



**MGT**

# Community Equity Profile

HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, FLORIDA

**Final Report**  
March 24, 2022



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Hillsborough County, Florida

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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## Introduction and Purpose

The Hillsborough Community Equity Profile is the collective evaluation of quantitative and qualitative data and synthesis of stakeholder perspective on the state of equity in Hillsborough County provided in a summary report. The purpose is to use the results to guide the design and implementation of an equity lens through which consideration of the impact on equity is considered by County leadership in actions and decision-making as it relates to the following nine pillars:

- ❖ income bias
- ❖ economic opportunity
- ❖ health care
- ❖ criminal and juvenile justice
- ❖ housing
- ❖ land use/zoning
- ❖ transportation
- ❖ food security
- ❖ educational access/digital divide

## Key Findings & Observations

- ▶ Current inequities are directly related to historic systemic oppression.

The impact of historical systemic racial disparities is still being felt by minorities across the region and often intersect in areas creating high levels of economic strain, which create artificial barriers towards success and frequently reinforce patterns of systemic disadvantage. Maps found across a multiplicity of reports illustrate that predominantly Caucasian areas typically do not struggle with the same issues as areas that are predominantly home to BIPOC populations. It bears mentioning that these inequities are present across the United States and are not unique to Hillsborough County.

- ▶ Each pillar identified by the Hillsborough Board of County Commissioners impacts the economic realities of citizens in tangible ways.

For example, disparities within an indicator such as criminal justice are frequently mirrored in economic inequality.

- ▶ The Hillsborough community is concerned primarily about affordable housing and economic opportunity.

These community concerns are impacted by County communication and accountability.

## Key Recommendations

- 1) Create an Office of Equity and Access
- 2) Conduct a Risk-Benefit Analysis of Instituting a Disparity Study
- 3) Establish Apprenticeship Programs in Emergent & Green Technologies
- 4) Conduct a Disproportionate Minority Impact Study on Criminal Justice
- 5) Provide Ongoing and Comprehensive DEI Training to All Staff
- 6) Support Enhancements in the Public Transportation System
- 7) Enforce the Regular Use of an Equity Decision Guide

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## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

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In 2021, Hillsborough County (County) contracted MGT Consulting (MGT) to develop a community equity profile. The Board of County Commissioners envisioned this equity profile to be used to inform strategic equity spaces including, but not limited to, income bias, economic opportunity, health care, criminal and juvenile justice, housing, land use/zoning, transportation, food security, and educational access/the digital divide. The County intends to use this community profile and data to guide the design and implementation of an “equity lens” through which actions taken by the County are examined to assess and measure questions of equity.

This equity profile of the Hillsborough County community identifies pertinent and applicable best practices which will benefit the County. Best practices were compiled from similar communities in relation to the project pillars of economic opportunity, affordable housing, land use/zoning, transportation, and access/digital divide. This peer review and resulting set of best practices is suggested for use as a resource and guide for the County.

Overall, the quantitative data analysis represented in this report was conducted through a mixed-methods meta-analysis of the significant amount of data Hillsborough County has acquired across nine separate studies since 2018. Through this analysis, MGT found that the impacts of historic systemic racial disparities are still being felt by minorities across the County. These impacts intersect in areas creating high levels of economic strain, which create artificial barriers towards success and frequently reinforce patterns of systemic disadvantage.

As an integral step in creating the community equity profile, MGT gathered community input to understand the impact of the nine pillars on the citizens of the County. MGT conducted four types of community engagement: focus groups, community meetings, open voicemail service, and email inbox. Chapter 4 summarizes and analyzes the community feedback.

Based upon the best practices, quantitative data gathered, and the community input, MGT developed a series of recommendations aimed at addressing the key findings of the project.

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## CHAPTER 2. BEST PRACTICE PEER REVIEW

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The following is a compilation of selected peer research prepared by MGT in conjunction with the Community Equity Profile for Hillsborough County (County). By no means is this research exhaustive or limited only to communities that resemble Hillsborough County in terms of population, demographic composition, or other key indicators. Initial interviews with each of the County Commissioners highlighted five key indicators as the most impactful to the people of the County. The foremost of these being economic opportunity and land use. The sections that follow are intended to provide information, models, and insights in nine similar communities related to the following indicators:

- ◆ Economic Opportunity
- ◆ Affordable Housing
- ◆ Land Use/Zoning
- ◆ Transportation
- ◆ Access/Digital Divide

Some of this compilation draws from an analysis of MGT's research, while some draws from MGT's experience in other communities. Collectively this compilation helps to inform how equity is being addressed in other communities. As expected, there is no one size fit all. Community priorities, dynamics, resources, and other factors drive efforts that have been undertaken in other communities. However, a significant thread common to all target communities revolved around the following:

- ◆ Access and Equity: The steps that must be taken in the short and long term to ensure access and equity in employment, housing, health, education, transportation, and other quality of life indicators in underrepresented and marginalized communities.
- ◆ Evidence-Based Initiatives: The steps that must be taken to ensure initiatives and strategies to promote and advance equity are based on best practices and the most accurate picture of inequities that affect the ability to live well and thrive.
- ◆ Leadership Commitment/Support: The steps that must be taken by key leaders to foster, promote, and sustain diversity, equity, and inclusion visibly and consistently.
- ◆ Knowledge and Skills Enhancement: The steps that must be taken to ensure mentoring, coaching, training, and other strategies are used to effectively mitigate implicit bias and promote and foster greater understanding of the unique experiences of minorities and other marginalized groups.
- ◆ Framework: Effective and impactful solutions framed around the following:
  - Diversity: There must be a commitment to diversity in myriad forms including race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, language, culture, national origin, religious affiliation, age, (dis)ability status, and political perspective.
  - Equity: There must be a commitment to actively challenge harmful bias and embed equity in policies and practices to ensure equal opportunity for all persons.

- Inclusion: Deliberate and intentional efforts must be taken to ensure an environment and culture where differences are welcomed, different perspectives are respectfully heard, and all community segments feel a sense of belonging and inclusion.

Municipalities, states, special districts, and other governmental entities have been conducting disparity research studies since 1989 following the *Croson v. Richmond* Supreme Court decision. Since 1990, MGT alone has conducted over 200 such disparity research studies, including several in Florida. Tightly constrained by case law, these studies focus on equity in procurement and contracting. The decision made in *Croson* is “narrowly tailored” to target spending specific to a municipalities’ procurements. Equity profiles in a broader community context which address the underlying or root causes of disparities fall outside the “narrowly tailored” scope in *Croson*. Therefore, equity profiles, like the one Hillsborough has commissioned, are necessary to address persistent disparities found in *Croson*-based studies.

In the aftermath and wake of the death of George Floyd, cities and counties began to shine a spotlight on equity, inclusion, and social justice by focusing on persistent and structural barriers that have led to the historic marginalization of communities of color. There is no one size fit all approach being taken by communities that have conducted equity audits or community equity profile studies similar to the one being done by Hillsborough County. Other communities such as Columbus, Ohio; Riverside, California; and King County, Washington have declared racism a public health crisis and the basis for policymaking to address equity and social justice.

