

FERGUSON COMMISSION MEETING

March 25, 2015

**Economic Inequity & Opportunity
Initial Racial & Ethnic Relations
Discussion Findings**

DISCUSSION FINDINGS OVERVIEW

- Review Community Discussion at Meeting # 6
 - Economic Inequity & Opportunity (February 23)
- Review Community Discussion at Meeting # 7
 - Racial & Ethnic Relations (March 2)

ECONOMIC INEQUITY & MOBILITY DISCUSSION

RECAP FROM MEETING #6
FEBRUARY 23, 2015

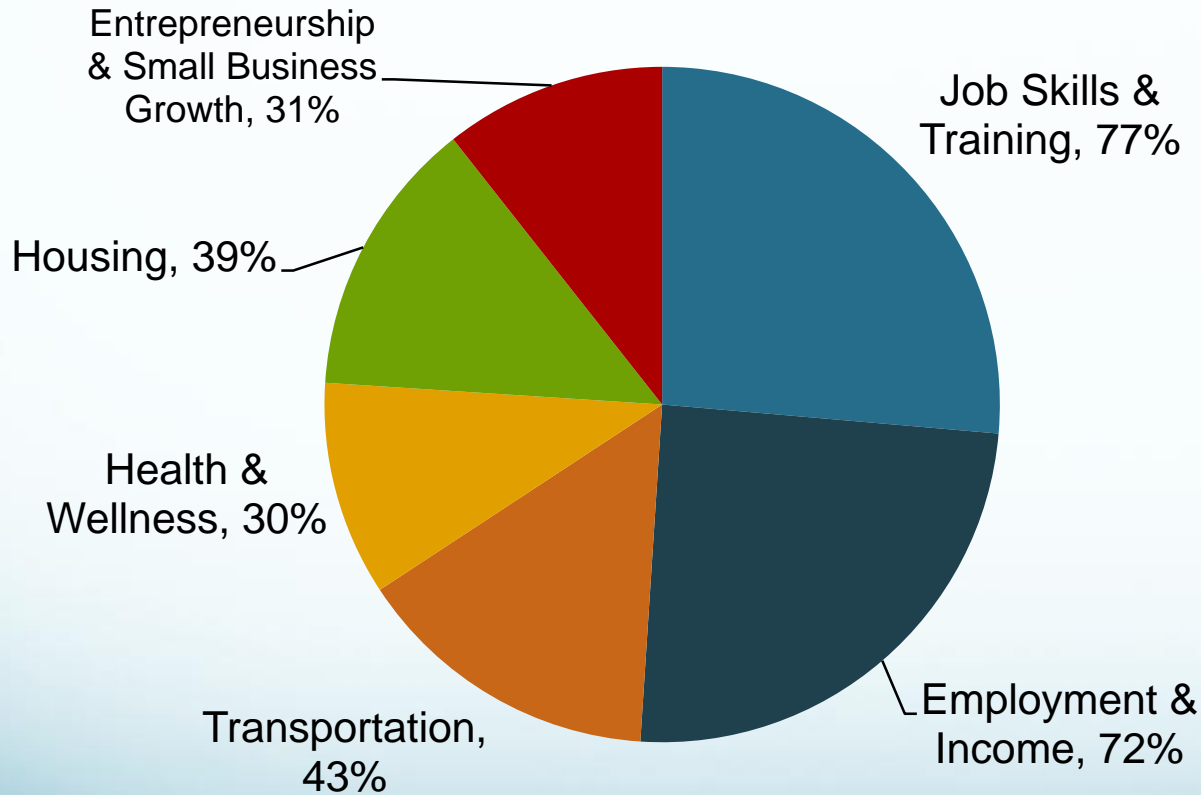
PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

- **Public Open Mic Session**
- **Small Group Discussions:**
 - Employment & Jobs
 - Business & Entrepreneurship
 - Housing
 - Transportation



WHAT FACTORS ARE MOST IMPORTANT TO ACCESSING OPPORTUNITY?

