobb County Board of Commissioners was held on Tuesday, May 23, 2023 at 1:30 p.m. in the second-floor public meeting room at 100 Cherokee Street, Cobb County Building, Marietta, Georgia. Present and comprising a quorum of the Board were:

Chairwoman Lisa Cupid
Commissioner JoAnn Birrell – Not present
Commissioner Keli Gambrell
Commissioner Jerica Richardson - arrived at 2:02 p.m.
Commissioner Monique Sheffield

CALL TO ORDER

Chairwoman Cupid called the meeting to order at 1:32 p.m.

PRESENTATIONS

1. **To receive an update from the Executive Director and CEO of the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).**

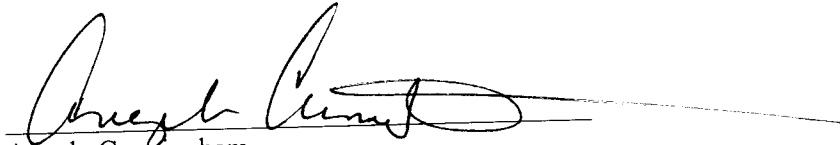
Anna Roach, Executive Director and Chief Executive Officer, Atlanta Regional Commission, presented information regarding their 25-year vision to create a great region. A copy of the information presented is attached and made a part of these minutes.

2. **To receive an update from United Way of Greater Atlanta and Chrysalis Lab on diversity, equity and inclusion in Cobb County.**

Bill Cheeks and Melanie Brown with United Way of Greater Atlanta, and Leslie Grady and Kim Anderson with Chrysalis Labs, presented information regarding their diversity, equity and inclusion study conducted in Cobb County. A copy of the information presented is attached and made a part of these minutes.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 2:46 p.m.


Angela Cunningham
Deputy County Clerk
Cobb County Board of Commissioners



1



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ARC's Impact: Cobb

- In Cobb County, 2022:
 - **\$191M** in transportation funds
 - **\$2.2M** for older adult services
 - **14** Livable Centers Initiative communities



3

Metropolitan Plan Transportation Plan

- \$173 billion through 2050
- Developed collaboratively
- Major updates at least every four years
- Projects using federal dollars must be in plan



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Planning for Change

- Strong growth
- Technology is driving change
- The 'New Normal'
- Climate change requires greater resiliency
- Shifting federal priorities

ONE great REGION ARC

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MTP Participation Plan

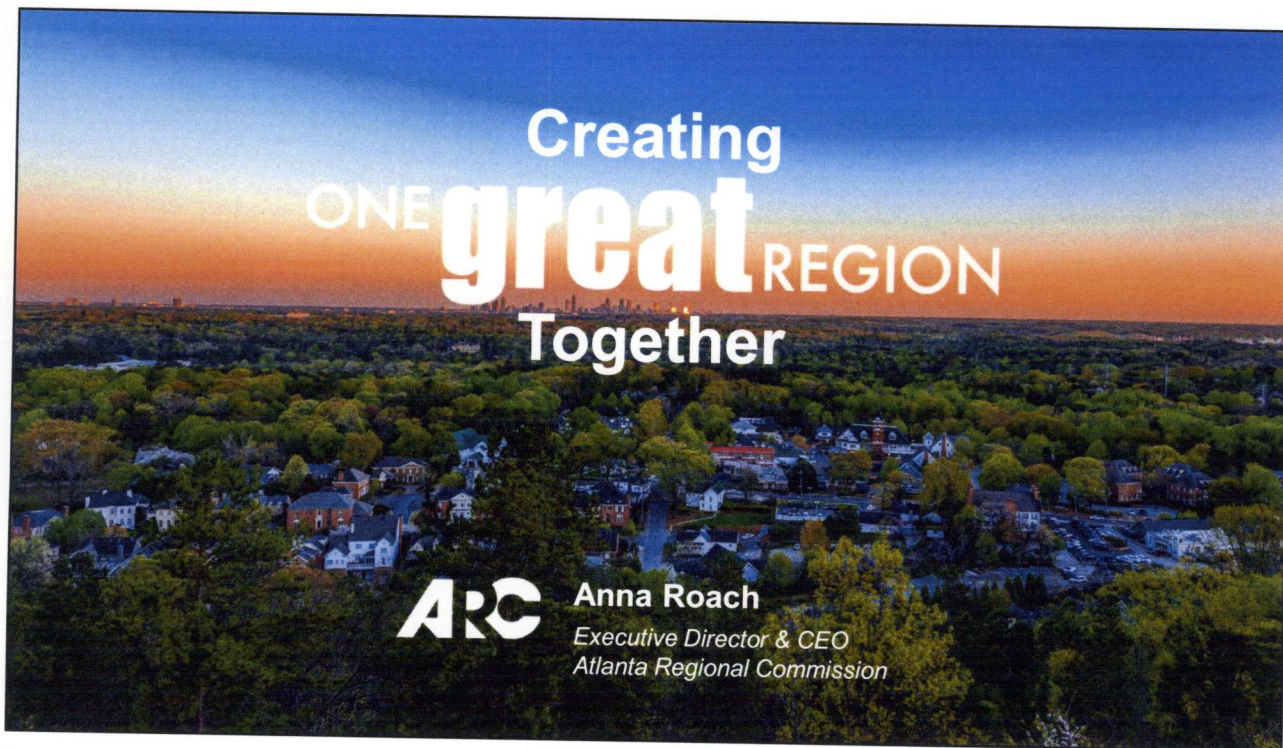
- Partnership with local governments
- Community outreach
- Public comment period
- Online survey