It is against this backdrop that MGT conducted its peer research. For this review MGT’s research focused on communities in Florida and East and West Coast communities. Ultimately the results of the peer research will be used to help guide areas of inquiry and engagement and help to inform recommendations, practices, and policies for consideration by Hillsborough County.

## 2.1 Peer Review

### 2.1.1 Pinellas County, Florida

“An Equity Profile of Pinellas County “was produced by Policy Link and PERE (Program for Environmental and Regional Equity). Policy Link has worked in other communities conducting studies like the Pinellas County equity profile. The equity profile completed in Pinellas County is particularly relevant because of its proximity to Hillsborough County.

To produce the Pinellas County equity profile, Policy Link worked in concert with UNITE Pinellas, which is comprised of over a dozen community partners. Like similar reports prepared by Policy Link, the Pinellas County equity profile focused on measures of equity to analyze disparities based on race and ethnicity across selected socio-economic indicators. The analysis of socio-economic indicators is essential and can be used to better understand and expose the root causes that underlie disparities, including systemic/structural causes of inequity.

As Hillsborough County embarks upon its equity profile, the description of “what is an equitable county” may serve as an important guidepost.

“Counties are equitable when all residents-regardless of their race/ethnicity, nativity, gender, income, neighborhood of residence, or other characteristics-are fully able to participate in the county’s economic vitality, contribute to the region’s readiness for the future, and connect to the region’s assets and resources.”

The Pinellas County equity profile, using the above description as the organizing framework, focused on the following key indicators:

- ◆ Demographics: Description of who lives in the county, and how is the county is changing
- ◆ Economic Vitality: Job growth, income inequality, employment, education, poverty, and neighborhood composition
- ◆ Youth Preparedness: Education, graduation rates, and access to careers and other opportunities
- ◆ Connectedness: The cost of housing, homeownership, stable housing for renters, mobility, public transit use, voter registration, and participation in elections
- ◆ Justice: Treatment by law enforcement and treatment by the courts
- ◆ Health of Residents: Description of who is uninsured and who has access to healthcare
- ◆ Economic Benefit of Equity: Rate of GDP growth without economic inequities

In particular, the reporting of economic vitality with respect to employment and income inequality could be crucial for understanding economic opportunity in Hillsborough County. The Pinellas County equity profile did not offer recommendations to address the key indicators. Instead, for each of the above indicators, there was a discussion of implications and potential adverse impacts that can be used to guide policy and practices. Overall, the community equity profile results from community and stakeholder collaboration and engagement, is an essential strategy and best practice.

## 2.1.2 Miami-Dade County, Florida

The first study of this kind was conducted by the Metropolitan Center at Florida International University (FIU) following the McDuffie riots. The Center produced the “Status of the Black Community Report” on behalf of the Metro Miami Action Plan (MMAP). Since the initial study, subsequent studies have been required by ordinance to be conducted every ten years by the Miami-Dade Economic Advocacy Trust (MDEAT). The “Status of the Black Community Report” was similar to the Pinellas County equity profile and focused on the following indicators:

- ◆ Demographics
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Criminal Justice
- ◆ Public Health

The report documented major disparities in key indicators and provided recommendations to mitigate disparities by increasing economic empowerment in the Black community through education, entrepreneurship, and business capacity building and expansion. On behalf of MDEAT, Social Compact, a national nonprofit corporation established to help strengthen neighborhoods, prepared the Miami-Dade Disparity Analysis report focused primarily on market size, market demographics, workforce, and unemployment to develop a disparity analysis and scorecard that revealed a disparity in all predominately Black zip codes.

MGT noted that Miami-Dade County issued a solicitation in March 2021 that was re-issued in July to conduct another study examining economic conditions of Black People in Miami-Dade County pursuant County Ordinance XLVII, Section 2-506(F) requiring a study to be conducted every ten years. Since the initial study, Miami-Dade County has supported programs to increase economic empowerment in the County's Black communities and neighborhoods. These models of economic empowerment could be helpful to address inequities towards economic equity.

### 2.1.3 Broward County, Florida

The Metropolitan Center at FIU also prepared the Status of Women in Broward County Report 2021. The report tracks disparities between men and women's progress toward closing the gender gap in the following:

- ◆ Education
- ◆ Employment
- ◆ Economic Development
- ◆ Income and Earnings
- ◆ Health
- ◆ Safety

Broward County's study evolved from the County's CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women) ordinance adopted in 2019, making the County the 8<sup>th</sup> jurisdiction in the U.S. to adopt the United Nation's CEDAW, which call for eliminating discrimination in politics, law, employment, health, and other areas related to civil rights, reproductive rights, and gender relations.

### 2.1.4 City of Boston, Massachusetts

Under the leadership of the Mayor's Office, the City of Boston has implemented several initiatives focused on "resilience and racial equity" to address persistent divisions of race and class. In addition to establishing the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet in the Mayor's Office, major initiatives include the following:

- ◆ Boston Racial Equity Fund: Created in 2020, the goal of the Fund is to advance racial equity by increasing safety, well-being, equity, and prosperity in the City's communities of color

- ◆ The Office of Equity: The Office is responsible for spearheading initiatives across the city including a Racial Equity and Leadership program and community partnerships with a multiplicity of organizations to increase equity and reduce barriers to opportunities that significantly impact the quality of life. For example, in collaboration with other City departments, initiatives are underway to ensure fair and equitable access to housing opportunities and broadband to ensure access to up-to-date digital tools.
- ◆ Resilience and Racial Equity Department: The Department was established to develop and execute Boston’s Resilience Strategy premised on social and economic resilience necessary to thrive from childhood to retirement. The Department’s Chief Resilience Officer leads a team focused on executing initiatives through partnerships, collaboration, and engagement with a diverse group of community stakeholders and community segments. The Department also provides resources to support equity and resilience, including the 2019 report “Racial Equity: Resilient Cities at the Forefront.” Which establishes best practices to support meaningful and sustained equity frameworks designed for longevity.

### 2.1.5 City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

The City’s Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is the focal point of the City’s efforts to advance equity. In 2020 the Office published the “2020 City of Philadelphia Workforce Diversity Profile,” which provided in-depth and detailed information and data on the City’s workforce. The report examined the workforce’s racial, ethnic, and gender breakdown, highlighting progress in certain areas and opportunities for significant improvement. For example, one of the key findings revealed that most of the City’s workforce is composed of people of color, but people of color are woefully underrepresented at the middle and upper levels in virtually all departments. This key finding clearly demonstrates that diversity alone does not ensure equity and inclusion.

The Office also collaborates with other city departments, external partners, and community members to identify and dismantle institutional and structural barriers that adversely impact equity as a determinant of success and quality of life. The ultimate goal is to improve outcomes for all while paying closer attention to specific community segments in greater need.

