

Date:

To: Monrovia City Council

From: Monrovia Ad-Hoc Committee on Equity and Inclusion, Chair Yuille, Vice Chair Elizalde, Secretary Ling, Olivas, and Rev. Tadken

Re: FINAL REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

*“The definition of **insanity** is doing the same thing over and over again, but expecting different results.” - Albert Einstein*

INTRODUCTION

Monrovia’s Ad-Hoc Committee on Equity and Inclusion was established by City Council in July of 2020 (Resolution No. 2020-62) to “review the City of Monrovia’s policies, practices, and procedures to determine whether barriers exist that impede diversity, equity and inclusion in City Government.” Collaborating with the City Manager and the staff, this Committee of volunteer residents held bi-monthly meetings to review the departments of the City. The Committee members have a shared commitment to help the City do better and be more inclusive. This is the continuing work of all Monrovians.

In May of 2020, George Floyd was killed by a member of the Minneapolis Police Department. Floyd was one of a string of racist incidents around the nation. Coupled with the disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on people of color, there was a swelling of demand for change and empathy surrounding these issues and for the Black Lives Matter movement. In June of 2020, a series of peaceful multiethnic rallies were held at Monrovia’s Library Park. For many, the events of this past year were reminiscent of the 1992 L.A. Riots, the 1960s riots around Monrovia High, and the 1965 Watts Riot.

BLACK HISTORY MATTERS

Anti-Blackness and racism are systemic¹ in the United States and around the world – as such, Monrovia is not immune to its consequences. It is a legacy inherited from generations of governments, cultural institutions, educational systems, and tradition. A culture of racism encourages class discrimination, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, and anti-otherness. A culture of racism inhibits inclusion and harmony. Only by acknowledging our diversity can we begin to heal from our history of segregation and discrimination.

This part of Los Angeles County was inhabited by people of the Tongva nation since 500 BCE. In the Spanish and Mexican eras of California history, Rancho Santa Anita and Rancho Azusa de Duarte were established. It was in 1884 that William Monroe and his partners accrued some of this land and established subdivisions and lot sales that attracted migrants. In 1887, Monrovia was incorporated with a multiethnic population near 900. According to 2019 Census estimates, the population is just over 36,000 and 41% Hispanic, 35% White, 15% Asian, 5% African American, 1.2% Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.4% American Indian and 5.8% Two or More Races. Monrovia’s official poverty rate is at 7.8% (California is 11.8%) and 26.2% are foreign born (California is 26.8%).²

¹ Systemic is defined as “relating to a system.”

² Information from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/monroviacitycalifornia,CA/PST045219>

It would be useful for the City to also ascertain community proportion of other variables especially single parent households, LGBTQ population, mentally disabled population, physically disabled population, and language needs populations. The Committee made a request to the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) during a demographic presentation on 27 August 2020 to include these questions in its 2021 demographic survey.

Monrovia is unique in that there are African American residents that trace back seven generations. Along with Duarte and Pasadena, Monrovia was a safe haven – a non-“sundown town” – on the Santa Fe, Atchison, and Topeka Line. Monrovia was the destination of ambitious John Isaac Wesley Fisher and the Bennettsville team; national activists like Lt. Col. Allen Allensworth and Anna H. Jones; as well as hundreds who came - especially from Mississippi - in the Great Migration out of the South. Monrovia was a beacon of opportunity from Reconstruction into the 1970s. Monrovia boasts some of the oldest African American churches in the County.³

Monrovia also has Latinx families that are descendants of the founding of Los Angeles in 1781. Chinese Americans were recruited here by William Monroe in 1884 to clear brush and boulders. Japanese American families came to Monrovia in the early 1900s – and stayed. Jews, Filipinos, Indonesians, Armenians, Middle Easterners, and others are also part of the fabric of our community. Since its incorporation, Monrovia has been home to people of many faiths.

