

*Mayor Jane Castor*

# Transforming Tampa's Tomorrow

**Co-chairs:** Moez Limayem, Dean, USF Muma College of Business  
Michael Bloom, AVP, USF Corporate Partnerships & Innovation



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## **Introduction and Background**

### **Mayor Castor's Advisory Teams**

The Economic Advisory team was created as part of Mayor Jane Castor's mission for Transforming Tampa's Tomorrow. Working with the Tampa City Council, she assembled a group of subject matter experts, key stakeholders, and community leaders to participate in this important effort. Representatives of the USF Muma College of Business chaired this team and facilitated the committee's discussions, conclusions, and recommendations.

### **Economic Advisory Team Activity**

Mayor Castor kicked off the Economic Advisory Committee on August 19, 2020 and set the challenge for this team to assess 'best practices' in the use of essential social and economic metrics, identify key metrics relevant to the City of Tampa's needs, and recommend tactical and strategic initiatives to improve the selected metrics over time. The team convened over a 90-day period to carry out these tasks.

The work began by evaluating numerous data measures and information sources including dozens of metrics from the 'State of the Region' data both for 2019 and 2020. Initial evaluations focused on 21 indicators related to economic vitality such as talent, infrastructure, civic quality, and related outcomes from the 2020 Regional Equity Report. **(See Appendix A)**. This report measured the gap between race disparities, examined how well Tampa has performed in racial and ethnic categories among 19 other peer cities across the United States, and identified the differences in performance by race and ethnicity across the Tampa Bay region.

The team also reviewed findings and recommendations from related activities including the City's recent 'Housing Affordability' and 'Workforce Development' Advisory Team Recommendations, the 2020 'Workforce Housing Initiative' from the Tampa Bay Chamber, and an overview of resources available from Career Source Tampa Bay, a pivotal partner to the City and the community to help close the regional skills gap.

Following a review of this material, the group focused its recommendations on the following key indicator categories:

1. Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth
2. Reducing Poverty
3. Committing to Racial Equity
4. Encouraging Educational Opportunity

The team then focused on identifying selected measures that drive these focus areas and then identifying actionable tactical and strategic initiatives to improve the trend of the selected metrics. These actionable recommendations, along with the Mayor's and City Council's

leadership, and support of the community, and local stakeholders will help build a common understanding of the pathway to achieve positive progress.

**Factors Influencing Economic Growth in Tampa**

THIS SECTION WILL PROVIDE A SUMMARY OF THE KEY DATA THAT WAS PRESENTED TO THE COMMITTEE DURING ITS FIRST TWO SESSIONS, INCLUDING GRAPHS AND FINDINGS FROM THE 2019 'STATE OF THE REGION' MATERIALS.

THE SECTION WILL LAY THE FOUNDATION FOR ESTABLISHING THE NEED AND PURPOSE OF THIS GROUP TO REVERSE DECLINES AND NEGATIVE TRENDS IN IMPORTANT SOCIO-ECONOMIC MEASURES IN OUR COMMUNITY.

## **General Findings**

The team identified the following measures as representing the most critical areas of weakness or gaps for the City to focus on. In addition, these measures are readily accessible for regular tracking purposes and can be drilled down to the local Tampa level (versus at the regional level).

### **1. Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth**

- a. Per Capita Income
- b. Unemployment Rate

### **2. Reducing Poverty**

- a. Poverty rate
- b. Transportation to Work
- c. Digital Access

### **3. Committing to Racial Equity**

- a. Racial Poverty rate gap
- b. Racial Labor Force Participation Gap

### **4. Emphasizing Educational Opportunity**

- a. 4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Florida Standards Assessment (FSA)
- b. High School Graduation Rate
- c. Educational Attainment (Bachelor's degree and above)

## **Advisory Team Recommendations**

### **Section 1. PROMOTING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Inclusive economic growth is a concept that advances equitable opportunities for economic participants during economic growth with benefits incurred by every section of society. (Cite)

The definition of inclusive growth implies direct links between the macroeconomic and microeconomic determinants of the economy and economic growth. The microeconomic dimension captures the importance of structural transformation for economic diversification and competition, while the macro dimension refers to changes in economic aggregates such as the country's gross national product (GNP) or gross domestic product (GDP), total factor productivity, and aggregate factor inputs. (cite).

