Dedicated to the memory of Dr. Demetria Shabazz
Acknowledgements

Assembly Members
Heather Lord
Yvonne Mendez
Michele Miller, Chair
Alexis Reed
Irvin Rhodes, Ph.D.
Amilcar Shabazz, Ph.D.
Debora Bridges

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Staff Liaisons
Jennifer Moyston
Pamela Nolan Young, M.Ed., J.D.

Writer
Mattea Kramer

Designer
Elena Zakashansky

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# Table of Contents

**Introduction** 5  
**Part I. Anti-Black Racism in Amherst, Past and Present** 8  
**Part II. Reparative Justice in Amherst** 12  
**Part III. Funding Plan** 17  
**Part IV. Priorities and Eligibility** 21  
**Part V. Truth, Reconciliation, and Other Repair** 25  
**Part VI. Recommendations to the Superintendent, the University of Massachusetts, and Amherst College** 32  
**Summary of Recommendations** 35  
**Appendices** 37
In 2022, the city of Evanston, Illinois became the first government entity to disburse reparations to Black residents for generations of racism and harm. In January 2023 in the U.S. House of Representatives, Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee reintroduced H.R. 40, legislation that would establish a commission to study reparations for African American descendants of slavery. First introduced in Congress by Rep. John Conyers in 1989, H.R. 40 has been introduced in every Congress since then.

In May of this year, U.S. Representative Cori Bush of Missouri unveiled federal legislation calling for $14 trillion in reparations for African American people for the effects of enslavement and racist federal policies since the end of chattel slavery. And in June, a reparations task force in California approved recommendations for billions of dollars in reparations to Black Californians for generations of discrimination perpetuated by the state.

The Town of Amherst is part of this movement. Anti-Black racism has been sanctioned and perpetuated at all levels of government in the U.S. and has waged varied and expansive harms against generations of African Heritage people. This means that reparations are warranted on the municipal, state, and federal levels.

The notion of reparations is not new but is as old as human conflict. Harm committed against a person or persons heals by way of acknowledgement, apology, and redress. In the United States, reparations have been made at various times to Indigenous people and to Japanese-American people interned during World War II, among other groups.¹

Here in Amherst, the African Heritage Reparation Assembly has examined local harm to Black people that has occurred over centuries, and we have begun the work of designing a local reparative justice plan.

Even as we have pursued this work, we hold as our ultimate goal a federal reparations program aimed at closing the Black-white racial wealth gap, which stands today as the cumulative

economic effect of more than four centuries of oppression and economic exclusion. Economist and reparations scholar Dr. William A. Darity, Jr., who has roots here in Amherst, referenced our local reparations effort in his recent book, noting explicitly that our Town will never have the funds necessary to achieve true reparations:

Amherst, Massachusetts, making overtures to replicate Evanston’s program, has a smaller eligible Black population of about two thousand persons. Even so, it would need $600 million to erase the racial wealth gap while having a current town budget of $85 million.²

Our local efforts are intended to help build momentum for federal as well as for state reparations. Simultaneously, our work has been grounded in the very specific context of our Town.

Amherst’s African Heritage Reparation Assembly formed in June 2021, more than half a year after the Town’s Community Safety Working Group (CSWG) began its investigation into local policing and public safety. Meeting intensively for over a year and conducting thorough research into both our Town and alternative models of emergency response across the country, the CSWG issued a thorough two-part final report that has been vital to the efforts of our Assembly. We thank the CSWG for this work, as well as its successor body, the Community Safety & Social Justice Committee, and Amherst’s Human Rights Commission, which has been dedicated to justice and equity in our Town for years.

In the pages ahead, this report lays out recommendations for a reparative justice plan intended to meet the needs of our specific community, subject to the limitations that we face as a municipal committee. Indeed, there are legal and fiscal considerations that constrain a municipality’s ability to dedicate public funds to redress racial harm. We have done our best to work within those constraints while putting forth a plan that acknowledges and seeks to repair profound and longstanding harms.

Following our charge and responsibility as a Town committee, this report directs recommendations to our Town Council and Town Manager. Yet in certain instances we have gone beyond our charge to make recommendations to other entities, namely to the Superintendent of Schools, the University of Massachusetts, and Amherst College, a private institution. We have elected to do so because the harms that we unearthed in the course of our

research cannot wholly be addressed by a municipal government, and because we felt a responsibility to address specific harms that came to our attention and affect current residents.

Indeed, as the movement for reparations gathers steam across the country, we believe that municipal governments as well as public and private institutions have a role to play in acknowledging and repairing racial harm. Thus, even as this Assembly largely has focused on what is necessary and possible within the scope of Town Government, our report is intended to reflect a more expansive vision for racial healing and repair.
It might be tempting to believe that the harms of slavery and structural racism shaped our nation, but not our Town. In fact, both are true. Many of us understand that our country’s economic systems were built on wealth that accumulated to white people through the enslavement of African and African Heritage people, and that Black families were never compensated for enslavement. We might also understand that, in the modern era, discriminatory practices have systematically excluded many Black people from full participation in the economy in general and from home ownership in particular, thereby preventing or limiting the accrual of intergenerational wealth and inflicting a variety of ongoing harms on the health, well-being, and dignity of African Heritage people.

This has taken place in our country, and on the land that today is known as Amherst, Massachusetts.

Even after enslavement was no longer practiced and became illegal in Massachusetts, people of African Heritage in Amherst lived separately and apart from whites in almost every way. They worked primarily in the lowest paid and most socially undesirable jobs. They lacked the status to attend school or run for office or intermarry with whites. Their numbers in the population remained very small and they were the subject of scorn and violence.

Many Black residents of Amherst gathered and built community through two historically Black churches, the Goodwin Memorial A.M.E. Zion Church, and the Hope Community Church. Yet even in the midst of such community building, Amherst’s African American population was largely regarded as a distinct ethnic group that was not included in the town’s historical narrative and public memory in any meaningful or visible way – with one exception. In 1893, the E.M. Stanton Grand Army of the
Republic veterans organization commissioned a set of marble tablets that listed the name of every soldier and sailor from Amherst who served in the Civil War, including nearly 30 soldiers of African descent. Once exhibited in the Town Hall, these tablets were subsequently moved to a town-owned shed where they remained in storage until recently. (See Civil War Tablets recommendation below.)

In the summer of 2020, a citizens’ petition calling for reparations for African Heritage residents circulated Amherst. Concerned citizens formed the grassroots entity Reparations for Amherst (R4A). Among other efforts, R4A coordinated a group of residents to study the history of structural racism and present-day Black/white disparities in the Town, and to compile findings in public reports. (See Appendices A and B.)

Here we present a selection of those findings. Note that these select findings are in no way exhaustive of the depth and breadth of anti-Black racism or the erasure of African Heritage culture and peoplehood in Amherst, nor is this report meant to be a recounting of the experience of each and every Black family that has resided in Town. This report presents select information to help readers understand the nature of anti-Black discrimination, oppression, and exclusion in this Town, past and present.

Select Findings on the History of Structural Racism in Amherst:³

- In the 17th and 18th centuries, white people enslaved African Heritage people on the land that is now the Town of Amherst, and wealth accumulated to white residents as a result of enslavement. Boltwood Avenue in present-day Amherst was named for Lucius Manlius Boltwood, whose 5th great-grandfather, Robert Boltwood, was an enslaver in Amherst.
- The history of Amherst College is intertwined with slavery, and the College benefited from wealth generated through the legal ownership of African Heritage people. Amherst College trustee Israel Trask enslaved more than 250 people during his lifetime, and used his political connections in Boston to help secure the College’s founding charter.
- In the mid 18th century, according to The History of the Black Population of Amherst, Massachusetts by James Avery Smith, the lives of Black people in Amherst “consisted of performing the hard labor tasks that whites wanted to avoid. Black men worked in the fields and the mills and on road repair crews. They filled mudholes in the highways, removed rocks, and dug ditches.”

³ See Appendix A for historical timeline and works cited
• In the mid 20th century, Black people in Amherst were excluded from hotels, some restaurants, barbershops, and the fraternities of the University of Massachusetts and Amherst College.
• In 1948, the University of Massachusetts hired its first African American faculty member, Dr. Edwin D. Driver. Dr. Driver and his wife were refused housing in Amherst, and settled in Northampton.
• In 1950, a deed for the sale of a property on Blue Hills Road mandated that “said premises shall not be sold or rented to any colored person or persons.”
• In 1973, graffiti with racial slurs were scrawled on the sidewalk in front of Amherst Regional High School and signed “KKK.” Similar episodes of public racism have continued to erupt periodically in the Amherst school system, typically followed by a period of public outcry and commitments to study the problem.
• In 1990, the NAACP filed a complaint against Amherst schools, citing an undercurrent of racism and harm to students of color. That same year, an article in the Amherst Bulletin about Town Meeting referenced a sense of “discomfort” among Town Meeting members regarding “assertions that the white majority has allowed discrimination to go unchecked.”

Select Findings on Black/White Disparities in 21st-Century Amherst:

• As of 2019, the Black median family income in Amherst was $45,464; white median family income was 2.4 times greater, $108,500.
• Only 1.8% of owner-occupied housing in Amherst is occupied by Black residents, who make up 9% of the Town population.
• A disproportionate number of Black households are “rent burdened,” that is, forced to spend one-third or more of their income on housing alone.
• In modern Amherst, racial bias in housing often takes the form of NIMBYism (“Not In My Backyard”). For instance, Butternut Farms, a 26-unit affordable rental development, was delayed for five years and cost its developer over $150,000 in legal fees in a suit brought by Orchard Valley abutters, who claimed harm for reasons that included 20% of the units would be set aside for minority households.
• At the University of Massachusetts, Amherst’s largest employer, 5.1% of employees identified as Black/African American in 2019, as compared to 9% of the Town population and 9% of the population of Massachusetts. Already underrepresented, during the

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4 See Appendix B for full report and data sources
Covid-19 pandemic Black employees were more likely to be furloughed indefinitely relative to their white peers.

- The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District’s own data over the past 30 years show that Black students are disproportionately disciplined relative to their white peers and tracked into lower-level courses, and that staff are disproportionately white relative to the student body. Complaints from students, parents, and staff cite harmful racist incidents against both students and faculty of color.
- Racism permeates the campus of the University of Massachusetts, where hurtful and sometimes dangerous acts of racial hostility continue to erupt against students and faculty.
- Racism affects Black patients in the form of medical bias. Local providers acknowledge that bias and prejudice exist throughout their agencies, specifically in a lack of staff diversity, as well as through prejudices and intolerance.
- A significant threat to health, food insecurity affects 38% of all Hampshire county households. In 2020, 24% of those using the food pantry at the Amherst Survival Center were Black.
- The high cost of living in Amherst and racially-biased practices that routinely impose higher costs for Black people to purchase, finance, and insure automobiles, make car ownership out of reach for many. Lack of reliable transportation interferes with the ability to access essential health care, fresh food, and educational and employment opportunities, which negatively and materially affects overall well-being.
- While the PVTA is fairly reliable and convenient for riders from the Five Colleges, permanent residents face considerable hurdles, including service interruptions and a lack of basic amenities such as sheltered bus stops.
- Black drivers in Amherst speed less and are involved in fewer car accidents than their white peers, but are stopped and searched disproportionately. They are 1.5 times more likely than white people to be arrested following a traffic stop.
On December 7, 2020, the Town Council adopted a resolution “Affirming the Town of Amherst’s Commitment to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity for Black Residents,” which led to the formation of the African Heritage Reparation Assembly.

African Heritage Reparation Assembly: Committee Charge

On June 21, 2021, the Town formally adopted a charge for an African Heritage Reparation Assembly (AHRA), a Town Manager-appointed committee whose members were selected following an application and interview process.

The AHRA was charged with the following responsibilities:

Develop and recommend to the Town Council a Municipal Reparations Plan that includes both a reparations fund and a community-wide process of reconciliation and repair for harms against Black people. This plan will include:

1. A plan for developing ongoing funding streams to repair past harms committed by the Town against Black people.
2. An allocation plan including eligibility criteria, which will be determined and approved by the broader Amherst Black community through a census and community feedback process.
3. Additional means of repair for anti-Black structural and communal racism, including public events and activities that prioritize truth telling and reconciliation.

Listening to Our Community: The Work of the AHRA

Black Census

To fulfill our charge, the AHRA has gathered information from our community through a variety of channels. As we began our work, we desired a census to tell us the number of people who identified solely or partly as Black or African American: We wanted to know where in town this group lives, and how they are faring economically. (See Appendix C for complete Black Census.) According to the 2020 Decennial Census, Amherst had a total population of 39,263 of whom 3,450 residents (9%) identified as Black of African-American alone (2,382) or in combination
with another race. While this population is dispersed across, it’s clear that many of these Black/African American residents are students. Roughly 1,500 Black or African-American (alone or in combination with another race) residents lived in blocks that were 90% or more residents of college dormitories.

There are also block groups in South East Amherst and North Amherst – that is, apartment complexes – with higher than average shares of residents who identify as Black or African-American alone or in combination with another race.

Community Survey

From April 11 through May 8, 2023, the AHRA conducted a community survey with the assistance of the University of Massachusetts Donahue Institute. The target population for the survey was all residents and former residents of Amherst, inclusive of all races. Survey questions about experiences of racism in Amherst, as well as about reparations, were developed by the Assembly. The survey was publicized through channels including social media, the Daily Hampshire Gazette and Amherst Indy, the Town Council, and the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools newsletter. Additionally, guided by data from the Black census, volunteers went door to door in select apartment complexes in order to reach Black residents.

The survey yielded more than 500 responses; 99 respondents identified as Black. Of the respondents who chose to share their race, 69.8% were white; 15.8% were Black or African American; 1.8% were Asian; 1.6% were American Indian or Alaska Native; and 7.8% selected
“Some Other Race.” In a separate question about ethnicity, 6.2% of respondents identified as Hispanic or Latino. Of those who chose to share their age, 12.7% of respondents were 34 years or younger; 28.7% were age 35 to 54; and 54% were age 55 or older. (See Appendix for complete survey data.)

An overwhelming majority (78.4%) of survey respondents who identified as Black said they had experienced racial discrimination in Amherst, with 48.9% saying they had experienced race-based discrimination “from time to time” and an additional 29.5% saying they experienced such discrimination regularly. Just under one-fifth (19.3%) of Black respondents said they had not experienced race-based discrimination in Amherst.

![Share of Respondents in Support of Specific Forms of Repairs](chart.png)

Black survey respondents were asked to share their perspectives on whether specific institutions in Town require reform in order to bring about equitable treatment. Responses overwhelmingly indicated that the Town’s institutions require “major changes” or need to be “completely rebuilt,” according to Black residents, to create an environment that is equitable for Black people. For instance, 73% of Black respondents said Amherst’s primary and secondary schooling requires “major changes” or needs to be “completely rebuilt,” while 77% said the same about Amherst’s political system.

Respondents were also given the opportunity to write open-ended responses to questions about their experiences of racial discrimination in Amherst. Black respondents noted that their experiences of discrimination in Town included racist treatment in the school system, by police, in employment opportunities, in banking, and in downtown retail establishments, among other areas. Respondents also noted that the lack of public transit is racially discriminatory, and that there is a lack of public spaces where young people can safely gather.
Respondents also shared a sense that Amherst is home to a white-majority culture that is unwelcoming for Black folks. This culture manifests in a variety of ways, for instance in the pervasive assumption that Black people are new to town or are otherwise outsiders.

**Community Conversations about Anti-Black Racism and Repair**

On October 27, 2022, the AHRA held a listening session at the Hitchcock Center, facilitating a substantive community dialogue. Additionally, the AHRA held a listening session virtually via Zoom on January 11, 2023, with an attendance of more than a hundred people.

At these public listening sessions, Black residents of all ages shared an array of concerns, including exclusionary practices in housing and employment, and discriminatory treatment in the school system and public spaces. Parents noted that they face continual barriers to making a life and raising their children in Amherst, and that existing support programs often require applicants to jump through so many hoops they are often not worth the effort.

Participants also decried a perpetual lack of meaningful representation among faculty and administrators in the school system, and a profound need for Black people to serve in positions of power as role models for youth. In the words of one listening session participant, this would allow young Black folks to feel that “I belong here. I can see myself here.”

The AHRA also held three closed-door listening sessions with specific community groups. On May 16, 2023, the AHRA met with members of the People of Color United student group at Amherst-Pelham Regional High School. Students shared concerns such as the tracking of students of color into lower, non-honors classes; a lack of truth-telling in the history curriculum; that students of color are continually asked to share personal experiences in ways that are vulnerable, painful, and emotionally draining; and a need for more representation among the teaching and counseling staff.
On May 18, 2023, the AHRA held a listening session at the Survival Center. Issues voiced in that session included concern about the cost of living in Amherst, such that Black people who are employed in town often cannot afford to reside here. On May 21, 2023, the AHRA held a listening session with the Black Business Association of the Amherst Area. In that session business owners shared an array of concerns, including a sense of being ignored and invisible within the Town’s economic structures, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Business Improvement District, as well as overtly discriminatory and/or exclusionary treatment.

**Support for Reparative Justice**

A strong majority of survey respondents voiced support for an array of reparative justice measures, including the creation of an education program to teach Black legacy in Amherst (70.8%); the creation of home ownership and real estate investment opportunities for Black residents (69.6%); and the creation of a program to support Black teachers and students in the school system (67.6%).

Overall, 82% of respondents supported educational scholarships as a means of reparative justice, while 72.8% supported the idea of financial assistance for starting or improving a business, and 65.5% logged their support for a program of financial assistance for buying or improving a home.
1. **Operationalize a $2 Million Reparations Endowment Fund Within 4 Years**

The Town’s current commitment to reparative justice is to establish a $2 million reparations fund within 10 years. This financial commitment was based on projected revenue from the cannabis sales tax, which is now trending downward. Cannabis tax revenue was selected as a funding source for reparations in part because the historic criminalization of cannabis brought outsized harm to Black people. Moreover, the Commonwealth’s Cannabis Control Commission identified Amherst as one of 30 cities and towns across the state in which prohibition and enforcement have had a “disproportionate impact” on communities of color.\(^5\)

Once this reparations fund is operationalized, it will function as an endowment, in which the interest income will be expended while the principal remains untouched. At an interest rate of 3 to 5%, the annual income from such an endowment will range from $60,000 to $100,000. That will serve as the foundational funding stream for the Town’s ongoing reparative justice work.

Unfortunately, this plan does not allow for the pursuit of meaningful reparative justice work until a decade has elapsed. This timeline is not reasonable for our community. Rather, we require a solution that allows us to pursue reparative justice initiatives beginning now. The AHRA has determined an annual funding goal of $100,000 beginning in fiscal year 2031.

Here we provide three options for the Town Council to consider in order to achieve this timeline. We have designed these options and subsequent recommendations to complement the work and priorities of existing Town programs and departments.

**Option 1**

The Town fully funds the Reparations Stabilization Fund at $2 million immediately, by borrowing from reserves. In this option, the Town subsequently pays back the reserves through the annual flow of certified free cash.

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Option 2
The Town devotes $100,000 annually from cannabis tax revenues to fund reparative justice initiatives immediately, and any remaining cannabis tax revenues over and above $100,000 are deposited into the Reparations Stabilization Fund. In this way, the $2 million endowment is built slowly and gradually, while reparative justice work is funded in the present.

Option 3
The $2 million commitment is reached over four years, by moving a quarter of the necessary funding from reserves into the Reparations Stabilization Fund each year annually through FY2028. The Town subsequently pays back the reserves through the annual flow of certified free cash. If the Town Council selects this option, then it is essential that Community Preservation Act and Community Development Block Grant funds are used to fund reparative justice initiatives in the interim four-year period.

2. Dedicate a Share of Community Preservation Act Funds to Reparative Justice

We recommend that the Community Preservation Act (CPA) committee consider expanding its charge to encompass the Town’s commitment to reparations, and that some CPA funds be dedicated to projects specifically by and for Black/African Heritage residents. This recommendation acknowledges that the CPA is a standing Town committee charged with disbursing funds for purposes including affordable housing and historical preservation, and therefore that there is notable overlap between the CPA’s aims and those of reparative justice.

The AHRA recommends that its successor committee and the CPA collaborate by pooling funds for certain projects that fall within both entities’ purview. For instance, the AHRA’s successor committee might choose to dedicate a portion of reparations funds to a particular historical preservation project, and request matching funds from the CPA.

3. Dedicate a Share of Community Development Block Grant Funds to Reparative Justice

This recommendation is addressed to the Town Manager. We recommend that the Town devote a share of funds received through the federal Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to reparative justice projects that are CDBG-eligible.
4. Collaborate with Private Citizens for the Establishment of an Associated Charity

Following the model established by the Jones Library and its associated 501(c)3, Friends of the Jones Library System, we recommend the establishment of a private endowment fund to accept private donations for the purposes of carrying out reparative justice in Amherst.

5. Pursue Grant Funding Through Private Foundations

We recommend that our successor committee explore the possibility of grant funding through private foundations. Specifically, we note that Amherst is on the vanguard of municipal reparations, and certain foundations may be interested in funding truth and reconciliation or other initiatives in Amherst, which can serve as a model for other cities and towns across the country.

6. Pursue Special Legislation to Permit Direct Cash Payments

After extensive deliberations, we have determined that direct cash payments are warranted and necessary to address certain specific harms to specific individuals and/or groups of African Heritage residents. To that end, we recommend the Town continue to move forward with the special legislation that would make such direct payments legally permissible. (See Appendix H for draft special legislation.)

Further, in our efforts to listen to our community, we have identified a profound need for an emergency fund that would help residents who are experiencing acute financial stress. Distinct from the many extant public programs that require applicants to complete pages of forms and to demonstrate eligibility along numerous criteria, the vision for such an emergency fund would be to provide support without question. While such a fund would be difficult to design and implement in practice, it stands as a vision for a kind of reparations that could genuinely improve the lives of Black residents who have experienced an array of economic harms.

7. Collaborate With Other Municipalities to Advocate for Statewide Legislation

We recommend that Amherst collaborate with other municipalities and with grassroots organizations to advocate for statewide legislation that would empower cities and towns to make direct cash payments as part of their reparative justice work. This recommendation acknowledges that our Town is not alone in the exploration of how to implement municipal-level reparations, even as this remains largely uncharted territory. We hope that the work that takes place in Amherst, and subsequently in collaboration with other Massachusetts
8. Adopt a Charge for a Permanent Successor Committee

We recommend that the Town establish a successor committee to the AHRA, and that this successor committee be charged with carrying forward the work that this body has begun over the past two years. Acknowledging that reparative justice for African Heritage residents of Amherst must redress centuries of harm, it is essential that the Town establish a committee to carry out this work for the long term.

This successor body will oversee the distribution of reparations funds. (See Appendix for proposed charge of successor committee.)

More specifically, we recommend that this successor committee be charged with seeking robust input from the Black community and receiving proposals from the Town Assembly for African Heritage Residents (below), vetting such proposals, and then sending them to the Town Council for voting.

9. Establish a Town Assembly for African Heritage Residents

The AHRA recommends the establishment of a Town Assembly for African Heritage Residents, which will create a formal space in which Black/African Heritage residents can gather to present, discuss, and vote on reparative justice initiatives, among other issues. Notably, this type of assembly and dialogue space need not be created from scratch. There is already a Black Assembly of Amherst, Massachusetts (BAAM), which could form the basis of a Town Assembly for African Heritage Residents. The AHRA envisions such a Town Assembly taking place twice a year. Following each biannual meeting, this Assembly would then put forward proposals for reparations funding. The AHRA’s successor committee would review such proposals and select those to put forward for a vote by the Town Council.
How should reparative justice funds be spent? Here we present three critical areas for reparative justice funding in Amherst. For these priorities and the subsequent recommendations for implementation, we have sought to develop a programmatic and funding framework that taps into funds and initiatives that already exist in our Town. That is, where funds are already dedicated to such issues as historical preservation and affordable housing, and where prior guidance has been made for achieving equity and racial healing, we have designed our recommendations to augment and expand those pre-existing initiatives, to honor the extensive work that has already been done, and to maximize the impact of a reparative justice fund in Amherst.

**Funding Priority 1: Youth Programming**

In May 2021 the Town of Amherst’s Community Safety Working Group (CSWG) issued a report that included the following recommendation to the Town Council:

We recommend that Amherst create a BIPOC-led Youth Center. This long-needed facility will be open to all youth in town and serve the youth of all racial backgrounds…. The Youth Center will give BIPOC youth a voice, a place to excel, and a place to participate in after-school activities. The Youth Center will provide a range of activities such as theatre, arts, fitness classes, job readiness, and academic support. We are recommending this center be staffed with at least three individuals to allow this program to run Monday-Saturday until 6 pm. The Youth center will provide a stable place for youth to go after school.6

Acknowledging that the Town has allocated $500,000 in American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funds for the exploration of the creation of a Youth Center, the AHRA reiterates and

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strongly supports the CSWG’s recommendation that the Town Council prioritize and fund a Youth Center that operates six days a week.

Further, we recommend that programming for the forthcoming Youth Center be the first reparative justice funding priority; that such programming specifically address the needs of young people of African descent; and that programming receive funding from the endowment on a permanent basis.

Further, we recommend that a portion of reparative justice funds be dedicated to youth educational scholarships. This recognizes that our research has identified the disparity in graduation and college matriculation rates between Black and white students at the Amherst-Pelham Regional High School. We envision an Amherst in which our schools’ counseling offices provide equal and superlative college counseling to students of all races; in which there are no racial disparities in college matriculation; and in which all young people know their rights and walk our streets with dignity and a sense of physical safety.

Further, we recommend that reparative justice funds be made available as grants to support special projects concerning people of African descent, to take place at or in conjunction with the Youth Center, such as bringing in a visiting writer or scholar in African American literature, or community youth travel to the National Smithsonian African American Heritage Museum or to Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

Funding Priority 2: Affordable Housing

Our Town has a history of exclusionary housing practices, including but not limited to deed restrictions in the 20th century that explicitly prevented people of color from purchasing certain pieces of property. In the 21st century, Amherst residents and would-be residents face exorbitant housing costs, with a substantial share of the population being rent-burdened, or spending more than percent of their income on housing. For these reasons, we have determined that affordable housing should be considered a critical priority for reparative justice.