### 2.1.6 Orange County, California

“An Equity Profile of Orange County” is the second equity profile in the Southern California region prepared by Policy Link and the Program for Environmental and Regional Equity (PERE) at the University of Southern California. The Equity Profile of the Los Angeles Region was conducted in 2017, and the Orange County equity profile in 2019. The Orange County equity profile is similar in certain respects to the other Policy Link equity profiles highlighted in this review. Like the other profiles, the Orange County profile is premised on an equity framework to ensure inclusion in a community’s economic, social, and political life regardless of race, ethnicity, age, gender, neighborhood, or other characteristics.

The Orange County equity profile analyzed many of the equitable growth indicators examined in other equity profiles prepared by Policy Link including the Pinellas County equity profile. Key findings include the following:

- ◆ Orange County leads the nation in demographic change and is projected to outpace the nation through 2050
- ◆ Growth in many communities of color has created a “racial generation gap”
- ◆ Inequalities threaten long-term economic prosperity
- ◆ Educational inequities threaten the region’s future and there are wide racial/ethnic gaps in educational attainment
- ◆ Community health and safety risks disproportionately affect people of color
- ◆ Expanding affordable housing is critical to equitable growth
- ◆ Racial and economic inclusion would strengthen the regional economy

Unlike other equity profiles prepared by Policy Link, the Orange County equity profile offered “Ten (plus one) steps to Equity in Orange County”:

1. Commit to reducing disparities and improving outcomes for all in Orange County
2. Use data for cross-sector dialogue
3. Link inclusion with innovation
4. Invest in early childhood education and other early
5. Ensure affordable housing for all
6. Embed and operationalize a prevention-oriented approach to advance health equity
7. Promote immigrant integration
8. Build civic health among underrepresented voices
9. Build a culture in which racial equity is discussed and is a shared goal
10. Partner with peer regions pursuing similar goals
- 10+1. Develop regional equity strategy, indicators of progress, and data systems for measuring progress.

### 2.1.7 City of San Diego, California

To demonstrate the breadth and diversity of equity initiatives and research, MGT reviewed the City of San Diego’s 2020 Pay Equity Study prepared by Analytica Consulting. Although the pay equity study was internally focused the findings and recommendations have potential community impact given the importance of employment on other key community indicators. The study’s most compelling findings include the following:

- ◆ Women made up 32% of the City’s workforce and on average their total pay was almost 18% less than men’s.
- ◆ People of color made up 55% of the City’s workforce, and on average, their total pay was almost 21% less than Whites.

- ◆ The pay equity study recognized that some of the contributing factors behind gender and racial ethnic pay gaps stem from societal factors that the city has little or no control over. Nevertheless, several recommendations were offered to help remedy issues exposed by the pay equity study.
- ◆ Systematically track pass/fail rates at each stage of the police recruiting process by gender, race, and ethnicity.
- ◆ Systematically collect data on all employee levels of education.
- ◆ Evaluate whether changes to job names could reduce the likelihood of women and people of color self-selecting lower paying positions to apply for.
- ◆ Evaluate options and costs for employee benefits that would directly target the work-life balance needs of mothers and parents of color.

This Pay Equity Study is one of the most recent comprehensive studies on the indicator of Income Bias. Analytica employed an analysis model coined “Occupational Sorting,” which groups occupations with similar skill and education requirements. Occupational Sorting was used to study the number of employees, percentage of women, percentage of people of color, and average pay for regular and overtime workers. Limiting factors to implementing a similar study will be directly related to the availability of data and the time available.

### 2.1.8 King County, Washington

King County is considered a national leader in addressing equity and social justice. Many of their effort’s pre-date the unrest and upheaval in the aftermath of George Floyd. For example, in 2015, “The Determinants of Equity” was published and used to establish the kind of equity baseline like community equity profiles that are currently being executed across the country. Based on the 2015 report, King County started developing a plan that resulted in the “Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan 2016-2022,” which was the first of its kind by any municipality. The strategic planning process was led by the Office of Equity and Social Justice which is housed in the Office of King County Executive. The plan is a comprehensive plan that includes a pro-equity policy agenda for the following:

- ◆ Child and Youth Development
- ◆ Economic Development and Jobs
- ◆ Environment and Climate
- ◆ Health and Human Services
- ◆ Housing
- ◆ Information and Technology
- ◆ Justice System
- ◆ Transportation and Mobility

The policy agenda is being executed through the following six goal areas:

- ◆ Leadership, Operations, and Services
- ◆ Plans, Policies, and Budgets
- ◆ Workplace and Workforce
- ◆ Community Partnerships
- ◆ Communication and Education
- ◆ Facility and System Improvements

The study of critical indicators in King County closely reflects those indicators requested by the Hillsborough County Commissioners. Specifically, King County investigated affordable housing and transit, focusing on the intersection of race and class. Based on preliminary conversations and industry best practices, this intersectional lens will be critical to emulate.

Implementation plans have been developed for each of the goal areas being executed, monitored, and reported on internally and externally to the broader community. One of the most impactful outcomes has been a racial equity toolkit which is widely recognized as a best practice and is frequently replicated and adopted by other communities and organizations. For example, MGT uses the toolkit in some of its DEI work. Other initiatives King County initiatives to advance equity and social justice include:

- ◆ Equity and Justice Opportunity Fund-The Fund is operated by the Office of Equity and Social Justice to provide resources to King County employees to develop and execute projects to advance equity aligned with the strategic plan mentioned above.
- ◆ Public Reporting Platform -The reporting platform is used to help monitor, track, and share progress on the Equity and Social Justice Strategic Plan with the community.
- ◆ The Office of Equity and Social Justice is establishing the Racism as a Public Health Crisis Community Oversight Committee that will focus on community priorities and advancing economic justice, including directing the use of a \$25 million fund approved for COVID-19 -related economic recovery of BIPOC communities (Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color).

### 2.1.9 Puget Sound, Washington

The Puget Sound is one of the fastest-growing regions in the United States, with the unique challenge of creating housing for a projected five million new residents in and around the area. In 2014 the Fair Housing Center of Washington completed a report of current equity issues within the region. It also provided models to solve these disparities. Beyond strategizing methods of establishing equitable access to fair housing, the purpose of the report was “To ensure that the regional plans link fair housing considerations with issues of transportation, employment, education, land use planning, and environmental justice.” This report is crucial as it acknowledges and investigates many of the same intersections Hillsborough County is interested in understanding, including each of the following:

- ◆ Link of Race and Income to Access and Opportunity

- ◆ Segregation through land use and housing beyond income differences)
- ◆ Link between Housing opportunities and access
- ◆ Equitable infrastructure & transit development
- ◆ Addressing Housing Discrimination

### 2.1.10 Richmond City, Virginia

In 2016 Richmond, Virginia, conducted a study on access to food framed through the lens of Public Health. The study – led by the Institute for Public Health (IPH) – included significant interviews with stakeholders, officials, and local advisory groups to understand the city’s qualitative impact on food accessibility. Instead of sourcing data from the local authority, the IPH obtained detailed data from the National Agriculture Library run by the USDA. Key findings of this study include:

- ◆ Healthy food access in the City of Richmond reflects systemic inequalities exacerbated by race, ethnicity, wealth, and neighborhood.
- ◆ Beyond health, access to nutritious foods impacts education and employment.
- ◆ Coordination of existing public and private efforts is needed for better access to healthy foods.
- ◆ Existing local ordinances can be leveraged to help support healthy food access.