Currently, there are many organizations focused on improving economic inclusiveness in our community. The Tampa Bay Chamber, the Economic Development Corporation, Career Source Tampa Bay, and many other private sector and public, advocacy, and academic/educational groups are launching initiatives focused on improving this measure. It will be important to leverage these existing programs and not reinvent the wheel when driving inclusive growth. The Committee reviewed many of these efforts in brief and recognized the need to continue to invest and build in existing successful solutions, ensure appropriate visibility and awareness of existing programs, and inspire and/or influence new supportive programs across all employer groups and sectors.

This is a foundational economic equity measure and the City and its partners need to focus on discreet and strategic efforts to improve it.

### **Recommended Action Items**

#### **Per Capita Income**

- 1) Identify all current state and federal funding programs targeted at job creation and assess effectiveness for improving Tampa's per capita income for underrepresented individuals.
- 2) Provide information to employers regarding federal, state, and local programs intended to support the labor force and supplement income levels for the employed.
- 3) Develop training and certification programs for the largest unemployed groups to enhance talent available for workforce opportunities. This recommendation strongly encourages employers to implement skills-based hiring.

- 4) Leverage and build upon existing job and career path planning through organizations such as Career Source Tampa Bay to increase skill levels and drive compensation increases.

**Unemployment Rate**

- 1) Support marketing designated Opportunity Zones, including, but not limited to developing prospectuses for the Opportunity Zones.
- 2) Develop new programs or enhance and promote existing programs that incentivize employers to encourage greater proportion of employment from underserved communities.
- 3) Review findings and of recent Citywide survey of job skills of unemployed and underemployed individuals to identify potential areas to target for employment.

## **Section 2. REDUCING PROVERTY**

Poverty reduction, poverty relief, or poverty alleviation is a set of measures, both economic and humanitarian, that are intended to permanently lift people out of poverty. (Cite) The City of Tampa has several resources that can be helpful in this journey including the Career Source Tampa Bay team, representatives of Hillsborough Community College, and the One Tampa Board. These groups, and others, will need to come together to find real solutions to make meaningful improvements in these measures.

### **Recommended Action Items**

#### **Poverty Rate**

Breaking the cycle of poverty is a fundamental aspect of achieving economic equity. The team recommended the following initiatives:

1. Focus on reducing poverty in specific neighborhoods like East Tampa, West Tampa, and Ybor City by providing increased structure, support, and guidance to those CRAs.
2. Encourage actions and policies that will attract more jobs, businesses, and true mixed-use developments to neighborhoods, particularly those with viable Opportunity Zones.

#### **Transportation To Work**

Enabling access to reliable and cost-effective transportation, particularly to work centers, is a key part of increasing the likelihood of long-standing employment and reducing the costs associated with personal transportation, both of which can reduce poverty. The team recommended the following initiatives:

1. Identify best methods to provide access to reliable and frequent public transportation options largely focused on connection to core work centers.
2. Work to ensure that frequent and reliable public transportation is available in all neighborhoods.
3. Develop a formal partnership with USF's Center for Urban Transportation Research (CUTR) and possibly other related organizations to establish an initiative that encourages/incentivizes selected major employers in the three major work centers (Downtown, Westshore, Innovation District/University) to promote commuter resources.
4. Explore a City Staff commuter incentive program.

#### **Digital Access**

Access to the internet for educational and vocational purposes will help reduce poverty across underserved areas. The team recommended the following initiatives:

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1. City should work with partners to establish 'Homework Centers' in Tampa Recreation Centers to provide a clean and safe place for students to go after school close to their home to do their homework.
2. Work with telecommunication service providers to ensure availability to all neighborhoods.

