

# Implementing Policy Recommendations from the Ferguson Commission's Report: A Guide for Policymakers

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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In their introductory letter to the Ferguson Commission Report, Co-Chairmen Rich McClure and Rev. Starsky D. Wilson wrote that the report: “reveals difficult, uncomfortable truths about this region we call home. It should be read with an understanding that there are ways to address these issues, and that there are people of goodwill who want to address these issues. Perhaps most importantly, addressing these significant challenges will take all of us working together to find common ground.”

To show a way forward, the Report included signature priorities with related policy calls to action, national model examples, context and history, day-to-day implications, as well as other necessary tools and information. And while the report includes many specific policy calls to action, it is not an implementation plan. Implementation may require legislation, policy changes, funding, public support, private support, or in most cases, a combination of these. Some calls to action identify half a dozen accountable bodies or more. Each individual or organization has a role in making these changes a reality.

What this means is that the report does not spell out step-by-step solutions, or answer questions about how proposed solutions will be funded, as those things are beyond the scope of the Commission, the charge of which was to identify needed changes and call on those accountable for that change to act.

But to assist you, as a policymaker, in your efforts to move forward the policies included in the report, we have developed the following guide for looking at policy implementation through the eyes of the Commission. Whether you are a state legislator, a mayor or county executive, member of a city council, or even the head of a civic or philanthropic institution, as you consider how to implement a policy call to action from the Report, we recommend that you ask these three threshold questions:

1. Is what I am looking to do a policy or a program change? Understanding the difference between these two terms is critical to implementing policies -- which affect systemic change -- instead of programs -- which address temporary improvements.
2. Has a racial equity framework (lens) been applied? Data suggest that our institutions and systems are not equal and this has racial repercussions. Applying a racial equity framework to the policy you seek to change will help address these systemic inequities.
3. Do other calls to action from the report align with what I am working on? Many of the nearly 200 calls to action included in the Report are related to one another. The individual policy recommendations in the Report should not be viewed as “one off” changes, but rather as an opportunity to address systemic change that may include additional calls to action.

In addition to explaining in greater detail how to answer these threshold questions, we have taken one of the calls to action from the Report -- “Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the Region” -- and applied these questions to it as a case study so it can serve as a practical example of how these questions can be applied to a policy you may be looking to change. In doing so, we seek to demonstrate how you, as a policymaker, can help fulfill the mission of the Ferguson Commission.

## POLICY VS. PROGRAM

In an op-ed published in *Governing Magazine*, Ferguson Commission Co-Chair Rev. Starsky D. Wilson addressed the concept of policies vs. programs, asking, “Which [of these] will pave the way to enduring change?” In answering this question, Rev. Wilson distinguished between policies and programs in the following way:

“Programs are short-term interventions that create temporary improvements in the wake of challenges; whereas, policies are covenants we collectively choose to live by, as articulated in legislation and regulation — which inform our socially-accepted mores and ethics. ... Ultimately, programs can’t eliminate the systemic injustices that any group faces. Rather, they help people manage the effect of these injustices; they do not overcome or cure them” as policies do.

As you look to take a call to action from the Ferguson Commission’s Report, we hope you will ask yourself, “Is this a policy or program change?” and focus on the former of these two. To help determine whether it is a policy or a program, consider the following:

	<b><u>Program</u></b>	<b><u>Policy</u></b>
<b><i>Duration</i></b>	Short-term	Long-term
<b><i>Purpose</i></b>	Manage the effects of injustice or inequity	Change the system that results in the injustice or inequity
<b><i>Requires</i></b>	Counting the number of people injured and determining cost of treating the injury itself (e.g. “How many Band-Aids do we need and what will that cost?”)	Disaggregating data to find and address the underlying <b>cause(s)</b> of the injury (e.g. “Why are people getting injured? What systems exist to cause the injury? How can these systems be changed to eliminate the injury?”)