One of the critical differences separating Richmond from Hillsborough County is that Richmond is far smaller and primarily covers heavily urbanized areas. In contrast, Hillsborough has a healthy mix of both urban and rural communities. This fundamental difference means that some of the recommendations, such as changing zoning laws to help develop urban farms and community gardens, will be less effective if implemented in Hillsborough County. Nevertheless, the methodology used by the IPH to support their theory of change is effective. A forensic analysis of relevant municipal codes coupled with Federal data will yield detailed findings related to food security.

### 2.1.11 Baltimore City, Maryland

In 2017 the Baltimore Police Dept was placed under a Consent Decree by the U.S. Department of Justice. As part of that Consent Decree, the Center for Children’s Law and Policy (CCLP) conducted “A ‘comprehensive assessment’ of the City of Baltimore’s efforts to decrease young people’s involvement with the juvenile justice and criminal justice systems.” The CCLP conducted a deep analysis of the juvenile justice system using various methods, including the following: quantitative data, forensic policy reviews, system mapping, interviews/focus groups, and targeted surveys. The study identified that the Baltimore Police Department should create and expand a diversion program. Additionally, the study identified what data the city should be collecting to measure the success of a diversion program in the future. Critical data points comprised of:

- ◆ Disaggregated demographic markers (race, ethnicity, gender, etc.)
- ◆ Location and detail of an incident

- ◆ Number of youth eligible for diversion according to eligibility criteria
- ◆ Number of youths referred for diversion
- ◆ Number of youths not referred to diversion and the rationale therein
- ◆ The time between incident and referral to the diversion program
- ◆ The time between referral to diversion and contact with youth and family members
- ◆ Number of youths who successfully engage with the diversion program
- ◆ Number of youths who successfully complete the diversion program
- ◆ Number of youths who do not complete the diversion program and the reason therein

MGT can replicate the models present in this report to review Hillsborough's policies around juvenile justice to determine the efficacy of any diversion program. If not, the models present in the report can help develop a diversion program coupled with relevant indicators to ensure the integrity of the program.

### 2.1.12 City of Syracuse, New York

The City of Syracuse, New York, conducted a health equity report in 2017 before the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic laid bare health inequalities across the country, including healthcare access and quality of care by race and class. While the report conducted by the New York State Department of Health does not account for changes in healthcare-related to COVID-19, it does offer guidance on key indicators to measure comprehensive information in health disparities. These indicators include:

- ◆ Disaggregated demographic markers (race, ethnicity, gender, etc.)
- ◆ Births & Deaths
- ◆ Hospitalizations for Injuries
- ◆ Hospitalizations for chronic diseases
- ◆ Preventable hospitalizations
- ◆ Cancer Diagnoses
- ◆ HIV and STD Cases
- ◆ Suicide

The City of Syracuse studied these indicators in areas with a high minority population to identify where disparities exist compared with Onondaga County as a whole (the county in which Syracuse resides), New York State as a whole, and New York State excluding New York City. The simplicity of the data sourcing from a combination of ACS and readily available local data renders a similar study in Hillsborough County feasible.

## 2.2 Summary

In the past year, MGT has reviewed dozens of requests issued by municipalities seeking to perform an equity audit, equity profile, or DEI assessment designed to provide evidence and guidance to advance equity, racial, and social justice. Virtually all the requests we have examined have been premised on creating a stronger and more welcoming community where every person can thrive in an anti-racist and pro-equity environment. In addition, we have seen that an assessment has been the starting point for shifting away from policies and practices that react to crises toward investments that address root causes. We found that equity profiles and similar types of assessments tend to focus on areas where people of color experience disproportionately worse outcomes related to health, access to housing and good-paying jobs, educational attainment, income, incarceration rates, and transportation.

Our research and experience have shown that the following practices and strategies tend to be effective and warranted:

- ◆ An equity audit or equity profile should be used as a baseline for developing a plan or blueprint for action to guide policy direction, decision-making, planning, operations, and services.
- ◆ Coordination and cross-sector solutions should match the scale of inequities informed by collaboration and partnerships with communities adversely impacted by inequities.
- ◆ Governance and executive-level leadership are needed in several key areas, including operations and services, plans, policies and budgets, workforce and workplace, community partnerships, and communications and education.
- ◆ A pro-equity policy agenda should be premised on the areas that have disproportionately worse outcomes for specific marginalized demographic groups as identified by an equity audit or equity profile. Based on MGT's experience, key areas include the following:
  - Children and youth
  - Jobs and economic development
  - Health and human services
  - Built environment
  - Criminal justice
  - Digital divide
  - Transportation and mobility
- ◆ The structure, resources, and authority to plan and execute strategies are essential to long-term success. King County's Office of Equity and Social Justice housed in the County Executive's Office and Office of Equity, and the Equity and Inclusion Cabinet housed in the Mayor's Office in Boston are good examples of the structure, resources, and authority that can make a huge difference.
- ◆ Continuous community and stakeholder engagement is essential for buy-in, credibility, and community support.

## CHAPTER 3. A Quantitative Meta Analysis of Equity Indicators in Hillsborough County, FL, 2021

Late In 2020, in the wake of national unrest due to the killing of George Floyd, Hillsborough County declared racism a Public Health Crisis. The 20-page resolution affirms “Racism is a negative social system with multiple dimensions including: individual prejudices that are internalized or interpersonal; and systemic racism that is institutional or structural, and is a system of structuring opportunity and assigning value based on the social interpretation of how one looks; and [...] the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners stands with the residents of Hillsborough County with the declaration of racism as a public health crisis.” Even before this declaration, Hillsborough County has been evaluating where it stands concerning the propagation of racial disproportionality through institutional and interpersonal means and how the impact of these ought to be addressed.