It was between the 1920s and the 1970s that Monrovia established formal systemic racism through segregated city facilities (pool, churches), segregated retail businesses (restaurants, department stores, movie theaters), segregated education (Huntington Elementary), segregated housing (south of Olive), and segregated economic opportunities. In fact, Member Olivas great grandparents, Louis and Lucinda Garcia, refused to sit in the back of Immaculate Conception that Mexican Americans helped to build in Monrovia in 1905-06.

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Between August of 2020 and March of 2021, the Ad-Hoc Committee reviewed the City’s seven departments, and these are our findings and recommendations.

I. Human Resources

Lauren Vasquez reported that in November of 2020, the City had a total of 211 full-time (FT) employees (including 41 police officers and 42 in the Fire Department), and 59 part-time individuals. These numbers are lower because of the pandemic; usually the City hovers near 240 full-time and 100 part-time. In 2018-19, the City recruited for 41 job openings, 20 in 2019-20, and 13 so far in 2020-21 (during the pandemic). Monrovia’s HR must adhere to federal, state, and municipal codes, plus M.O.U.’s with 3 union bodies (General Employees, Police and Fire), and 2 unrepresented groups (Management and Mid-Management.)

³ For more historical information, see Susie Ling’s “History of African Americans in Monrovia” (2015) “*Recuerdos de Monrovia: History of Mexican Americans*” (2015), and “Monrovia’s Asian American History” (2020) at susieling.wordpress.com. Also see Richard Singer’s *1887: The History of Early Monrovia* (2020), *Renaissance Years: A History of Modern Monrovia* (2017), and Mary Ellen Romney MacArthur’s dissertation “De Facto Segregation in Monrovia, California: Almera A. Romney and Huntington Elementary School” (1993).

It is observed that City staff are professional and have a positive team spirit. There is a Monrovia Employee Engagement Group that coordinates several social opportunities including “service days,” annual awards, games, and picnics. Flexible schedules, tuition reimbursement, training opportunities, and other employee benefits are available.

	California (Census 2019)	Monrovia City (Census 2019) n=36,331	Employees in 11/2020, n = 270
African American	6.5 %	5.4 %	4% = 10 individuals
Asian American plus Native Hawaiian	16.0	16.0	11% = 29 individuals
Hispanic/Latinx	39.4	41.1	38% = 104 individuals
Native or Indigenous	1.6	0.4	1% = 2 individuals
White	36.5	34.5	45% = 123 individuals
Two or more/Other/NA	4.0	5.8	1% = 2 individuals

Recommendations:

1. City/HR should state goal to increase ethnic and racial diversity in the staffing of all departments, and to encourage all personnel to be more sensitive to cultural bias in their dealings with clients and customers.
2. The Committee applauds the City’s disaggregating of candidate pools for race/ethnicity, age, and gender at each stage of the hiring process to ascertain “bottleneck” problems and potential changes to alleviate such “bottlenecks.” We want applicants to be successful.
3. Modify job descriptions:
 - a) Include statements about City’s history of racial diversity and commitment to respecting diversity in job announcement’s introductory profile of City.
 - b) Consider statement such as “demonstrated experience in diversity, equity, and inclusion” as a “desirable quality” on job announcements.
 - c) Establish other “bonus qualifications” i.e. multilingualism, community involvement.
4. Use 3rd parties (eg HR managers from other institutions) to review job screening procedures with emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion.
5. Diversify marketing and outreach procedures, with greater consideration for ethnic press, ethnic organizations, and social media outlets - especially for Police hires.
6. First and second-level hiring panel members should reflect diversity, and be trained against unconscious bias. Hiring panel members may sign pledge to respect diversity.
7. Second-level interviews should be formal (and less informal) and use consistent procedure to level playing field.

8. Consider non-employees on certain hiring committees to encourage new perspectives. For example, a member of City's Preservation Committee might sit on hiring for Public Works Department, or Library Board member may sit on hiring of librarian.

9. New employee onboarding/training might include more discussion of Monrovia's history and commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion. Questions about effectiveness in working with diverse clientele may be a formal item in staff evaluations.

10. City should line-item budget for continuing quality anti-bias training for all City personnel. Managers currently have one-to-one internal training. Training should include speakers from "outside the building" to provide fresh perspectives. Anti-bias training may also be extended to include part-time workers and City volunteers. Some of this educational process might include appreciation of Monrovia's wilderness, Monrovia's historical legacy, and even a tour of Monrovia's architecture.