### Case Study: Ferguson Commission Call To Action

To help provide a practical example, we have taken a call to action from the Commission’s Report and used it to demonstrate the difference between policies and programs. The specific call to action from the Report reads:

Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the Region. Identify agreed upon priority transportation project(s) for the St. Louis region (e.g., extending MetroLink on the proposed North-South corridor, implementing Bus Rapid Transit) in order to elevate the importance of key projects for the region and make tangible the need and potential benefits of transit.

This call to action was crafted in response to the feedback of various stakeholders in the transportation arena who repeatedly stressed that the lack of a strategic, policy- and priority-focus to transportation planning in the region undermined the potential of such infrastructure building to facilitate transformational change. The status quo method of identifying transportation projects was a good example of taking a programmatic instead of policy-oriented approach.

In this case study, the benefits of embracing the policy-oriented approach captured in the call to action relative to the status quo can be summarized as follows:

<b>Status Quo:</b> transportation projects are identified in a one-off manner with little underlying strategy	<b>Call to Action:</b> transportation projects are identified through a concerted planning process
<b>Programmatic approach</b>	<b>Policy-oriented approach</b>
Projects are “one off” and responsive to “the loudest voice in the room”	Projects are a function of regional demands based on a thoughtful needs assessment including an application of the racial equity lens ( <i>see below</i> ) that has yielded a big-picture plan and strategy for the area
Projects are smaller in size due to a lack of planning necessary for large-scale endeavors	With an underlying plan in place, projects have potential to be larger
Projects have little economic impact or development due to limited size (both in terms of implementation and reach)	Projects have far-reaching economic impact due to their larger scale and reach
Ultimately, projects do little to improve racial equity and access to opportunity	Ultimately, projects have great potential to improve racial equity and access to opportunity

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## RACIAL EQUITY FRAMEWORK (LENS)

Racial equity refers to the capacity of our region to create, manage, and distribute resources in a way that gives people from all racial backgrounds the opportunity to thrive. As stated earlier, as well as in the Ferguson Commission Report, data suggest that our institutions and systems are not equal and that this has racial repercussions:

- Economists estimate that the 2012 Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the St. Louis region would have been 10 percent higher— \$151.3 billion instead of \$137.57 billion—if there had not been a racial income gap (Public Policy Research Center, 2015).
- The St. Louis region ranks 42 out of 50 large metropolitan areas for economic mobility, defined as a person, family or group’s ability to improve their economic status by moving up in income (Chetty, 2014).
- Researchers found that less racial segregation is one of the five predictors of upward economic mobility (Chetty, 2014). St. Louis currently is the fifth most segregated metropolitan area in the country (Ihnen, 2013).
- At its extreme in the St. Louis region, life expectancy differs by nearly 40 years depending on zip code (Comprehensive Planning Division, 2015). In mostly white, suburban Wildwood, MO., the life expectancy is 91.4 years; in the mostly black, inner-ring suburb of Kinloch, MO., it’s 55.9 years (St. Louis County Health Department, 2015). The reality behind those numbers is a complex, interconnected set of socioeconomic factors, including disparities in access to quality housing, healthcare, education and employment. Researchers estimate that nationwide, in one year alone, premature death associated with low levels of education and poverty among Black individuals costs \$3.3 billion (Purnell et al., 2014).
- The National Urban League Policy Institute found that racial disparities in health cost the U.S. \$60 billion in excess medical costs and \$22 billion in lost productivity in 2009 (National Urban League Policy Institute, 2012). They projected that if these health disparities remain, the burden will rise to \$126 billion by 2020 and \$363 billion by 2050 (National Urban League Policy Institute, 2012). An additional economic loss due to premature deaths was valued at \$250 billion in 2009 (National Urban League Policy Institute, 2012).
- In St. Louis, Black individuals are significantly more likely than White individuals to suffer from several chronic diseases and conditions including obesity, asthma, and diabetes (Purnell et al., 2014).