### Chapter Sections

- 3.1 Methodology
- 3.2 Glossary of Terms
- 3.3 Demographic Context for the Study: A Comparison of Selected Characteristics of Hillsborough County
- 3.4 Analysis of Economic Trends
- 3.5 Criminal and Juvenile Justice
- 3.6 Healthcare
- 3.7 Quantitative Thematic Analysis
- 3.8 Conclusion

### 3.1 Methodology

#### 3.1.1 Data Collection

In 2021 Hillsborough County contracted MGT to address the question: “In Hillsborough County, FL, are there racial disparities or disproportionalities in the areas of economic opportunity, affordable housing, transportation, Internet access (digital divide), income bias, criminal and juvenile justice, and healthcare?” This chapter represents quantitative answers to the research question through a mixed-methods meta-analysis of the significant amount of data Hillsborough County has acquired across nine separate studies since 2018. Additionally, MGT bolstered this information and validated it wherever possible through the use of American Community Survey (ACS) data. Finally, criminal and juvenile justice data were sourced through internal County sources and data publicly available on the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice (FDLEJ) website.

MGT began by collecting and analyzing the multiplicity of reports commissioned by Hillsborough County or independently initiated by third parties. Since 2018, Hillsborough County has been the subject of nine public reports covering economic growth, transportation, healthcare, and more. Upon consultation with the Hillsborough County Commissioners, MGT determined that these prior reports would make up the backbone of the data summary contained in this chapter. The data is representative of all nine reports including a significant amount of data related to the above-postulated research questions. While these reports represent a tremendous amount of information, MGT also bolstered the available data with American Community Survey (ACS) data wherever it was necessary.

In the reports provided to MGT, there was a distinct lack of information related to criminal justice and not included in ACS data. Fortunately, Florida has stringent public disclosure laws, and MGT could locate data related to criminal justice publicly available from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement website. In addition, the website allowed filtering for counties which made the process of isolating information related to Hillsborough straightforward. With the data filtered for Hillsborough County, MGT created comparative analyses to determine the existence of any racial disproportionality within the criminal justice system.

INDEX	DESCRIPTION
<b>Reports Used in Meta Analysis</b>	
1.	2018 Title VI Plan
2.	2019 Entrepreneurs of Color
3.	2019 Community Needs Assessment
4.	2020 State of the Region Regional Equity Report
5.	2020 State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey
6.	2020 Health Equity Report
7.	2021 State of the Region Economic Insights Report
8.	2021 Nondiscrimination & Equity Plan
9.	2019 Hillsborough MPO Mobility Profile (Published 2021)

### 3.1.2 Data Aggregation and Cleaning

The process of data aggregation began with the identification of relevant variables. Based on our review of best practices, MGT identified a multiplicity of variables typically include in a data analysis of the various pillars listed below. For the ACS data, MGT used the 2015-2019 5-year PUMS Data Dictionary to identify pertinent variables collected by ACS, which MGT could utilize within the scope of this review. Data collected from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement was already cleaned and prepped for analysis by FDLEJ staff. Pertinent crime statistics and information were accessed using pre-built tools for comparative analysis.

MGT began the process of data analysis by obtaining data accessed through the US Census website starting with the American Community Survey (ACS) Public Use Microdata Sample (PUMS) dataset for Hillsborough County. Next, MGT proceeded to clean the data, meaning superficial changes to make the data easier to read. ACS data uses response codes for nominal data, which is difficult to read when translated into charts or graphs. Therefore, MGT changed the response codes for relevant variables from an integer response category to an appropriate label. Finally, MGT developed various scripts to clean the data efficiently. The result was a usable dataset which MGT could use to begin answering the research questions.

The eight reports identified by MGT were closely scrutinized for data pertinent to the indicators Hillsborough County is investigating. This meta-analysis of prior studies formed the backbone of the review. Variables relevant to the current review were identified within each of these reports and extracted for comparison. Once MGT identified all pertinent variables, comparisons of similar variables were conducted to determine if any reports' findings conflicted with each other. MGT did not identify any severe conflicts within the data reported since many of the reports used the same set of ACS data as identified above. Once it was established that the data in the reports do not conflict, MGT identified how the data was presented to best tell the story of Hillsborough County. MGT identified data that included racial disproportionality in Hillsborough County and demonstrates how Hillsborough compares to similarly sized regions and counties across the United States. The purpose of this decision is to highlight instances of disparities unique to Hillsborough County and to demonstrate that racial disproportionality and challenges to racial equity exist across the country regardless of region. Once the meta-analysis of prior studies was completed, MGT identified any significant gaps in data already investigated by Hillsborough County and other stakeholders.

The tertiary source of data was the FDLEJ data related to crime statistics. Using the Criminal History Reports section of their data visualization tool, MGT was able to identify data between 2011-2020. As 2021 was ongoing at the time of data collection, MGT excluded numbers for this year. MGT compared each racial demographic against the entirety of the county over the study period. Convictions, dispositions, and arrests were all investigated as part of the criminal justice portion of this study. The publicly available FDLEJ data was particularly helpful as obtaining this type of critical data usually requires a public disclosure request.

For the depiction of community characteristics and the racial equity analysis, MGT selected socioeconomic and demographic factors for their potential to influence overall housing equity. Since racial equity analysis is an established research domain, the selection of the socioeconomic and demographic variables for this study was based on an extensive review of racial equity research literature. For example, most economic studies of discrimination are based on the seminal work of Nobel Prize recipient Gary Becker, "The Economics of Discrimination." Becker was the first to define discrimination in financial and economic terms. Additionally, many studies have found that factors such as race, ethnicity, age, education, income, and marriage are strongly associated with homeownership and the value of owned housing (e.g., Alba and Logan 1992; Coulson 1999; Krivo 1995; Lewin-Epstein et al. 1997; Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov 2000; Rosenbaum 1996).

Hillsborough County has requested analysis of key equity indicators referred to as "Pillars". These pillars are economic opportunity, affordable housing, land use/zoning, transportation, access/digital divide, income bias, criminal/juvenile justice, food security, and health care. MGT has executed a mixed-methods review of these pillars, meaning that we have used both quantitative and qualitative data to understand the reality of each of these pillars as they pertain to Hillsborough County. Since 2018, reports of a similar nature have been conducted in Hillsborough County, with the State of The Region reports offering key insights but no substantive recommendations to address racial disproportionality within these pillars. Throughout the meta-analysis, MGT was able to identify critical variables related to economic opportunity, affordable housing, transportation, internet access/digital divide, criminal justice, and health care. While this constitutes most indicators, not every indicator is reflected in this quantitative section.

Food security is an indicator that did not have publicly available data; however, MGT was able to collect enough qualitative information to address this indicator. Each of the other pillars was addressed in the meta-analysis contained in this chapter. While there was data related to transportation, this data was already collected and analyzed by Hillsborough County's Transportation Planning Organization (TPO). The raw numbers do not tell the story of individual experiences with the transit system and how/where it might be failing the citizens of Hillsborough County. Therefore, look to the qualitative community engagement chapter for detailed experiences within the Hillsborough County transit system.