% of respondents who selected that factor



Top Three:

Job Skills & Training (77%)
Employment & Income (72%)
Transportation (43%)

PUBLIC OPEN MIC COMMENTS

Living Wage

- Working poor
- “Tale of Two Wallets”: Rich and Poor divide

Opportunity

- People are doing their best
- Needs to be a focus on systemic inequity

Access to Capital

- Inability to finance initiatives
- “Don’t forget about North County”

Financial Literacy

- Access to capital requires financial literacy
- Business ownership is low among African Americans

EMPLOYMENT & JOBS INSIGHTS

ISSUES: *What issues do we face as a region concerning employment, jobs & income?*

- **Minority Participation in Development**
 - African Americans not visible on local construction projects; inclusion goals not being met
- **Plight of Ex-Offenders**
 - Ex-offenders are excluded from resources that would allow them to become productive citizens
- **Wage Stagnation & Income Inequality**
 - Minimum wage is not a living wage, but competition for even low-wage jobs is increasing
 - Debate on whether raising min, wage would hurt business if corporations' profits are skyrocketing
 - Power inequality, more minorities need to be policy
- **Patronage & “Good Ol’ Boy” Network**
 - Economic mobility is tied to relationships
- **Structural Inequality**
 - Wealth gap has been created by policy; issues are systematic



BUSINESS & ENTREPRENEURSHIP INSIGHTS

ISSUES: *What issues do we face as a region concerning business and entrepreneurship?*

- **Race/Underrepresentation of People of Color**

- Unequal access to opportunity
- Minorities underrepresented in key business institutions and in the most promising growth sectors
- Communities of color fatigued by micro-aggressions (“constant struggle”) in business context

- **Strained Access to Capital**

- Local banks very risk-adverse/conservative

- **Lack of Education & Capacity Building**

- Early education on business and entrepreneurship is needed
- Innovative concepts (such as incubators) that provide resources & capacity building aren’t accessible or not perceived to be welcoming environments



HOUSING INSIGHTS

ISSUES: *What issues do we face as a region concerning housing?*

- **Access to Capital**
 - Insufficient financing to subsidize affordable quality housing, including seniors
 - Home ownership requires knowledge about budgeting, maintenance and organization
- **Access to Quality Housing and Neighborhoods**
 - Concentrated poverty which creates environments/conditions where residents have less access to resources such as good schools, transportation, access to food and recreation
 - Builders misuse and profit from misuse of tax credits
 - More than a physical house: All communities should have assets that contribute to community growth
 - “White Flight” is a contributing factor and results in segregated communities and resources



COMMUNITY INPUT ON IMPROVEMENTS

Employment & Jobs

- Invest in youth
- Hold leaders accountable for diversity

Business & Entrepreneurship

- Create funding models that focus on racial equity
- Support youth entrepreneurship