Take Our Survey!
We Need Your Input

great A:C REGION



- ## Strategic Alignment
- Promoting healthy, livable communities
 - Making strategic investments
 - Fostering a competitive economy
 - Informed by diverse stakeholder participation



#Listening #Learning #Leveraging #Leading

Recommendations to Drive Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in Cobb County

May 23, 2023

 CHRYSLIS LAB

1

Overview & Introductions

 CHRYSLIS LAB

2

United Way of Greater Atlanta's History and Mission

The mission of United Way is to engage and bring together people and resources to drive sustainable and equitable improvements in the well-being of children, families, and individuals in the community



UNITED WAY 2020 FUNDRAISING

United Way of
Greater Atlanta



Child Well-Being Movement

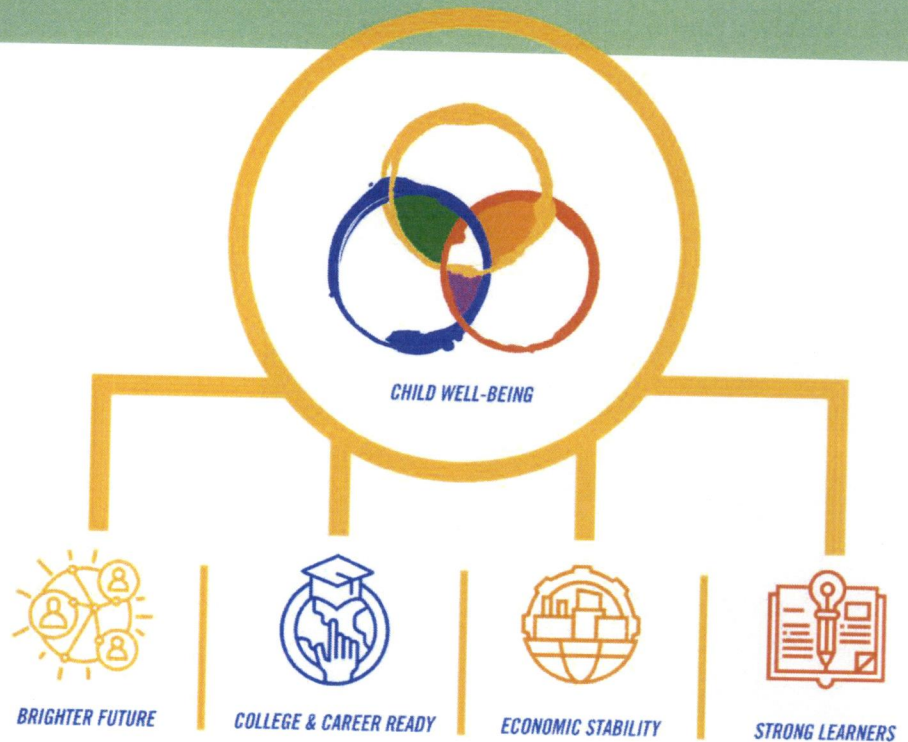
In 2017, United Way, along with dozens of partners, developed a **set of 14 measures** that helps the region assess how children, the families that support them and the communities that surround them, are doing. This data is **bringing people together from across the community** to advance a shared goal and drive transformative results for children and families.

The **Child Well-Being Map** demonstrates how the different areas score across the region in the areas of child, family and community well-being scores.