### **Section 3. COMMITTING TO RACIAL EQUITY**

Racial equity occurs when institutions give equal opportunities to people of all races. In other words, regardless of physical traits such as skin color, institutions must provide individuals legal, moral, and political equality. (Cite)

#### **Recommended Action Items**

##### **Racial Poverty Gap**

While the Team identified ‘Reducing Poverty’ as a fundamental aspect of this effort, it also recognized that a racial poverty gap exists that needs specific focus and identified the following recommendations.

###### *Outreach and Awareness*

1. Improve marketing and communication tools to heighten awareness of existing support programs; enlist professional marketing firms, particularly black-owned firms, to engage in outreach programs.
2. Enlist targeted advocacy and community groups to assist in improving outreach and communications including pastors, church groups, the NAACP and specific business support organizations, e.g., SBA, SBDC.
3. Coordinate informational outreach activities with existing community-based activities and events, e.g., church events, neighborhood gatherings, etc.

###### *Increase Workforce Opportunities*

4. Expand and formalize the use of comprehensive lists of local minority contractors (primes and subs) including USF’s vendor lists to widen awareness of City contract opportunities and other City-sponsored programs such as the ‘Owner Occupied Rehab’ program.

###### *Encourage and Support Home Ownership and Maintenance*

5. Emphasize and grow programs that support maintenance of home ownership, particularly for elderly or those in need. Heighten awareness of programs to assist with routine maintenance, taxes, property fees, and fines.
6. Synthesize the use of multiple support programs for those most in need, e.g., connect homeowners who qualify for the Stormwater Fee Mitigation program to the ‘Owner Occupied Rehab’ program and the ‘Tax Assessor Discount’ program.
7. Emphasize and widely communicate Foreclosure Prevention programs; work with

professional marketing/outreach firms to assist in increasing awareness.

### **Racial Labor Force Gap**

The Team focused on the growing gap between the positive trend in labor force growth and the declining percentage of black participants in the work force, particularly young black men. Following are recommendations to tackle this issue:

1. Identify training, entrepreneurship, vocational and technical partners to present paths and options that are alternatives to college, particularly at an early age. Work closely with Career Source Tampa Bay and other similar organizations to return these youths to a stable workforce.
2. Focus on developing an apprenticeship program; the NAACP and labor unions can support and market these opportunities.
3. Explore Davis-Bacon (wage related) and Sec. 3 (community-sourced jobs) recruitment programs that demonstrate the impact of a specific selected path.
4. Explore programs with private employers to implement incentives tied to the recruitment, promotion, and retention of African Americans; consider USF's current similar initiatives.
5. Explore 'Seed Funders' to contribute to promotion of black-owned businesses.
6. Develop opportunities for minority businesses to be prime contractors, not just subs; Build on the 'Bridges to Business' program to encourage cultivation of minority businesses, particularly smaller projects that will have less substantial bond and insurance requirements; Work to overcome the situation where minimum standards can become a ceiling, e.g. 3%; this holds back growth and capacity-building across minority vendors.

## **SECTION 4: EMPHASIZING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY**

Lifetime earnings are heavily influenced by higher levels of educational attainment. Individuals without high school diplomas earn lower wages and experience higher levels of unemployment than graduates, and those who complete at least a bachelor's degree enjoy even higher wages. (2020 Regional Equity Report). Accordingly, the Team focused on three Tampa-specific metrics affecting educational opportunity: 4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> Grade Math FSA, High School Graduation Rate, and Educational Attainment (bachelor's degree and above).

### **Recommended Action Items**

#### **4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Math FSA**

Brief description of this measure and its importance.