### Sources:

- 1 Chetty, R. (2014) *Improving Opportunities for Economic Mobility in the United States*. Retrieved from: [http://www.budget.senate.gov/democratic/public\\_cache/files/08bd12ef-104d-44c0-a589-20dcb426b833/chetty-mobility-testimony.pdf](http://www.budget.senate.gov/democratic/public_cache/files/08bd12ef-104d-44c0-a589-20dcb426b833/chetty-mobility-testimony.pdf)
- 2 Ihnen, A. (2013). *Lies, damn lies, racial integration and segregation in St. Louis, and statistics*. NextSTL. Retrieved from: <http://nextstl.com/2013/01/lies-damn-lies-racial-integration-and-segregation-in-st-louis-and-statistics/>
- 3 National Urban League Policy Institute. (2012). *State of Urban Health: Eliminating Health Disparities to Save Lives and Cut Costs*. Retrieved from: [http://iamempowered.com/sites/default/files/nul\\_state\\_of\\_urban\\_health\\_2012\\_report.pdf](http://iamempowered.com/sites/default/files/nul_state_of_urban_health_2012_report.pdf)
- 4 Public Policy Research Center. (2015). *An Equity Assessment of the St. Louis Region*. University of Missouri-St. Louis. Retrieved from: [http://pprc.umsl.edu/pprc.umsl.edu/data/stl\\_equity\\_assessment\\_may2015.pdf](http://pprc.umsl.edu/pprc.umsl.edu/data/stl_equity_assessment_may2015.pdf)
- 5 Purnell, J., Drake, B.F., Goodman, M., Hudson, D.K., Tate, W.F., Camberos, G., Fields, R., Elder, K., & Gilbert, K.L. (2014). *For the Sake of All: A multidisciplinary study on the health and well-being of African Americans in St. Louis*. Institute for Public Health. Retrieved from: <https://publichealth.wustl.edu/projects/sake/>
- 6 Comprehensive Planning Division. *Aging successfully in St. Louis County*. St. Louis County. Retrieved from: [http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/document%20library/AgeFriendly/FINAL\\_Aging\\_Successfully\\_Assessment.pdf](http://www.stlouisco.com/Portals/8/docs/document%20library/AgeFriendly/FINAL_Aging_Successfully_Assessment.pdf)

Applying a racial equity framework (or lens) to the policy you seek to change will address these systemic inequities. But what is a racial equity lens and how is it applied to policy changes – whether they are enumerated in the Report or not? For this, we can look directly at the language in the Report, which states:

**Broadly Apply A Racial Equity Framework.** Intentionally apply a racial equity framework to existing and new regional policies, initiatives, programs and projects in order to address and eliminate existing disparities for racial and ethnic populations. The following focus questions to be included at a minimum:

- Whom does this benefit?
- Does this differentially impact racial and ethnic groups?
- What is missing that will decrease or eliminate racial disparities?

**Case Study: Applying a Racial Equity Framework to a Ferguson Commission Call To Action**

To help demonstrate the application of a racial equity framework (lens) to a call to action, we will use the same example – *Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the Region* – and apply the focus questions of the racial equity framework to it.

	Status Quo	Call To Action
<i>Whom does this benefit?</i>	People with cars; communities already located near economic, entertainment, educational, or cultural centers	People without access to transportation; communities lacking, but needing, economic, entertainment, educational, and/or cultural centers
<i>Does this differentially impact racial and ethnic groups?</i>	Helps communities that speak with one, louder voice; pits communities against one another. Leaves people without easy access to transportation with less opportunity and access to jobs, education, health care, etc.; few new job opportunities in existing transportation system; “one off” nature of projects does not provide opportunities for significant minority hiring and workforce development	Projects are a function of regional demands based on a thoughtful needs assessment; would develop infrastructure in communities with larger minority and underserved populations; would spur coordinated economic development in underserved areas; would expand access to jobs, health care and education for underserved communities; would create jobs for construction, and in supply chain and back office functions for minorities
<i>What is missing that will decrease or eliminate racial disparities?</i>	Lacks an applied racial equity framework; broader, bigger picture strategic thinking	Provides opportunity for further systemic change by encouraging further racial equity through intentional contracting, hiring, job training, and workforce development practices for major regional projects in future

## ALIGNMENT WITH ADDITIONAL CALLS TO ACTION

There are nearly 200 calls to action in the Ferguson Commission’s Report, and it would be difficult to find any individual call that could be viewed as a “one off” change. These signature priorities and calls to action exist as opportunities to address systemic change and align with other calls to action in the Report.