Amherst Community Homes is a forthcoming housing project on Ball Lane that will consist of 32 three-bedroom homes. Intended to support the mission of affordable home ownership, the project is slated to be completed in 2026. Applicants will apply through a lottery system, and those selected will be required to make a down payment and then go through the banking process to secure a home loan. This project will prioritize applicants who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color).

We recommend that affordable housing initiatives such as projects like Amherst Community Homes be a priority for reparative justice spending in Town.
Survey respondents supported educational scholarships, home ownership, and business grants, among other priorities.

**Funding Priority 3: Business Grants and Entrepreneurial Training**

We recommend that reparative justice funds be dedicated to a Town program that teaches skills of entrepreneurship to young people of African Heritage. There are many great models for incubator programs in entrepreneurship designed for student groups as young as elementary school. We acknowledge that a people’s ability to thrive in our culture hinges on their ability to earn money, and that the skills of entrepreneurship – of creating an enterprise and offering valuable services or goods – can be a valuable avenue to flourishing.

Further, we recommend that reparative justice funds be used for business grants for African Heritage entrepreneurs who seek to start or expand their enterprise in Amherst, with the vision that our Town be a place where Black business owners thrive.

**Who Should Be Eligible for Reparations in Amherst?**

The question of who should be eligible for reparations is a complex one. As an Assembly, we have engaged in ongoing deliberation and have drawn on an array of sources to address this question. We recognize several groups of African Heritage people in Amherst as eligible for reparations.

**Group 1.** Descendants of African Heritage People Who Were Enslaved in Amherst

The first group of persons eligible for reparations are those current and former Town residents who are descendants of African Heritage people who were enslaved in Amherst. These residents are at the very center of our concern for local reparative justice.

**Group 2.** Residents of Amherst Who Descend From African Heritage People Enslaved Elsewhere in the U.S.
Moving beyond the first circle of eligibility, the AHRA has determined that Amherst residents of African Heritage who trace their ancestry to a person or persons who were enslaved elsewhere in the United States should be eligible for reparations in Amherst.

**Group 3. All African Heritage Residents of Amherst**

The broadest eligible group consists of all persons of African Heritage residing in Amherst, regardless of whether or not they trace their ancestry to someone who was enslaved in the United States. Our qualitative and quantitative research indicates that this group has experienced profound and widespread discrimination and economic inclusion in contemporary Amherst, and should be eligible for reparations.

**How Does This Inform Reparations in Amherst?**

The recommendations in this report regard all African Heritage residents of Amherst as eligible for reparations; that is, as currently written, our recommendations embrace the broadest notion of eligibility. The largest of the three circles shown above, this group includes those who identify as descendants of people who were enslaved in Amherst, and those who identify as descendants of people who were enslaved elsewhere in the U.S., as well as those who do not trace their ancestry to persons enslaved in this country.

Even as this report regards all African Heritage residents of Amherst as eligible for reparations, it is important to distinguish between these three groups, as the differences between them will become important to any successor committee charged with evaluating applications or selecting specific reparative justice initiatives. For example, a central priority for reparative justice is affordable housing. If our successor committee evaluates applications for financial assistance for down payments on a home, then our eligibility criteria indicate that applicants whose ancestors were enslaved in Amherst would be prioritized first; followed by those whose ancestors were enslaved elsewhere in the United States; followed by those African Heritage residents who do not trace their ancestry to the enslaved.

This model is proposed as a framework to guide the Black community, as well as to educate the broader community regarding who should be eligible for reparations. However, we embrace a holistic approach that recognizes there are other factors that may be appropriate to consider.
1. Continue and Expand Town-Wide Programming in Truth and Reconciliation

In October 2021, the Community Safety Working Group (CSWG) released a report that included recommendations for a town-wide process of racial healing and visioning. Members of the CSWG wrote, “We believe this is fundamental to the success of all other efforts the town is making toward racial justice.” We, the members of the AHRA, strongly agree.

The CSWG specifically recommended a process for racial healing that included building relationships with and between diverse segments of the community and enlisting their engagement in a visioning process – to imagine an environment free of white supremacy.

The AHRA acknowledges that the Town’s Department of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion – created in response to the CSWG’s recommendations – is actively engaged in bringing such programming to Amherst. One such example was the town’s participation in the National Day of Racial Healing in January 2023.

It is critically important that the Town continue and expand such programming to heal racial harms of the past and to address ongoing harms in the present, consistent with the vision set forth by the CSWG. We recommend that the AHRA’s successor body work in collaboration with the Department of DEI to design and implement such programming.

We specifically recommend that our successor body and the Department of DEI provide educational opportunities for non-Black residents to better understand structural anti-Black racism and the meaning and history of reparations. To this end, we recommend that the Town collaborate with the creators of the “Stolen Beam” curriculum, a resource that was developed by members of the Jewish Community of Amherst and is now being used across the nation.7

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7 For more information about the Stolen Beam curriculum, contact Jeffrey Gold at jeffreywgold51@gmail.com, or Devorah Jacobson at devorahjacobson18@gmail.com.
2. Publicize the Human Rights Commission’s Complaint Process, and Consider a Town Policy for Public Apology

The Town of Amherst’s Human Rights Commission (HRC) works to ensure that “no person, public or private, shall be denied any rights guaranteed pursuant to local, state, and/or federal law on the basis of race or color, gender, physical or mental ability, religion, socio-economic status, ethnic or national origin, affectional or sexual preference, lifestyle, or age.” This mission applies to the protection not only of residents, but to all people who enter Amherst. As part of the work to fulfill this mission, the HRC assists in the mediation of formal complaints that can be filed through its website.

Yet the HRC’s formal complaint and mediation process is relatively unknown among the Amherst populace. As part of ensuring that incidents of anti-Black racism are properly addressed on an ongoing basis, we recommend that the Town make greater efforts to publicize the HRC’s complaint process, such that those who experience rights violations have access to mediation.

Further, and more broadly, we recognize the power of apology. When a person in power makes a sincere, public apology to a harmed individual or group – whether or not that person in power was personally responsible for said harm – it initiates a healing process. To this end, we recommend that the Town craft a formal policy for making public apology.

3. Develop a Town Policy for Renaming Streets and Spaces

In 2000, the Westside District of Amherst was recognized as a National Historic District because of an initiative conceived by Amherst resident Dudley Bridges, Sr. in honor of his family and the Black and Afro Indigenous community of Amherst. This historically Black neighborhood includes sections of Northampton Road, Hazel Avenue, Snell Street, and Baker Street. His work also includes other lesser known historically Black areas of Town. Many Amherst residents have been unaware of the Westside District of Amherst and that it was a historically Black neighborhood. On June 17, 2023 the Ancestral Bridges Foundation unveiled signs in honor of Hazel Avenue and the Westside District on what would have been Dudley Bridges’ 100th birthday.

Yet as of today, the Town’s “Amherst Street History” online search interface – which contains historical information compiled by former Amherst Town Engineer James Avery Smith – reveals that there is not one street or public way named for a person of African descent. The streets of Amherst, like the Town’s name, memorialize white settler colonialism – a history of invasion, displacement, and enslavement.
A relatively simple step toward reparative justice and decolonizing this town from its historic white supremacist culture is to diversify the street names and other aspects of the landscape and built environment.

We recommend that the Town Council, in collaboration with the AHRA’s successor body, develop a policy for renaming streets, buildings, and other spaces, and formally adopt such a policy. Once this policy is in place, we recommend that the AHRA’s successor committee receive and vet proposals for renaming a selection of streets and spaces to honor residents of African Heritage.

Additionally, we recommend that the Town provide a public history and signage for the street that was formerly called Woods Court (see below: “Reparations for the Descendants of Mrs. Frances Brown”), a place where an historic Black family in Amherst resided. Today Woods Court has been erased from our Town, without any sign or other marker to acknowledge its history.

4. Support and Uplift the Work of the Ancestral Bridges Foundations

An ongoing harm to the African Heritage community is that of cultural appropriation, in which the work, history, culture, or intellectual property of African American people is claimed and used by another community without permission or acknowledgement. In Amherst, the Ancestral Bridges Foundation is an initiative led by current generational residents who are descendants of this Town’s historic Black and Afro-Indigenous community with lineage rooted in the first harms of genocide and enslavement in Amherst, and we recommend the Town support and uplift the work of this organization, whose mission is to “celebrate BIPOC arts, history, and culture in western Massachusetts.” The organization also partners “with local communities to create local and economic opportunities so that BIPOC and disadvantaged youth can thrive.” Indeed, this represents an opportunity for our Town to show deep respect for local heritage and to learn how to uplift without appropriating, by allowing this descendant-led organization to guide us in historical preservation and the telling of our shared history.

5. Support the Civil War Tablets Exhibition

We recommend that the Town support the Civil War Tablets and Photograph Exhibition, an initiative brought forward by Dudley Bridges, Sr. and envisioned, curated, and guided by African Heritage Reparation Assembly Member Debora Bridges, as determined by Debora Bridges.

Center: Debora Bridges, Director and Curator of Civil War Tablets exhibit, with Town Manager Paul Bockelman and Former Evanston Alderwoman Robin Rue Simmons
6. **Establish a Museum and Genealogical Research Center**

We recommend the Town establish a museum to showcase the history and culture of the African Heritage people of Amherst, past, present, and future, and to curate ongoing initiatives that uplift that history and culture.

Recognizing that a considerable harm waged against people of African Heritage has been the severing of ties to our ancestry, we recommend that this museum include an archival and genealogical research center.

7. **Provide Fair Compensation to Persons Who Contribute to Truth, Reconciliation, DEI, and Other Initiatives**

A fundamental harm committed against Black people in Amherst and elsewhere has been to withhold compensation for valuable labor. Today it remains common practice that people from historically marginalized communities go uncompensated, or undercompensated, for their work. For example, African Heritage as well as other people of color are often asked to share personal experiences or other expertise in the interests of educating the public, often with little or no monetary compensation, even as such work is emotionally draining and even traumatizing.

The AHRA recommends that this practice come to an end in Amherst, and that those who provide labor and/or expertise be fairly compensated.

8. **Dedicate a Significant Share of Second-Round ARPA Economic Development Funds to Black-Owned Businesses**

This recommendation is addressed to the Town Manager

We strongly and urgently recommend that a significant share of the Town’s second-round American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) funding for economic development be dedicated to Black-owned businesses. Moreover, we emphasize that the Biden Administration and the U.S. Treasury outlined specific equity-driven goals for ARPA monies. According to PolicyLink and The New School’s Institute on Race, Power and Political Economy:

Aligned with the Biden Administration’s racial equity executive order, the US Department of the Treasury prioritized equity in its spending guidelines for the ARPA funds. Grantees were encouraged to target resources to the communities of color, tribal communities, and low-income communities disproportionately negatively impacted by the pandemic, and to
invest in projects that address the systemic health and economic challenges causing such disparities.\(^8\)

In keeping with these federal guidelines and with our Town’s commitment to achieve racial equity, it is imperative that a substantial share of the remaining $300,000 of unobligated ARPA economic development funds be awarded to Black-owned businesses.

9. **Provide Assistance to Residents for the Expungement of Cannabis Charges**

The historic criminalization of cannabis has brought profound harm to Black communities. In 2022, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts passed a law making it easier for residents to expunge cannabis charges from their criminal records. But expungement is not automatic; rather, expungement requires filing an application, and many who are eligible need further information or legal assistance.

We recommend that the Town host a clinic to assist residents with expungement, such as the clinics hosted by Ayr Wellness and reported by WBUR.\(^9\)

Further, we recommend that the Town post a link to the state expungement application form from the Town website.

10. **Discontinue Low-Level and Pretexual Traffic Stops and Consent Searches**

We advise the Town implement the Community Safety Working Group’s October 2021 recommendation to discontinue low-level and pretextual traffic stops and consent searches. Further, we recommend our Town model its policy on the “Driving Equality Ordinance” drafted by the city of Ann Arbor, Michigan, which wrote this about routine traffic stops:

Pretext stops are disproportionately carried out against people of color and return negligible public safety benefits. The fiscal costs they impose are unjustified given that there are more effective public safety tools at our disposal. The human and societal costs are immeasurable and unacceptable.\(^10\)

With the discontinuation of pretextual stops, minor infractions such as a broken tail light can be addressed through a mailed citation. This change in Amherst policing will facilitate equity through the cessation of practices that have disproportionately harmed Black residents, and


\(^10\) See “AN ORDINANCE TO ADD CHAPTER 124 (INITIATION OF TRAFFIC STOPS) OF TITLE IX (POLICE REGULATIONS) OF THE CODE OF THE CITY OF ANN ARBOR”
help to facilitate a climate of trust, justice, and genuine safety. Nothing about this recommendation limits law enforcement’s ability to stop drivers who engage in behaviors that endanger public safety, such as speeding or reckless driving.

Further, we recommend the Town follow the CSWG’s recommendation to adopt guidance similar to that of the Providence Police Department regarding consent searches:

No operator or owner-passenger of a motor vehicle shall be requested to consent to a search by a law enforcement officer of his or her motor vehicle which is stopped solely for a traffic violation, unless there exists reasonable suspicion or probable cause of criminal activity.¹¹

11. Provide Resources to the Board of Health to Address Health Inequities

We acknowledge that racism is a public health crisis, and we endorse the Board of Health’s September 2021 “Statement on Racism and Public Health,” in which the Board of Health committed to the following actions (See Appendix for complete statement):

- Assessing the community’s health needs through a comprehensive community assessment that focuses on health inequities,
- Increasing funding for the Health Department to provide staffing and resources needed to improve outreach and effectiveness in communities of color,
- Evaluating policies, procedures, and regulations to ensure racial equity to improve health in communities of color, and
- Supporting local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice.

We call on the Town to provide resources, monetary and otherwise, to support these actions. Moreover, we acknowledge that the collection of racial data in healthcare is woefully inadequate, especially at our local level, and that the lack of such data makes it difficult for committees like the AHRA to grasp the extent of current health inequities. Thus we urge the Town to prioritize the collection of such data at community health centers.

12. Adopt a Town Resolution in Support of State and Federal Reparations

U.S. Representative Jim McGovern has submitted a formal letter to President Biden requesting he use his executive authority to establish a commission to study reparations for slavery in the United States. In that letter, Rep. McGovern acknowledged and uplifted the movement for

reparations here in Amherst; in so doing, he made a direct connection between the local and the national. Indeed, such a connection exists, and is vitally important.

The AHRA holds as its ultimate goal that reparations in the United States will close the Black-white racial wealth gap, which stands today as the cumulative economic effect of more than four centuries of oppression and economic exclusion. Reparations on a scale sufficient to close that wealth gap will require not only local and state action, but, significantly, federal action as well. To this end, we recommend that the Town Council formally adopt a resolution in support of state and federal reparations for the enduring harms of slavery and structural racism in Massachusetts and in the United States.
These recommendations do not represent the views of the Town, Town Manager, Town Council, or any Council member.

To the Superintendent of Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools: Revise History Curricula for Greater Truth Telling

We recommend that the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools reexamine and update its history curricula with the goal of engaging in deeper truth telling regarding the realities of enslavement as well as the historic and ongoing struggle for civil rights. Rather than produce new curricula for these purposes, we recommend the school system draw on the considerable resources available locally and nationally, including the Black Studies Department at the University of Massachusetts and the Center for Racial Justice and Youth Engaged Research at the UMass College of Education. Additionally, the 1619 Project and other such national resources could be utilized.

To the University of Massachusetts: Provide Just Compensation to Professor Edwin D. Driver

In 1948, Dr. Edwin D. Driver became the first Black faculty member hired at the University of Massachusetts. Dr. Driver and his wife subsequently encountered discrimination in their efforts to purchase a home in Amherst, and settled in Northampton. For decades Dr. Driver was denied appropriate pay raises, even as he earned tenure in 1954 and became one of the sociology department’s most distinguished and widely published professors. Over the course of his esteemed career, Dr. Driver published many books and served as a visiting professor at elite colleges around the country, while remaining permanently at UMass.

The AHRA recommends that UMass compensate Dr. Driver for lost wages, and that the University undertake a process to select and name a campus building in Dr. Driver’s name.

Further, we strongly encourage the University of Massachusetts to take the bold step of embarking on its own process of studying the racialized harms that have occurred throughout the institution’s history. We have encountered some of those harms in the course of our
community listening and other research, and some of our findings can be found in Appendices A and B.

To Amherst College: Repair and Reconcile With Descendants of Mrs. Frances Brown

Circa 1857, Amherst College President William Stearns took into his home a Black man named Charles Thompson with whom the Stearns family had maintained a fond relationship for many years.12 Mr. Thompson was later employed by the College as a custodian. Students referred to him as “Professor Charley.” Mr. Thompson and his eventual wife Eliza Thompson adopted a daughter named Mary, who was Native American and of the Black Foot tribe. Mary Thompson went on to wed Henry Hawkins and, in 1900, gave birth to a daughter, Frances (Hawkins) Brown.

Married and widowed three times, Frances Brown established a family home at 26 Woods Court, where she lived until her death in 1979. Mrs. Brown also owned two additional parcels of land on Hazel Avenue where she grew vegetables for her family. The fresh produce she raised on those plots fed her family during the summer and autumn months as well as throughout the winter, as Mrs. Brown home-canned her crops.

Prior to Mrs. Brown’s passing, representatives of Amherst College approached Mrs. Brown with a proposal to acquire the land on which her home was situated. They offered her an arrangement in which the College pledged to take care of the maintenance and upkeep of the home until Mrs. Brown’s death, at which time the house and land would become College property. Motivated by her limited financial means and limited knowledge of the value of the home and land, Mrs. Brown accepted this offer.

This transaction between Amherst College and Mrs. Brown was characterized by a grave power differential, in which a wealthy College approached a layperson who had little experience in real estate and proposed an exchange that gravely shortchanged not only Mrs. Brown but also her descendants. Furthermore, based on our research of meetings held by the Trustees of Amherst College, the College did not conduct a formal appraisal of the property. On Nov. 1, 1969 the Trustees conducted the following business:

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Voted: to authorize the purchase of the Woods Court house for $7,500, seller to have life tenancy; with exterior maintenance of the property, including taxes and water, the responsibility of the College during the lifetime of Frances L. Brown, and a furnace and/or heating system to be installed at a cost not to exceed $800.

Once the College had formalized its agreement with Mrs. Brown, the institution then failed to fulfill its commitment. The Brown family home fell into disrepair. Upon Mrs. Brown’s passing, her family was forced to leave the house, and the structure was promptly demolished. Today, the acreage that was formerly 26 Woods Court is an expanse of forest, and one of the plots that was formerly Mrs. Brown’s vegetable garden is part of Amherst College’s Pratt Field.

The trajectories of the lives of Mrs. Brown’s grandchildren, Rhonda Coleman and Donald Coleman, were changed and harmed by their family’s dispossession. That is, the College’s acquisition of this property has had deleterious intergenerational effects.

We recommend that the College enter into a process of reconciliation and repair with Mrs. Brown’s descendants, who continue to feel the ramifications and injustice and loss of their inheritance and heritage land, and who continue to reside in Amherst today. We recommend that the College explore all avenues for repair, including monetary compensation.

Additionally, Mrs. Brown’s descendants have requested that the College furnish resources for the production of a documentary about their family’s story. This is a chance for the family, the College, and the Town to jointly honor and uplift the heritage and contributions of a legacy family with deep roots in this land. The family plans hopes to work with the Hampshire College film department in the creation of this film, such that it will serve as a genuine community partnership, funded by Amherst College.

In 2020, the College created and began to implement an institutional anti-racism plan intended to improve the racial climate on campus. At that time the College also commenced an internal research project called “A Racial History of Amherst College.” We commend this work. Further, we strongly recommend that Amherst College embark on a process of investigating what forms of reconciliation and repair are warranted based on the racialized harms that occurred throughout the institution’s history.
Summary of Recommendations

The Town of Amherst and the African Heritage Reparation Assembly (AHRA), a Town committee, are part of the movement for reparations on the local, state, and federal levels. Over two years, the AHRA has examined local harms to African Heritage people historically and in the present era. This report presents the Assembly’s findings and a plan for reparative justice in Amherst.

Part I of this report details select findings on the history of structural racism in this Town and current Black/white disparities, linking the wealth and landscape of modern Amherst to slaveholding and other historic forms of racialized oppression and exclusion. Part II traces the Town’s recent efforts toward reparative justice, including the chartering of the AHRA in 2021, and the AHRA’s efforts to gather and interpret community input through surveys and listening sessions.

Pursuant to its official charter, this report presents the AHRA’s final recommendations to the Town Council and Town Manager. These recommendations encompass a reparative justice plan, itemizing funding sources and laying out a framework for eligibility. Presented in detail in Parts III through VI of this report, these recommendations are summarized below.

How should reparations in Amherst be funded and implemented?

- Operationalize a $2 million reparations endowment fund within 4 years through a combination of cannabis tax revenue and funds borrowed from reserves and repaid with annual certified free cash. This plan accelerates the Town’s current commitment of $2 million for reparations over 10 years.
- Augment the $2 million endowment fund with monies from the Community Preservation Act and Community Development Block Grants.
- Collaborate with private citizens to establish an associated charity, using the Friends of the Jones Library – a 501(c)3 organization – as a model.
- Pursue additional grant funding through private foundations.
- Pursue special legislation to permit direct cash payments to residents who have experienced specific racialized harms, and collaborate with other municipalities to advocate for statewide legislation that would permit such direct payments.
- Adopt a charge for a successor Town committee to carry on the work of the AHRA; among other responsibilities, this body will vet applications for reparative justice initiatives on an ongoing basis.
Establish a Town Assembly for African Heritage Residents to operate as a forum to discuss and propose specific reparative justice initiatives to the AHRA successor committee on an ongoing basis.

How should reparations funds be spent?

The AHRA has identified youth programming, affordable housing, and business grants and entrepreneurial training as three priority areas for reparations funding.

Who is eligible for reparations in Amherst?

Due to present-day structural racism, the AHRA regards all Black residents of Amherst as eligible for reparations, while centering and prioritizing those whose ancestors were enslaved.

What other forms of reconciliation and repair are needed?

- Continue and Expand Town-Wide Programming in Truth and Reconciliation
- Publicize the Human Rights Commission's Complaint Process, and Consider a Town Policy for Public Apology
- Develop a Town Policy for Renaming Streets and Spaces
- Support and Uplift the Work of the Ancestral Bridges Foundations
- Support the Civil War Tablets Exhibition
- Establish a Museum and Genealogical Research Center
- Provide Fair Compensation to Persons Who Contribute to Truth, Reconciliation, DEI, and Other Initiatives
- Dedicate a Significant Share of Second-Round ARPA Economic Development Funds to Black-Owned Businesses
- Provide Assistance to Residents for the Expungement of Cannabis Charges
- Discontinue Low-Level and Pretexual Traffic Stops and Consent Searches
- Provide Resources to the Board of Health to Address Health Inequities
- Adopt a Town Resolution in Support of State and Federal Reparations

Additional recommendations to non-Town entities

To the Superintendent of Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools: Revise History Curricula for Greater Truth Telling

To the University of Massachusetts: Provide Just Compensation to Professor Edwin D. Driver

To Amherst College: Repair and Reconcile With Descendants of Mrs. Frances Brown
Appendices

A. Partial Historical Timeline of Structural Racism in Amherst
B. Report on Anti-Black Racism and Black/White Disparities in the Town of Amherst
C. Black Census
D. African Heritage Reparation Assembly Community Survey
E. Successor Committee: Proposed Charge
F. Legal Opinion
G. Memo on Special Legislation
H. Draft Special Legislation
I. Board of Health Statement on Racism and Public Health
J. African Heritage Reparation Assembly Community Survey Results
A PARTIAL HISTORICAL TIMELINE OF
SLAVERY AND STRUCTURAL RACISM IN AMHERST

An appendix in support of

A PROCLAMATION AFFIRMING THE TOWN OF AMHERST’S COMMITMENT TO END STRUCTURAL RACISM AND ACHIEVE RACIAL EQUITY

SLAVERY IN AMHERST

1641 – Massachusetts was the first colony to legalize slavery.¹

1645 – Emmanuel Downing wrote to his brother-in-law John Winthrop, governor of Massachusetts Bay Colony, “I doe not see how wee can thrive vntill wee gett into a stock of slaves sufficient to doe all our buisines.”²

1667 – In the East Hadley precinct known as Amherst, Robert Boltwood filed a lawsuit against Benjamin Wait in an attempt to recover from Wait twenty pounds he earned from selling Boltwood’s enslaved person without authority.³ Boltwood Avenue in modern-day Amherst was named for Lucius Manlius Boltwood; Robert Boltwood, slaveholder, was Lucius Manlius Boltwood’s forebearer—his 5th great-grandfather.⁴

1731-1758 – A local doctor, Dr. Richard Crouch of Hadley, kept a record of treatments, including medical treatments of enslaved people in East Hadley/Amherst, which note the following slaveholders and the people they enslaved:
Ebenezer Kellogg, “Negro Child”, medical treatments 1731-1746
Richard Chauncey, “negro”, medical treatment 1735
John Ingram, “Tully your negro,” medical treatments 1736-1742
Daniel Kellogg, “negro,” medical treatments 1751-1756
Ebenezer Kellogg, “negro,” medical treatments 1755
Ephraim Kellogg, “negro,” medical treatments circa 1758⁵

1737 – The first person buried in Amherst’s West Cemetery was John Scott of Palmer, and the first item of personal “property” listed in the November 1737 probate inventory of his estate was “A Negro Man.”⁶

1738 – Amherst resident Zechariah Field enslaved a person who was valued at one hundred and thirty pounds.⁷ According to the British National Archives currency conversion, one hundred and thirty pounds in 1738 was roughly the equivalent of three and a half years’ wages for a skilled tradesman.
1754-1755 – A government survey shows a total of eighteen “Negro Slaves… Sixteen Years Old and Upward”—“13 males” and “5 females”—enslaved in Hadley/Amherst.8

1759 – Amherst was recognized as a district distinct from Hadley.