1. Collect Tampa-specific data on kindergarten readiness and vocational/certification programs to have more comprehensive understanding of educational opportunities for Tampa residents from preschool through post-secondary school.
2. Widely advocate and promote programs that can reduce the gap between white and black student performance and increase overall performance in 4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade Math FSA scores by Tampa Public School students; in coordination with Hillsborough County Public Schools, community organizations and the City of Tampa.
3. Ensure that Tampa families are aware of the current and upcoming programs available through Hillsborough County Public Schools, community organizations and resource centers, and City of Tampa Parks and Recreation – such as afterschool tutorial, homework assistance and mentor programs that can improve 4<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grade math performance. These programs should be aggregated and aggressively marketed beyond website and social media vehicles, given the digital divide.

#### **High School Graduation Rate**

1. Encourage better collaboration and coordination by the City of Tampa Parks and Recreation, Hillsborough County Public Schools, and organizations including LEAP Tampa Bay, Hillsborough Community College, the University of South Florida, Big Brothers Big Sisters and others – to promote existing programs and develop new initiatives.
2. Partner with Hillsborough County Public Schools to better analyze and understand root causes of the gap in white and black student high school graduation rates in Tampa, and craft practical solutions to eliminate these differences and improve overall graduation rates based on these specific analyses.

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3. Increase high school student engagement with and exposure to the Tampa business community by developing internship and mentorship programs and expanding existing initiatives on career pathways, in partnership with Tampa companies.

### **Educational Attainment (bachelor's degree and above)**

1. Promote widespread completion of FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) forms by Tampa high school students through programs offered to families where they are at – city high schools, neighborhood community centers and recreation facilities.
2. Significantly expand college tours and teen prep programs offered by City of Tampa Parks and Recreation with corporate and foundation support, to make it easier for Tampa students to successfully apply, enroll and succeed in college.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Acknowledgments and list of Advisory Team Members**

**APPENDIX A: 2020 STATE OF THE REGION**

[https://issuu.com/tampabaypartnership/docs/2020\\_regional\\_equity\\_report](https://issuu.com/tampabaypartnership/docs/2020_regional_equity_report)

**APPENDIX B: CATERGORIES AND METRICS DEFINED**

**1. Promoting Inclusive Economic Growth**

**A. Per Capita Income:** This measures the mean income for every person (man, woman, and child) living in a city. It is derived by dividing the total income generated in a city in the past 12 months by the total population of the city.

**B. Unemployment Rate:** The percentage of the labor force that is without employment. An Individual is considered unemployed if he/she is willing and able to work but unable to find employment.

**2. Reducing Poverty**

**A. Poverty rate:** The percentage of population that is living below the federal poverty line defined by the US Census Bureau (Income thresholds vary by family size). For Tampa, the Poverty level thresholds in 2019 are: 1-person Household: \$13,011; 2-person Household: \$16,521; 3-person Household: \$20,335; and 4-person Household: \$26,172.

**B. Transportation to Work:** The share of workers 16 years and older that rely on public transit or walking to commute to work. This data is from US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. This metric measures the proportion of workers who either walk or use public transit (does not include workers who use bike or scooter) to commute for work and reflects public transit availability which is an important driver affecting poverty reduction.

**C. Digital Access:** The share of households with a computer and a dedicated physical broadband with internet subscription such as fiber optic or DSL.

**3. Committing to Racial Equity**

**A. Poverty rate gap (Race):** The black-white gap in share of workers working fulltime with income below the poverty line; calculated by comparing the average poverty rates for African Americans vs White-Americans.

**B. Labor Force Participation Gap (Race):** The black-white gap in the percentage of the population 16 years and older that is either working or actively looking for work; calculated by subtracting the labor force participation of African Americans from that of White-Americans.

**4. Emphasizing Educational Opportunity**

**A. 3rd/8th Grade Math Florida Standards Assessment (FSA):** Percentage of students who took the 3rd and 8th Grade Math, Florida Standard Assessment, and got a level 3 or higher.

**B. High School Graduation Rate:** Percentage of High School graduates in the school district.

**C. Educational Attainment (Bachelor's degree and above):** Percentage of population, 25 years and older, who have attained a bachelor's degree or higher.