So as you review the Report and determine that there is a call to action you would like to develop into a policy, we encourage you to dig deeper, to examine the Report to see if there are other calls to action that can align with and support the policy you wish to change. This will not only help to advance more of the recommendations of the Report itself, but as each report identifies accountable bodies for action – and, in some cases, several of them – you may also be able to involve additional allies to help push for even broader and deeper policy change.

We like to think of this as categories of alignment. As you look to promote legislation or another action addressing the specific language in a call to action, you might look beyond the (1) Immediately obvious alignment (the specific language in the call) to (2) Push the vision further to include areas of potential alignment by digging a level deeper into the report to intentionally seek out other calls to action that work in coordination. Looking even deeper and more strategically, you might seek out areas that have the (3) Potential for generational impact.

### Case Study: Aligning Additional Policy Change with a Report Call To Action

To help demonstrate how additional policy changes can be aligned with a call to action from the Report, we will use the same example – Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the Region – and examine how it works with the three categories of alignment.

Identify Priority Transportation Projects for the Region. Identify agreed upon priority transportation project(s) for the St. Louis region (e.g., extending MetroLink on the proposed North-South corridor, implementing Bus Rapid Transit) in order to elevate the importance of key projects for the region and make tangible the need and potential benefits of transit.

Immediately Obvious Alignment	
What goals does the project in the Call To Action work toward?	Additional Ferguson Commission Calls to Action that align with the selected Call To Action:
<b>Project’s Commitment: Encouraging minority and women enterprises to participate in the project and foster their development</b>	<u>Implement a Statewide M/WBE Program</u> Establish a statewide program for Minority/Women’s Business Enterprises (M/WBEs) with outcomes measures that incorporate capacity building, mentoring, and education with respect to the state and local procurement system. <i>AB: Office of Administration, St. Louis Minority Business Council, Women’s Council, Mid-States Minority Suppliers Development Council, Missouri Department of Transportation, State University System</i>
	<u>Develop and Implement an Economic Inclusion Infrastructure</u> Create and implement an economic inclusion infrastructure in industries that supports business’ growth strategies and aids them in attaining their profit goals by promoting workforce inclusion (e.g. Construction, Manufacturing, and others).

	<i>AB:Trade Unions, Trade Organizations, Industry Associations, Ad hoc affiliations of Industry Leaders</i>
<b>Project Commitment: Build a pipeline that develops individual workers and new-to-the-field firms</b>	<u>Create Pathways for Lower Skilled Employees</u> Modify incentive programs for employers to prioritize those that have internal career ladders creating clear pathways to higher skilled jobs for lower skilled employees. <i>AB:Missouri Legislature, Capacity-building organizations (philanthropic and technical-service providing)</i>
<b>Project Commitment: Build a pipeline that develops individual workers and new-to-the-field firms</b>	<u>Create Pathways for Lower Skilled Employees</u> Modify incentive programs for employers to prioritize those that have internal career ladders creating clear pathways to higher skilled jobs for lower skilled employees. <i>Missouri Legislature, Capacity-building organizations (philanthropic and technical-service providing)</i>
<b>Project Potential Commitment: Bringing opportunities to underprivileged and under/unemployed individuals in the region</b>	<u>Implement a State Section 3 Hiring Program</u> Create a state complement to the Federal Section 3 hiring program, which requires developers to make employment available to low and very-low income residents of the community in which the development is located. <i>Missouri Housing Development Commission, Missouri Legislature , Board of Missouri Housing Development Commission, other agencies that help finance affordable housing, state Affordable Housing Trust Fund</i>  <u>Expand Internship and Apprenticeship Opportunities</u> Expand internships and apprentice opportunities for eligible high school and college students. <i>Governor, Missouri Legislature, City and County Government, College and Universities, Business Community, Ready By 21</i>
<b>Pushing the Vision Further</b>	
<b>Project Potential Commitment: Embracing accountability measures in order to drive progress</b>	<u>Launch an Employer Grading System for Economic Mobility</u> Endorse the Better Business Bureau-like consumer –facing rating system proposed by the Commission in the area of Racial Equity and Reconciliation and add to it economic mobility factors that should be monitored (e.g. employability, opportunity for promotion, promotability, presence of career path, income). <i>AB: St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce, Regional Business Council, Mosaic Project, and ethnic-group focused chambers of commerce, St. Louis Minority Business Council, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative</i>  <u>Evaluate Job Training Success and Award Funding Accordingly</u> Incorporate the number of disconnected youth enrolled and graduated from job training programs with significant success in job placement and earnings as a metric in the performance evaluations of youth-serving organizations receiving public dollars and grant funds from local foundations in the St. Louis metropolitan region. <i>Capacity-building organizations</i>
<b>Project Potential Commitment: Developing thoughtful, evidence-based inclusion and job training programs</b>	<u>Identify Job Training Best Practices</u> A designated task force appointed by the Department of Economic Development’s Workforce Development Division shall identify critical attributes of job training programs that shall be used: *As criteria for guiding current job training organizations; *As standards to evaluate the success of those programs; and *As criteria for awarding priority grant funding from local foundations and