1760 – Amherst minister David Parsons enslaved a family of three people; one of them, named Pompey or Pomp, ran away and Parsons posted the following notice in the Boston Post-Boy: 

Ran away from his Master David Parsons of Amherst Hadley, A Negro Man Servant named Pomp, about 26 Years of Age; a Fel- of the tallest Stature, judged six Feet and a half High, has been long of the Country, can Read and Write, speaks good English: Had on when he went away two Jackets, one of Leather, and under all a Flannel Jacket. Whoever takes up the said Runaway and will bring him to his said Master shall have THREE DOLLARS Reward, and all necessary Charges paid by me David Parsons N.B. All Masters of Vessels and others are hereby caution’d against harbouring, concealing, or carrying off said Servant as they would avoid the Penalty of the Law.9

1760s – The daily lives of Black people in Amherst “consisted of performing the hard labor tasks that whites wanted to avoid. Black men worked in the fields and the mills and on road repair crews. They filled mudholes in the highways, removed rocks, and dug ditches.”10

1766 – Amos Newport went to court to seek his freedom. Newport was born around 1710 on the western coast of Africa, where he was abducted by slave hunters around 1715. By 1729, he was enslaved by David Ingersoll of Springfield, Massachusetts. Ingersoll then sold Newport to Joseph Billings of Hatfield.11 Newport’s 1766 lawsuit was unsuccessful; after losing in the lower court, he pursued an appeal, which was also unsuccessful. Slaveholder Joseph Billings, the defendant in the case, was represented in court by the prominent Amherst lawyer Simeon Strong.12 Strong Street in modern-day Amherst was named after John Strong, Simeon Strong’s son.13

Circa 1790 – Wealthy Wheeler, a five-year-old girl who was born in the southern United States, was purchased by Oliver Cowls, farmer in North Amherst. According to census records, Wealthy Wheeler remained in the household of Oliver’s son Levi through 1870, when she was eighty-five years old. The purchase of Wealthy is the last mention of slavery in the historical records of Amherst. Oliver’s son Dr. Rufus Cowls became a moderator at town meeting, a selectman, and a founder of Amherst College.14 Oliver’s brother Jonathan was a farmer in North Amherst whose descendants operate businesses under the Cowls name in Amherst today.

Circa 1800 – The practice of slavery dwindled in Massachusetts. “No doubt some Massachusetts slave owners sold their slaves to buyers in states where slavery continued to be legal,” writes Robert Romer in Slavery in the Connecticut Valley of Massachusetts.15

FREE BLACKS IN AMHERST
1761 – The first free Black people of record, a married couple named Tom and Tab, arrived in Amherst in June of this year.16

1762 – On the first of January, the Selectmen ordered Tom and Tab to leave Amherst. In his history of the Black population of Amherst, genealogist James Avery Smith wrote that the Selectmen considered Tom and Tab to be “likely paupers if they were allowed to stay in Amherst as residents.”17

1788 – A statewide law was enacted that forbade non-resident free Blacks from entering Massachusetts, and was used as a means to force non-resident Blacks and Indigenous people to leave the state; the law was reiterated in September of 1800. According to James Avery Smith, “The available information indicates a definite decline in Amherst’s black population in the decades before 1790. It is a chilling thought that the exclusion laws of 1788 and 1800 were enforced in Amherst and directed at freed slaves who may have tried to set up their own households.”18

1807 – In April of this year, two of the town’s poor, one of them “an aged negro who had served in the war of the Revolution,” were “struck off at auction” to local residents as paupers in need of boarding.19

1826 – A meeting-house for worship was built and owned by Oliver Dickinson. Dickinson received partial compensation for this expense by selling the pews inside the meeting-house. To each purchaser he gave a deed to confer the rights of perpetual ownership, subject to the condition that they were not to sell or lease their pew “to any negro or mulatto, or allow any such person to occupy them, under penalty of forfeiting their rights.”20

1835 – In direct contradiction of the historical record, historian Alden Bradford wrote, “The slave-trade was never permitted by the government of Massachusetts.”21

1840 – Three Black men of Amherst, Lewis B. Frazier, Henry Jackson, and William Jennings, were jailed for “kidnapping” eleven-year-old Black orphan Angeline Palmer. A ward of the state, Angeline had been placed under the care of the Shaw family in Belchertown; the Shaws then conspired to sell Angeline into slavery in the South. Frazier, who was Angeline’s half-brother, voiced concern about his sister’s safety to the Amherst Board of Selectmen in the spring of 1840, prior to the “kidnapping.” The five white Selectmen—Luther Nash, Eleazer Kellogg, Cotton Smith, Seth Nims, and Willard M. Kellogg—declined to intervene on Angeline’s behalf.22

1845-1865 – A public record of vital statistics shows Black residents of Amherst concentrated in three primary occupational categories: laborer, domestic servant, and pauper. According to genealogist James Avery Smith, the increase in domestics from 1860 to 1865 “reflects how hard it was for an unskilled black person to secure a job above a subsistence level.”23

1864 – A smallpox outbreak in March of this year led the town to remove occupants from a tenement on North Pleasant Street. The residents, all of whom were Black, were relocated to a
“Pest House” in Hadley. While the Black residents were away, an unknown party tried to burn down their tenement.24

1863 – Massachusetts Agricultural College, which became the University of Massachusetts Amherst, was founded.

1895 – An unsigned article in the Massachusetts Agricultural College student newspaper *Aggie Life* advocated for disenfranchising African Americans, claiming that Southern Blacks “are improvident, depraved, and strenuously resist any attempts at education,” and calling them a “body of people unprepared for freedom.” The article alleged that “the giving of the unqualified ballot to a people totally unfitted and unprepared for it was a direct blow against intelligent republican government.”25

1897 – Massachusetts Agricultural College admitted its first Black student.26

1898 – *The History of the Town of Amherst, Massachusetts* by Edward W. Carpenter and Charles F. Morehouse appears to deliberately erase a record of slavery in Amherst by omitting the valuation of enslaved persons from an historic tax document; the original tax record, with a column for human chattel, is still on file at the Jones Library.27

AMHERST IN THE 20TH CENTURY

1940s – Black people in Amherst were excluded from hotels, some restaurants, barbershops, and the fraternities of UMass and Amherst College.28

1948 – The University hired its first African American faculty member, Edwin D. Driver, in the sociology department. For several years, Driver, who was also the first faculty of non-European descent, was one of the only Black people on campus. During his first year at UMass, Driver rented an apartment in Amherst from a fellow professor. But after he was married, he was unable to find housing in Amherst, ultimately finding a place in Northampton—after a landlady mistook him for being Polish.29

1948 – Theodore Adams, a Black UMass student, was refused service at the private Quonset Club in Hadley which was owned by William F. Russell of Amherst. When Adams returned with an attorney, Russell claimed Adams was causing a disturbance, and police were subsequently posted at the door. Protestors with signs that read “Jim Crow Must Go” then picketed the package store in Amherst that was also owned by Russell.30

1949 – The first Black teacher, Sylvia G. Hawley, began teaching in the Amherst school system, at Amherst Junior High School.31

1950 – A deed for the sale of a property on Blue Hills Road mandated that “said premises shall not be sold or rented to any colored person or persons.”32
1964 – In a UMass freshmen class of nearly 2,500, only twelve students were of color. Of those twelve, eight would go on to graduate. Two years later, the entire Black student population at UMass was around fifty people, or about .001 percent of the student body.33

1969 – Appearing before the Amherst Board of Selectmen, two Black UMass students, William Hasson and Stanley Kinard, described numerous incidents in which Black students were threatened by whites and sought help from the police to no avail. Such incidents included: a white youth pulling a knife on a Black student in a local pizza place, and when the Black student reported it to a police officer, the officer simply shrugged. In another incident, a group of white youth chased down a car of Black women and then invited Black men to come “settle” the matter, then greeted the Black men with chains and tire jacks—and when these Black students reported the incident to the police, officers again responded indifferently. In reply to Hasson and Kinnard’s testimony, Chairman of the Board of Selectmen Norman MacLeod said it was his impression that the police were not acting out of racial bias.34

1973 – Graffiti with racial slurs was scrawled on the sidewalk in front of Amherst Regional High School and signed “KKK.”35

1976 – The UMass Black student newspaper reported that Craemen Gethers, a young Black man, had been charged and convicted of armed robbery in Hadley in a case that rested on inconsistent eye-witness testimony by white onlookers and trial by a jury of eleven whites and one Black. Gethers was sentenced to eight to twelve years in jail.36

1982 – A racial slur was written on a mural at Amherst Regional High School.37

1986 – A violent incident at UMass led to seven Black students sustaining injuries. Witnesses said some of the attacks were racially motivated and that police failed to respond quickly to Blacks being beaten.38

1990 – A white high school student violently assaulted a Black boy at a fair on the Amherst Town Common and used a racial slur. A headline in the Amherst Bulletin said the town was “shocked.” The fourteen-year-old victim was treated for torn ligaments in the Cooley Dickinson emergency room.39 When asked what motivated the incident, a group of white Amherst Regional High School students said, “We were brought up that way.”40

1990 – The NAACP filed a complaint against Amherst schools, citing an undercurrent of racism and harm to students of color, including an incident in which a white student “shoved a Confederate flag in the face of a black student and spoke about ‘the good old days.’”41

1990 – An article in the Amherst Bulletin covering Town Meeting referenced a sense of “discomfort” among Town Meeting members regarding “assertions that the white majority has allowed discrimination to go unchecked.”42
1994 – The NAACP voiced concerns about Amherst schools lacking teachers who reflect the students' racial and ethnic makeup, and lacking sensitivity to those students' experiences. The NAACP noted that 27 percent of Amherst’s school population consisted of Black, Latino and Asian students, while only 10 percent of teaching staff were non-white.43

2002 – The front window of Amherst Typewriter and Computer, a local Black-owned business, was smashed, and someone wrote “KKK” with a typewriter that owner Robert Green had set up outside. This incident came just five years after a previous incident in which someone broke the store’s front window at night, stole two computers, and smeared excrement in the store.44

2004 – Nine white UMass students, all student government representatives, were photographed with handmade images depicting themselves as members of the Ku Klux Klan. One image showed student senate speaker Patrick G. Higgins in a pointed KKK hat, holding a burning cross, captioned as “grand wizard,” with a speech bubble that said “I love ALANA.” ALANA is a campus group whose name stands for African Latino Asian/Pacific Islander Native American.45

2006 – A man who yelled racial slurs and was verbally abusive toward his neighbors was issued a warning by police.46

2014 – Racial slurs escalated into a Facebook post threatening violence at Amherst Regional High School, causing the school to temporarily close. Superintendent Maria Geryk said the school was conducting “a thorough investigation.”47

2014 – Amherst Regional High School math teacher Carolyn Gardner left her job in the wake of anonymous racist messages and threats.48

… many more racist incidents and evidence of structural racism not included here due to space constraints…

AMHERST TODAY

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau and reported by the Amherst League of Women Voters, there were 2,435 Black residents in Amherst in 2019, comprising 6.1% of the town population. Fifty-one percent of Black residents were below the poverty line in 2019, compared with 30% of whites.49
- In 2019 the Black median family income in Amherst was $45,464; white median family income was 2.4 times greater, $108,500.50
- Only 1.8% percent of owner-occupied housing in Amherst belongs to Black folks. Whites make up 78.7% of town residents but hold 84.1% of owner-occupied housing.51
- Of around 1,100 students enrolled in Amherst’s three elementary schools in 2019, 9% were Black, while 5.4% of school staff were Black. In the Amherst school system in the 2018-19 school year:
  - 2.3% of 12th grade white students dropped out;
o 6.3% of 12th grade Black students dropped out;
o 74.8% of graduates went on to attend a college or university;
o 38.8% of white graduates went on to attend a private, 4-year college or university;
o 0% of Black graduates went on to attend a private, 4-year college or university.\textsuperscript{52}

- According to data collected by Cooley Dickinson Hospital between 2012 and 2015, the mental-health hospitalization rate for Black people in Hampshire County was 1.7 times the rate for white people.\textsuperscript{53}

In her recent essay on the need for reparations for Black Americans in \textit{The New York Times Magazine}, journalist and 1619 Project founder Nikole Hannah-Jones explains, “You do not have to have laws forcing segregated housing and schools if white Americans, using their generational wealth and higher incomes, can simply buy their way into expensive enclaves with exclusive public schools that are out of the price range of most black Americans.”\textsuperscript{54} She might have been writing specifically about Amherst, where the average price for a home in South Amherst is $372,000 and in North Amherst, $473,000. In central Amherst, average rentals are $2,000 monthly.

Lack of intergenerational wealth prevents Black would-be entrepreneurs from opening businesses in Amherst. Of the 2,756 firms registered in Amherst in 2012 (most recent year available), just 8.5% were owned by non-white people.\textsuperscript{55} There is no data specifically on Black business ownership in Amherst; suffice to say, Black-owned firms are a slender share of the total number of businesses in town.

Whether in Amherst’s schools, housing, or commerce, Black residents of Amherst have faced and continue to face deeply-rooted racism and structural barriers. White residents—especially those who are homeowners or business owners—are the modern-day beneficiaries of Amherst’s standing as a wealthy white enclave, and, by extension, of the dire economic conditions of Black people who were enslaved here and have been subsequently excluded or made to feel unwelcome in the town’s schools, housing, businesses, and public spaces.

\textit{This timeline represents only a small sampling of Amherst’s history of white supremacy, anti-Black racism, and racial inequity. It was compiled by Reparations for Amherst, with research by Amherst resident Mattea Kramer. Cynthia Harbeson, Jones Library Special Collections, and Aaron Rubinstein, Special Collections and University Archives, University of Massachusetts, provided research assistance.}
KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS that we, Ernest J. Stachowicz and Stella V. Stachowicz, husband and wife, of Amherst, Hampshire, Massachusetts, for consideration paid, grant to Anthony E. Conklin and Mary B. Conklin, husband and wife, to hold jointly and to the survivor of them as tenants by the entirety, the land in said Amherst, situated on the east side of Blue Hills Road, shown as lot No. 24 on Plan of Lots on Blue Hills Road, dated Sept. 1933, T. L. Warner, Surveyor, recorded in Hampshire County Registry of Deeds Plan Book 18, Page 32, bounded and described as follows:

Beginning at a concrete post set in the easterly line of said Blue Hills Road, said concrete post marks the northeast corner of the land described; thence easterly, along land of the grantees, one hundred forty-seven and twenty-five hundredths (147.25) feet to an iron pipe; thence westerly, along land of the grantees, one hundred forty-seven and seventy-seven hundredths (147.77) feet to an iron pipe set in the easterly line of Blue Hills Road; thence northerly, along the easterly line of Blue Hills Road, eighty (80) feet to the place of beginning.

It is mutually agreed between the parties hereto, their heirs, administrators, executors and assigns, that this conveyance is made subject to the following restrictions: (1) That no portion of any building constructed upon said property shall be nearer than 35 feet from the easterly side of said Blue Hills Road. (2) That said premises shall not be sold or rented to any colored person or persons. (3) That all service wires, including those for electricity and telephone running from the highway to any building or buildings erected or to be erected shall be installed underground. (4) That no house shall be constructed upon said property designed to accommodate more than one family.

Hereby conveying a portion of the land conveyed to us by deed of Horace G. Babb and Dorothy H. Babb, dated August 15, 1950, recorded in Hampshire County Registry of Deeds Book 1076, Page 332.

Witness our hands and seal this first day of December, 1950.

Ernest J. Stachowicz
Stella V. Stachowicz

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

December 1, 1950

Then personally appeared the above named

Ernest J. Stachowicz

and acknowledged the foregoing instrument to be his free act and deed, in open court, before me, a notary public in and for said county, who, being by virtue of my commission authorized to do so, did on Dec. 5, 1950 at 3 o'clock & 28 mins. P.M. record, return'd, att'd. & Exam'd.
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Reparations for Amherst, Massachusetts

Report on Anti-Black Racism and Black/White Disparities in the Town of Amherst

Contents

Executive Summary
Introduction
Housing
Education
Health
Income and Employment
Transportation
Policing
References

March 9, 2021

Written by: Matthew Andrews, Jeff Fishman, Daiana Griffith, Mattea Kramer, Michele Miller, Mary Porcino, and Anita Sarro
Edited by: Mattea Kramer
NOTE ABOUT DATA

Throughout the research for this report we continually confronted a lack of basic data about race in Amherst. Astonishingly, we aren’t certain of the size of Amherst’s Black population. The 2010 Census counted 5,068 Black residents, or 13.4% of Amherst’s populace. Yet, because some college students list Amherst as their home when filling out the Census, 13.4% is likely an overestimate of the local Black population. In 2019, the American Community Survey (ACS) estimated that Amherst had 2,435 Black residents, or 6.1% of the populace. Since the ACS is only a survey, not a census, and since it differs so dramatically from the 2010 Census, we suspect that 6.1% is an underestimate of the Black population. For the purposes of this report, we will use the 2010 Census.

Meanwhile, during the compilation of this report, the Town of Amherst mailed paper census forms to every household. This annual survey could collect information on race/ethnicity, but it does not. Repeatedly throughout our research we found that town data are not disaggregated by race; to put that another way, most town data ignore race. One form of racism is omission.

In the report that follows, we have used what town-level data are available, and where appropriate we have used indicators from the region or state to help us better understand Amherst. We have also conducted interviews. Much work remains.
Executive Summary

The information provided in this report describes a present-day and historical Amherst that is not the progressive, equitable place that many white residents imagine. Instead, research in key areas—housing, education, health, income and employment, transportation, and policing—reveals systemic racism and classism that marginalizes Black residents and inflicts harm.

Housing

- Communities of color have faced implicit and explicit racial discrimination in housing in Amherst throughout its history. Often deprived of full participation in the local economy, many Black residents or would-be residents find Amherst unaffordable.
- Only 1.8% of owner-occupied housing is occupied by Black residents.
- A disproportionate number of Black households are “rent burdened,” that is, forced to spend one third or more of their income on housing alone.

In Amherst today, racial bias in housing has primarily taken the form of NIMBYism, or Not In My Backyard. Many white residents say they support the idea of affordable housing—just not in their own neighborhood. Butternut Farms, a 26-unit affordable rental development, was delayed for five years and cost its developer over $150,000 in legal fees in a suit brought by Orchard Valley abutters, who claimed harm for reasons that included 20% of the units would be set aside for minority households.

Education

- The Amherst-Pelham Regional School District’s own data over the past 30 years show that Black students are disproportionately disciplined relative to their white peers and tracked into lower-level courses, and that staff are disproportionately white relative to the student body.
- Complaints from students, parents, staff, and the local chapter of the NAACP have cited harmful racist incidents against both students and faculty of color.
- In meetings with an outside consultant, some stakeholders have question whether both racial equity and academic excellence can be achieved, as they are, in their view, mutually exclusive.
- The balance of power in the school district remains overwhelmingly white, with white stakeholders failing to express sufficient discontent to alter a school system that disfavors people of color.

Public records from the district reveal a pattern in which staff and students of color are asked to participate in time-intensive diversity or equity committees and to make recommendations based on their findings. In the wake of such efforts, administrators undertake little in the way of meaningful change. Subsequently, there is administrative turnover, and the pattern repeats.
Racism also permeates the campus of the **University of Massachusetts**, where hurtful and sometimes dangerous acts of racial hostility erupt against students and faculty. Likewise, **Amherst College**, whose founding was supported in part by the intergenerational white wealth accumulated through slaveholding, continues in the 21st century to be an institution where overt racially-threatening acts occur, and where alumni describe a culture that is alienating and in which Black faculty were 33 times as likely to be denied tenure as their white colleagues between 2000 and 2016.

**Health**

The culture of a community is a strong determinant of the health and well-being of its residents. Marginalization, isolation, and exclusion that results from interpersonal and institutional racism have negative consequences for Black residents in Amherst. The mechanism is clear: living under systemic racism perpetuates a state of physiological stress, ultimately causing physical and mental illness.

- According to Cooley Dickinson, local Black communities bear a disproportionate burden of disease, suffering higher rates of chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular conditions, asthma, and diabetes. Both adults and children suffer disproportionate levels of depression, suicidal thoughts, and self-harm.
- Racism affects Black patients in the form of medical bias. Local providers acknowledge that bias and prejudice exist throughout their agencies, specifically in a lack of staff diversity, policies, assumptions, prejudgments, and intolerance. Meanwhile, health outcomes, including survival, vastly improve when Black patients receive care from Black providers.
- A significant threat to health, food insecurity affects 38% of all Hampshire county households. Last year, 24% of those using the food pantry at the Amherst Survival Center were Black.
- In Amherst, the safety-net health facilities Musante Clinic and Amherst Survival Center Free Clinic cannot meet all the needs of the local at-risk population.
- Black communities show higher rates of infection, hospitalization, and death from Covid-19. Although vaccines are now available, Black residents of Massachusetts have a vaccination rate that is half that of whites.

**Income and Employment**

- A disproportionate number of people of color in Amherst live below the poverty line.
- As of 2019, the Black median family income in Amherst was $45,464; white median family income was 2.4 times greater, $108,500.
- The University of Massachusetts is the largest employer in town, yet only 5.1% of all employees identified as Black/African American. Already underrepresented, Black employees were more likely to be furloughed indefinitely due to Covid-19.
• Black residents may hold two or even three jobs in order to make ends meet.
• Most small businesses are white-owned, and Black would-be entrepreneurs face particular barriers to establishing a business in Amherst.

Transportation

• Black residents are considerably more likely than their white counterparts to rely on public transit and to be among the 52% of PVTA riders who have no alternative means of travel.
• While the PVTA is fairly reliable and convenient for riders from the Five Colleges, permanent residents face considerable hurdles, including service interruptions and a lack of basic amenities such as sheltered bus stops.
• There are no consistent routes from Amherst to Holyoke, Springfield, and Greenfield, where technical and community colleges are located, affecting access to higher education.

The high cost of living in Amherst and racially-biased practices that routinely impose higher costs for Black people to purchase, finance, and insure automobiles, make care ownership out of reach for many. Lack of reliable transportation then interferes with the ability to access essential health care, fresh food, and educational and employment opportunities, all of which negatively and materially affect overall health.

Policing

Amherst’s Community Safety Working Group is conducting a detailed assessment of policing in town using data provided by the Amherst Police Department. This report does not duplicate their efforts. However, preliminary data from the APD indicate that,

• Black drivers in Amherst speed less and are involved in fewer car accidents than their white peers, but are stopped and searched disproportionately for “investigatory” reasons.
• Black drivers are 1.5 times more likely than whites to be arrested following a traffic stop.
Introduction

Like many other rural New England towns, Amherst is a primarily white enclave. Its settlement as a mostly white community was not coincidental but rather intentional, the product of systematic reinforcement of social conditions since the town’s founding in 1759.

Simple Timeline of the Black Population in Amherst

The first Black residents of Amherst were enslaved people who had been abducted from Africa or who descended from those who had been abducted. Records kept by a local doctor in East Hadley, as Amherst was then known, show that numerous Amherst households enslaved human beings in the mid 18th century. Though Massachusetts had been the first colony to legalize slavery, the practice dwindled in the state by the turn of the 19th century. (Romer, 2009)

By the middle of the 19th century, according to Davis-Harris (1982), “The population of blacks [in Amherst], designated ‘colored people’ at the time and settled principally in homes south of Northampton Road near the Hadley line, was ninety-one counted at the end of the Civil War.”

By 1900, according to the U.S. Census, there were 199 Black residents—which was considered significant in a town the size of Amherst, and “attributed largely to the need for servants in the homes of well-to-do Amherst College faculty.” By 1950, that number had been nearly cut in half, to 110. (Essays on Amherst’s History, 1978)

The U.S. Census in 2010 counted 5,068 Black residents in Amherst, out of a total population of 37,819.

The Great Migration and Aftermath

Black people were legally enslaved in the U.S. until Emancipation in 1863. In the 20th century, more than 6 million African Americans fled conditions of economic deprivation, discrimination, legal racial apartheid known as Jim Crow, the specter of white terror including sexual violence and lynching, and migrated from the southern U.S. to cities in the Northeast, Midwest, and West, in what became known as the Great Migration. (Anderson, 2016) Yet even as “many African-Americans moved north in hopes to escape the racism they experienced in the south, many found that discrimination continued, even in supposedly progressive places like Springfield and Amherst.” (How We Settled, 2019) Indeed, once arrived in new cities and towns across the U.S.,

Many Black people found that they could only be hired for low-paying work, including as janitors, maids, and drivers. In addition, they were often excluded from renting or
buying property, disabling them from settling down or building wealth. The social inequities faced by Black community members after the Civil War and well into the 20th century laid the groundwork for exclusion from opportunities that we continue to see today. (How We Settled, 2019)

**Racist Amherst**

In contrast to the overt anti-Black racism of southern communities, many white Amherst residents purported indifference toward Black residents. To this day, some refer to Amherst’s Black community as “invisible.” Two white residents share their experiences of Amherst’s Black community members:

There was a small number of black families here in town, and I believe that most of them came as servants in some category or another. And we didn’t - I think we were like everybody else. We didn’t dislike Negroes, but we didn’t associate with them. I’m sure these people were just about 100 percent ignored, although this brings to mind there were on the football team at least two blacks and maybe three. I don’t think we disliked them, we kind of admired them, but after they got off the football field, I don’t believe we had one iota to do with them. (Essays on Amherst’s History, 1978)

They were treated with, I think stiff kindness, but they stayed in their place. I’m afraid in Amherst there was a bit of a barway there. It wasn’t violence really, it was just a bit of indifference to hobnob. Just as we didn’t hobnob with the Slavic people. They never worked in stores except, perhaps, as janitors. They rode the trolley, of course, but I don’t know that we would sit with them, though we should have for we went to school with them. (Essays on Amherst’s History, 1978)

Racism also took the form of overt anti-Black attitudes. A white resident recalls a section of town populated with Black residents:

We weren’t scared of coloreds. They were just different, you know? We never had any trouble with the colored people, down Northampton Road and Snell Street. That used to be called N----- Heaven [slur omitted].