Child Well-Being

Goal: ensure Greater Atlanta's children and their families grow up in thriving communities



ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Our ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization." -Mahatma Gandhi

In early 2022, the United Way of Greater Atlanta (United Way) sought to identify opportunities to advance ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion in Cobb County. Grounded in historic and current understanding of Cobb's social, political, and economic context, United Way engaged a broad swath of County residents and key stakeholders to solicit their experiences, perceptions, and aspirations for greater shared prosperity for the County.

CHRYSLIS LAB

United Way partnered with Atlanta-based social impact consulting firm Chrysalis Lab to conduct a discovery process that would gather critical data and insights, reveal opportunities and challenges to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in Cobb County, and chart potential paths forward through well-informed recommendations. Cobb County Commission Chairwoman Lisa Cupid was a key stakeholder in the planning and implementation of the discovery process.

This project was supported by United Way's Racial Equity and Healing Fund. Work was completed from March through November 2022.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

United Way of
Greater Atlanta



The United Way of Greater Atlanta engages and brings together people and resources to drive sustainable and equitable improvements in the well-being of children, families, and individuals in the community. It invests in over 200 programs in 13 metro Atlanta counties.

Chrysalis Lab

Chrysalis Lab is an Atlanta-based social impact consulting firm that helps courageous leaders co-create solutions that drive social change.

CHRYSLIS LAB

Definitions

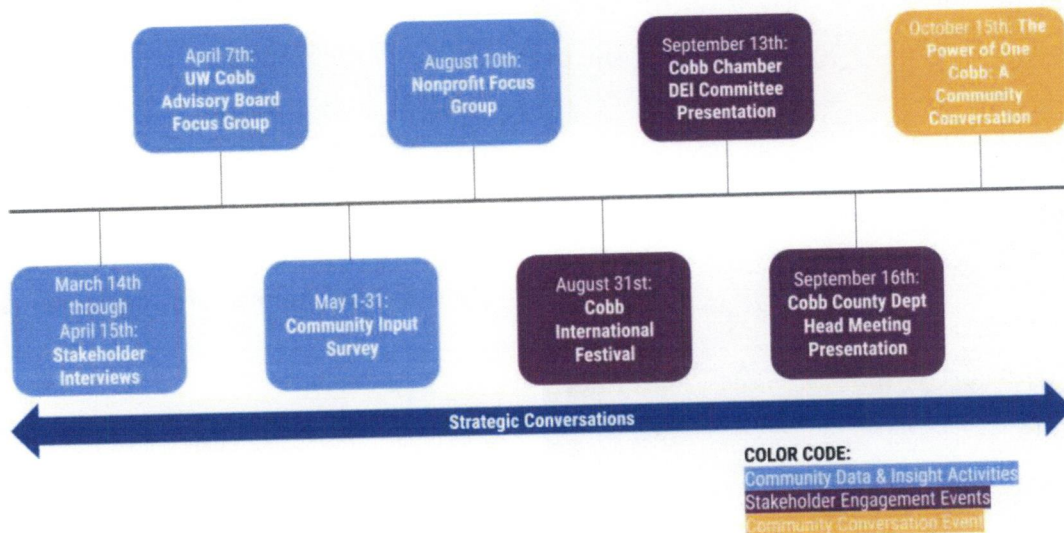
For consistency and shared understanding, we used the following definitions for this work:

- **Diversity** - the representation of a range of groups in a given setting, including but not limited to age, disability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status (Source: PolicyLink).
- **Equity** - the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential (Source: PolicyLink).
- **Inclusion** - the act of creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate (Source: Independent Sector).
- **Stakeholder** - a person with an interest or concern in something

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OUR PROCESS

TIMELINE OF ACTIVITIES



CHRYSLIS LAB

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COMMUNITY DATA & INSIGHTS: BY THE NUMBERS

Residents, nonprofit leaders, academics, public officials, business representatives, and faith leaders provided input in a variety of ways, including an online survey, one-on-one interviews, strategic conversations, focus groups, presentations, and community events.



