

5118 Hinchey Road  
Howell, MI 48843  
14 June 2021

Livingston County Board of Commissioners  
304 E. Grand River Avenue  
Suite 201  
Howell, MI 48843

Dear Commissioners,

Since some of you continue to insist that the Huron-Clinton Metroparks Authority (HCMA) Diversity, Equity and Inclusion training program is somehow the work of the devil, I decide to compare it to the Social Equity section of the 2018 Livingston County Master Plan (pages 132-141).

After reviewing the Livingston County Social Equity Plan (LCSEP) and the HCMA DEI Plan, I have identified the following commonalities:

- **Data Collection:** One of the major components of both the LCSEP and the HCMA DEI plan is data collection. In fact, LCSEP and MP DEI plan uses many of the same data sets (SEMCOG, Census, etc.) to inform its strategies. The data identifies the needs and provides the rationale to focus on the “Trends” identified in the LCSEP.
- **Social Equity:** The definition of Social Equity, contained in the LCSEP is in keeping with the overall scope of our DEI plan. The LCSEP states *“Social Equity strives to eliminate the disparities in how community residents can experience the spaces that we create through planning, zoning and land use.”* (LCSEP p.2). The only differences being, MP DEI plan **expands** this definition to include five counties and replaces the word *zoning* with *programs* (as zoning is not an issue at the Metroparks just as programs are not an issue for Livingston County). The work of both the Metroparks and DEI is to *“eliminate the disparities in how residents of Southeast Michigan can experience the spaces that we create through planning, programs and land use.”*
- **Community for a Lifetime:** The concept of Community for a Lifetime is the same as the HCMA goal to “Decrease barriers & increase opportunities for participation of underrepresented communities and populations” (senior citizens are considered underrepresented) (HCMA DEI Plan p.8). Similar to Livingston County, the Metroparks strive to, *“Increase access to services”* and expand **universal access**, making our parks optimal for a lifetime of use for every resident of Southeastern Michigan.
- **Addressing Financial Hardship of the Working Poor:** This concept is the same as the HCMA DEI plan goal to “Decrease barriers & increase opportunities for participation of underrepresented communities and populations” (people with low socioeconomic status are also considered underrepresented). This shows up in the HCMA efforts to provide hot spots for students in Livingston County or for suspending tolling during the pandemic.

The greatest difference between the LCSEP and the HCMA DEI Plan is that the latter is an actual plan, with measurable goals, objectives and actions steps; whereas the former is an identification of “Trends” to be addressed. If the LC BOC decides to put the LCSEP into action, you will find the strategies needed to make the current document a viable plan will be similar to the strategies contained in the HCMA DEI Plan. In other words, the 2018 Board of Commissioners created a Social Equity Plan that will use the HCMA DEI plan as a template for implementation. Even if you never voted on the 2018 Master Plan, the fact that you have not taken any actions to modify the plan constitutes an implied approval of the plan.

An example of what the LC BOC has done to implement the LCSEP is the unconscious bias training that was authorized and conducted in 2020.

For a specific example of the **differences** between the LCSEP and the HCMA DEI plans, look at efforts to provide increased broadband internet access to Livingston County residents, especially school age children. Since I left the Board at the end of 2016, the CL BOC has taken no substantial steps to improve broadband access in Livingston County. By contrast, the HCMA authorized spending to buy and check out internet hotspots to our children living in rural areas without good access to high-speed internet. Those expenditures were authorized under the umbrella of the HCMA DEI Plan.

Another example is access to recreational opportunities for **all** Livingston County children. In the past 10 years the LC BOC accepted land donations and created the first two county parks. A large number of people, led by the Livingston County Planning Department, worked very hard to make the best use of these extremely valuable donations. However, because to the very limited budgets provided by the LC BOC, amenities are still very limited at both parks. In contrast, over the past two years the HCMA Board authorized expenditures of over \$1 million to create a universally accessible playground at Kensington Metropark, which is of course Livingston County's most popular park. Those expenditures were authorized under the umbrella of the HCMA DEI Plan.

How is it that you can demonize the HCMA DEI Plan while remaining silent about the Livingston County Social Equity Plan when they have so much in common?

I look forward to your individual responses.

Sincerely,



Steven E. Williams