**Classist Amherst**

One could argue classism was (and is) Amherst’s most egregious form of discrimination, and likely contributed to Amherst being a white enclave. Advertisements for sale of land in the early 1900s, listed by prominent towns-person and real estate agent W.R. Brown, demonstrate exclusionary sales practices: “Price to first-class people very reasonable, to others very high.” In his book *Attractive Amherst*, published in 1912, Brown describes the people of Amherst:
The many advantages of Amherst have kept here a large percentage of the descendants of the early settlers, who are now engaged in agriculture, business and professional life. The new-comers likewise, for the most part, are men of high character and principles. (Brown, 1912)

Amherst Social Order and White Denial

In 1953-4 an Amherst College student, David Chaplin, did his thesis on the Black community. His research, though limited to the early 1950s, tells an important story about why Amherst remained primarily white while surrounding communities like Springfield and Holyoke were growing their Black communities. Chaplin found that, by the 1950s, the number of Black residents in Amherst had dropped nearly in half since 1900. “Earlier economic opportunities for small scale businesses, cleaning shops, and catering and hauling services had diminished along with the employment of household servants.” (Essays On Amherst’s History, 1978)

Most of the Blacks still in Amherst by the mid 1950s were from long-established families who owned their own homes, as it was difficult for younger Blacks coming of age to find jobs in Amherst. Employers did not easily hire Blacks because of potential issues with fellow employees. A director of staff employment at one of the educational institutions asked: “What are you going to do if five of your best workers tell you they won’t work with a prospective Negro employee?” (Essays On Amherst’s History, 1978) This created an age gap, with most Black residents being either children or older persons “who had found some ‘place’ in the town and who knew where they were and where they were not welcome.” (Essays On Amherst’s History, 1978)

Of four barbers in town, only one was willing to cut a Black customer’s hair. Several dozen restrictive real-estate covenants, though illegal, were being actively enforced. And up until 1945, the Lord Jeffrey Inn, owned by Amherst College, banned Black guests.

Amherst has always considered itself a progressive and well-meaning community—a town that welcomes people from all over the world. The collective denial that any real discrimination exists is as present today as it was at the time of Chaplin’s research.

As one white resident explained: “I don’t know anything about the Negroes here, but I do know that there isn’t any discrimination.” (Essays On Amherst’s History, 1978)
For centuries the town of Amherst has used exclusionary housing policies to deprive communities of color from participating fully in local economic prosperity. There are many examples of implicit and explicit racial discrimination in the history of housing in Amherst up to the present day, which explain why Amherst remains overwhelmingly white.

Racial animosity has frequently surfaced in Amherst in the form of not-in-my-backyard (NIMBY) attitudes. NIMBYism in Amherst can be traced as far back as the 19th century: in 1860, for instance, white Amherst residents derisively nicknamed a tenement house on East Main Street the “Beehive” for its continuous activity. (U.S. National Park Service, 2000) This tenement housed poor families and African Americans, and was known as the center of one of the few African American enclaves in the town. The boardinghouse was often the target of disdainful remarks from town residents and local reporters. (Amherst Historic, 2015)

In the early 1860s, local newspapers reported on a number of events that took place at the Beehive. The reporters often used a denigrating tone when talking about the Beehive and its residents (for example, referring to residents as the “swarm”), indicating that their presence was unwelcome. Tellingly, one of the events reported by newspapers in 1864 was an attempt to set the tenement house on fire after it was rumored that a Beehive resident contracted smallpox. (Amherst Historic, 2015) The fire was put out in time, but the event painfully reinforced the message that Beehive residents—African American people—were not welcome in Amherst.

Racially Restrictive Real-Estate Covenants

Racially restrictive covenants were contractual agreements that prohibited the purchase, lease, or occupation of property by a particular group of people, usually African American people and other racial minorities. (Fair Housing Center of Greater Boston) Across the U.S. and in Amherst specifically, this was a legal tool at the disposal of white people who wanted to maintain the racial homogeneity of their neighborhoods.

The most notable example of the use of racially restrictive deeds in Amherst can be seen on the property deeds of multiple lots on Blue Hills Road. In 1947 alone, there were six registered deeds on this street that contained racially restrictive covenants. The deeds of these properties all contained exactly the same language: “That said premises shall not be sold or rented to any colored person or persons.” (Hampshire Registry of Deeds) This indicates that the inclusion of
racist exclusionary language on these deeds was a concerted, coordinated effort among residents on this street.

It was not a matter of chance that these restrictive deeds were common on Blue Hills Road. This street bordered a historically African American neighborhood in the center of Amherst known as the Westside Historic District. This neighborhood encompassed approximately 44 properties on Hazel Avenue, Northampton Road, and Baker and Snell Streets. Many of the residents in this neighborhood were working-class people who had come from the southern U.S. to Amherst, with the hope of finding less racial hostility, opportunities for advancement, and acceptance in the larger community. (U.S National Park Service, 2000)

Unaffordable Amherst

Housing in Amherst is expensive relative to the rest of Hampshire County and to comparable towns across the U.S. (Town of Amherst Master Plan, 2010) About 45% of the Amherst population is rent burdened, meaning they spend more than one third of their income on housing, in a town that is increasingly financially out of reach for many.

There is little housing data in Amherst broken out by race. But it is easy to deduce that a disproportionate share of those who are rent burdened are Black residents, considering that 51% of the Black population in Amherst is below the poverty line. (League of Women Voters, 2020) In terms of home ownership, only 1.8% percent of owner-occupied housing in Amherst is occupied by Black folks. In contrast, whites make up 78.7% of town residents but account for 84% of owner-occupied housing. (League of Women Voters, 2020)

According to the most recent Amherst Housing Production Plan (2013), there was an unmet need for a total of 4,730 extremely low- to moderate-income housing units. But despite the severe need for production of affordable housing, Amherst residents are often unwilling to accept new developments.

Our Neighbor Springfield

Not far to the south of Amherst, the city of Springfield boasts a population that is 22% African American. Both Springfield and Amherst are the largest towns in their respective counties. Springfield’s history and its present-day policies can help us understand why the city’s racial demographics are so different from Amherst’s.

According to Our Plural History (2009), “During the period leading up to the Civil War, Springfield was a locus of abolitionist sentiment and activity.” By the 1830s, Springfield was a key station along the Underground Railroad. During the Great Migration, many African Americans “fled the segregationist Jim Crow system in the South to join a thriving, long-established black community in Springfield.” (Our Plural History, 2009)
In Springfield today, high-rise apartment buildings may be up to 150 feet, and certain business districts allow for structures up to 400 feet. These zoning regulations made it possible for more affordable housing opportunities than in Amherst. (How We Settled, 2019)

According to Amherst’s 2016 zoning bylaws, the maximum structure height of any building in a business or residential district is 55 feet. This regulation has limited opportunities for affordable housing by preventing the construction of higher-rise apartment buildings and multi-family housing. Whether or not these policies were intended to exclude people of color, they have surely impacted the town’s demographics. (How We Settled, 2019)

**NIMBYism in Amherst Today**

Today NIMBYism takes the form of opposition to affordable housing developments. Since people of color are disproportionately in need of affordable housing due to historic economic exclusion, town residents’ opposition to affordable housing serves as a proxy for racial discrimination and effectively reduces the number of African Americans and other racial minorities who can live in Amherst. (Shriver Center of Poverty Law, 2018)

One of the most salient recent examples of opposition to affordable housing involved Butternut Farms in Orchard Valley. In 2002, the Amherst Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) approved a comprehensive permit for HAP, Inc. (now known as Wayfinders) to build Butternut Farms, a 26-unit rental affordable housing development. Immediately, Orchard Valley residents filed a suit in Land Court seeking to invalidate the zoning approval. The abutters argued that the ZBA lacked authority to approve the comprehensive permit because the town had exceeded the 10% subsidized housing threshold. They also claimed injury specifically due to the permit’s requirement that 20% of the units be set aside for minority households.

The state Supreme Judicial Court ultimately ruled in favor of the ZBA and upheld its authority to issue the permit. (Citizens’ Housing and Planning Association, 2008) Yet, even though the abutters lost this battle, their legal action significantly delayed the project—for five years—and cost HAP $150,000 in legal fees. This is the kind of time-consuming and costly opposition that advocates can expect when trying to create housing in Amherst that is within reach for those who’ve been historically excluded.

Another more recent instance of NIMBYism has to do with a proposed 28-unit single-room occupancy development at 132 Northampton Road, which would house homeless and extremely low-income individuals. This development faced opposition from neighboring residents who cited concerns about the size of the development, the potential for increased criminal activity, the possibility of drug and alcohol use, and the endangerment of neighborhood children. Many of these abutters publicly stated their support for affordable housing *in general*, but concluded that *this location* just wasn’t right. (Office of the Town Manager, 2020)
A single-room occupancy development like the one proposed at 132 Northampton Road could help mitigate the crisis of homelessness in Amherst. Craig’s Door, a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing services to the town’s homeless population reported that during the 2017-2018 season they served 172 individuals and had to turn someone away 32 times a month due to capacity issues. Of the guests Craig’s Door served during this period, 15% were Black. (Craig’s Doors)
**Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools**

Decades of data on the Amherst-Pelham Regional Public Schools (ARPS) reveal a school district in which African American students are disproportionately disciplined relative to their white peers, and in which staff are disproportionately white relative to the student body and community from which they are drawn. The effect is the marginalization of Black students and a sense of unequal, and sometimes hostile, treatment.

In the 1995-1996 school year, Black students were 9.5% of the high school student body but accounted for 25.9% of suspensions. Fifteen years later, in 2009-2010, Black students were 7.8% of high school students but 15.2% of suspensions. (ARPS, 1996; 2010) And 25 years later, in the 2019-2020 school year, Black students were 8.2% of the ARHS student population but 18.75% of suspensions. (Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020)

In 1990, the Amherst chapter of the NAACP filed a complaint against the ARPS, voicing concerns that included not only unequal disciplinary treatment and a faculty who did not reflect the students’ racial makeup, but also specific harmful racist incidents, and the disproportionate tracking of Black students into lower-level courses. (Watson, 1990) Following the NAACP’s legal action, the school district agreed to form a committee to study the effects of instructional grouping; to co-host community forums on race in the school district; and to pay the NAACP’s attorney fees. (U.S. District Court, 1993)

Little changed. Twenty years after the NAACP’s complaint, in 2010, an outside consultant conducted an equity audit of the ARPS and reported that “Staff, community members and students told stories of communities feeling marginalized. . . and of disparate treatment in access to courses and high quality instruction, and in discipline referrals and special education placement.” (Ray-Taylor, 2010) Moreover,

> Both teachers and students described what they viewed as cultural and/or race-based negative activities. Students stated that they feared nothing would be done to improve the issue, and teachers stated that they feared negative repercussions in response to raising complaints. . . . Throughout the visit there was evidence of pent up concern for disparities and for insensitive and unfair treatment. (Ray-Taylor, 2010)

The same audit also showed significant disparities between white and Black student achievement, noting, for example, that participation in the advanced 8th grade mathematics program was listed as 75% white and 3% African American. (Rossi-Taylor, 2010) Importantly, the audit also found a lack of consensus about whether stakeholders were “on the same page” with goals for equity and diversity, with some stakeholders questioning if “both equity and excellence can be achieved, as they are, in their view, mutually exclusive.” (Ray-Taylor, 2010) This may be a primary tension in the ARPS, as some white stakeholders may see the central
value—and positive reputation—of the ARPS to be its impressive record at supporting affluent white students on their path to college, even as some students of color or low-income whites may be excluded or left behind.

In 2011, despite considerable work already completed to diagnose equity issues in the district, then-Superintendent Maria Geryk tasked an Equity Inquiry Group to “Uncover, identify, and understand inequities in our schools.” (ARPS, 2011) This group went on to reiterate numerous long-standing problems, including: “De-facto tracking that prevents some students from accessing enrichment/electives and other programming”; “Teachers’ culturally-driven values that shape instruction in the classroom”; “Unconscious biases and assumptions about students’ potential that impact teacher expectations and beliefs”; “Surface commitment to diversity and equity in the district and community”; and the “Continuing challenge of recruitment and ‘after-hiring support’ of staff of color to develop a staff that is representative of our student population.” (ARPS, 2011)

Underscoring the lack of support for staff of color, anonymous racist messages and threats forced ARHS math teacher Carolyn Gardner to leave her job in 2014. On July 10th of that year a special section of the Daily Hampshire Gazette ran with the headline “A year of racial tension in Amherst schools boils over.” It described the events leading up to Gardner’s departure:

Amherst schools have been the site of multiple racist assaults throughout the 2013-2014 school year. Most of the vitriol has been aimed at Carolyn Gardner, a black math teacher who began teaching at Amherst Regional High School in September, 2013. She’s been the target of graffiti and hateful notes. Other incidents include racially-based bullying that led to a social media post that scared the administration into closing the high school for a day and a “serious and aggressive” assault on a student. (Daily Hampshire Gazette, 2014)

Following these incidents, the school district conducted after-action reviews and pursued further staff trainings in cultural competency and “interrupting” civil rights violations.

Yet the balance of power in the school district remains overwhelmingly white, with primarily white administrators and white school committee members in charge and overseeing a staff that is 75% white. Today 5.4% of Amherst staff yet 10% of Amherst students identify as African American. (Mass. Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, 2020) In the 2018-19 school year, 2.3% of 12th grade white students dropped out, while 6.3% of 12th grade Black students dropped out, and 38.8% of white graduates went on to attend a private, four-year college or university, while 0% of Black graduates went on to attend a private, four-year college or university. (Town of Amherst, 2020)

White stakeholders—who hold most of the power in the Amherst school district—have not expressed sufficient discontent to alter a school system that disfavors Black students. There remains a recurring pattern in which staff (and students) of color are called upon to participate in committees or engage in other time-intensive (and/or emotionally exhausting) work that is
ostensibly intended to address the schools’ persistent inequities. Such work has been underway for more than a quarter century, yet today administrators and staff in the ARPS do not have organized access to the reporting and recommendations of prior committees on equity and multiculturalism. An apparent lack of consensus about whether the district should prioritize equity has meant only modest progress over decades.

The above constitutes just a brief description of anti-Black racism in the ARPS. A thorough report would span hundreds of pages.

University of Massachusetts

Originally the Massachusetts Agricultural College, or Mass Aggie, the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, was founded in 1863 under the Federal Morrill Land-Grant Colleges Act, and served only white male students for most of its first three decades. In 1895 the student newspaper Aggie Life published an unattributed editorial advocating for disenfranchising African Americans, claiming that Southern Blacks “are improvident, depraved, and strenuously resist any attempts at education,” and calling them a “body of people unprepared for freedom.” (UMass Special Collections, 2019) Just two years later, in 1897, the school admitted its first Black student. The university did not hire its first Black faculty member until the middle of the 20th century. As of Fall 1967, Black students constituted less than 1% of university enrollment. (Bell, 2012)

In 1954 the Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation in schools was unconstitutional. White people across the U.S. responded with widespread and coordinated resistance, violent and otherwise. Black people turned to civic action and public protest in order to demand equal access; at UMass, Black students demonstrated and circulated petitions for equality and for the recruitment and retention of Black faculty. (Bell, 2012) In 1969, the inaugural volume of the UMass student publication Drum included the following statement:

We, the Black Student Community, recognize that the Colleges are not, and have never been, seriously committed to satisfying our needs and the needs of the broader Black Community. Previous efforts to implement programs that speak to needs have led to meaningless dialogues between individual campus groups and their respective administrative structures. Innumerable meetings, countless proposals and ‘advisory committees’ have continually frustrated our efforts to determine the reality of our presence. (Drum, 1969)

Although this statement is more than a half-century old, it could have been written by university students today. “We have the same list of demands since 1969, and nothing has been changed,” said a UMass student activist named Stacy Tchouanguem in 2015, during a protest over the university’s lack of diversity. (Bowler, 2015)
Racism continues to permeate the UMass campus, which periodically erupts following a deeply hurtful act of racial hostility. When angry white students beat a Black student unconscious following the 1986 World Series, it made national headlines, with the *Washington Post* referring to UMass as “one of the most racially troubled campuses in the country.” (Maraniss, 1990) In 1992, *The New York Times* reported that a United States Justice Department mediation team had been brought to the campus “to help heal the wounds.” (Depalma, 1992)

Yet wounds remain, with new harms heaped on the old. In 2004, nine white members of the UMass student government were photographed with handmade images depicting themselves as members of the Ku Klux Klan. One image showed student senate speaker Patrick G. Higgins in a pointed KKK hat, holding a burning cross, captioned as “grand wizard,” with a speech bubble that said “I love ALANA.” ALANA stands for African, Latino, Asian/Pacific Islander, Native American. (Amherst Bulletin, 2004)

In the fall of 2014, a Black student found the phrase “kill these n------s” scrawled across his dorm room door in Coolidge Hall. (Ferguson, 2016) This was not an isolated incident; in the *Amherst Wire*, a publication produced by the school’s journalism students, Black students described being the target of racial slurs, and the complicit silence of white witnesses who declined to intervene on their behalf. In 2015 the university convened a ‘diversity planning committee’ as well as listening sessions in which students were invited to share painful experiences. Yet following these sessions there was a lack of meaningful change for Black students, who have continued to protest. (Weaver, 2015)

In 2016, then-student Ellanjé Ferguson published an article called “Whiteout: Life as a black student at UMass Amherst,” describing UMass as a Primarily White Institution, or an institution in which whites account for half or more of the student population. “My peers have protested poor treatment, demanded diversity plans and asked for more support from the moment I stepped foot on campus. . . . Students of color have the right to demand less talk and more action, especially when they’re dealing with racial hostility at a place they call their home nine months out of the year.” (Ferguson, 2016)

It is not only students who feel such hostility and isolation. At an orientation for new faculty in 2013, Dr. Karla Zelaya was presumed by a colleague to be in food service and asked to refill the orange juice. “I was crushed,” she said of the experience, noting that on the same day, a fellow professor complimented her English (English is her first language). (Ferguson, 2016) Dr. Zelaya is now a professor at the University of North Alabama.

As of Fall 2020, just 4.2% of faculty, 5.5% of undergraduates, and 6.4% of graduate students at UMass identified as Black/African American. (UMass, 2020)
Reverend David Parsons and Oliver Cowls were among the first white settlers in Amherst. They also both enslaved Black people, and both had sons who became prominent town residents who made foundational donations to the establishment of Amherst College.

Minister of the First Church of Amherst Rev. David Parsons (1712-1781) owned three enslaved Black people whose names were Pompey, Rose, and Goffy. Parsons’s son Rev. David Parsons (1749-1823) contributed funds and land to Amherst Academy, an affiliated institution that preceded Amherst College, and was one of several people who signed a bond for the college’s founding. Today the campus building known as the Octagon sits on the site of the First Church of Amherst, which was donated by the younger Parsons. Thus chattel slavery existed on the very land upon which Amherst College now sits, and was gifted to the College as a result of intergenerational white wealth created at least in part by slaveholding.

In 1824, Dr. Rufus Cowls, son of Amherst slave owner Oliver Cowls, donated to the Trustees of Amherst Academy a tract of land in Maine valued at $3,000 (more than $80,000 today). Amherst College received its official charter the following year; thus Cowls’s gift directly supported the creation of Amherst College.

Edward Jones, class of 1826, was the first African American to enroll at Amherst College. Yet, from the 1830s until World War II, all-white fraternities were central to Amherst’s social life. In 1948 a Black student named Thomas Gibbs from Evanston, Illinois, made national news by pledging the Amherst chapter of Phi Kappa Psi. Some fraternities at Amherst subsequently integrated; others remained entirely white until all fraternities were officially abolished from campus in 1984 (some continued to operate clandestinely thereafter). Whether officially or effectively excluded from Amherst’s social life, many Black students felt isolated by racism. (Saxton, 2020)

In the 21st Century, Amherst College has made efforts to diversify its student body beyond its white roots, yet “while numerically speaking there may be greater diversity, brown students still suffer the same feelings of hostility and alienation.” (Oka, 2015) In June 2020, alumna Chaka S. Laguerre submitted a letter to College President Biddy Martin undersigned by some 360 alumni describing that sense of alienation. Referencing a student protest known as Amherst Uprising, Laguerre emphasized that “the violence, harassment, and exclusion felt by students [of color] at other colleges and universities were also felt by members of their own community.” (Laguerre, 2020) The letter pointed out that “From Fall 2000 to Fall 2016, Black faculty were 33 times as likely to be denied tenure as their white colleagues,” and that in 2017 an unidentified person left a noose on Amherst College’s Pratt Field.

On August 3, 2020, Amherst College President Biddy Martin issued the following apology:

To our Black students and alumni, on behalf of the College and in my role as its current president, I offer you an apology for the harm you have experienced here and for having not made more progress. . . . [T]oo often white people deny responsibility for what they see as the sins of the past without recognizing how those sins live in the present, how
systemic they are, and how much we who are white benefit from them, whether consciously and willfully or not. Against that backdrop, I offer you, our Black alumni and students, our recognition that the realities of structural racism in the United States have shaped our educational institutions, including Amherst, and my deep sorrow about the toll your negative experiences at Amherst have taken. (Martin, 2020)

Though Amherst College is a private institution, the College and the town support one another in a number of ways. Among other benefits, the town enjoys a reputational boost from having a prestigious and top-ranked liberal arts college located in its downtown. At present, the College is establishing a Steering Committee on a Racial History of Amherst.
Health

Racism has a profoundly negative effect on the individual and collective health of Black residents of Amherst. Because there is little town-level data on health, and even less information on health by racial subgroup, we have used a variety of county-level sources, personal interviews, and national research to inform our understanding of how racism affects the health of Amherst residents.

Health and health outcomes are influenced by multiple social determinants. (CDC, 2021) Some, such as income and employment, housing, transportation, and access to quality education are covered in other sections of this report. This section addresses health care access and quality and food insecurity. Most importantly, the social and community context of a town has a direct effect on health. Where that context includes systemic racism, those who live under its burden suffer real, direct, and harmful health consequences.

Direct Health Effects of Racism

The American Medical Society (AMA, November 2020) and the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS, November 2020) have recognized that interpersonal, institutional, and systemic racism is a serious threat to public health and impedes the delivery of appropriate medical care and advancement of health equity. Cities nationwide, including twelve Massachusetts municipalities, have declared that racism is a public health crisis. (American Public Health Association, 2021) Racism affects Black people regardless of income, employment status, access to health care and ability to pay.

As we have seen throughout this report, race-based discriminatory practices are pervasive in Amherst. Such white supremacy is a form of historic, generational, social, and interpersonal discrimination, bias, and psychological trauma. (Darling A et al, 2020) The cumulative effects of surviving everyday under vulnerable conditions, with messages on multiple levels that your needs are not important or respected, is the harmful reality for many Black residents.

In physiological terms, internalized racial discrimination causes elevation in stress hormones. Chronic stress damages all bodily systems, increasing physical vulnerability to asthma and cancer (Cooley Dickinson, 2019), cardiovascular complications, obesity, diabetes, and early death, as well as mental health outcomes such as depression, substance use disorders, and sleep disturbances. (MA Public Health Network)

Nationally, African Americans bear a disproportionate burden of disease, are 50% more likely to have high blood pressure, and suffer the highest death rates among all racial groups for all cancers. (GARE, 2018) Within Massachusetts, Black residents have higher rates of diabetes, obesity, hypertension, chronic kidney disease, peripheral vascular disease, and heart attacks. (Tufts Health Foundation, 2018) Within Hampshire County and by implication in Amherst, Black
residents suffer higher rates of cardiovascular disease, asthma, and diabetes. (Cooley Dickinson, 2019) These medically complex conditions increase the need for more frequent, specialized care, and drive up medical costs for those affected.

Mental health hospital rates in Hampshire County are 1.7 times higher for Black residents than white residents. (Cooley Dickinson, 2019) Locally and throughout the county, more children are experiencing mental health issues, and this is disproportionately true for youth of color. According to the Community Action Pioneer Valley Community Needs Assessment, “increasing numbers of youth are also reporting depressive symptoms/suicidal thoughts/self-harm; low-income youth, LGBTQ youth, girls/young women, and people of color report these issues to a greater extent than other groups.” (Darling A et al, 2020)

The culture of a community, including civic engagement and nondiscriminatory safety, is an independent determinant of physical and mental health. (Cooley Dickinson, 2019) In Amherst, the Black population is not proportionately represented in local government bodies, and representation is often absent entirely. The inability to participate fully in community activities and feeling unsafe in one’s own community due to implicit and explicit racism—including in law enforcement practices—result in a sense of isolation and exclusion. Stress levels increase, precipitating chronic physical and mental health issues. (Cooley Dickinson, 2019; CDC, 2021) In the simplest of terms, by sustaining a culture of systemic racism, Amherst makes its Black residents sick.

The connections between chronic forms of stress and chronic forms of illness such as hypertension are clear. However, due to the longstanding societal stigmas surrounding mental health, coupled with an overriding mistrust of health care systems due to historic maltreatment (Bajaj SS and Stanford FD, 2021), Black residents in Amherst are less likely to disclose their health conditions to providers and are less likely to seek treatment.

**Health Care Access and Quality**

Mandatory health insurance coverage in Massachusetts means the state has a relatively small share of uninsured residents. However, in 2019, although the rate for uninsured white residents was a low 3%, the rate of uninsured Black residents was almost double, 5.5%. (KFF State Health Facts, 2019) As of 2018, over 70% of all Massachusetts residents received health care coverage through their employer. (MA 2018 Employer Survey, June 2019) For many, loss of employment or unstable employment means loss of coverage, and due to discrimination in hiring practices this is disproportionately likely to affect Black people.