Housing

- Create programs for accessing capital and educating communities
- Build

Transportation

- Address political will
- Innovative private sector action

INITIAL RACIAL & ETHNIC RELATIONS DISCUSSION

RECAP FROM MEETING #7
MARCH 2, 2015

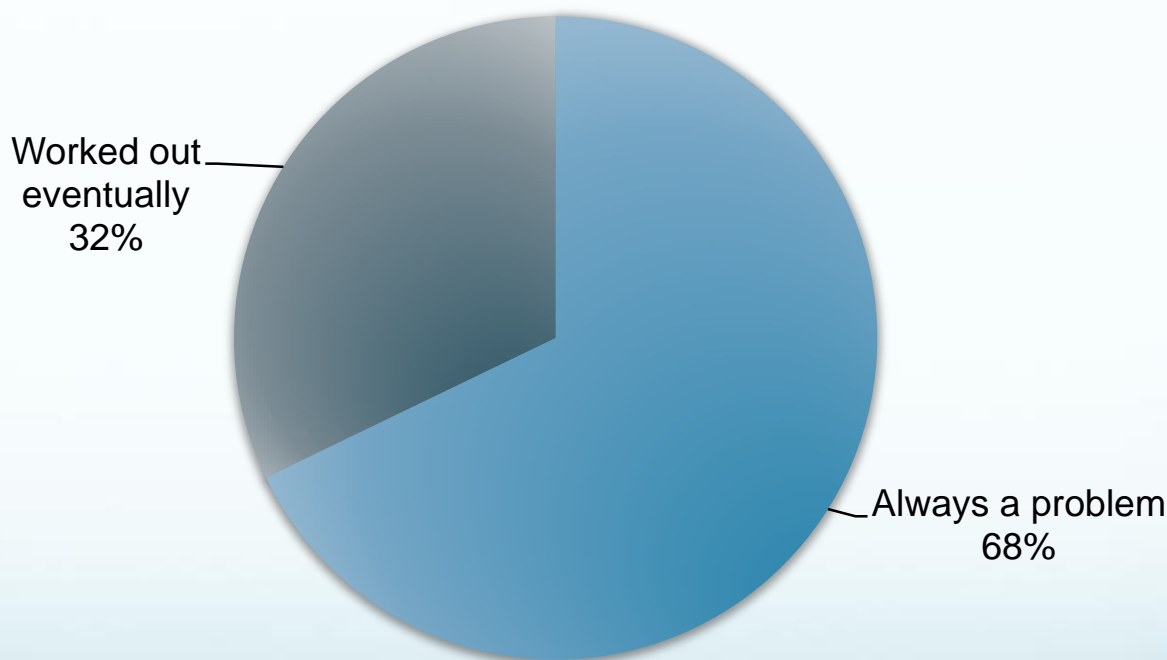
PUBLIC DISCUSSIONS

- **Public Open Mic Session**
 - First 100 Days: What are you going to do differently? What have you learned?
- **Small Group Discussions:**
 - Racial & Ethnic Relations



WILL RACIAL AND ETHNIC RELATIONS ALWAYS BE A PROBLEM IN THE UNITED STATES?

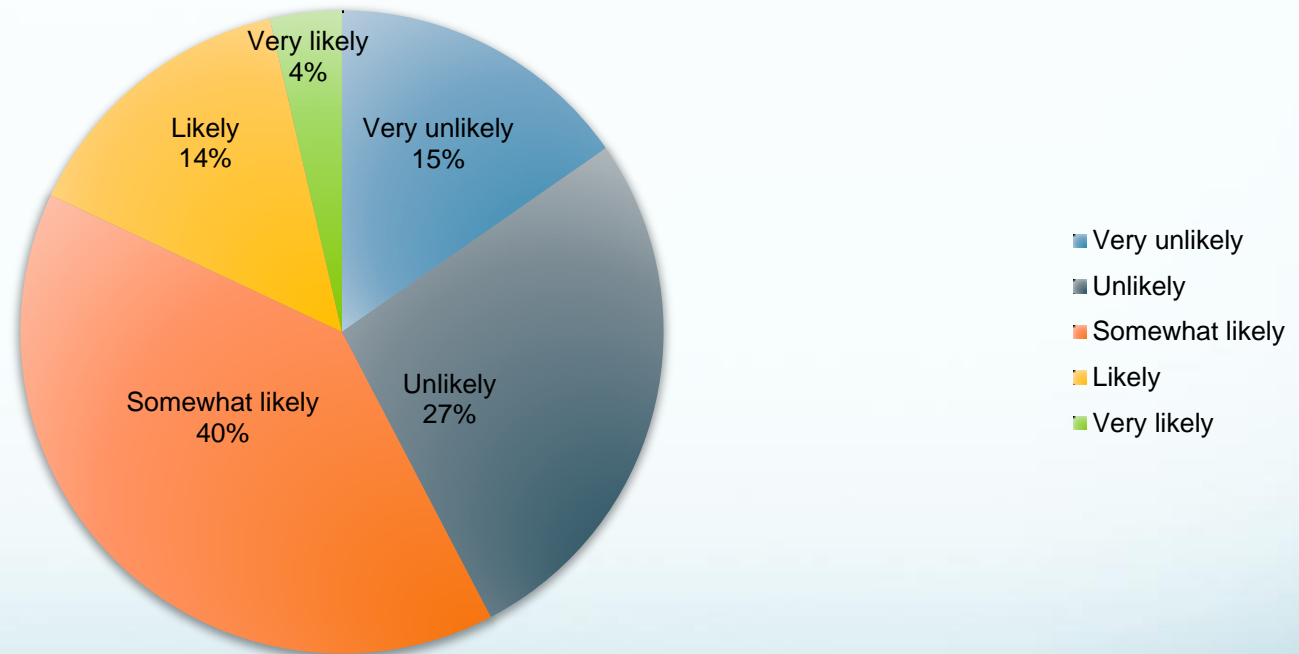
Two of Three Attendees Believe Racial and Ethnic Relations Will Always be Problematic