11. HR must guard against bias in their evaluation process of employees.

12. HR should continue to work to enhance an equitable working environment for all employees. Anonymous work satisfaction surveys might be useful in every department.

13. The City should do quantitative and qualitative surveys of residents' satisfaction and needs. Such questions may include "Are you satisfied with the services of Monrovia Police Department? library?", and open-ended questions such as "In what ways can the City be more effective in serving its multiethnic population?" Such surveys may be included with the water bill. Such surveys should be done by every department in the City.

II. Monrovia Police Department

Established in 1903, Monrovia's Police Department – like other police departments – has a history of discrimination and bias. While this reputation does not accurately describe today's officers, the Police Department must understand community sentiments cannot be easily erased.

In 1942, Julian Fisher was the first African American officer in Monrovia. Fisher was the officer designated to keep African Americans and Latinx in the segregated niche of Monrovia orderly. Louie Romero, past president of the Monrovia Latino Heritage Society, remembered the 1950s, "We called him *El Pescador*, and Fisher would sometimes warn us that his shift was ending. There was one other officer that would just harass us."⁴ In 1956, 13-year-old Steven Kiyoshi Kuromiya was arrested for having sexual encounters with another boy.⁵ In Nov of 1971, 13-year-old African American Mark Allen was arrested for alleged shoplifting. By 6:25 pm, he was found dead in jail #M4 from an alleged suicide. Community rallies ensued, and the NAACP and the community demanded the hiring of more African American officers.⁶ Near 2008, MPD was in several lawsuits by former officers that alleged harassment.⁷ Such history is not forgotten.

⁴ Interview with Louie Romero by Susie Ling, 20 May 2013.

⁵ "Consideration of Posthumous Pardon for Steven Kiyoshi Kuromiya", 26 Oct 2020 letter signed by Dylan Feik, City Manager at <https://www.cityofmonrovia.org/Home/ShowDocument?id=23730>.

⁶ Richard Singer. *Renaissance Years: A History of Monrovia* (2017), pp. 1-6.

⁷ "Monrovia Faces New Lawsuit by Police Officer," 13 March 2009, *San Gabriel Valley Tribune*.

According to Chief Sanvictores, in November of 2020, Monrovia PD had 41 FT peace officers (and recruiting to fill 9 slots). MPD should have 1 chief, 2 captains, 4 lieutenants, 7 sergeants, 6 detectives, 6 agents, and 24 patrol officers, or a total of 50. There are also non-sworn and part-time personnel in the 79-member department. MPD reports having a very difficult time recruiting officers to a small department. These are the number of fulltime sworn officers.

Male: 38 (90% of FT)

Female: 4 (10%)

White Male: 16 (38% of FT)

White Female: 3 (7%)

Hispanic Male: 16 (38%)

Hispanic Female: 1 (2%)

Asian Male: 5 (12%) including Chief Sanvictores

Asian Female: 0

Indigenous Male: 1 (2%)

Indigenous Female: 0

African American Male: 0

African American Female: 0

MPD works with POST (Peace Officer's Standards and Training) to provide extensive training on a myriad of issues from racial and cultural diversity to domestic violence to terrorist prevention. MPD should be commended for effective programs including CARY (Chaplains for At-Risk Youth), MAGIC (Monrovia Anti-Gang Intervention Committee), Homeless Outreach Program, and collaboration with MUSD. MPD extended ride-along opportunities to members of this Committee.

This Committee applauds MPD's community efforts including Spark of Love toy collection, National Night Out, Santa parade, and Breast Cancer Awareness.