Access to local health care facilities and health providers is limited by individual economic resources and transportation options. The regional hospitals, Valley Medical Group, and even facilities in downtown Amherst require access by car or public transit, creating a barrier to health care access because local public transit options are limited. (See also Transportation.)
The Musante Clinic and the Amherst Survival Center’s Free Clinic both provide care to underserved populations in Amherst. The Musante Clinic, a satellite of Hilltown Community Health Center, receives federal funds to provide underserved persons medical, dental, and behavioral health care, and provides assistance in applying for and navigating health insurance. (U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, 2021) The clinic also offers assistance in referrals to providers and navigating health insurance coverage. Approximately 8 to 10% of the Musante Clinic’s patients are Black, drawn from Amherst and 90 other zip codes. There are no Black professional or ancillary personnel at the clinic. (Eliza Lake, CEO Hilltowns Community Health Center, February 4, 2021)

Until it was forced to close in March 2020 due to COVID restrictions, the Amherst Survival Center’s Free Clinic was open three times a week, providing care without regard to insurance status or ability to pay. Although no formal data on patient race or ethnicity is collected at the clinic (Dr. Susan Lowery, February 4, 2021), patients reflect the same demographics as users of other Survival Center services, with 24% identifying as African American. (Lev Ben-Ezra, Director, Amherst Survival Center, January 29, 2021)

**Health Care Providers’ Race Affects Patient Outcomes**

To the extent that staffing patterns could be determined through a review of relevant websites, professional and ancillary staff at local health care facilities are overwhelmingly white. (Websites of Valley Medical Group, Atkinson Family Practice, UMass Health Services, February 15, 2021)

Medical bias affects the care that Black patients receive. (Elgon J, 2020 May 10) Local community health partners, when recently surveyed, acknowledged that bias and prejudice existed throughout their agencies, specifically in a lack of staff diversity, language barriers, policies, assumptions, prejudgments, and intolerance. (Darling A et al, 2020) Efforts to instill “cultural humility” in white providers do not fully mitigate these attitudes.

Health outcomes, including survival, vastly improve when Black patients receive care from Black providers. In Massachusetts, the infant mortality rate for Black babies is more than twice as high as that of whites. (MA Department of Public Health, 2013) But research shows that infant mortality is cut in half when Black babies receive neonatal care from Black physicians. This demonstrates the essential roles of culture and respect in provider-patient relationships. (Greenwood, et al, 2020)

In interviews with local health providers, our questions about the racial breakdown of staff were generally met with the answer that the facility does not specifically track such information. To the extent that the race of providers can mean life or death for patients of color, this is a grave omission by the local health care community.
Food Insecurity

Food insecurity, an often overlooked determinant of health, is “a household-level economic and social condition of limited or uncertain access to adequate food.” (USDA, 2006) Lack of reliable transportation, a problem for many Amherst residents, contributes to food insecurity by limiting access to food sources. (Mary Beth Ogulewicz, February 1, 2021) Local supermarkets are outside population centers, and the few year-round sources of fresh food are within walking distance for few Amherst residents. The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated virtually all of Amherst a “food desert.” (Cooley Dickinson, 2019)

In 2018 in Hampshire County, fully 36% of all households were food insecure. Within the student population, students were 17 to 30% more likely to be food insecure (Darling A., 2020). Data available for Amherst, not disaggregated by race, identifies food insecurity as affecting more than 20% of households. (Cooley Dickinson, 2019)

The Amherst Survival Center provides a safety net for food insecure people in Amherst and twelve other towns. Statistics covering the year ending September 30, 2020, show that 24% of the persons accessing the food pantry and take-out meals were Black residents of Amherst. (Lev Ben-Ezra, January 29, 2021) This is much larger than the share of the town population that is Black. Thus we infer that a disproportionate share of those who are food insecure in Amherst are Black. Food insecurity substantially and negatively impacts physical and mental health, as well as school and job performance.

The Impact of Covid-19

Mirroring the U.S. at large, the Covid-19 pandemic has had a more profoundly negative effect on the Black population as compared to whites in Massachusetts. All the factors discussed in this report—including inequities in housing, education, health care, transportation, and employment, as well as a lack of social cohesion—contribute to greater physiological vulnerability, higher rates of infection, and worse outcomes. (NIH, 2020; Elgon J, 2020 May 10)

The death rate from Covid-19 for Black Massachusetts residents is three times higher than for white residents. (Boston Indicators, 2020). There is no data to indicate that Black folks in Amherst have fared any better than this deplorable state average.

Data on race and ethnicity of vaccine recipients demonstrates that communities of color in Massachusetts have not only been disproportionately affected by Covid-19 with respect to infections, hospitalizations, and deaths, but also have a vaccination rate that is half that of white people. Lack of access to reliable internet, transportation, or flexible work schedules necessary to take advantage of any available opening, all contribute to this disparity. (Schoenfeld Walker A. et al, 2021 March 5) Moreover, lack of trust that is the result of a history of abuse at the hands of white health care providers has contributed to a nationwide trend in which Black communities are wary or suspicious of the Covid vaccine. (Bajaj SS and Stanford FD,
The Amherst Health Department should take race, ethnicity, and income into account when devising vaccine outreach strategies.
According to the Town of Amherst Master Plan, “Amherst is a highly desirable community in which to live, work, study, and play.” Yet, as we have seen, not everyone has an equal chance of thriving here. White people in Amherst have less than a one in three chance of living in poverty, while for Black residents that number is one in two. As of 2019, the Black median family income in Amherst was $45,464; white median family income was 2.4 times greater, $108,500. (League of Women Voters, 2020) This is not a matter of chance but the product of economic exclusion, past and present.

In the mid 19th century, vital statistics for Amherst showed that Black residents were largely limited to work as domestic servants, for women, or as laborers, for men. Genealogist James Avery Smith has written that this historical record indicates “how hard it was for an unskilled black person to secure a job above a subsistence level” in Amherst. (Avery Smith, 1999) This historical circumstance helped shape Amherst’s economy in the present.

Today the town’s Economic Development Plan explicitly acknowledges that “Despite the relative affluence of many Amherst residents, there remains a . . . disproportionate number of people of color below the poverty line.” (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2018) Yet this troubling reality has not been named a central priority in local planning. According to the Economic Development Plan, “It will be important to measure changes in these populations as Amherst pursues economic development strategies that benefit all residents.” (Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, 2018) That is, equitable economic growth is not a priority in its own right, but rather something to be tracked amid the pursuit of generalized economic gains that accrue primarily to white people.

The very first goal listed in Amherst’s Master Plan is to “Maintain Amherst’s existing community character.” (Amherst Planning Board, 2010) But to which character does this refer? Black residents have been historically marginalized in Amherst and in the town’s economy, and such marginalization continues today.

Employment in Amherst

The University of Massachusetts is by far the largest employer in town, and jobs at the University are typically sought-after due to the relatively high wages and associated benefits. As of Fall 2019, the University employed 6,274 people, inclusive of all faculty, administrators, and staff, of which 320, or 5.1%, identified as Black/African American. Among faculty specifically, the proportion that is African American is just 4.4%. (UMass, 2020) By comparison, 9% of Massachusetts residents identify as Black/African American.

Already underrepresented in employment at the University, Black employees were more likely to be furloughed indefinitely due to Covid-19. By Fall 2020, as compared to the previous year,
the number of Black people employed at the University had declined 17%, compared with a 9.9% decline for white people. (UMass, 2020) This indicates that white University employees enjoy greater job security than their Black colleagues.

Black people seeking employment in Amherst who cannot find a sought-after job with the University may encounter few options offering a living wage. According to the town’s Master Plan, “Other [non-educational] job sectors in Amherst, particularly traditional businesses such as retail and service businesses, are disproportionately small for a community this size.” Moreover, this “relative shortage of non-academic job opportunities and growth . . . hampers the community’s efforts to support economic and social diversity.” (Amherst Planning Board, 2010)

Family Outreach of Amherst, a social-services agency, increasingly serves clients who work two or even three jobs but still do not earn enough to meet their family’s needs. (Executive Director Laura Reichsman, January 27, 2021) Black residents are disproportionately likely to experience such poverty.

A considerable share of the private-sector jobs that do exist in Amherst are derived from very small businesses. As of 2004 (most recent year available*), Amherst had a total of 1,192 workers employed in firms with three or fewer employees. (Town of Amherst, 2007) But business owners tend to hire people with whom they feel comfortable, which very often means people who look like them. Since most small businesses in Amherst are white-owned, white job applicants are likely to have a leg up in securing employment here, as in most places in the U.S. In this way it is fairly easy to see how an insular white economy of small businesses effectively shuts out the same people—of color—who have long been excluded. One former Black resident with whom we spoke expressed a sense of being “locked out” of Amherst professionally; he has since relocated to the Boston area. There is a need for more interviewing and data collection to document the experiences of Black residents.

**Black Entrepreneurship**

Of the 2,756 firms registered in Amherst in 2012, 8.5% were owned by non-white people. (League of Women Voters, 2020) There is no data specifically on Black business ownership in Amherst because, to date, the town has not prioritized collection of such information. However, if local business ownership were proportional to Amherst’s population in the 2010 Census, there would be around 369 Black-owned businesses here; thus we can estimate that hundreds of Black-owned firms are “missing” from town. A recent presentation by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission to the Amherst Planning Board underscored the need for local business data collection that includes the race/ethnicity of business owners. (Hall, 2021)

Black would-be entrepreneurs in Amherst and elsewhere are less likely to enjoy the intergenerational wealth that some white families have built over decades or centuries, which very often forms the seed capital to start a business. Yet, even when a Black person does set
out a shingle in Amherst, they will almost certainly contend with discrimination in a variety of forms. Such discrimination drives away some would-be entrepreneurs, depriving them of the benefits of commerce here and depriving their families of the associated financial gain. It is also a substantial loss for the local economy and culture.

Is the Black Population of Amherst Declining?

Over the course of compiling this report, informational interviews from several sources indicated that there has been an exodus of Black residents from Amherst. The Census Bureau’s 2019 American Community Survey also indicated that the local Black population has declined. At present we are awaiting 2020 Census data to say definitively whether there has been negative growth in the town’s Black population.
Transportation

“When people think about racial equity, transportation may not be the first thing that comes to mind. Unless your bus or train is late or your car won’t start, people don’t think much about transportation. But transportation equity and access can be the greatest equalizer - or [the lack of it] can do tremendous harm.”
– U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, 2020

The town of Amherst has not prioritized the collection of data from residents about race/ethnicity nor transportation access. Yet we know that 51% of Black residents in Amherst live below the poverty line (as compared to 30% of white residents), and that 65% of all riders in PVTA’s Northern Region are living below the poverty line. (Amherst League of Women Voters, 2020; PVTA, 2016) Thus we infer that Black people in Amherst are considerably more likely than their white counterparts to rely on public transit, and to be among the 52% of PVTA riders who have no alternative way to travel. (PVTA, 2016)

Transportation inequities in Amherst mirror the larger nation. “While many people view the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as the end of government-sponsored discrimination in the United States, there is an obvious and ignored truth: equality in transportation has been established in name only. Half-century after the Montgomery bus boycotts—chronic inequality in public transportation is firmly and nationally entrenched.” (Bullard, 2019)

Amherst Public Transit

Transportation inequity in Amherst is visible in the stark differences between transit service for college students as compared with year-round residents. While the PVTA is fairly reliable and convenient for riders from the five colleges, permanent residents face considerable hurdles, including service disruptions and lack of basic amenities. Many of these problems have been described in multiple reports by the PVTA yet remain unchanged. While Amherst prioritizes projects such as the construction of expensive new traffic circles, basic and egregious problems persist in transit service, including:

Lack of Bus Shelters: The PVTA Customer Service Survey of 2016 found that 63% of respondents ranked bus shelters their second-highest concern. The 2015 Amherst Transport Plan makes specific note of the lack of bus shelters in neighborhoods that heavily serve customers of color: “[At UMass] the school has installed many shelters and has larger shelters available in some locations. Downtown Amherst is the next highest activity location, followed closely by Hampshire College and the Boulders apartment complex. Unfortunately, none of these locations have… bus stops with typical amenities that would be found in communities with such high transit ridership, including more benches, better weather protection, lighting, information displays, etc.” (PVTA, 2016)

No Public Transport to Holyoke, Springfield, and Greenfield: The 2015 Amherst Transportation Plan states that “Although PVTA recently implemented improvements as part of its Comprehensive Services Analysis project, there are continued concerns about lack of service in some areas and with regional connections to Holyoke, Springfield, and Greenfield.” These towns are important providers of technical
and community-college education for area residents, as well as significant employers. (John Hornick, Amherst Affordable Housing Trust Chair, February 2021) Yet no meaningful transit options exist.

**Problematic “Three Bag Rule:”** Lev Ben-Ezra, Executive Director of the Amherst Survival Center, tells of a mobility barrier particularly problematic for Survival Center customers. Many who are reliant on the PVTA must take multiple busses to arrive at the Center, some with children in tow. Bus drivers are empowered to invoke a three-bag limit, and child strollers can count against that total. If a customer is carting as much food as needed for her household, she may exceed that limit and face the possibility that any one of the multiple bus drivers she will encounter during her travel will invoke the rule and prevent her from boarding the bus. (Lev Ben-Ezra, February, 2021).

**College Calendar Bus Schedules Don’t Work for Year-Round Residents:** The 2015 Amherst Transportation Plan notes the frequently reported concern that “services are either reduced or unavailable for most of the current routes when school is not in session, such as the summer break, winter break, and spring break.” (Town Transportation Plan Task Force, 2015) Indeed, Ben-Ezra speaks of the Amherst public transportation system as being woefully inadequate for non-students who need to utilize the bus year-round. She said many of the people who depend on Survival Center services struggle because it “absolutely doesn’t work when bus service goes down to 25% when college is not in session. . . . [Amherst’s transit system] badly needs to sustain what exists during the school year, across the full year. This would make it a functional service for the people who need food support.” She feels this issue reveals “who was an afterthought, and who this system really was designed for.” (Ben-Ezra, February 2021)

**Problems with Frequency of Service, On-Time Performance, and Lengthy Commutes:** The 2016 PVTA Onboard Customer Survey found that two-thirds of customers were dissatisfied with the frequency of service, while 60% were unhappy with the system’s on-time performance. (PVTA, 2016) Another survey measured total commute times, including travel to stations and the time spent waiting for buses or trains. Riders reported commute times an average of 1.9 times greater than those who drove. (Maciag, 2017)

**Interruptions to Transportation During Emergencies:** Ben-Ezra reports that the Covid-19 pandemic shed light on the fact that Survival Center clients had organized themselves to work around the gaps in local transit service. They had set up elaborate systems to rely on one another—for example with car pools or borrowing or sharing cars. Schedules for shared cars had been established so that special needs could be met; one parent might borrow a car from another household to pick up food at the Center while kids were in school. After the onset of Covid-19, with kids schooling at home, this was no longer feasible. It was also no longer safe to carpool. “Where people had been piecing transportation together, Covid caused these structures to fall apart.” To respond, the Survival Center hired drivers to make home deliveries. Nine routes were set up so that food deliveries could be made to individual homes. Additionally, nineteen “coordinated site delivery” spots were set up close to housing where clients are clustered. The Survival Center brings food in refrigerated trucks to these sites—to the Boulders, for example—so that people can walk to retrieve their groceries. In total, 1,200 people a month currently require food deliveries because they lack transportation to the Survival Center. (Ben-Ezra, February 2021)

**Today’s Inequities Echo Past Discrimination**
To many African American residents, disparities in transportation in present-day Amherst echo discrimination of the past. Charlie Bhodi has lived in Amherst for more than forty years, and he recalls his family’s “yearly pilgrimages” to Louisiana to see his grandparents. Many Black families who had fled the violent Jim Crow-era South made similar journeys to visit relatives who had not joined the Great Migration. Here’s how Charlie describes his family’s annual trips:

They were long and arduous—there were no motels where we could stay, all food was pre-packed and eaten in the car on the go. Filling stations were reluctantly willing to sell us gasoline... restrooms for ‘coloreds’ were so foul... Once we were travelling through Georgia and needed to stop for some fast food at a roadside stand. My father went up to the window to order and was told to go around the back—which he refused to do!... He came back furious. (Charlie Bodhi, February 2021)

Looking back, Charlie feels that the indignity felt by his father was particularly painful since both he and Charlie’s mother were highly educated, with advanced degrees, and were successful professionals.

For the many Black residents of Amherst who carry such memories, injustices in Amherst today are likely to trigger the trauma of painful discrimination from the past.

Transit Can Determine College Access

In interviews with members of Hope Community Church, we were told a story of a young Black congregant who made her family and church community proud when she graduated from Amherst Regional High School and planned to attend Holyoke Community College. She was nearly unable to matriculate, however, because she could not find transportation from Amherst to Holyoke. Her family stretched to pay much more than they had budgeted for her education so that she could share an apartment within walking distance of HCC. She would otherwise have been unable to access the college, which is a half-hour drive from her family’s home. (Steve Rogers and Mary Ellen Shea, February 2021) Massachusetts State Senator Jo Comerford has emphasized the importance of connecting and expanding transit routes so that Amherst residents have reliable transportation to points north and south. In addition to Holyoke Community College, Greenfield Community College, which lies a half hour north of Amherst, is an essential destination that’s out of reach for transit riders.

U.S. Representative Ayanna Pressley of Somerville, Massachusetts, might have been referring specifically to Amherst when she noted that “Everyone has a right to live and travel safely in community, but that right is denied to far too many in our communities. From subpar and overpriced housing in our neighborhoods to bus and train routes that force communities of color to spend hours more on transit every year, our basic infrastructure is exacerbating and reinforcing systemic racism in our community.” (Presley, 2020)

Barriers to Car Ownership

In addition to problematic gaps in public transportation, Black folks in Amherst and elsewhere face
higher barriers to car ownership than their white peers. Across the U.S., African Americans have the lowest rate of car ownership of all racial and ethnic groups, with 19% living in homes in which not one person owns a car, as compared to 4.6% of white people for whom this is true. (Rochester, 2017)

The cost of living in Amherst is high due in particular to the steep cost of housing. The Black median family income is less than half that of whites in town, meaning that Black residents on average have considerably less financial resources available to support the purchase and maintenance of a private vehicle. Moreover, when Black folks do acquire a car, they are likely to face inflated costs at every step of the process. This is not unique to Amherst, yet it is a hurdle that Black residents may face.

In *The Black Tax: The Cost of Being Black in America*, Shawn D. Rochester provides a variety of data to show how African Americans in the U.S. are routinely charged more than whites to purchase, finance, and insure a car. These overcharges include higher purchase prices, in which black male buyers pay an average of $1,100 more than their white male counterparts; and higher financing costs, in which Black borrowers were charged 110% to 454% higher rates than whites with similar credit ratings. (Rochester, 2017) In lawsuits initiated by the Justice Department, both Toyota and Honda were sued for charging Black borrowers higher rates than white counterparts with similar credit ratings, with those car companies ultimately paying out settlements for their discriminatory practices. (Rochester, 2017)

**Racially-Motivated Traffic Stops**

Traffic laws have been abused by police across the country as a pretext to pull over, search, and escalate violence against people of color. We address basic statistics about policing in Amherst in the final section of this report.

**Transportation Obstacles Affect Local Health Outcomes**

The Cooley Dickinson Hospital Needs Assessment has found that unequal access to “appropriate” transportation is a significant factor in racial and ethnic health disparities in this region. Transportation issues emerged from the hospital’s data “as a major and chronic barrier to health care.” Transportation was a prominent concern that arose in all the individual and group sources that were used to gather information for the hospital’s Needs Assessment report. (Cooley Dickinson Board of Trustees, 2019) This finding predates the Covid-19 pandemic, in which Black folks are at a higher risk of infection and death, but less likely to have access to basic transportation to a health care facility.
Amherst’s Community Safety Working Group is presently conducting a detailed assessment of policing in town. This report will not attempt to duplicate their efforts. However, we can share some brief initial findings extracted from aggregate race data (2010-2020) that the Amherst Police Department submitted to the Community Safety Working Group earlier this year. These data show:

- Compared with white drivers, when a Black driver was stopped by police, the reason given for the stop was twice as likely to be “investigatory” rather than a traffic or equipment violation or accident. An investigatory stop is “for investigative purposes based upon reasonable suspicion that the person has committed, is committing, or is about to commit a crime, under circumstances that do not amount to probable cause for arrest.” (International Association of Chiefs of Police, 2019)
- Black drivers accounted for only 6% of all crashes but 8.4% of all stops and 14.5% of all “investigatory” stops.
- Black drivers stopped by police were 1.45 times more likely to be searched, and 1.5 times more likely to be arrested, than white drivers.
- When Black drivers were stopped by police, they were about 1.25 times more likely than white drivers to be stopped for over 30 minutes.
- When Black drivers were searched by police, the reason given was 20% less likely to be probable cause, and nearly twice as likely to be “reasonable suspicion,” compared with white drivers. (Community Safety Working Group, 2021)

These statistics, which represent a decade of policing in Amherst, indicate that Black drivers speed less and are involved in fewer car accidents, but are stopped, searched, and arrested disproportionately relative to whites. When they are searched, the search is slightly more likely to result in a finding of “nothing found” than searches of vehicles owned by white people (61% of searches of Black drivers, versus 57% for white drivers). And Black drivers were significantly more likely than white drivers to be stopped, searched, and arrested by Amherst Police for an “investigatory reason,” and under the auspices of reasonable suspicion, rather than for probable cause.
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Introduction


COMPLETE REFERENCES FOR INTRODUCTION TK

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Income and Employment


Transportation


Policing


To: Town of Amherst - African Heritage Reparation Assembly  
From: Kerry Spitzer, Research Manager, Economic and Public Policy Research, UMass Donahue Institute  
Date: April 7, 2022  
Re: Summary of project

The African Heritage Reparation Assembly of the Town of Amherst commissioned the UMass Donahue Institute (UMDI) to provide basic demographic and geographic data and relevant maps on the African-American/Black population to support AHRA’s planned outreach and engagement with members of the African-American/Black community in town. On April 4, 2022, Dr. Kerry Spitzer and Susan Strate shared the maps with the Assembly and the public. This memo summarizes some of the data points presented along with the maps and key take-aways presented by UMDI.

The U.S. Census Bureau provides multiple data sets. For this project, we used the 2020 Decennial Census P.L. 94-171 Redistricting dataset and the 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates. The Decennial Census provides the most reliable population counts by race and ethnicity, as well as age group (under 18 and 18 and over), and housing unit counts by occupancy status. The ACS provides rich survey data on income and other socioeconomic measures. It is important to note that for areas with population under 65,000, such as the Town of Amherst, the Census Bureau uses a multi-year sample of the total population to make reliable estimates.

Both data sets are available at multiple levels of geography including census tracts, block groups, and blocks. The Town of Amherst contains seven census tracts, which contain 22 block groups, which contain 423 blocks. Census tract boundaries are set by local participants prior to each decennial census and have populations between 1,200 and 8,000 people. Block groups are statistical divisions of census tracts designed to contain 600 to 3,000 people. Blocks are nested within block groups and are designed to be bounded by visible features such as roads, and invisible features, such as city boundaries. In rural areas blocks may cover hundreds of square miles, but in town such as Amherst the area is generally small. It is important to note that blocks may not have any population and there are several blocks in Amherst where this is the case. For this analysis UMDI was asked to look at the finest level of geography available, in order to enable AHRA to identify patterns within the town of Amherst, thus we summarized data at the block-group and block level.

Data points from the 2020 Decennial Census Block-Level Analysis:

- Block-level data are available here: [https://public.tableau.com/views/AfricanHeritageReparationAssembly-Census2020BlockLevelData/Dashboard1?:language=en-US&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link](https://public.tableau.com/views/AfricanHeritageReparationAssembly-Census2020BlockLevelData/Dashboard1?:language=en-US&:display_count=n&:origin=viz_share_link)
• According to the latest 2020 Decennial Census redistricting data, Amherst had a total population of 39,263.

• 3,450 residents (9%) identified as Black of African-American alone (2,382) or in combination with another race.

• In Amherst, 16,080 residents (41%) lived in college dormitories.

• Roughly 1,500 Black of African-American (alone or in combination with another race) residents lived in blocks that were 90% or more residents of college dormitories.

• Due to the effects of differential privacy, a technique applied by the U.S. Census Bureau to protect individual respondent privacy, we strongly caution against relying on the precise counts at the block or block-group level and instead encourage the Town to look at patterns in the data. Differential privacy introduces error or “noise” to protect individual privacy so the counts, especially at small geographies or small population groups, are not exact. According to a UMDI analysis of the Census Bureau’s differential privacy demonstration dataset, published block-level counts of the Black-alone population may vary by as much as +/-19 persons per block from the actual count data, with a mean absolute error of 2.6. For more information on Differential Privacy’s effect on Massachusetts Census 2020 data by race and by geographic type and size, see: https://donahue.umass.edu/our-publications/donahue-data-dash-the-effects-of-differential-privacy-on-massachusetts-pl-94-census-data

• The Black or African-American (alone or in combination with another race) population is dispersed across town. Where we see concentrations at the block-level is on college campuses. The highest shares were in very low-population blocks, which should be considered with caution due to the effects of differential privacy.

Data points from the 2020 Decennial Census and 2020 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year Estimates Census Block-Group Analysis:

• Block-Group-level data is available here: https://public.tableau.com/views/AfricanHeritageReparationAssembly-2020ACSCensusBlock-GroupLevelData/4MapDash?:language=en-US&display_count=n&origin=viz_share_link

• Concentrations of the Black or African-American population at the block-group level are highest in block groups that contain Amherst and Hampshire Colleges. There are also block groups in South East Amherst and North Amherst with higher than average shares of residents who identify as Black or African-American alone or in combination with another race.

• According to the 2020 ACS 5-Year Estimates, 22,971 residents in Amherst were enrolled in college or graduate school. Of those enrolled, 936 identified as Black or African American alone (note ACS does not provide tables for Black or African American in combination with another race for school enrollment data).
• According to the 2020 5-Year ACS Estimates, the overall median household income was $56,906 (in 2020 inflation-adjusted dollars).