Each report enumerated above discusses one or more of the pillars of this study. Economic opportunity was key to every study included in this meta-analysis, including the Health Equity Report. The 2020 State of the Region Equity Report and 2021 State of the Region Economic Insights report both focused heavily on various economic variables and economic proximate variables that closely impact economic opportunity. MGT included many of these variables in the meta-analysis of Hillsborough County. Housing security and affordable housing were investigated by the 2020 State of the Region Equity Report and the 2019 Community Needs Assessment. There were far fewer variables analyzed related to housing than economic opportunity, but the interrelated nature of these variables allowed for inclusion into the meta-analysis. Quantitative data related to transportation has been widely studied across the 2021 State of the Region Economic Insights report, the 2021 Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan, and the 2021 Community Needs Assessment. The variables associated with transit did demonstrate some inequities concerning travel time to/from work and the ridership demographics but did not highlight any key disproportionality. Healthcare was broadly covered in the 2018 Title VI and 2021 Nondiscrimination and Equity plans but covered in depth in the 2020 Health Equity Report. MGT included variables related to insurance coverage and further analysis of the Economic Health Index in the meta-analysis for Hillsborough County. Access/digital divide questions were investigated in the 2020 Regional Equity report and the 2021 State of the Region Economic Insights report. While there were not many variables related to this information, sufficient information was represented to include these variables in the meta-analysis confidently.

Every research study has its data and scope limitations. Acknowledging them so that the reader can decide how much confidence to place in the study's results is a professional obligation in an official report of this nature. Particularly in this study, data limitations imposed by the nature and/or absence of certain detailed data elements constrained the scope of the study. However, given that consistent inequities reproduce and exacerbate disparities within communities; MGT is confident in the consistency of our findings as they are consistent with decades of research investigating the dynamics of equity across the United States generally and Hillsborough County specifically.

## 3.2 Glossary of Terms

This glossary contains definitions of common terms and acronyms used throughout the County's 2021 Equity Audit. Additional and more detailed definitions can be found in various chapters of the report.

American Community Survey/ACS	The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing survey that provides vital information on a yearly basis about our nation and its people. It is frequently used to help local officials, community leaders, and businesses understand the changes taking place in their communities. It is the premier source for detailed population and housing information about our nation.
African Americans	U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents having an origin in any of the Black racial groups of Africa.
Asian Indian/Pacific Islanders	U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents who originate from the Far East, Southeast Asia, the Indian subcontinent, or the Pacific Islands.
Caucasian	U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents who responded “No, not Spanish/Hispanic/Latino” and who reported “White” as their only entry in the race question.
Demographics	Statistical data about the characteristics of a population, such as the age, gender, income, and race of the people within the stated population.
Digital Divide	This refers to the reality that continued access to the internet requires significant ongoing financial burden through internet subscriptions and frequent hardware updates. These financial burdens create two classes of people, those that have access to the internet and digital services and those struggle to consistently have it. The separation between these groups is referred to as the digital divide.
Economic Opportunity	The ability and opportunities available to an individual to build, maintain, and pass on wealth.
Hispanic Americans	U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish or Portuguese cultures or origins regardless of race.
Income Bias	Known also as the racial wealth gap refers to the reality that on average Caucasian average wealth (\$929,800) is 6.7 times greater than African American average wealth (138,100) ( <a href="#">McIntosh, Moss, Nunn, Shambaugh, 2020</a> ; <a href="#">Bhutta, Chang, Detting, Hsu 2020</a> ; <a href="#">Sullivan, Meschede, Dietrich, Shapiro, 2015</a> )
Mixed Race	U.S. citizens or lawfully admitted permanent residents who chose more than one of the other race categories.
Private Sector	The for-profit part of the national economy that is not under direct government control.
Public Sector	The non-profit part of the economy that is controlled by the government.
PUMS	An acronym for Public Use Microdata Sample. PUMS contains records for a sample of housing units with information on the characteristics of each unit and each

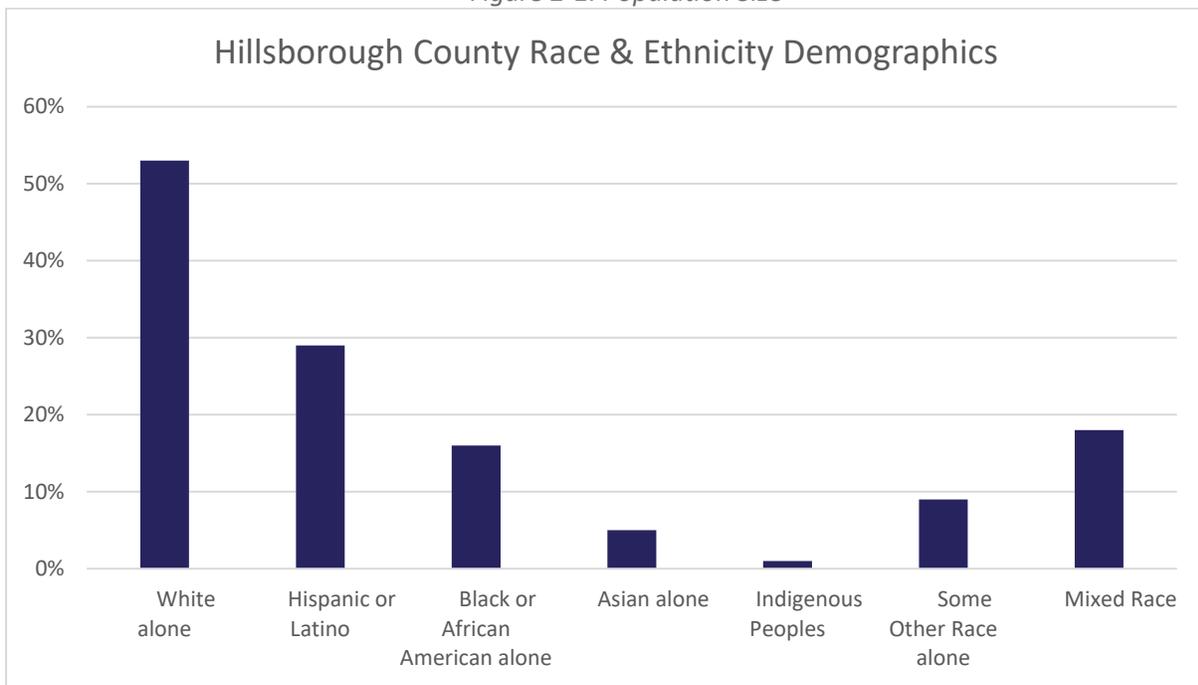
person in it. PUMS files are available from the American Community Survey (ACS) and the Decennial Census.

### 3.3 Demographic Context for the Study: A Comparison of Selected Characteristics of Hillsborough County

#### 3.3.1 Populations by Race and Ethnicity

**Figure 2-1** shows the population of Hillsborough County based on the results of the 2020 Census. The population of Hillsborough County was determined to be 1,459,762 individuals. The population of Caucasian individuals is 767,348, or 52% of the total. The Hispanic or Latino population consists of 427,381 individuals, or 29% of the total. The African American population consists of 237,434 individuals, or 16% of the total. The population of Asians consists of 71,080 individuals, or 5% of the total. Indigenous Peoples, including Indigenous Americans and Indigenous Islanders, totals 8,378 individuals, or >1% of the total. Finally, Hillsborough is home to 257,074 Mixed Race individuals or 17% of the total population.