Recommendations:

1. MPD should offer their award-winning "de-escalation simulation training" to some members of the public and MAP Adult/Youth Leadership Academy.
2. MPD should have a policy of not tolerating racism especially in light of the history of racial bias in the Department.
3. As MPD trains their officers daily, it may be beneficial to include outside subject experts, and community speakers to stimulate cultural awareness. MPD may also survey officers to their preference of training, resources, and professional services (i.e. rape counseling, working with homeless, working with immigrants).
4. MPD may investigate the need for special interest response teams eg homeless response team, mental health, etc.
5. As working with mental health clinicians has been deemed effective, Monrovia should seek to enhance this program. Monrovia should continue to train all officers on sensitivity to mental health issues.
6. MPD should establish anonymous surveys of officers about feeling marginalized or harassed.

MPD should aim for unbiased evaluation of its officers.

7. MPD should include “cultural and racial sensitivity” as a formal criteria in their evaluation of officers and in their hiring criteria.

8. MPD needs to “think outside the box” in recruiting officers of color. It may be useful to seek the support of other Monrovia organizations from Monrovia-Duarte Black Alumni Association to the Chamber of Commerce in recruitment efforts. The Committee applauds efforts to track diversity at each stage of this long recruitment; this might help the ability to assess special needs at each stage.

9. MPD should explore the benefits of establishing a citizens/community advisory resource to provide support and collaboration.

10. The Fire and Police Departments should study their response data (timeliness and types) to various geographic neighborhoods in Monrovia. This is an important equity strategy.

11. MPD needs to have officers that mirror the racial make-up of the community it serves. This Committee applauds the Dec 2020 hire of 3 officers representing different racial backgrounds.

III. Administrative Services

This unit provides accounting and management support to other units in City Hall. About 50% of their “customers” are internal, 10% are with business vendors (i.e. street fair, Monrovia Renewal construction, Athens), and 40% are utility customers/residents. Administrative Services does not keep separate statistics of the ethnicity of the utility customers. Some customers have special language needs, and others need financial flexibility. Staff speak Spanish, Chinese, and Tagalog. Staff tries to keep an eye on the most vulnerable of customers.

In December of 2020, there are 13 staff members, 2 part-timers, and 2 vacancies. 40% of this department are of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, 33% Hispanic, and 27% White (no African Americans, no Indigenous) and 80% female. Team work and customer service are highly stressed in this unit. Staff have biweekly meetings and mandatory harassment training every two years plus opportunities with Cal JPIA, GFOA, and CSMFO for technical and customer service training. These include selections for unconscious bias, workplace harassment, sensitivity training, and the like.

Recommendations

1. The Department should explore ways to address the linguistic needs of residents and customers, including on the City website. While there are translation services available on the Internet, using Chinese and Spanish words are a means of inclusion.

2. The Department should strive to ethnically diversify its staff.

IV. Community Development

This work unit under Craig JImenz includes (1) Building and Safety, (2) Neighborhood and Business Services, (3) Planning, and (4) Administration. There are 23 full-timers and 3 part-timers of which 52% are white, 36% are Latinx, 1 African American and 1 Asian American. 52% of the staff is female.

The department seeks to address the needs of marginalized communities, especially of the disabled.

In 2006, this department established Monrovia Area Partnership (MAP). Of the 400 graduates, 50 are very active. MAP did intentionally try to recruit volunteers from certain neighborhoods. This department also sponsors the Youth Leadership Academy and youth employment for at-risk interns.

The department is concerned about changing state laws and the rising cost of housing in all of Southern California.

Recommendations

1. This City and thus this department inherits a history of redlining and racial segregation. The economic difference in neighborhoods is already engrained. Equitable policy may not be enough, a reparations attitude may be necessary. For example, the structures that receive “City of Monrovia Landmark” should be “outstanding examples of a certain style of architecture”.⁸ Does this overlook places that may have been homes of community heroes of more modest means? Can flexibility be built in to permit fee scales and the like?

2. While the Neighborhood Treasure Project has celebrated diversity, the loved bears and the painted utility boxes can also reflect diversity. Perhaps we have utility boxes painted with diverse children or of the likeness of women of Monrovia. City banners might include other languages or images that welcome and recognize diversity. A “bienvenidos” here and there is friendly. Why not go bold and do a large mural of a diversity theme – similar to the Diego Rivera murals at Monroe School or Kobe Bryant mural in Los Angeles. Murals can easily be replaced. The City may wish to involve Monrovia Association of Fine Arts in such projects.