• According to the 2020 5-Year ACS Estimates, 43% of Amherst residents were living at or below 200% of the federal poverty line. Note the federal poverty line is adjusted for age and household make up. For example, it was $26,930 for a person under 65 living alone and $52,493 for a family of four with two adults and two children.

• Note that the U.S. Census Bureau does not calculate median income and poverty rates for students living on-campus. For this reason, on the median income and poverty map displays, areas with high-levels of on-campus housing do not depict median incomes and poverty rates. However, students living off-campus, who may be supported by their families, do contribute to the poverty rates and median income calculations and can lead to higher rates of poverty than one might anticipate. See: https://www.census.gov/content/dam/Census/library/working-papers/2013/acs/2013_Bishaw_01.pdf

• Finally, it is important to keep in mind that as with all survey data, the 2020 5-Year ACS Estimates are estimates with margins of error, which were provided in the data tables submitted to the Town. Furthermore, these estimates were derived from data collected over 60 months from 2016 through 2020. The multiple years of data allow for more reliable estimates and analysis at smaller levels of geography, but mean that the estimates represent averages over the 60 months and, therefore, do not necessarily “line up” with counts from a single point in time, such as the decennial Census, or local administrative records.
The African Heritage Reparations Assembly invites you to take a survey. The survey is seeking responses from all residents of Amherst, regardless of their identity, to understand how they would like to see reparations in Amherst carried out.
AHRA Community Survey

The Town of Amherst's African Heritage Reparations Assembly's (AHRA) mission is to study and develop reparation proposals for people of African Heritage in Amherst to further the goals of the 2020 resolution “Affirming the Town of Amherst’s Commitment to End Structural Racism and Achieve Racial Equity for Black Residents.” To learn more about AHRA please visit: https://engageamherst.org/ahra.

Since passing the resolution, the Town of Amherst has committed $2 million over 10 years to support reparations. By June 30, 2023 the AHRA is required to report to the Town with recommendations on how to implement a municipal reparations plan for Amherst.

We designed this survey with the intention of identifying resident attitudes about implementing reparations. The survey is seeking responses from all residents of Amherst, regardless of their identity, to understand how they would like to see reparations in Amherst carried out. This survey is the first to explore Amherst residents' attitudes about race and reparations.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. Individual responses will be kept confidential. You are free to skip any question(s) you do not want to answer. If you have any questions about the survey, including the need for translation, please contact Michele Miller at millerm@amherstma.gov or (413) 259-3001.

Thank you for your help!

Sincerely,

Heather Lord
Yvonne Mendez
Michele Miller
Alexis Reed
Irvin Rhodes
Amilcar Shabazz
Debora Bridges
Question 1: Do you currently live in Amherst, Massachusetts?

[ ] Yes, I live in Amherst and Amherst is my primary residence. – Skip to Question 3

[ ] Yes, I live in Amherst part-time, but my primary residence is in another town. – Skip to Question 3

[ ] No, I do not currently live in Amherst. – Go to Question 2

Question 2: If no, have you ever lived in Amherst?

[ ] Yes, I have lived in Amherst and Amherst was my primary residence.

[ ] Yes, I lived in Amherst part-time, for example as a student.

[ ] No. – Thank you for your interest, but this survey is for current and former residents of only.

Question 4: Do you support the Town's decision to establish a dedicated reparations fund?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Don't know/Don't have enough information
For the following questions, please consider each type of repair for Black Amherst residents of African Heritage and indicate whether you support it.

**Question 5:** Do you support financial assistance for buying or remodeling a house as a means of repair?

[  ] Yes  
[  ] No  
[  ] Don't know

**Question 6:** Do you support financial assistance for renting a home as a means of repair?

[  ] Yes  
[  ] No  
[  ] Don't know

**Question 7:** Do you support financial assistance for starting or improving a business as a means of repair?

[  ] Yes  
[  ] No  
[  ] Don't know

**Question 8:** Do you support educational scholarships as a means of repair?

[  ] Yes  
[  ] No  
[  ] Don't know
Question 9: Do you support symbolic acts such as renaming spaces, public art installations, memorials, or commemorations as a means of repair?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] Don't know

Question 10: Do you support cash payments as a means of repair?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No
[ ] Don't know

Question 11: Are there other forms of repair that you believe should be considered? If so, please explain in the space below.

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
AHRA's work will end on June 30, 2023. AHRA wants to ensure the continuation of their efforts in implementing reparations for Black Amherst residents of African Heritage, after the Assembly is dissolved. The following questions are intended to identify effective ways to continue the Town's commitment to Reparations.

**Question 12:** Would you like to see the Town of Amherst form a successor committee to the AHRA to ensure recommendations are acted upon?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

**Question 13:** Would you like to see educational opportunities in the Amherst community, designed to build and sustain support for reparations?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know
Question 14: The AHRA is considering recommending a truth and reconciliation process for the community. These processes could be organized by the Town of Amherst or community-based organizations. Below is a list of elements of a potential truth and reconciliation process. Please select all that you would like to see happen.

[ ] A process related to the name of the Town of Amherst
[ ] Comprehensive cultural competency training for all Town employees
[ ] Creation of a permanent historic cultural site for preservation and actualization
[ ] A process to address disparities in policing and criminalization of cannabis
[ ] Creation of a system-wide, concrete support for Black students and teachers in Amherst school system
[ ] Creation of homeownership and real estate investment opportunities for Black residents
[ ] Creation of a restorative education program to teach Black legacy in Amherst
[ ] Other: ________________________________________________________

Question 15: Please use this space to share with AHRA any other suggestions you have related to reparations in Amherst.

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
If you identify as Black, please answer Questions 16-30.

If you do NOT identify as Black, please skip to Question 33.

**Question 16:** Do you identify as a descendant of people enslaved in the United States?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Don’t know

**Question 17:** Thinking about your own experience, have you ever personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity in Amherst?

[ ] Yes, regularly

[ ] Yes, from time to time

[ ] No

[ ] Prefer not to say

**Question 18:** Please use the space below to share with AHRA any details about your experiences of discrimination in Amherst.

________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________________________________________________
Thinking about how you as a Black person, have been treated in your time living in Amherst, how much, if at all, do you think the following systems need to change for Black residents to be treated fairly in Amherst?

**Question 19:** Amherst's economic system (e.g. access to lending and banking)

- [ ] Requires no changes
- [ ] Requires only minor change
- [ ] Requires major changes
- [ ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
- [ ] Not Applicable

**Question 20:** Amherst's healthcare system

- [ ] Requires no changes
- [ ] Requires only minor change
- [ ] Requires major changes
- [ ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
- [ ] Not Applicable

**Question 21:** Amherst's public elementary and secondary educational system

- [ ] Requires no changes
- [ ] Requires only minor change
- [ ] Requires major changes
- [ ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
- [ ] Not Applicable
**Question 22:** Amherst's political system (e.g. public engagement, Town Council, state government)

- [ ] Requires no changes
- [ ] Requires only minor change
- [ ] Requires major changes
- [ ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
- [ ] Not Applicable

**Question 23:** Amherst's policing

- [ ] Requires no changes
- [ ] Requires only minor change
- [ ] Requires major changes
- [ ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
- [ ] Not Applicable

**Question 24:** Hampshire County courts and judicial system

- [ ] Requires no changes
- [ ] Requires only minor change
- [ ] Requires major changes
- [ ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
- [ ] Not Applicable
Question 25: Amherst's housing system

[  ] Requires no changes
[  ] Requires only minor change
[  ] Requires major changes
[  ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
[  ] Not Applicable

Question 26: Amherst's social services system

[  ] Requires no changes
[  ] Requires only minor change
[  ] Requires major changes
[  ] Needs to be completely rebuilt
[  ] Not Applicable

Question 27: Are there any other systems that you believe need to be addressed for Black residents to be treated fairly in Amherst? If yes, please describe:

________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
**Question 28:** If you would like, use this space to share with the AHRA any experiences you have had with these systems in Amherst?
AHRA will make recommendations to the Town about who will be eligible for reparations. We would like your thoughts on who should be eligible to receive reparations from the Town of Amherst.

**Question 29:** Should eligibility be limited to descendants of enslaved individuals in the United States?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don't know

**Question 30:** Are there other reparation eligibility criteria that you feel should be considered? If so, please describe in the space below.

________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________________
If you identify as a descendant of people enslaved in the United States, please answer Questions 31-32.

If you do NOT identify as a descendant of people enslaved in the United States, please SKIP to Question 35.

**Question 31-32:** Peoplehood is one of the five injury areas of slavery. It refers to the forms of harms associated with destruction of cultures, the denial of rights to openly express cultures, subsequent displacement of peoples from their identities and endangerment of histories, destruction of Black spaces, townships and institutions, and suppression of community-building.

**Question 31:** Have you ever personally experienced harms associated with Peoplehood while living in Amherst?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
- [ ] Don’t know

**Question 32:** If you would like, use this space to expand:

__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________
If you do NOT identify as Black and of African Heritage, please answer Questions 33 and 34.

If you identify as Black and of African Heritage, please SKIP to Question 35.

Question 33: Thinking of your experience living in Amherst, have you witnessed anti-Black discrimination toward someone because of their race or ethnicity?

[ ] Yes

[ ] No

[ ] Don’t Know

Question 34: Please use the space below to share with AHRA any details about discrimination you have witnessed in Amherst.

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________________________
The following questions ask about demographic information.

**Question 35:** How long has your family lived in Amherst?

- [ ] Under 5 years
- [ ] 5 to 9 years
- [ ] 10 to 19 years
- [ ] 20 to 29 years
- [ ] 30 to 39 years
- [ ] 40 to 49 years
- [ ] 50 to 59 years
- [ ] 60 to 69 years
- [ ] 70 to 79 years
- [ ] 80 to 89 years
- [ ] 90 to 99 years
- [ ] 100 year or more
**Question 36:** How long have you lived in Amherst?

- [ ] Under 5 years
- [ ] 5 to 9 years
- [ ] 10 to 19 years
- [ ] 20 to 29 years
- [ ] 30 to 39 years
- [ ] 40 to 49 years
- [ ] 50 to 59 years
- [ ] 60 to 69 years
- [ ] 70 to 79 years
- [ ] 80 to 89 years
- [ ] 90 to 99 years
- [ ] 100 year or more

**Question 37:** What best describes your housing situation?

- [ ] I live in a home that I own
- [ ] I live in a home that I rent
- [ ] I live with friends or family
- [ ] I live in a dormitory
- [ ] I live in an assisted living or long-term care facility
- [ ] I do not have stable housing
Question 38: Are you a student at Amherst College, Hampshire College, or UMass Amherst?

[ ] Yes
[ ] No

Question 39: What is your race? Select all that apply.

[ ] American Indian or Alaska Native
[ ] Asian
[ ] Black or African American
[ ] Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
[ ] White
[ ] Some Other Race _________________________________
[ ] Prefer not to say

Question 40: What is your ethnicity?

[ ] Hispanic or Latino
[ ] Not Hispanic or Latino
[ ] Prefer not to say

Question 41: Are you a registered voter in Amherst, MA?

[ ] No
[ ] Yes
[ ] Prefer not to answer
Question 42: What is your age?
   [ ] Under 18
   [ ] 18 - 24
   [ ] 25 - 34
   [ ] 35 – 44
   [ ] 45 - 54
   [ ] 55 - 64
   [ ] 65 - 74
   [ ] 75 or older
   [ ] Prefer not to say

Question 43: Sometimes people find that their income does not quite cover their living costs, have you experienced that while living in Amherst?
   [ ] Yes – Go to Question 44
   [ ] No – Skip to end of survey
   [ ] Don’t know – Skip to end of survey
   [ ] Prefer not to answer – Skip to end of survey

Question 44: When have you experienced difficulty covering your living costs? Select all that apply.
   [ ] In the past 3 months
   [ ] In the past 12 month
   [ ] In the past 3 years
   [ ] It has been over 3 years since I have had trouble covering my living costs
Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

If you have any questions about the survey, please contact Michele Miller at millerm@amherstma.gov or (413) 259-3001.

Please return all completed surveys to:

Amherst Town Hall
Jennifer Moyston
4 Boltwood Avenue
Mezzanine Level
Amherst, MA 01002
TOWN OF AMHERST

DRAFT Committee Charge

Name: Amherst Black Reparations Committee (ABRC)

Type: Standing

Legal Reference: Amherst Home Rule Charter Section 2.5

Appointing Authority: Town Manager

Number of Voting Members: Five (5) to Seven (7) Members

Number of Non-Voting Members: TBD

Number of Liaisons: One (1) Town Council Liaison and One (1) CSSJC or HRC Liaison

Term of Appointment: Three (3) years

Special Municipal Employees: Yes

Staff Support: DEI Department

Composition:

Five (5) to Seven (7) Voting Members

- No fewer than three (3) of the five (5) or five (5) of the seven (7) voting members shall represent members of the eligible group that Black Reparations are addressed to. (reference concentric circles in final AHRA report)
- One Youth and/or student from a Higher Ed institution Representative

Purpose:

ABRC’s mission is to carry forward the work of the AHRA in accordance with the recommendations in the AHRA Final Report.

Charge:

The ABRC Shall:

- Support implementation of the recommendations in the African Heritage Reparation Assembly’s Final Report.
- Oversee the Town’s reparations fund and identify additional sources of funding for reparative justice work.
- Consult with the Black community on a biannual basis about the allocation of reparations funds.
- Accept proposals from the community through a process determined by this body.
- Work with other Town committees and departments to pursue reparative projects and initiatives where shared goals are present.
- Work with the CSSJC and HRC to advance shared goals.

Charge Adopted: [date]
Charge Revised: [date]
SME Status Voted: [date or N/A]
TO: Mr. Paul Bockelman, Town Manager (By Electronic Mail Only)

FROM: Lauren F. Goldberg, Esq.

RE: Reparations Fund

DATE: September 28, 2021

CONFIDENTIAL / ATTORNEY-CLIENT PRIVILEGE

Question

You have requested information concerning the creation and use of a reparations fund and the potential issues that require further study before such action may be undertaken. This memorandum is a follow-up to those issues outlined in our November, 2020 correspondence on these issues.

Short Answer

In our opinion, the so-called “Public Purpose Rule” and the Anti-Aid Amendment make it difficult, even impossible, to fund direct payments to individuals, and, more than likely, to non-profit entities providing such support. Grants can be made, however, to private entities, “to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation instead of procuring supplies or services for the benefit or use of the governmental body.”

Thus, in our opinion, the Town could take one of three paths:

First, the Town could make a grant to a Community Development Corporation (CDC) created pursuant to G.L. c.40H, to provide technical and financial assistance and related services to community development corporations, nonprofit corporations and other organizations, to promote the revitalization of target areas and to preserve and develop housing affordable to “low and moderate income persons”. A CDC may undertake a portion of its work to bettering a specific constituency, but must have as its main focus the development of affordable housing for low and moderate-income persons.

Second, the Town could make a grant to a non-profit corporation to fund projects and benefits that would constitute a public purpose. This path would require that the funds be spent for matters that would benefit the community at large, rather than provide assistance to a particular minority population.

Third, perhaps the most direct process, and that which, in my opinion, is most protective of the Town and the work it wants to do, is to seek special legislation defining reparations as a “public purpose” and setting forth some basic rules as to how such funds will be held, expended, and accounted for.
Analysis

A. Factual Background

We are informed that the Town has joined cities and towns across the country in declaring racism a public health crisis. It is our further understanding that the Town is seeking to address the crisis of anti-Black racism specifically, which it suggests impacts the entire Amherst community, through economic reparations. The Town has passed a resolution affirming the Town’s commitment to ending structural racism and achieving racial equality, and Reparations 4 Amherst (“R4A”), a private group, has thoroughly studied and documented the historic and contemporary instances in which the Town facilitated, participated, stood neutral, or enacted segregation and discriminatory practices in all aspects of engagement with the Amherst Black community.\(^1\) The Council has concluded that this collection of data demonstrates a need to address the inequities and other harms in Amherst caused by anti-Black structural racism. To this end, the Town Council has created a Town committee to address reparations, called the African Heritage Reparation Assembly.

The Town has inquired whether it may contribute to a reparations fund without running afoul of Massachusetts financing laws governing payments to private entities such as an individual or charitable nonprofit organization. The Town Attorney prepared a preliminary opinion outlining legal issues and areas for further study in that regard. In particular, that memorandum explained that Massachusetts law prohibits the expenditure of municipal funds for private, or individual, purposes, the so-called “Public Purpose Rule”, or for support of religious or other private schools and entities, the so-called “Anti-Aid Amendment”. There is no existing law that specifically defines as a public purpose the funding of reparations for damage caused by structural racism, or how racial equality-based expenditures would be held, managed, and expended.

Public support of private organizations is analyzed under what is called the three-factor Springfield test. See Commonwealth v. School Comm. of Springfield, 382 Mass. 665, 675 (1981). This Springfield test focuses on (1) whether a motivating purpose of the funding is to aid the private organization; (2) whether the funding will have the effect of substantially aiding the private organization; and (3) whether the funding avoids the risks of the political and economic abuses that prompted the passage of the Anti-Aid Amendment. See Caplan v. Town of Acton, 479 Nass. 69, 71 (2018).

We understand that the Town has continued to study this issue and worked with an Alderperson in Evanston, Illinois, which municipality has established such a fund. Based on the positive feedback from that community, we understand that the Town, or R4A, may seek to set up a tax-exempt entity under Section 501(c)(3) of the federal tax code to operate and manage a reparations fund supported by the Town of Amherst, public and private anchor institutions, private developers and business owners, and individuals. I am informed that the intention is to use the funds raised to offset economic disparities for current and former Black residents of Amherst.

Amherst in areas such as housing, income, education, health, enterprise, transportation, and personal development. We understand that the Town will be asked to contribute in a meaningful way to this effort, using revenue from cannabis sales or other available funds.

Please see below for responses to specific questions.

**B. Town’s Specific Questions**

1. **Based on the legal opinion offered by KP law on November 19, 2020, it appears the most likely path for the Town to contribute is to “reinvest in areas in which Black residents face disparities, G.L. c. 40H, § 2.” One potential stream is using “tax revenue from cannabis sales to reinvest in the Black community or in Black-owned businesses.” For the Town to do this, and keeping in mind the fund will not be housed with the municipality, would Reparations For Amherst (R4A) have to be established as a Community Development Corporation pursuant to 40H, § 2?**

As indicated previously, in our opinion, if the expenditure of funds for these purposes can be accomplished without special legislation, it would be necessary for the Town to enter into a grant agreement for such purposes with a CDC or regular non-profit. Despite the Public Purpose Rule and the Anti-Aid Amendment, municipalities may make grants to a non-profit if such a grant “is to carry out a public purpose of support or stimulation instead of procuring supplies or services for the benefit or use of the governmental body.” G.L. c.30B, §2. Thus, regardless of the form of the entity to which a grant will be made, the Town will need to be prepared to demonstrate and defend that the expenditure constitutes a “public purpose”. Based upon the facts, at this time, it appears that the Town would attempt to defend its position by relying upon the extensive historical information collected by R4A to demonstrate evidence of the general benefit to the community as a whole.

The statute authorizing creation of a CDC specifically states, it “is in the public interest of the commonwealth to promote the prosperity and general welfare of its citizens, a public purpose for which public money may be expended”. General Laws 40H, §2 provides that a CDC must focus a “substantial majority” of its efforts on serving a constituency that is economically disadvantaged, and its purpose must be “to engage local residents and businesses to work together to undertake community development programs, projects and activities which develop and improve urban, rural and suburban communities in sustainable ways that create and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income people.” G.L. c. 40H, §2. General Laws c.40H, §1 states further that CDC funds may be used for, “provision of technical and financial assistance and related services to community development corporations, nonprofit corporations and other organizations, to promote the revitalization of target areas and to preserve and develop housing affordable to low and moderate income persons”. [Emphasis added]. Additional information concerning the powers and duties of CDCs can be found on the website for the Massachusetts Association of Community Development Corporations (MACDC). There are CDCs, such as the Asian CDC and Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción, with a particular racial focus, but their primary objectives must nevertheless be consistent with the statutory purposes for which the CDC is formed. Therefore, if Amherst meets the definition of a “target area” as
provided by G.L. c.40H, §2, a grant of public funds to a racially focused CDC for the enumerated statutory purposes is likely to be deemed a public purpose.

If a CDC is not created either because the Town or region does not constitute a “target area” for purposes of G.L. c.40H, or because a different form of non-profit corporation is formed, grants must comply with the standards set forth in the Public Purpose Rule and the Anti-Aid Amendment. As discussed previously, it is unclear whether the Town could, in the absence of special legislation, contribute money to a non-profit corporation providing race-based relief, and/or grants to individuals. In order demonstrate that a grant to a non-profit is a public purpose, the Town would need to, at a minimum, utilize the information gathered by R4A and rely generally on the statement in G.L. c.40H, §1 concerning grants to non-profits. Unlike a CDC, however, it is unlikely, in the absence of special legislation, that the Town could comply with the relevant municipal finance laws. Therefore, in either scenario, in my opinion, direct grants to individuals would be unlikely to meet such requirements.

As indicated previously, however, in my opinion, use of a home rule petition, i.e., special legislation provides the Town with the clearest path and most direct opportunity to create or fund a reparations program meeting the Town’s goals. If the Town were to pursue this option, the Town Council would need to approve, by majority vote, a home rule petition requesting special legislation to provide for the expenditure of municipal funds for reparations for systemic racism limiting the opportunities of Black residents. The act could include, but not be limited to, defining reparations a public purpose, designing the reparations program in broad strokes, addressing the appropriation of public funds and use of other available funding sources, and provide, if desired, that a portion of a fee for some activity be automatically credited to the fund. Such process would therefore lead to a debate at the state level, and allow the Town to help shape the future of similar efforts.

2. Please expand on all possible structures to support the above scenario.

To pursue creation of a CDC, the entity would have to be organized and incorporated as a 501(c)(3) entity and then apply for certification from the state Department of Housing and Community Development (“DHCD”). While the exact process and information to be included in the application for certification are described in detail in the DHCD CDC Guidelines for Certification, G.L. c.40H, §2 defines a CDC as “a non-profit corporation organized under chapter 180 [Charitable Corporations], and exempt from taxation under section 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code”, and which:

(a) focuses a substantial majority of the corporation’s efforts on serving one or more specific neighborhoods or municipalities, a region of the commonwealth or a constituency that is economically disadvantaged;
(b) has as the corporation’s purpose to engage local residents and businesses to work together to undertake community development programs, projects and activities which develop and improve urban, rural and suburban communities in sustainable ways that create and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income people;
(c) demonstrates to the department of housing and community development that the corporation’s constituency, including low and moderate income people, is meaningfully
represented on the board of directors of the corporation; provided, however, that in making this determination, the department shall consider the following criteria:

(1) the percentage, if any, of the board that is elected by the general membership;
(2) the percentage of the board members that are residents of the service area;
(3) the percentage of board members that are people of low or moderate income;
(4) the racial and ethnic composition of the board in comparison to the racial and ethnic composition of the community being served;
(5) other mechanisms, including committees, membership meetings, that the organization uses to ensure that their constituency has a meaningful role in the governance and direction of the organization; and
(6) other criteria as determined by the department.

A CDC is managed by a board of directors that must be comprised of no less than 60% of the persons served by the CDC. The organization must promulgate by-laws, hold regular meetings, and file annual reports with the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the Public Charities Unit of the Office of the Attorney General.

Creation of a non-profit organization would follow a similar path, but would not involve seeking certification from DHCD. While this would allow for greater flexibility as to the make-up of the Board of Directors, demonstrating the public purpose of any grant would likely pose a more difficult challenge.

In both cases, monies appropriated by the Town Council for such purposes would be provided to the grantee pursuant to a grant agreement between the Town Manager and the grantee setting forth the terms and conditions of the grant.

3. In this scenario, are there any limitations you can imagine with regard to disparities that cannot be remedied through a municipal contribution?

As noted, in the absence of special legislation, municipal funds cannot be utilized to provide benefits to individuals or to be available solely for members of the community based upon race. If a CDC is created, it must focus a “substantial majority” of its efforts on serving a constituency that is economically disadvantaged, with a goal to “develop and improve urban, rural and suburban communities in sustainable ways that create and expand economic opportunities for low and moderate income people.” G.L. c. 40H, §2. Similar restrictions on expenditures of public funds would apply to a grant to a non-profit not certified as a CDC, particularly with regard to the degree to which the funding could be seen to benefit the non-profit or individuals, rather than “support or stimulation the public good”. Thus, while some Black persons living in Amherst with low and moderate incomes may well benefit from such programs, the programs would also benefit non-Black persons with low and moderate incomes. As with the other options, limitations on the purposes for which municipal funds may be expended would prohibit direct payments to Black persons currently living, or who formerly resided, in Amherst.
4. Do the Massachusetts laws that govern municipal spending, including public purpose limitations and prohibitions against certain expenditures due to the Anti-Aid Amendment, pertain to the above scenario? Or are those laws only applicable when considering direct financial payments? If they do apply, what process would ensure the Town that reparations benefits the public as a whole?

The public purpose provisions of G.L. c. 40, §4 and the Anti-Aid Amendment apply to a grant of funds to a CDC or to a non-profit, as well as grants to individuals.

5. Please outline the minimum required path for the Town of Amherst to legally contribute funds to a CDC or other non-profit organization.

Please see our answers, above, outlining the purposes for which the Town could likely make a grant to the CDC, specifically, by appropriating funds as a grant for the specific purposes of the CDC, or as a grant to a non-profit where the Town can support that such grant was for a public purpose. In each case, the Town Council would need to appropriate the funds for such grant consistent with the normal course and the Town Manager would need to negotiate and execute a grant agreement for such purposes.

Alternatively, the Town Council could vote to authorize the filing of a home rule petition that defines reparations to the Black community as a public purpose and lays out the type of appropriations that may be made under that umbrella. Such a process would require approval by the Town Council, in the normal course, of the request for special legislation, and then submission to, and approval by, the General Court.

6. Given we are not discussing direct financial payments, is a town sponsored ad-hoc committee to study what other municipalities are doing needed?