	<p>other bodies.  <i>Missouri Legislature, MO DED- Division of Workforce Development, WIBs, STLCC, Area schools and job training programs, St. Louis Minority Business Council, Urban League of Metropolitan St. Louis, St. Louis Business Diversity Initiative</i></p> <p><u>Launch Best Practice-Driven Job Training Programs</u>  Expand and incentivize transitional job programs containing confirmed critical attributes to be identified by a designated task force appointed by the Department of Economic Development's Workforce Development Division to serve a greater number of employment-ready individuals including those who are TANF recipients, long-term unemployed, and at-risk youth.  <i>Governor, Missouri Legislature, WIBs, St. Louis City, St. Louis County</i></p> <p><u>Implement Work-Based Learning Opportunities</u>  Industry organizations (e.g., employers, unions) shall consider more work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities as a workforce training approach. (e.g., LaunchCode and Building Union Diversity (BUD)).  <i>Employers, unions, Regional Chamber, STL Economic Development Partnership</i></p>
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**Potential for Generational Impact**

<p><b>Project Long-term Impact: Revitalizing a Neglected Neighborhood</b></p>	<p><u>Prioritize Transit-Oriented Development</u>  Prioritize mixed-use mixed-income right-sized development near rail transit through changes in zoning, financial incentives for developers, and transit benefits for residents of developments. Prioritize developments for the underserved in the North and South St. Louis region.  <i>Municipal governments with light rail stops, St. Louis County, Metro, East-West Gateway Council of Governments</i></p> <p><u>Stabilize Middle-Market Neighborhoods</u>  Develop a regional strategy that actively attempts to stabilize middle-market neighborhoods and that emphasizes the health and well-being of existing residents (e.g., Baltimore's Healthy Neighborhoods program).  <i>Foundations, Financial Institutions, CDFIs, CDCs, Local Governments</i></p> <p><u>Build Safe Neighborhoods</u>  Support sustained, citizen-led efforts to develop safe neighborhoods, particularly the efforts of parents and families impacted by violence, and clergy working to build community and keep watch. Support should include, but not be limited to, planning, coaching, funding and service-provider coordination  <i>Governor, Missouri Legislature, Local Government, Churches, Business and Philanthropic Community, Child/Family Serving Systems, Local School Districts, Colleges and Universities, Non-Profit Organizations</i></p>
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## CONCLUSION

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We hope that you find this guide as a useful tool in your efforts to implement the policy recommendations included in the Ferguson Commission's Report.

The Ferguson Commission's Report is the result of months of community input, research, and the voice of the people of the St. Louis region. It represents not the end of a process, but the beginning. The work that has been done to date is far underscored by the work that remains to be done.

As a policymaker, you have the ability to take these recommendations and turn them into meaningful policy that moves our region forward. We thank you for answering the call.

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