Figure 2-1. Population Size

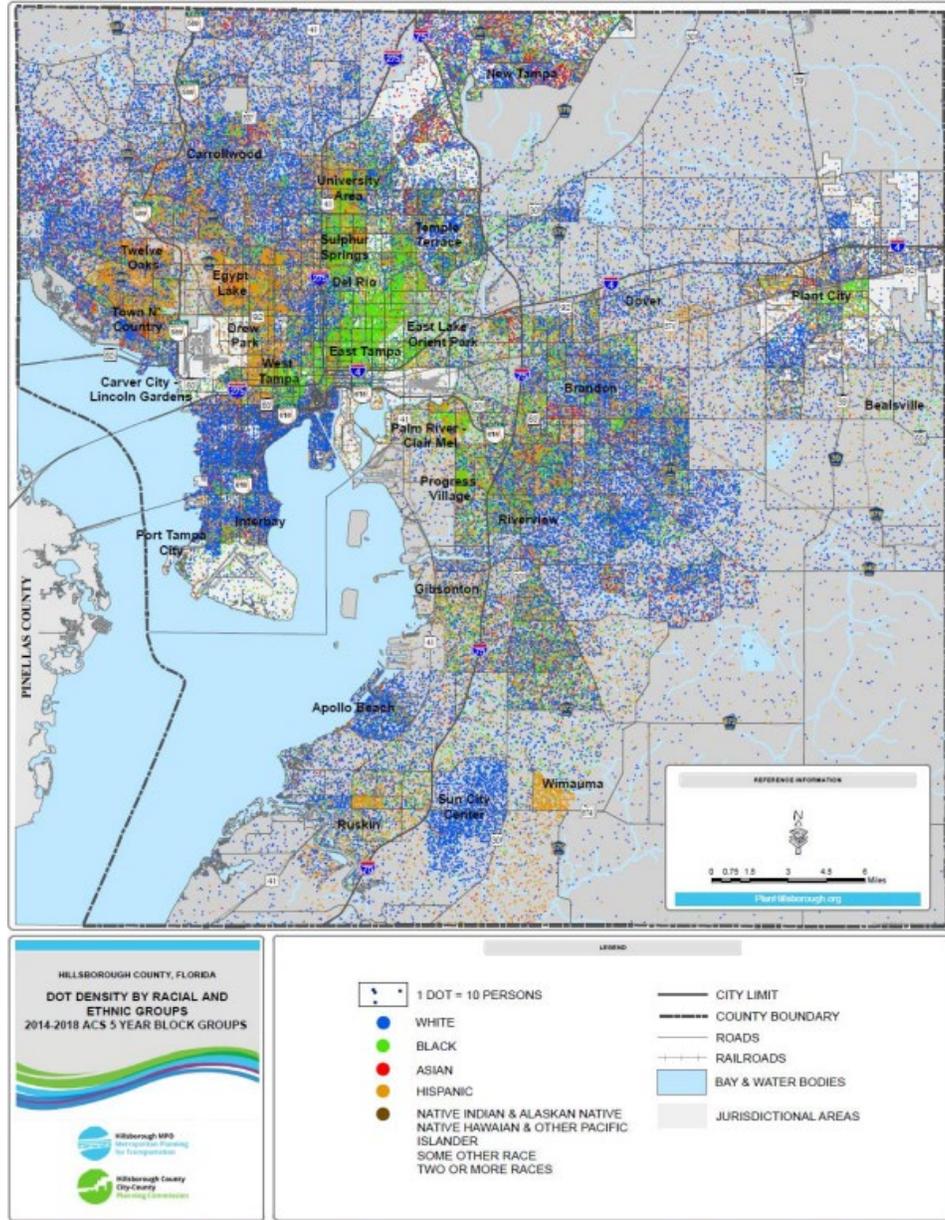


Source: US Census Bureau 2020 Decennial Census.

**Figure 2-2** illustrates the estimated distribution of different races across the county based on ACS data estimates. Each dot is representative of 10 persons. The Caucasian population is spread out across Hillsborough, with a significant presence in the rural areas to the Northeast and Southeast of Tampa. Further, south Tampa also shows a considerable density of Caucasian individuals. While African Americans are spread across the county, a significant population density is clustered along the Interstate 275 corridor

south of the University Area and north of Interstate 4. The highest density of Hispanic Americans is found in the Egypt Lake and Twelve Oaks area bifurcated by the 589 Toll Way.