The question of whether to appoint a committee to study what other municipalities in the Commonwealth and in the country are doing with regard to reparations would largely be a policy decision. Should this investigation be further pursued, it would be most helpful to study municipalities in Massachusetts or other states with constitutions that include provisions similar to the Anti Aid Amendment, and statutes similar to G.L. c. 40, §4.

7. The City of Evanston, through a resolution, committed the first $10 million of cannabis revenue to a reparations fund. Is there anything prohibiting Amherst from doing the same?

The collection and use of local excise taxes on marijuana sales under Massachusetts and Illinois law differ because the statutory structure of marijuana legalization in each state is unique, as are their respective state constitutions. Recreational marijuana sales were legalized in Massachusetts under Chapter 55 of the Acts of 2017, which act authorized municipalities, if they accepted the provisions of G.L. c.64N, to charge a 3% local tax on recreational marijuana retail sales. These funds are collected by the Commissioner of Revenue and distributed to the Town quarterly. Upon transmission to the municipality, the monies are deposited in the general fund, subject to appropriation and are subject to the same limitations on expenditure as any other
municipal funds. See LFO 2018-3 (attached). Though there are restorative justice objectives set forth in the marijuana legalization legislation, those spending purposes do not apply, in my opinion, to local excise tax revenues. See G.L. c. 94G, §14.

The one possibility for providing restorative justice would be the creation by the Town Council, by a 2/3 vote, of a special purpose stabilization fund and dedication of all, or a portion of 25% or more, of the local marijuana excise taxes or fees provided for in an HCA for such purposes. The Cannabis Control Commission concludes that such taxes and fees have not been excluded from the application of G.L. c.40, §5B, nor have the revenues been reserved for any particular purpose. See CCC Guidance on Municipal Equity (attached); see also Department of Revenue Informational Guideline Release, IGR 17-20. Exploring the possibility of using a dedicated revenue stream to fund a stabilization fund for the restorative justice purposes of the Massachusetts marijuana law would, in my opinion, be a worthwhile endeavor, but will not resolve the limitations established by the Public Purpose Rule and the Anti-Aid Amendment on the use of public funds.

8. What % of the Council would be required to vote in favor of a resolution for it to pass?

Approval of a resolution supporting the provision of reparations to members of the Black community impacted by systemic racism would require a majority vote of those Town Councilors present, provided that a quorum was present. Section 2-6 of the Charter provides, in part:

(b) Quorum: Unless otherwise provided by this Charter, the presence of 7 members of the Town Council shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business.

(c) Adoption of Measures: Except in the event a higher quantum of vote is required by general laws or this Charter, the affirmative vote of a majority of the members present is required to adopt any measure.

Thus, unless otherwise provided by the Charter or the General Laws a resolution, a petition to the General Court, or other action that would require approval of a majority of the members present, provided that a quorum was present.

The creation of a special purpose stabilization fund requires approval by a 2/3 vote of those Councilors present and voting, provided that a quorum is present.
TO: Mr. Paul Bockelman, Town Manager (By Electronic Mail Only)

FROM: Lauren F. Goldberg, Esq.
       Devan S. Braun, Esq.

RE: Reparations Special Legislation – Draft for Review

DATE: July 4, 2022

Question Presented

You have requested that we draft special legislation, consistent with a vote of the Town Council, to seek formal approval for the Town to raise and expend money to make reparations for the harms done to African American members of the Amherst Community.

Short Answer

Attached to this memorandum, please find a draft bill for consideration by the Town. Be reminded that neither state law, nor the constitution, mandate that a home rule petition take any particular form. Further, note that policy issues identified in the legislation can be addressed in any number of ways, at the discretion of the Town Council. As discussed in previous memoranda on this topic, both the “public purpose rule” and the Anti-Aid Amendment to the Massachusetts constitution establish barriers to the use of municipal funds to provide grants for matters that are not identified as “public purposes”. The legislation addresses this issue directly, as well as other, as explained in more detail, below.

Analysis

A. Background

In December of 2020, the Town Council concluded that research and documentation provided by a private group entitled “Reparations for Amherst”, or R4A, presents sufficient evidence of the Town’s need to remediate some of the harms it has caused and that have been caused by standing by silently in other cases. On June 21, 2021, the Council voted to create a special stabilization fund to put aside funds for reparations, and, further to create a reparations committee, the African Heritage Reparation Assembly, or AHRA. The AHRA was charged with sorting through the myriad of facts, factors, circumstances, and goals relative to reparations so as to design a cohesive, appropriate, reparations and reconciliation plan for harms against Black people in the Town.
B. Public Purpose Rule

As explained in previous memoranda on this subject, Massachusetts law prohibits the expenditure of municipal funds for private, or individual, purposes, known as the so-called “Public Purpose Rule”, or for support of religious or other private schools and entities, known as the so-called “Anti-Aid Amendment”. There is no existing law that specifically defines as a public purpose the funding of reparations for damage caused by structural racism, or how monies for racial equity-based expenditures would be held, managed and expended. As such, one of the options for pursuing authority to raise and or appropriate money for such purposes less susceptible to challenge was to seek special legislation for the Town of Amherst to recognize reparations as a proper public purpose.

C. Policy Considerations

In short, there are several policy issues to consider: (1) should the Town seek authority to make payments to individuals; (2) should the Town seek authority to place a “check off” on tax and other bills for voluntary donations, even if the Town doesn’t plan to use this authority at this time; (3) should expenditure of the funds be approved by the Town Council, and, if so, should expenditure be subject to a 2/3 vote; (4) if expenditure of funds should not require approval by the Town Council, should the reparations commission be required to hold public hearings before authorizing expenditures; (5) should the Town Council have authority to dedicate a different funding source, or a different percentage thereof, on an annual basis; (6) is there value in defining minimum eligibility for grants in the special act – is that more important if the Town seeks to provide grants directly to individuals?

D. Summary of Special Legislation

Section 1. Reparations is a Public Purpose

Where general rules of municipal finance mandate that public money may only be expended for a public purpose, i.e., a purpose that results in support or stimulation of the public generally, rather than just to the benefit of the organization or individual, the goals of this section are to: (1) demonstrate that the Town has researched and documented specific findings of racism in its history; (2) relate those instances to findings made on a more major scale; (3) define reparations as a public purpose, whether payments are made to organizations or directly to individuals; (4) explicitly confirm that reparations, even if made directly to individuals, support and stimulate economic development in the Town.

Section 2. Address Reparations Fund Accounting Issues

I understand that the Town Council has voted to establish a “Reparations Stabilization Fund” by a 2/3 vote pursuant to G.L. c.40, §5B. Such statute allows the Town Council to thereafter, by majority vote, set aside money for later spending by a 2/3 vote of the legislative branch. While money can be raised for any legal purpose, gifts and grants must typically be
accounted for separately. See G.L. c.44, §§5, 53, 53A. Section 2 of the legislation, therefore: (1) allows gifts and grants to be deposited into the existing fund; and (2) authorizes, but does not mandate, the Town to also deposit to the fund any monies collected for the purpose through a voluntary payment on tax bills, which action would otherwise be prohibited.

This section also mimics the language of G.L. c.40, §5B, stating that the Town Council may dedicate a portion of revenue to such fund. However, the proposed special act eliminates the statutory requirement that at least ¼ of the revenue from the funding source be dedicated to the particular purpose of the fund, and, further, allows the Town to annually, instead of every three years, identify and allocate the amount of funds to be dedicated. For that reason, on an annual basis the Town would be able to review and revise the funding source or amount to be dedicated to the fund, in consideration of available funding sources, the impact of the success or failure of any of the initiatives from the prior year, and weighing all of those facts with the Town’s general financial condition.

Section 3. Reparations Fund Commission

This section provides flexibility with regard to the composition and terms of the Commissioners because it is difficult to know at this time what structure will be best for managing the grant process. The Commission is expressly deemed to be a public entity subject to the Open Meeting, Public Records and Conflict of Interest Laws, with each member of the Commission holding special municipal employee status for purposes of the Conflict of Interest Law.

This section also formalizes the Commission’s charge, i.e., to establish eligibility criteria for grants, and ensures that there will be both notice and a public hearing before any vote is taken thereon.

Section 4. Commission Rules and Regulations

As the special act is just the beginning of creating a framework for identifying eligible grantees, programs and projects, additional structure will be needed to manage the grant process. Section 4 expressly authorizes the Commission to create such a structure through the adoption and amendment of rules and regulations and similarly requires that the Commission to hold a public hearing for which no less than 2 weeks notice is provided on the Town Bulletin Board. The Commission must report annually to the Town Manager and the Town Council.

Section 5. Eligible Organizations and Grantees

This section demonstrates a wide variety of possibilities for expenditure of the Reparations Fund and is not meant to limit the types of grants that can be requested or provided. In the event the Town wishes, at some point, to make grants directly to individuals, this section also clarifies that specific rules and regulations must be adopted for such purposes, noting, however, that the Public Records Law will allow holding of personal information.
Section 6. Commission Findings and Discretion

This section clarifies that it is Commission’s sole decision as to whether to approve any particular grant application, and, further, that it is not required to approve a grant application even if the application otherwise complies with the act or the rules and regulations promulgated under Section 4. In approving each grant, however, the Commission must find that “the grant serves the public purposes” identified in Section 1 of the Act, also that provision of the grant “does not substantially aid an organization or individual in a way that creates risks of political and economic abuses.”

Summary

The attached draft special legislation therefore: establishes reparations as a public purpose, authorizes the Town to raise and appropriate and otherwise receive and expend public and other funds for such purposes, clarifies that the Commission is a multiple member body of the Town and must follow all the rules generally applicable to multiple member bodies of the Town, clarifies the Council’s options with regard to accounting for and dediacting revenue to the fund, and authorizes the Commission to promulgate rules and regulations applicable to the grant process,
AN ACT ESTABLISHING GRANTS FOR REPARATIONS AS A VALID PUBLIC PURPOSE FOR WHICH PUBLIC MONIES MAY BE EXPENDED IN THE TOWN OF AMHERST

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

SECTION 1. The town of Amherst has demonstrated that the African American community in the town has historically faced, and continues to face, systems, laws, policies, practices and beliefs, that reinforce and extend the historic unfair treatment and oppression of the African American community such as residential segregation, unfair lending practices and other barriers to home ownership and accumulating wealth, schools’ dependence on local property taxes, environmental injustice, biased policing and sentencing, and voter suppression. While the town as an entity may not have intentionally or unintentionally engaged in any or all such practices, it has researched and documented specific historic and contemporary instances in which the town facilitated, participated, stood neutral, or engaged in segregative and invidious discriminatory practices with the African American community in the town of Amherst, leading to the conclusion that such practices have disproportionately harmed the African American community. As such, the town council has specifically affirmed the commitment of the town to ending and remediating its participation in structural racism and achieving present and future racial equity. Instead of securing supplies and services for the town, the town wishes to make reparations for such purposes through grants to community development corporations, nonprofit corporations, and other organizations that promote and invest in the revitalization of African American communities in the town, or, in appropriate cases, through direct grants to individuals. All such grants, even if ultimately inuring to the benefit of an eligible individual or individuals, directly further the public purpose of remediating and compensating current and prior residents for the harm caused by segregation and invidious discrimination in the town of Amherst and simultaneously support and stimulate economic development in the town.

SECTION 2. The town of Amherst has created a so-called special purpose fund, known as the Reparations Fund, held in the custody of the treasurer of the town, into which funds received by the town for such purposes, whether as gifts or grants, or through voluntary payment on municipal tax bills, motor vehicle excise tax bills, or water or sewer bills of an amount not less than one dollar or such other designated amount increasing the amount otherwise due, shall be deposited. The town may also raise and appropriate monies to such fund or dedicate to the fund a portion of revenue from any fee, charge or other receipt not reserved by law for expenditure for a particular purpose, but excluding the taxes and surcharges listed in the last paragraph of section 5B of chapter 40 of the general laws. Any interest earned by the fund shall be added to and become part of the fund. Any dedication of a revenue source to such fund, and the way such dedication is calculated, shall be approved by the town council annually and prior to the start of the new fiscal year, and shall take into account the overall financial position of the town, the goals of this act, and the available revenue streams that may be used to fund reparations grants.

SECTION 3. The town of Amherst shall authorize an existing committee, or create a new committee, to serve as the Reparations Fund Commission, to be appointed by the town manager pursuant to section 3(c) of chapter 3 of the town charter, consistent with any applicable bylaw addressing the composition of such commission and terms of office of such members. The
commission, as a multiple member body of the town, shall be subject to the sections 18-25 of chapter 30A, sections 10 and 10A of chapter 66, and chapter 268A of the general laws, as these laws may be amended from time to time. The members of the commission shall be deemed to be special municipal employees of the town for purposes of said chapter 268A. Any member of the commission may be removed by the town manager. Said commission shall be charged with establishing eligibility criteria and other requirements for grants made under section 1 of this act, provided however, that the commission shall not vote on any such criteria or amendments until it holds a public hearing for which notice is provided on the town bulletin board for two successive weeks prior and which includes the text of the proposed criteria or revisions thereto and a summary of the reasons therefor. Said commission may authorize expenditure of the funds from the Reparations Stabilization Fund without any further appropriation, and the town manager shall hereby be authorized to enter into and execute grant agreements for such purposes.

SECTION 4. To facilitate the grant program, said commission shall be authorized to establish rules and regulations for the submission and processing of grant applications, distribution of grants, and any continuing oversight and reporting that may be required, subject to the same notice and hearing requirements identified in the preceding sentence. The commission shall report annually to the town manager and town council after the close of the fiscal year, as to the activity of the prior year, including adoption or amendment of eligibility criteria, the number of grant applications received and grants awarded, starting and ending balances in the Reparations Stabilization Fund, and any other information the town manager determines is necessary or appropriate.

SECTION 5. Organizations may be eligible for a grant under section 1 of this act if the organization provides direct or indirect benefits to individuals and families who are or were members of the African American community in the town of Amherst or if they more generally provide funding or programs to remediate the damage done by structural racism to the African American community in Amherst. Such funding and programs may include, but shall not be limited to, provision of programs, grants, loans, interest or mortgage write-downs, rental or other housing assistance, creation or maintenance of affordable housing, scholarships, small business loans, bond and jail fund payments, and other education and community benefits, all as may be further detailed in the rules and regulations authorized by section 4 of this act. No grant application shall be deemed filed until the applicant has submitted the organization’s annual operating budget or comparable funding analysis as authorized by the town manager. If the commission determines that it is appropriate for the town to provide direct grants to individual, the commission shall adopt specific rules and regulations specifying the reasons for and goals of such a program, outlining eligibility for reparation grants thereunder, and the process for distribution of and reporting on the same; provided, however, that personal information collected for such purposes shall be public records subject to withholding under applicable exemptions to the Public Records Law.

SECTION 6. The commission created under section 3 shall have sole discretion as to whether to provide a grant to an eligible organization or, if applicable, an eligible individual. The award of a grant shall, in every instance, include a finding that the grant serves the public purposes identified in section 1 of this act, and that the grant does not substantially aid an organization or individual in a way that creates risks of political and economic abuses that prompted the passage of the anti-aid amendment to the Massachusetts constitution. Notwithstanding any provision of this act to the contrary, however, the commission shall have no obligation to award a grant solely because the application meets the requirements of this act or any rules or regulations promulgated hereunder.
SECTION 7. This act shall take effect upon its passage.
The Board of Health of the Town of Amherst recognizes that racism, including unconscious and systemic racism, threatens public health. Racism worsens the health of those it targets, resulting in racial and ethnic inequities in health. The Board resolves to work actively to end these health inequities by taking actions described below.

The American Public Health Association’s 2016 Presidential Initiative, a National Campaign Against Racism, asserts that racism is:

- a social system with multiple dimensions: individual racism is internalized or interpersonal; systemic racism is institutional or structural, and
- a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks that
- unfairly disadvantages some individuals and communities,
- unfairly advantages other individuals and communities and saps the strength of the whole society through the waste of human resources.

Racism worsens health because racial discrimination is stressful to those who experience it, and chronic stress causes many kinds of illness. Racism also affects the conditions in which people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship, and age. Through its impact on these Social Determinants of Health, racism prevents people from reaching their full potential for good health. This makes racism a serious concern of the Amherst Board of Health and the Amherst Health Department. A statement of racism can lead to action through a meaningful process of accountability rooted in health equity and fair practices.

Racism has played a central role in U.S. history, starting with slavery and continuing to the present through individual acts as well as discriminatory practices, intentional and unintentional, on the part of governments, industry and commerce, all levels of public and private education, and the health care system. Marginalized groups are disadvantaged in all the social determinants of health; this marginalization is a fundamental cause of ill health.

Amherst necessarily shares the history of the country in which it is located, but in addition, this history is the history of Amherst itself. Black people in Amherst have been slaves who at that time were the legal property of white Amherst residents; housing in Amherst has been de facto segregated; lending institutions in Amherst followed standard practices that resulted in keeping residents of color from owning homes.

Current ethnic and racial disparities in the Amherst area are barriers to good health for Black and Latino residents, who have a lower average income, a higher poverty rate, a lower rate of home ownership, fewer transportation options, and less access to health
care, including vaccination against COVID disease. Racial and ethnic health inequities are well-documented in Massachusetts as a whole and in our region.

To address racial and ethnic health inequities in Amherst, the Board of Health is committed to the following actions:

- Assessing the community’s health needs through a comprehensive community assessment that focuses on health inequities,
- Increasing funding for the Health Department to provide staffing and resources needed to improve outreach and effectiveness in communities of color,
- Evaluating policies, procedures, and regulations to ensure racial equity to improve health in communities of color is a core concern of the Amherst Board of Health and Health Department, and
- Supporting local, state, and federal initiatives that advance social justice.

In making this statement, the Board of Health joins with other organizations that have issued statements on racism and health, including the American Public Health Association, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the American Medical Association, and other Massachusetts municipalities and local Boards of Health.

Adopted by unanimous vote of the Amherst Board of Health, September 9, 2021.

Stephen George

Nancy Gilbert, Chair

Dr. Maureen Millea

Timothy Randhir

Data and sources for this statement can be found on the Amherst Board of Health website, https://www.amherstma.gov/1312/Board-of-Health.
Section One: Multiple Choice Survey Questions:

Table 1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you currently live in Amherst, Massachusetts?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I live in Amherst and Amherst is my primary residence.</td>
<td>483</td>
<td>88.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I live in Amherst part-time, but my primary residence is in another town.</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>5.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No, I do not currently live in Amherst.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>544</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Those who said they never lived in Amherst were excluded from this analysis.

Table 2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever lived in Amherst?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I have lived in Amherst and Amherst was my primary residence.</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>70.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, I lived in Amherst part-time, for example as a student.</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>29.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you identify as Black?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>81.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>539</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you identify as a descendant of people enslaved in the United States?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>78.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>21.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: this question was only available to those responded that they identify as Black.
### Table 5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you support the Town's decision to establish a dedicated reparations fund?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>20.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know/Don't have enough information</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>524</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 6.

Thinking about your own experience, have you ever personally experienced discrimination or been treated unfairly because of your race or ethnicity in Amherst?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, regularly</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes, from time to time</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: this question was only available to those responded that they identify as Black.
Table 7.

Thinking about how you as a Black person, have been treated in your time living in Amherst, how much, if at all, do you think the following systems need to change for Black residents to be treated fairly in Amherst?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>System</th>
<th>Requires no changes</th>
<th>Requires only minor change</th>
<th>Requires major changes</th>
<th>Needs to be completely rebuilt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amherst's economic system (e.g. access to lending and banking)</td>
<td>9 (13.0%)</td>
<td>10 (14.3%)</td>
<td>7 (10.0%)</td>
<td>4 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst's healthcare system</td>
<td>24 (34.9%)</td>
<td>29 (41.4%)</td>
<td>29 (41.4%)</td>
<td>25 (33.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst's public elementary and secondary educational system</td>
<td>15 (21.4%)</td>
<td>12 (17.1%)</td>
<td>13 (18.6%)</td>
<td>15 (20.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst's political system (e.g. public engagement, Town Council, state government)</td>
<td>12 (17.4%)</td>
<td>15 (21.4%)</td>
<td>13 (18.6%)</td>
<td>6 (8.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amherst Policing</td>
<td>9 (13.0%)</td>
<td>10 (14.3%)</td>
<td>8 (11.5%)</td>
<td>7 (10.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire County Courts and judicial system</td>
<td>12 (17.4%)</td>
<td>12 (17.1%)</td>
<td>12 (17.6%)</td>
<td>15 (20.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hampshire Social services system</td>
<td>9 (13.0%)</td>
<td>12 (17.4%)</td>
<td>10 (14.3%)</td>
<td>9 (12.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>69 (100.0%)</td>
<td>70 (100.0%)</td>
<td>70 (100.0%)</td>
<td>71 (100.0%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: These questions were only available to those respondents that they identify as Black.*
Table 8.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Have you ever personally experienced harms associated with Peoplehood while living in Amherst?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>56.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>32.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: this question was only available to those responded that they identify as Black and as a descendant of enslaved people.

Table 9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Should eligibility be limited to descendants of enslaved individuals in the United States?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't know</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: this question was only available to those responded that they identify as Black.

Table 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thinking of your experience living in Amherst, have you witnessed anti-Black discrimination toward someone because of their race or ethnicity?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>157</td>
<td>43.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>205</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>362</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: this question was only available to those responded that they do NOT identify as Black.
The AHRA is considering recommending a truth and reconciliation process for the community. These processes could be organized by the Town of Amherst or community-based organizations. Below is a list of elements of a potential truth and reconciliation process. Please select all that you would like to see happen. (Will not equal 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A process related to the name of the Town of Amherst</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>39.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive cultural competency training for all Town employees</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a permanent historic cultural site for preservation and actualization</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>52.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A process to address disparities in policing and criminalization of cannabis</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a system-wide, concrete support for Black students and teachers in Amherst school system</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>67.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of homeownership and real estate investment opportunities for Black residents</td>
<td>284</td>
<td>69.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a restorative education program to teach Black legacy in Amherst</td>
<td>289</td>
<td>70.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>408</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the following questions, please consider each type of repair for Black Amherst residents of African heritage and indicate whether you support it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Repair</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance for buying or remodeling a house as a means of repair</td>
<td>309</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance for renting a home as a means of repair</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial assistance for starting or improving a business as a means of repair</td>
<td>343</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational scholarships as a means of repair</td>
<td>387</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolic acts such as renaming spaces, public art installations, memorials, or commemoration as a means of repair</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash payments as a means of repair</td>
<td>175</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>471</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would you like to see the Town of Amherst form a successor committee to the AHRA to ensure recommendations are acted upon?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Would you like to see educational opportunities in the Amherst community, designed to build and sustain support for reparations?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Don't Know</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>307</td>
<td>307</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>284</td>
<td>62.4%</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>472</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 13.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long has your family lived in Amherst?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19 years</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29 years</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>17.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39 years</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49 years</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>12.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59 years</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 79 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 to 89 years</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 to 99 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 year or more</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>453</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 14.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long have you lived in Amherst?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19 years</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29 years</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39 years</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49 years</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59 years</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 79 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>456</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 15.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Situation</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I live in a home that I own</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a home that I rent</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live with friends or family</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a dormitory</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in an assisted living or long-term care facility</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have stable housing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 16.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you a student at Amherst College, Hampshire College, or UMass Amherst?</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>419</td>
<td>92.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>451</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Indian or Alaska Native</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black or African American</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>15.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>314</td>
<td>69.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some Other Race</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>450</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 18. What is your ethnicity?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Hispanic or Latino</td>
<td>356</td>
<td>81.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 19. What is your age?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Range</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 24</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>7.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>16.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>23.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or older</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>450</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20a.

Sometimes people find that their income does not quite cover their living costs, have you experienced that while living in Amherst?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>37.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>259</td>
<td>62.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>414</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 20b.

When have you experienced difficulty covering your living costs? Select all that apply. (Will not add up to 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the past 3 months</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>25.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past 12 months</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past 3 years</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>29.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been over 3 years since I have had trouble covering my living costs</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>44.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 21.

Are you a registered voter in Amherst, MA?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>388</td>
<td>85.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section Two: Comparison Tables for Selected Questions**

Table 22.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you support the Town’s decision to establish a dedicated reparations fund?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>79.2%</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15.6%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know/Don’t have enough information</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 23.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How long has your family lived in Amherst?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19.4%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.8%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59 years</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.3%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69 years</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 to 99 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black</td>
<td>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</td>
<td>Not Black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 5 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 to 9 years</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 to 19 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 to 29 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 to 39 years</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 to 49 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 to 59 years</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 to 69 years</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 to 79 years</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>381</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 25.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What best describes your housing situation?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I live in a home that I own</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>319</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>39.4%</td>
<td>34.6%</td>
<td>84.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a home that I rent</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>35.2%</td>
<td>38.5%</td>
<td>10.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live with friends or family</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.9%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in a dormitory</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I live in assisted living or long-term care facility</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not have stable housing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>3.8%</td>
<td>0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 26.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Are you a student at Amherst College, Hampshire College, or UMass Amherst?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>13.2%</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>81.9%</td>
<td>86.8%</td>
<td>95.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 27.  
**Are you a registered voter in Amherst, MA?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to answer</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>73</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>376</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 28.  
**What is your age?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 - 24</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 - 44</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 - 54</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 - 64</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 - 74</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75 or older</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prefer not to say</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>375</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 29.

Sometimes people find that their income does not quite cover their living costs, have you experienced that while living in Amherst?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>67.2%</td>
<td>110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>65.2%</td>
<td>237</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>347</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 30.