447

Online
Community
Survey
Responses



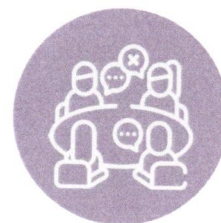
22

One-on-One
Stakeholder
Interviews



8

Strategic
Conversations



2

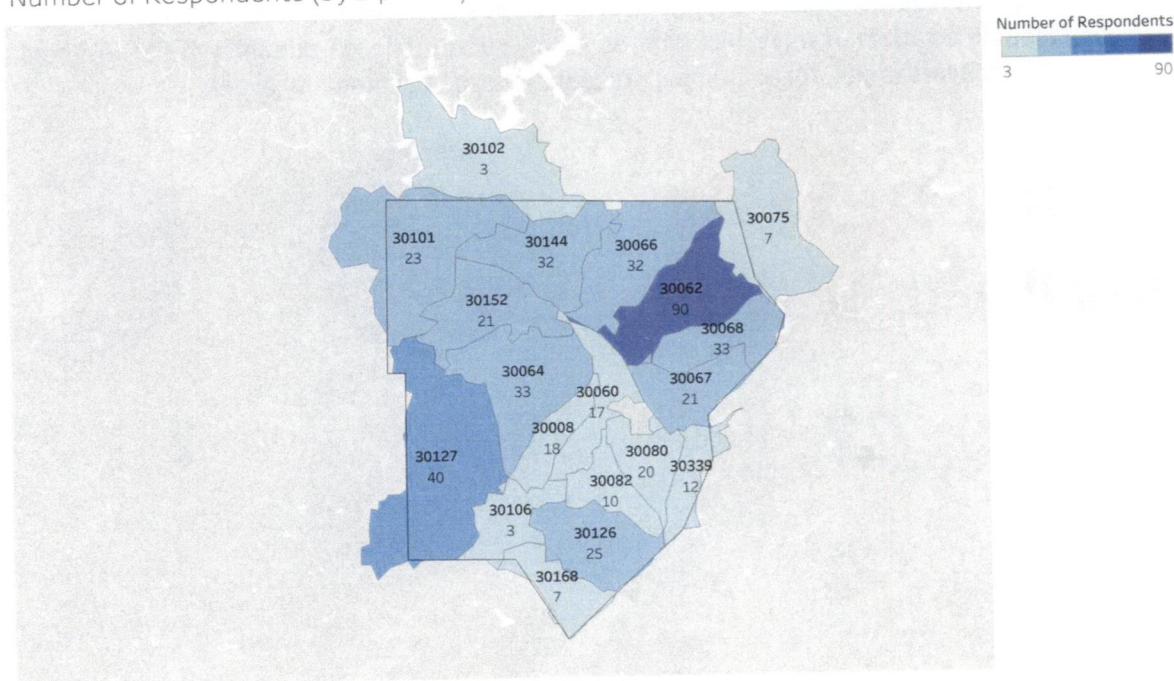
Focus Group
Discussions

COMMUNITY SURVEY: WHO RESPONDED

- ★ **How was the survey conducted?** The survey was sent out to United Way partners as well as advertised in the Cobb Courier online. It was open for one month between May 1 and May 31, 2022. Participants had the option to enter a random drawing for a \$100 gift card as an incentive.
- ★ 94.2% respondents identified as *residents* of Cobb County, with 4.7% working in Cobb County, and less than one percent either planning to move to Cobb or having lived in Cobb prior.
- ★ **How representative is the respondent pool of Cobb County?**
 - Representative by age
 - Representative by ethnicity/race (except Latino/Hispanic who were *underrepresented* by 36 responses)
 - Responses captured in English and Spanish
 - All 19 zip codes represented in results, with overrepresentation in 30062 (+13%), 30068 (+4%), 30075 (+4%), and underrepresentation in 30102 (-4%) and 30106 (-1%)
 - Women were overrepresented (+13.8%) and men were underrepresented (-27.9%)

Respondent Characteristics: ZIP CODES

Number of Respondents (by Zip Code)

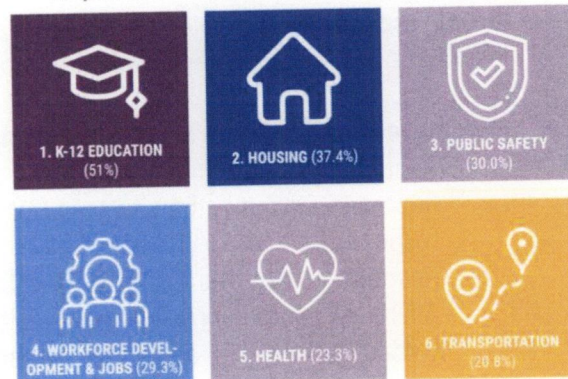


COMMUNITY DATA & INSIGHTS: SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

- ★ **Do we see that inequities exist in Cobb?** While 77% of respondents find Cobb to be generally welcoming, only 58% believe community members have equal access and opportunity.
- ★ The majority of respondents (76.8%) feel there should be equity efforts undertaken in Cobb County. Specifically, the top three areas identified for focus are: **K-12 Education, Housing, and Public Safety**.
- ★ When asked who is trusted to advance equity the top four answers were **community groups, nonprofits, faith-based groups/organizations, and county government**.
- ★ 65% of respondents feel efforts to ensure greater equity and inclusion should be a **high priority for Cobb County Government**.

THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES...

when it comes to ensuring Cobb County is a community where all residents have equal access and opportunity. Respondents were asked to select their Top 3 Issues.



COMMUNITY DATA & INSIGHTS

Key Stakeholder Interview Feedback:

- **Language and communication** is critically important
- Cobb County **elected leadership is not aligned on an equity agenda.**
- Many interviewees perceived there to be a significant **disconnect between residents** who recognize the existence of inequities in Cobb County and those who don't.

Focus Group Feedback:

- There is a **lack of a clear strategy** behind the county's equity and inclusion efforts; particularly in policy work
- There are **no clear, concise definitions** of diversity, equity, and inclusion and what the work might entail
- **Differing perspectives and understanding** among county leaders and the community
- **Nonprofits should lead** because they are mission-driven, address issues in the community, and are focused on issues of equity and inclusion

COMMUNITY DATA & INSIGHTS: WHAT WE HEARD

"Messaging is key. Just like affirmative action becoming a racialized policy position, DEI has too. How you say it and show [that] the benefits of this work matter. Getting folks who do not think they are stakeholders, but are necessary to the work, is the key." -Stakeholder Interview Participant

"I have lived and worked in Cobb County and there has always been a sense of unfairness based on areas that you reside in...I used to drive my kids to another district just to get a better education." -Community Input Survey Respondent

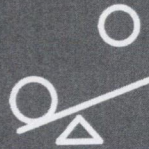
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION



#LISTENING



#LEARNING



#LEVERAGING



#LEADING

CHRYSLIS LAB 15

COBB COUNTY EQUITY & INCLUSION - RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION



LISTENING



LEARNING



LEVERAGING



LEADING

DESCRIPTION

Opportunities for Cobb residents and stakeholders to exchange perspectives, share aspirations, and generate new ideas, resulting in greater understanding and willingness to ensure opportunities for all.

Forums for shared understanding and exploration of the principles of equity and inclusion to set the stage for listening, learning, and introspection on pathways to eliminate inequity.

Engaging all of Cobb's assets to catalyze systems change, influence public policy, and lead to sustainable improvements for residents to access opportunity.

Demonstrating courageous and transparent leadership that centers community voice and shares power and engagement.

OBJECTIVE

To increase appreciation and affirmation of Cobb's diverse and absent voices

To gain greater understanding and appreciation, and develop a shared definition of diversity, equity, and inclusion concepts

To increase the impact of existing Cobb County equity work

To motivate Cobb leaders to leverage their social capital and be bold equity advocates

POTENTIAL MEASURES OF SUCCESS

Diversity of organizations and individuals who participate (geography, audience, sector, etc.)

Participant engagement and self-assessment of learning outcomes

Equity-centered partnerships and investments

Development of countywide equity plan; implementation of countywide equity audit; full participation of county elected officials

CHRYSLIS LAB

COBB COUNTY EQUITY & INCLUSION RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

LISTENING

- | | |
|----|---|
| #1 | Create opportunities for shared dialogue. |
| #2 | Develop strategic relationships with "trusted voices" within Cobb's Latino and other diverse communities. |
| #3 | Commit to focused dialogue about Cobb's inequities with Cobb elected officials and faith communities. |

LEVERAGING

- | | |
|----|--|
| #1 | Explore interest in creating a "Collective Impact" initiative or similar model to coordinate DEI efforts and leverage resources. |
| #2 | Leverage the 2021 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to drive attention and direct resources to address inequity. |
| #3 | Tap into the will and interest of Cobb residents to achieve greater equity together. |

LEARNING

- | | |
|----|---|
| #1 | Provide consistent opportunities for training on principles of equity and inclusion. |
| #2 | Compile a "brain trust" of Cobb's DEI efforts that can be used for engagement and action. |

LEADING

- | | |
|----|---|
| #1 | Join voices with other Cobb leaders to ensure issues of equity and inclusion are centered in discussion. |
| #2 | Support the county's hiring of a Director of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and promote the inclusion of equity principles and practices across all departments and operations. |
| #3 | Build coalitions between Cobb County and Cobb cities to drive greater equity. |

What's Next?



DISCUSSION

1. What questions do you have?
2. What stands out?
3. What's next for the Cobb County Commission?
4. How do you want to be involved?