3. The department staff should actively seek to collaborate with community members in reviewing its General Plan. It currently works with 5 committees including Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Board of Appeals, Art in Public Places Committee, and Development Review Committee.

4. The Monrovia Historical Museum should better incorporate our community’s diverse history, perhaps with permanent displays alongside the existing presentations of the City founders.

5. The City should collaborate with the Monrovia Housing and Tenants Advocates and other community groups to encourage and promote affordable housing in Monrovia.

V. Fire and Rescue Department

Established the 1906, the Department’s motto is “The Pride of Monrovia: Helping Anyone in Need.” In 2020 especially, the community of Monrovia has been very grateful for the professional services of the 46 members of the Fire Department through both the Covid pandemic and the Bobcat Fires. Fire and Rescue answer near 4600 calls per year. The 46 department members – organized in 3 teams - go through constant training as deemed necessary by California regulations. Chief Brad Dover said that the department focuses on

⁸ Quoted from <https://www.cityofmonrovia.org/your-government/community-development/historic-preservation/historic-landmarks>.

customer service, and has a healthy team spirit and “grit”. The average age of the department members is 38.9 and Monrovia firefighters average 10 years tenure in Monrovia. 15% of this department volunteer to be peer counselors for other firefighters. The department is active with many community activities including City of Hope, Make a Difference Day, Rotary, Boy Scouts, Monrovia Reads, Spark of Love, Muscular Dystrophy Association, and with burn units.

Monrovia Fire and Rescue has a “CERT” (Community Emergency Response Team) of about 80 trained volunteers, many of whom are retired. Attempts at recruiting young CERT members was tried, but not as successful. A *Listos* CERT class hopes to train more volunteers in the Spanish language.

Recommendations

1. The Committee concurs with the Chief on the needs to continue to train on diversity sensitivity, and to diversify the department’s staff. 93% of the staff is male, with 67% White, 20% Latinx, 9% Asian Pacific American, and 4% African American. It should be noted that some of officers are of mixed race and/or raised in other nations and cultures.
2. The Committee concurs with the Chief that the department needs to be wary of “group think” or a “fixed mindset”, especially as it is a tight male community. Fire departments inherit a lot of tradition and stereotypes.
3. While the Committee applauds the generous charitable efforts of the department, the perpetuation of cultural norms is noted. For example, the Sparks of Love toy drive is associated with Christmas, a religious holiday not celebrated by all. Gender neutral toys - or books - might be encouraged. Perhaps, the unit can purposefully share female firefighter figurines at their toy giveaway program, or share stories of female firefighters at Monrovia Read events.
4. The Committee recommends regularly gathering anonymous survey data on employee satisfaction, especially employees of historically marginalized experiences. It may not be adequate to depend on casual observations or verbal reports.
5. The Committee recommends regularly gathering survey data from customers or client base – from other internal departments (eg Public Works) to Monrovia businesses and residents. The staff should purposefully gather data from historically underrepresented communities. This is a healthy way to receive honest feedback.
6. The Fire and Police Departments should study their response data (timeliness and types) to various geographic neighborhoods. This is an important equity strategy.

Vi. Community Services Department

This department is divided into Administration, Library Services and Recreational Services. The staff includes 22 full-timers and between 40 to 60 part-timers. Two thirds of the staff are women, and 30% live in Monrovia. Director Tina Cherry reports that the division focuses on open door policy and team work. For example, library staff are each charged with a “learning hour” each week with an annual summit. As with all City of Monrovia staff, training on unconscious bias and customer relations are mandatory.

Prior to Covid, Rec Services coordinated some 30 community events and just opened a successful community garden. They have programs for underserved seniors, disabled, and

youth. With the quarantine, the staff has focused on innovations including Movies in the Park. The Library offers free Wifi, printing, and has established a “literacy” van that brings books on high density housing areas that may be further from the physical library. After the quarantine, the Library coordinated virtual story time in English and Spanish languages, curbside pick-up, delivery to seniors, etc.