When have you experienced difficulty covering your living costs? Select all that apply. (Sum will not equal 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the past 3 months</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past 12 months</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the past 3 years</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It has been over 3 years</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>since I have had trouble</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>covering my living costs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The AHRA is considering recommending a truth and reconciliation process for the community. These processes could be organized by the Town of Amherst or community-based organizations. Below is a list of elements of a potential truth and reconciliation process. Please select all that you would like to see happen. (Sum will not equal 100%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Element</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A process related to the name of the Town of Amherst</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>55.2%</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehensive cultural competency training for all Town employees</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>68.7%</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a permanent historic cultural site for preservation and actualization</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>64.2%</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A process to address disparities in policing and criminalization of cannabis</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a system-wide, concrete support for Black students and teachers in Amherst school system</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>70.1%</td>
<td>228</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of homeownership and real estate investment opportunities for Black residents</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>79.1%</td>
<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a restorative education program to teach Black legacy in Amherst</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>74.6%</td>
<td>238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 32.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you like to see the Town of Amherst form a successor committee to the AHRA to ensure recommendations are acted upon?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72.2%</td>
<td>82.7%</td>
<td>60.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>22.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>16.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 33.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Would you like to see educational opportunities in the Amherst community, designed to build and sustain support for reparations?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80.6%</td>
<td>88.5%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>9.6%</td>
<td>21.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For the following questions, survey respondents were asked to consider each type of repair for Black Amherst residents of African Heritage and indicate whether they support it.

Table 34a.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you support financial assistance for buying or remodeling a house as a means of repair?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>62.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>18.7%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>25.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>12.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you support financial assistance for renting a home as a means of repair?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>71.6%</td>
<td>77.8%</td>
<td>45.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>25.7%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>34.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>20.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Do you support financial assistance for starting or improving a business as a means of repair?</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>81.3%</td>
<td>85.2%</td>
<td>71.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>19.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 34b.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you support educational scholarships as a means of repair?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>84.0%</td>
<td>88.9%</td>
<td>81.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>14.7%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you support symbolic acts such as renaming spaces, public art installations, memorials, or commemorations as a means of repair?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>63.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
<td>20.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
<td>13.0%</td>
<td>16.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do you support cash payments as a means of repair?</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>Black &amp; Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)</th>
<th>Not Black</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>61.3%</td>
<td>64.8%</td>
<td>32.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>32.0%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don't Know</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>7.4%</td>
<td>19.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Do you support the Town's decision to establish a dedicated reparations fund?

- Yes: 79%, 88%
- No: 16%, 10%
- Don't Know: 5%, 1%

- Black
- Black & Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s)
- Not Black

---

Section Three: Graphs Visualizing Key Questions

Figure 1.
Figure 2.

Support for Potential Truth & Reconciliation Measures

- **Process related to Town Name**
  - Black: 55%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 58%
  - Not Black: 36%

- **Cultural Competency Training**
  - Black: 69%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 64%
  - Not Black: 67%

- **Historic Preservation Site**
  - Black: 50%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 50%
  - Not Black: 56%

- **Address Policing Disparities**
  - Black: 70%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 75%
  - Not Black: 70%

- **Support Black Teachers & Students**
  - Black: 36%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 36%
  - Not Black: 75%

- **Homeownership and Real Estate Investment**
  - Black: 79%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 88%
  - Not Black: 88%

- **Black Legacy Program**
  - Black: 75%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 77%
  - Not Black: 70%

- **Other**
  - Black: 10%
  - Black and Descendant of Enslaved Individual(s): 13%
  - Not Black: 19%
Figure 3.

Share of Respondents in Support of Specific Forms of Repairs

- **Buying or remodeling a House**
  - Black: 80%
  - Black & Descendants of Enslaved Individual(s): 63%
  - Not Black: 72%

- **Renting a Home**
  - Black: 81%
  - Black & Descendants of Enslaved Individual(s): 72%
  - Not Black: 46%

- **Starting/Improving a Business**
  - Black: 81%
  - Black & Descendants of Enslaved Individual(s): 84%
  - Not Black: 71%

- **Educational Scholarships**
  - Black: 65%
  - Black & Descendants of Enslaved Individual(s): 67%
  - Not Black: 65%

- **Symbolic Acts**
  - Black: 61%
  - Black & Descendants of Enslaved Individual(s): 64%
  - Not Black: 46%

- **Cash Payments**
  - Black: 61%
  - Black & Descendants of Enslaved Individual(s): 32%
  - Not Black: 71%

---

Figure 4.

Thinking about how you as a Black person, have been treated in your time living in Amherst, how much, if at all, do you think the following systems need to change for Black residents to be treated fairly in Amherst?

- **Amherst housing**
  - Requires no changes: 34%
  - Requires only minor change: 43%
  - Requires major changes: 12%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 11%

- **Amherst’s political system**
  - Requires no changes: 36%
  - Requires only minor change: 41%
  - Requires major changes: 18%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 5%

- **Hampshire County courts and judicial system**
  - Requires no changes: 37%
  - Requires only minor change: 38%
  - Requires major changes: 10%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 16%

- **Amherst policing**
  - Requires no changes: 33%
  - Requires only minor change: 33%
  - Requires major changes: 20%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 13%

- **Amherst’s public educational system**
  - Requires no changes: 41%
  - Requires only minor change: 31%
  - Requires major changes: 17%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 10%

- **Amherst’s social services system**
  - Requires no changes: 41%
  - Requires only minor change: 25%
  - Requires major changes: 17%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 13%

- **Amherst’s economic system**
  - Requires no changes: 41%
  - Requires only minor change: 23%
  - Requires major changes: 17%
  - Needs to be completely rebuilt: 14%
open-ended discrim - Please use the space below to share with AHRA any details about your experiences of discrimination in Amherst.

When my family and I bought this house, our neighbor installed an electric fence to mark a “do not cross” line of demarcation. Later, after consulting one of his Black associates to determine if it seemed that we’d be okay, he removed the fence, and became a real neighbor. On the other hand, the current owner of the house has installed evergreen trees at the top of the driveway. Although the trees block my exiting view at this dangerous point, the town inspector did not order the trees to be removed. This same person has put a tall mound of dirt (that form a small hill) and allowed overgrown weeds to abut my property despite my having requested their removal.

My salary was not equitable on two occasions, when I was employed at UMass as well as the Town of Amherst.

When Judy’s was open, I, along with 10-12 women of color attempted to enter Judy’s to celebrate a friend in our group’s birthday. The host informed us that we would not be seated because they were saving the space for students and their families who might come in. We then took our business to the Monkey Bar, who welcomed and set up tables for us. From then on, we all boycotted Judy’s until their closing day.

I was cast as a monkey in the school play, i was routinely sent out of class for the same behavior as my peers, I would be left to deal with racialized insults and remarks with no help from teachers, Inwas followed around in stores constantly, I was harassed by police in my own parking lot on several occasions, and I've routinely been treated poorly at boutique establishments

I sometimes see or anticipate racial discrimination about to happen in the moment and I quickly, and appropriately, meet the situation head on and I don't allow it to manifest.

Amherst hides itself under the pretence that they aren't a racist town. Well when the students are gone it's a whole other story. I have gone to bars and not served until I make it known, I have worked in jobs where managers have called me, You people", I was getting gas and someone shouted out, "Niger go back to Africa" lol, that my personal favorite. I am seriously over qualified for certain jobs at Umass Amherst and never get an interview. But when my white friends apply for jobs they get interviewed every single time. I pray this end some day :(

Too numerous to recount. Many in the educational institutions, the police department, downtown stores, housing, etc.

In the school system.

amherst’s faculty and administration are incredibly racist, I have experienced micro aggressions so many times in town and in my classes, among my peers and by educators.

DWB

profiled by police multiple times. discrimination in school. housing discrimination. employment discrimination.
The lack of accessible public transportation strikes me as racially discriminatory. The lack of access to transportation has meant I have not be able to meet with other black youth on top of there being no spaces made for us to gather outside of our schools.

My experiences with racism in Amherst stems from a myriad of interactions from service providers across all economic boundaries. In one instance, I recall awaiting seating in a restaurant that was virtually empty, only be seated to the rear of the establishment away from others who were dining. Of course, I politely objected for better seating arrangements. Another, was being overlooked in line for service while standing in line awaiting my need for service to be address. I politely explained my position being next in line and how the offense made me feel. Yet, another experience included tending cash for a service rendered, but the exchange or return of funds/change was dropped on the counter, as oppose to being placed in my hand, as I had tendered cash in hand of the recipient. As I've mentioned earlier, the experiences are numerous and insulting. Being a well-spoken professional, I've often had to give those respective individuals the benefit of doubt to compensate for their lack manner and courteous.

More than from time to time, but not regularly. Amherst is much better in 2023 than NYC in 1950. Still I felt my kids were discriminated against in school and in employment.

I have been ignored/dismissed in stores when help is needed.

Mainly about policing and micro aggressions from some of the residents of the town. Also, some businesses in own are known to follow POC around in stores.

Consistently being watch as I go into the stores, have been called out of my name by directors, but it was ok because I was not called a Black- B

I met a racial description when stopped by the police. My former doctor discriminated against me.

microaggression, casual racism, community policing & policing within commercial stores, etc

Being within a PWI it happens regularly within faculty and my fellow students.

other - Are there any other systems that you believe need to be addressed for Black residents to be treated fairly in Amherst? If yes, please describe:

Are there any other systems that you believe need to be addressed for Black residents to be treated fairly in Amherst? If yes, please describe:

Business development opportunities such as mentoring, access to funds--including those under USDA rural Housing resources--and more.

Employment in local businesses, especially for BIPOC youth, needs to be increased substantially.

Education around personal radicalized harm and a system of restorative justice and expanding learning and inclusion
Hire more qualified people of color in all departments in the town.

School systwm immediately

APD and the school system

Food access/services in schools/food banks

Transportation and youth services

The system of services available for response, in my view, are at best vague. For me, its not necessarily the system, but more so, the people within those respective systems that foster bias behaviors and attitudes that make the system inequitable in its treatment of any individual not work the way it's intended.

Unable to think of any currently.

More accessible psychological services.

Community bases, access to network of BIPOC in other valley communities, access to affordable nutritious food, transportation!!

Businesses that operate in Amherst should be required to hire a diverse staff, have people of color in management roles, and address claims of unequal treatment, including counseling and advice for employees and job seekers, who believe they are the subject of covert, discriminatory practices.

No

Stop changing our acronyms. We are of African descent in ALL of the Americas. Stop lumping LGBTQ+ with Black Inequities. Along with Native Americans, both of our ethnic groups have been disenfranchised before any other new immigrant groups faced injustice. A system of identification should respect people's ethnic identities such as African- Puerto Rican or African - Haitian, European - French, European - Irish

This is a weird and leading question. Have I felt that there are systems that need to be addressed to enhance equity? Sure. Better two way communication with the town would be good. Fewer taxes would be better.

End your racism of low expectation. Stealing wealth will destroy the town. Attract jobs. Loosen housing restrictions. We will MAKE equity.

The discrimination against low income Black people by the Black elite in Amherst. The affluent Black community in Amherst seems to be the only one people are concerned about.

Business Community- The BID

Perhaps trainings of Town workers in treatment and information given to Black people.
elaborate - If you would like, use this space to share with the AHRA any experiences you have had with these systems in Amherst?

If you would like, use this space to share with the AHRA any experiences you have had with these systems in Amherst?

Housing costs are astronomical especially if you don't live in a dual income Professor household. Even being middle class does not afford reasonable homeownership or rentals.

Banks especially Umassfive gives loans to my white counterparts with less of a credit score than me lower interest rates and police my family by wanting to take the money automatically every month. I know this because a group of us came together to secretly film them. The manner in which I, family members who participated and other black friends was disgusting compared to my white friends helping with building proof that banks 100% discriminate. What hurts is that we the black community have no idea who to go to.

I've felt as if old money has kept white and ignorant people in power who have little care for the live ability of the town for poor people, youth, queer people, and just generally anyone who doesn't want to live out a cottage fantasy in a white town.

Maybe later.

Basically, the system was not built to take care of Black people in Amherst and in the US. However, Amherst has a real change to change the systems locally to be more equitable for her Black residents. Amherst is known as a liberal and fair place to live, but overall, our Black residents don't feel like the tag line mirrors their experiences.

Lack of black psychological professionals.

as a black student of low income background, Amherst systems can be difficult to navigate and exclusive/underrepresented

I have not had much personal experience with these systems, but I know plenty of people who have, and they've shared their stories.

We were refused a home loan by all the banks in Amherst. All. We have lived in our home for over 33 years and haven't missed a payment. We finally had to go outside of Amherst and get loan insurance.

We need to prioritize money spent on the services which are used by ALL residents starting with a NEW FIRE STATION and POLICE STATION which are the services which keep EVERYONE safe in this town. ALSO, a COMPLETE transparent accounting of ALL money available which was assigned to making necessary changes to schools along with how and what this money was spent on. Also, with the DIMINISHING number of students, why can the schools not be combined with the possible sale of one property going toward needed changes and repairs of which should be listed and available for the residents, which are ultimately the ones paying for them, to be seen.

I want to thank our citizens for advocating and establishing CRESS. A family benefited from a crises intervention without fear of arrest or death.
Lower my taxes. It's only becoming more expensive to live here because of outsiders buying up property to rent to other outsiders.

I have actually done a lot of work for the Town on Housing, education and my name seems to disappear on the final reports. I came here after retirement and have had a glorious life and was appreciated… so, I did not need the recognition. But, I wonder if it happens to those here. I have observered that most Black candidates for public office have to run twice to win for example.

**pplhd_detail - If you would like, use this space to expand:**

If you would like, use this space to expand:

My soul.

**displacement of people**

I feel like there were more spaces black people and amirst as a teenager growing up

I've felt as if I'm a black drop in white water. And that soon I'm to dissolve in it if more isn't poured in. There's no government representation or liaison for people of color and we have to fight for a place here yet they tell us we have one.

n/a

**stereotyped,**

From the name of there town to the lack of a single place or street name (other than on the college campuses) the existence of black people in this town historically to now is not represented or visible.

Black holidays are co-opted in Amherst and lose the pride and artistic values.

I have been called the "N" word, and yelled at to get in back of the line "where I belong" by an elderly white woman

**There is no social gathering space for black people**

The requirement to conform to certain norms in language, appearance, public expression, and p=civic participation.

**Destruction of Black spaces due to pressure from White fragility.**

The way people speak to you. Especially those who feel you are new here. It is assumed that you are a novice in all things. I have had that and observed it done to other people of color.
other_elig - Are there other reparation eligibility criteria that you feel should be considered? If so, please describe in the space below.

Are there other reparation eligibility criteria that you feel should be considered? If so, please describe in the space below.

Blacks of African descent including Caribbean, Africa and other nationalities.

I believe anti-Black structures, sentiment and policy have impacted all Black American peoples with several generations in USA. They may not be direct descendants of enslaved people, but if they have generations of Black ancestry in the USA dating back to or before the 1950s, I believe they are due retribution for opportunities denied and resources refused.

Not at this time.

To brief, all white people's descendants must pay for their forefathers crimes against humanity. But wait, they don't think that we are people or human. I forgot about that.

Black students and residents, even with African ancestry

if you identify as black or as black and descendent of slavery then you should be eligible

people in generational poverty and health issues

I would be willing to discuss this more in person

I think they should be the focus for black reparations but ultimately the us was built upon crimes against all those who aren't white, able bodied, cishet, men

The issue of reparations and eligibility is a complex one. Who’s deserving and who’s not, how can we truly decide. The idea of reparations and who's deserving is broad, but at least an effort address some of the inequities that have impacted so many in different way, be it economically, mentally, emotionally, financially and health-wise. For me, cash will always be king, but is that enough? The promise of 40 acres and mule sought to address some of that, but that program no longer exists. I don't really know if I could ever. more thoughtfully, address that question fully.

I think if someone has lived in town for a long time, they should be eligible as they have suffered the experience of being discriminated against just like the direct descendants of enslaved Americans. However, some people have had more opportunities than others so other criteria will have to be talked about such as education level, economic status, employment status, lack of housing opportunities etc. etc.

Eligibility should include all people of African descent for most local initiatives, but those with enslaved ancestors in the U.S. should be at the center of our reparative work

There should be specific reparations for black descendants of enslaved people... for BIPOC outside of that identity (eg indigenous or members of African diaspora), other efforts should be made to address how US contributed to political displacement, indigenous genocide, and the state of refugee populations globally.
many other poc have faced the same fate of being enslaved there should be reperations for them

If somebody is descended from slavery, but not in the US, they should still be eligible if they've spent a formative amount of time as a resident of the town, since the harms did not end with slavery. Perhaps there should be a tiered reperations plan, in which some people may be eligible for some, but maybe not all of the benefits.

I would recommend that any black institutions be supported, such as Hope Community Church and the Goodwin AME Zion Church, which was established in 1896, current building finished in 1914. Much service to the community, and the home of the Amherst Area Gospel Choir

If you identify as black, if you have children in the education system in Amherst, and if you have lived in Amherst over the past 10 years

Everyone of color should receive some form of reperations including single mothers

I do not hold anyone responsible for where I am in my life other than myself.

We are not able to go back in time as Alex Haley to pinpoint our descendants. Therefore eligibility should be considered for 1) Amherst Residents only from slavery to year 2020 2) people of the African diaspora. For example I learned through Ancestry DNA the percentage of African Nations my descendants are from in West African nations is 79% who landed in the Puerto Rico which is a commonwealth of the USA. If one or both parents are of African descent that should count.

discrmin_detail - Please use the space below to share with AHRA any details about discrimination you have witnessed in Amherst.

Please use the space below to share with AHRA any details about discrimination you have witnessed in Amherst.

October 19, 2022 Town Council Meeting: a council member abruptly voted cut off discussion of the July 5 incident with police and teenagers, resulting in heated discussion, and a council vote to end the meeting. Members of the CSSJC, who had been invited to take part in the meeting stated that they were not through with meeting and would continue by themselves.

I have witnessed many experiences of discrimination in Amherst and so have my teenage children.

Our neighborhood has a pond on shared land, and I've heard about neighbors asking residents if they live in the neighborhood or not as a way of policing the usage of the shared pond. Since the neighborhood is majority white, it feels like racial profiling when they do this to Black and Brown people.

Antiblackness is connected to so many structures. I have witnessed micro aggressions where people assume that any black person in a store is a worker, I have seen white students throwing around the N-word, I have heard people evaluate black people's "professionalism" based on things like hair, language, dress, etc., and most importantly I have seen how they have been removed from so much of the local history

history of segregation in housing that continues today
Not personally witnessed but know people of color who have shared experiences of racism in Amherst because of their race

Nasty confrontation in town by a white man against a black man; racial slurs shouted by people in a car driving through town

Racial profiling in stores

I can't think of a specific incident that I have personally witnessed, but I'm sure Amherst (like anywhere) is not immune to structural and institutional racism, and I have heard about incidents of racism on and around the college campuses.

I witnessed a physical attack and derogatory words used against black individuals on the town common during the town fair as a young child.

I see more discrimination against white people and people who are politically conservative than I do any sort of anti-black racism. I see black coworkers do less work and get more praise than other people. The opposite of what you claim

Yes, I've heard the sign guy downtown - who I haven't seen since I moved back here recently - use slurs targeting several groups

As a high school student I witnessed more intense consequences for students of color. as a college student I was in a major that was 90% white.

Middle and High school students excluded because of black

While I have not witnessed it, I am sure it exists

UMPD using excessive force against Antael Rosa and arresting them for 'walking in the wrong place'

I have witnessed anti-BIPOC racism in UMass classes

"Witness" is a difficult standard. I believe it happens but I was not a in a position to say that I was a witness.

I am aware of reported racism in the schools. I have not witnessed it myself.

Although I did not personally witness the discrimination over the years, Dr. Edwin D. Driver, Professor Emeritus, UMass Amherst recounted many instances, especially in his early years at UMass, beginning in 1948 when he was the first African American professor on campus. He stated in a newspaper interview two years ago that the ideal reparation would be to rename Old Chapel, in the basement of which he had his first office, for him. There has been cheery support for this idea but so far no action. Dr. Driver is 98 years old.

other - Are there other forms of repair that you believe should be considered? If so, please explain in the space below.

Are there other forms of repair that you believe should be considered? If so, please explain in the space below.
Apologies

Memberships to organizations

Free or discounted fees for cultural activities, such as dance or art classes, even if they are outside of degree-granting educational institutions (perhaps this was considered part of educational scholarships, but if not, this is another form of repair I've seen and agree with).

Perhaps museum installations which may repair by educating on matters of historical erasure of contributions by people of color, for which surviving relatives of the historical subject may be financially compensated for loaning any artifacts and with a proportion of any revenue generated by the installation. (Regarding answers to above questions other than "yes": my understanding of reparations usually revolves around means which encourage more equitable distribution of generational wealth, which rent assistance and symbolism don't necessarily contribute to, but any financial reparations are justified.)

More than just renaming places, I would suggest creating specific black places. I am thinking it would be nice to have a museum specifically dedicated to the history of the black community in Amherst (civil war tablets, ancestral bridges, exhibits/sections dedicated to important people, tours of important areas in town, etc.).

Early childhood assistance as well as for young adults or older people wanting education

Healthcare, use of community space, platforms for community expression and story telling

careful revision/incorporation in primary and secondary school US history curriculum to include the 1619 Project educational materials and other anti-racist information

Experiences explained and pain shared should be paid for like professors are paid

Laws should be passed that prosecute the white people that wrongfully bother black people. Especially when they cause trauma to the black person or their families darn it. We should be left alone to build our neighborhoods, our own banks and assist in bringing back the black Wallstreet.

As a white Amherst resident, I don't necessarily feel that it should be up to me to determine appropriate means of repair. I would be open to considering different possibilities if Black Amherst residents felt they were appropriate/meaningful. I wonder whether scholarships or financial assistance for a specific purpose could potentially be too limiting/restrictive?

Not instead of but as well, an apology, for the past, for the present. An apology that is deeply rooted in the understanding of the harms, an acknowledgment, and a commitment to changing the present and assuring the future has reduced racial harm with a goal of elimination of racial harm

Renaming of Amherst and Amherst College. Visible celebration of diversity and inclusion in the town.

I believe these measures should target low-income/lower-middle class individuals and families. Well-educated, high income individuals - and successful businesses - are certainly not immune to racial discrimination, but they are privileged in that they nonetheless have benefited from the inequities of capitalism, and their interests should not be prioritized as a result, at least through financial means.
Improve the general welfare. Dedicate a new park, or fund a number of spots in preschool or after school activities for low income families. Programs with racial requirements for use are racist.

School

TO Native Americans! Lord Amherst killed many! Why exclude Native Americans????

Tracking students

The survey gives no opportunity to explore general questions about reparations. Are reparations a step towards reconciliation, or is reconciliation impossible after such great injustice? Are reparations race-based, or directed to those actually descended from slaves, and is the reparation offered by Amherst to be for harm actually done by Amherst? There is great injustice in the disparities in wealth in our society across the races, not only between white and black. It seems an open question as to whether there might be more justice and political wisdom in pursuing alliance between black and white to address the universal problems of inequality, which would include reparations for all wrongs perpetrated by an unjust economic system. I have many questions, which is why I responded “I don’t know” to so many questions on the survey.

I don't consider symbolic acts to be repair, but I still support them.

open-ended - Please use this space to share with AHRA any other suggestions you have related to reparations in Amherst.

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This is ridiculous! Paying people who never were Slaves by people who never owned Slaves is itself a racist act. Can't wait to sell my house and move out of this messed up town to a place with way more freedom and less onerous property taxes. OMG!

I strongly believe in all of this work and believe it is an important and needed step toward equity

Black history offered thru the study of black literature. Perhaps thru the library

Earlier I was asked who should receive reparations, I would like to expand that answer to include Indigenous folks as well

add "justice" to "truth and reconciliation" -- that is, there must be concrete outcomes/actions from the process

Thank you for this important work!

It concerns me that this is not happening for the indigenous people of this area.
Perform an actual analysis of harm and repair: A = For residents who can prove they are descendants with a direct link to an African enslaved in the USA between 1776 and 1830 when slavery was abolished, what is value of investment made in Great Society programs and favorable treatment since 1960s equal rights, voting rights and civil rights programs, and what are contemporary average assets and earnings in America today for African Americans, B = Assets and earnings of Africans who remained free in Africa. Is A greater, lesser or equal to B?

I support reparations, but I feel that they must target those who are economically franchised. High-income residents and families can still face discrimination, but the fact is that they are already yielding the benefits of our broken capitalist system, and thus they do not need the same supports. I'd much rather see resources go toward housing for low-income residents and small Black-owned businesses, rather than toward drawing in wealthy investors - unless those investors are directly contributing to programs that empower low-income residents. Also, I feel that practical measures should receive far more resources than symbolic acts. Renaming the town isn't going to solve the real-life issues that struggling, marginalized individuals face in their daily lives. Of course, creating public arts spaces and cultural spaces can open room for these voices, but again, I would want to see lower-income folks prioritized in these spaces as well. The elite have countless ways to have their voices heard and our society's capitalist love affair reinforces that constantly.

Do not do anything that will get the town on the wrong end of a civil rights lawsuit.

Ask Black people what they want. Reparations for Native Americans!

See previous answer. An additional concern is that at some point resolutions about reparations be submitted to the voters. Without democratic buy-in there seems a danger of resentment.

Renaming the town would gain a lot of press but might not be as effective as direct assistance for Black residents. I would be interested in dialogue about any reparations that my BIPOC neighbors prioritize as meaningful.

Rename UMass Old Chapel, or at least the auditorium, for Dr. Edwin D. Driver

This entire project presumes that black people need more help than their white peers. We should be finding ways to support poor people of all colors. That does not mean we make living in Amherst appear to be affordable when that is not sustainable for them.

Have a safe and meaningful, ie effective, way for students and parents to address when a student is experiencing racism either from peer(s) or teacher(s)

Sidewalks and places for kids to be.

I believe reparations would ideally be extend to any person who identifies as BIPOC or is a child living in poverty. Goodwill goes a long way; funds for children are a worthwhile investment and the right thing to do

While well intended there is no way to really doll out reparations fairly. I support financially increasing education and home ownership opportunities.

Seems that many of the options listed for a potential truth and reconciliation process could be useful. The devil is in the details, however. It also seems like the option to create opportunities for homeownership and real estate investment fits less comfortably under the umbrella of a truth and reconciliation process then under the umbrella of direct reparations.