Note: Question from Historic Gallup Poll on Race Relations

HOW LIKELY IS IT THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN BLACKS AND WHITES IN THE ST. LOUIS REGION WILL IMPROVE?

Almost Six of Ten Attendees Feel Improving is Somewhat to Very Likely to improve within the next three to five years



PUBLIC OPEN MIC COMMENTS

Call for Accountability & Implementation

Justice can look like
transparency and
accountability

Commission must
push to get
recommendations
implemented

Commission has
admirable ambitions
and heavy charge

Racial Profiling Regardless of Income

Educate myself and
children about
racially motivated
arrests

Racial profiling not
limited to poverty

Dialogue on Systemic Racism Needed

Systemic racial
issues pervasive

White people have
role and work in
addressing racism

WHAT ARE THE WAYS THAT RACIAL AND ETHNIC RELATIONS CREATE OPPORTUNITIES?

- Dialogue to Develop an Understanding
 - Elevate awareness
 - Promote multiple points of view
 - Open dialogue on culture
 - Moves from philosophical to personal
- Fair Representation/Access to Opportunity
 - Work to level the playing field
 - Create representative leadership
- Opportunity to Heal
 - We cannot move forward if the status quo is maintained
 - Black and white have been wounded
 - Address deep historic wounds

WHAT STANDS IN THE WAY OF REALIZING RACIAL AND ETHNIC RECONCILIATION?

- No Space for Healing
 - Diversity “just talk” vs. significant efforts to promote diversity and inclusion
 - Healing spaces needed within and across races
- Fragmentation and Segregation
 - St. Louis is highly segregated by race and class
 - The “High School” Question defines our community
- History and Institutional Policy
 - Policies drive problem of poverty, housing, jobs and education
 - We are not a culturally competent city
 - No income coming into North County
- Need for Power within Black Community
 - Access to positions of power
 - Resolve issues within community
 - “Black people need to get out of our own way”

WHAT ARE THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS AROUND RACE THAT WE NEED TO ADDRESS?

- Restructure Job Market and Address Economic Mobility
 - Support businesses that bring income into neighborhoods
 - Impact of social capital in job market (who you know)
 - “Labor market puts whites at an advantage”
 - Racial and economic segregation is costing everyone
- Rebuild Trust in the Court System and Policing
 - Lack of confidence in the court system
 - Court system perpetuates racism and inequality

WHAT ARE THE KEY CONSIDERATIONS AROUND RACE THAT WE NEED TO ADDRESS?

- Look to Youth as the Future
 - Racism is taught; counteract with early education about love and respect
 - Education system needs to prepare children for future competition and economic future
 - Youth must be a priority; they are our hope
- Plan with Vision
 - Fast forward 10 years in the future: What do we want STL to look like?
 - Win-win system
 - Targeted strategies to address poverty
- Create Common Ground
 - Develop a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood
 - Where can we get to know each other?