Three community Commissions include Community Services (7 members), Library (5 members), and Old Town Advisory (5 members). There are also Teen Advisory Board, Youth Commission, and paid summer internship program.

Notably, the Community Services Department has an impressive list of “community partners” ranging from the Monrovia Latino Heritage Society to Monrovia Association of Fine Arts (MAFA). This allows community and the department to “collaborate rather than duplicate.” Even members of this Ad-Hoc Committee reported great ease in working with the Library on past projects.

This Ad-Hoc Committee commended the department for its work – before and after quarantine.

Recommendations

1. Outreach – especially to marginalized niches and non-users – needs to continue to be a priority for this department. Perhaps community brainstorming sessions on this matter would be of service. Consideration may be given to widen the Library Board membership.
2. Intentional focus on programs of diversity and inclusion for the community would be welcomed. For example, a book club on diversity issues may be attempted. The 2020 Juneteeth program at Station Square Park was successful.
3. As the Library has developed a strategic plan for its development, perhaps Recreational Services may consider the same.
4. Diversity of staff – full-time and part-time – should remain a priority.
5. The City and Department should be intentional in getting staff response to work place satisfaction, and consistent in obtaining customer evaluations.

VII. Public Works Department

Director Sean Sullivan reports that the department consists of (1) Administration, (2) Engineering, and (3) Field Services. There are 32 full-time employees and no part-timers, of which 84% are male and 53% Hispanic, 31% White, 10% Asian, and 6% African American. The City uses contractors for tree trimming, garbage collection, sidewalk maintenance, special cleaning, utilities, etc. The unit is always on call, and provides safe and compliant water and physical surroundings for the citizens.

As Monrovia has a history of segregation, Public Works inherits problems of uneven distribution of resources – from heavy use of streets to size of road verges near sidewalks, etc.

As with other departments in the City, the staff works well together and has developed a reputation of “liking to eat” in employee social gatherings. All City staff receive non-harassment

training for one hour per year and modernized customer service workshops. This group also receives safety and technical training relevant to their positions.

The department and its contractors offer special consideration for marginalized groups (i.e. senior discounts for water), as well as Monrovia Transit.

Recommendations

1. The department should prioritize the diversification of its staff despite the industry being heavily male. As in some of its positions, the department provides training, there might be more innovative ways to recruit applicants, especially women and African Americans.
2. The department may explore more contracts with women-owned or minority-owned businesses.

FINAL RECOMMENDATION

It has come to our attention that other cities such as San Gabriel, Culver City, Temecula – and SCAG - have established permanent commissions on equity issues, similar to that of Los Angeles County's Human Relations Commission.

It is the recommendation of this Ad-Hoc Committee that, at this time, instead of having a special committee on equity issues, that every single niche of the City be charged with – to borrow the words of the San Gabriel HEAR Commission - “advancing and advocating for equity, access, diversity, and social justice, safety, mutual appreciation, increased cultural competency, positive inter-group relations, and respect for all members of the community”. It is the responsibility of Monrovia City Council and all City staff to be aware of such concerns in all that they do.

Monrovia City Council may wish to re-consider an equity commission at a later date.

San Gabriel: <https://www.sangabrielcity.com/1501/HEAR-Commission#:~:text=The%20purpose%20of%20the%20HEAR,of%20the%20San%20Gabriel%20community>

Culver City: <https://www.culvercity.org/City-Hall/Boards-Commissions/Equity-Human-Relations-Advisory-Committee-EHRAC>

Temecula: <https://temeculaca.gov/1421/Race-Equity-Diversity-and-Inclusion-Comm>

SCAG: <https://scag.ca.gov/special-committee-equity-and-social-justice>

Attachment 1: Examples of Monrovia Organizations Recognized by this Ad-Hoc Committee

ChangeMakers
Foothill Unity Center
Interfaith Council
Monrovia Area Partnership (MAP)
Monrovia-Duarte Black Alumni Association
Monrovia Historic Preservation Group
Monrovia Historical Museum
Monrovia Historical Society
Monrovia Housing and Tenants' Advocates
Monrovia Latino Heritage Society