Figure 2-2. DOT Density by Race

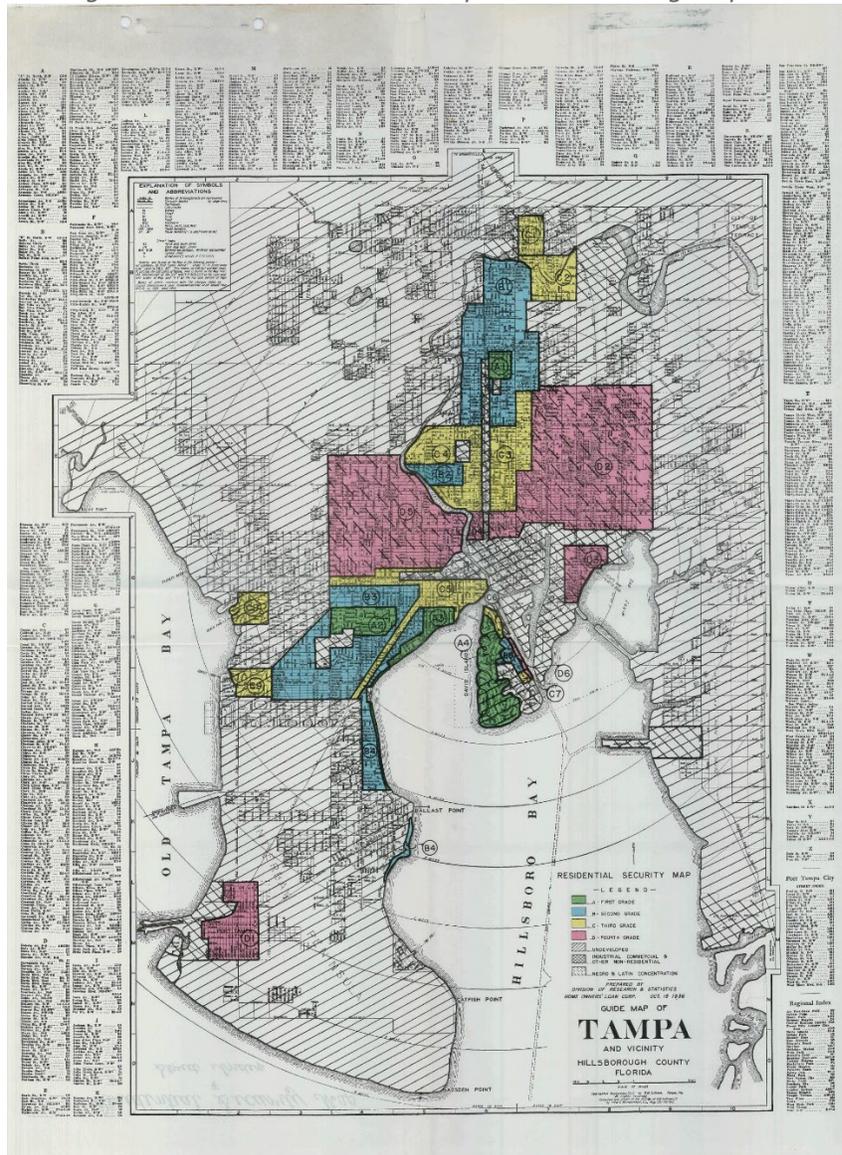


Source: ACS 2014-2018 5 Year Data Map Courtesy of Plan Hillsborough Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan 2021.

One key takeaway from **Figure 2-2** is the reality that the region has been dramatically segregated by race. This is not by chance but due to historical policies designed to create, exacerbate, and enforce racial disproportionality. **Figure 2-3** is a digitized version of the 1930s Homeowner Loan Corporation (HOLC)

neighborhood ranking map known by its more infamous name, “Redlining.” Redlining refers to the large swaths of “Hazardous” areas which were characterized by “Detrimental influences in a pronounced degree, under desirable populations or an infiltration of it.” The HOLC used this information to recommend that lenders not lend to people living in these areas, which consisted mostly of people of color. Further, the HOLC zoned 47% of Tampa as “hazardous” during this time. As a result, large swaths of East Tampa, where many African Americans currently live, were widely redlined. Likewise, West Tampa, containing a significant portion of the Hispanic population, was also widely redlined.

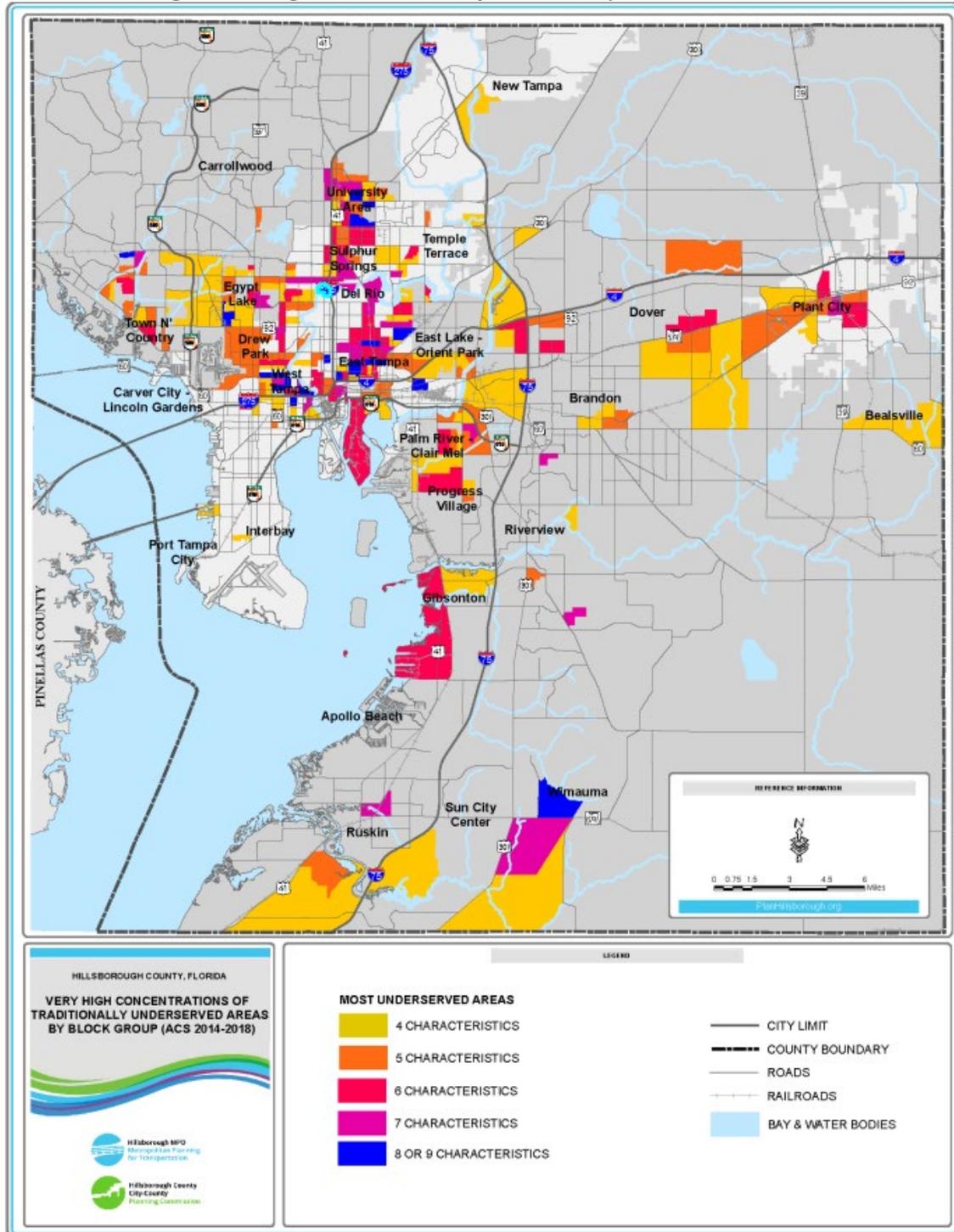
Figure 2-3. Home Owner Loan Corporation Redlining Map



Source: Mapping Inequality Tampa Redlining Map.

Twenty years after the initial implementation of the HOLC Redlining policies, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 routed many highways across the United States through historically African American and Hispanic American neighborhoods. Hillsborough County was not immune to this reality. Interstates surround the area consisting of the highest concentration of African Americans in Hillsborough County. Further, the places where Hispanic families live are divided by an interstate and a toll way. While Interstate 275 was commissioned and built during the 1960s under Jim Crow, the Veterans Expressway and Suncoast Parkway were built – with similar effect – in the 1990s. This has resulted in the minority residents of Hillsborough County continuing to live with the externalized costs of these capital improvements. **Figure 2-4** demonstrates a high concentration of areas consisting of four or more characteristics of underserved. These include, but are not limited to, low income, majority-minority populations, under average educational attainment, the density of single-mother households, and more. These areas coincide with areas most impacted by these historical policies.

Figure 2-4. High Concentration of Traditionally Underserved Areas

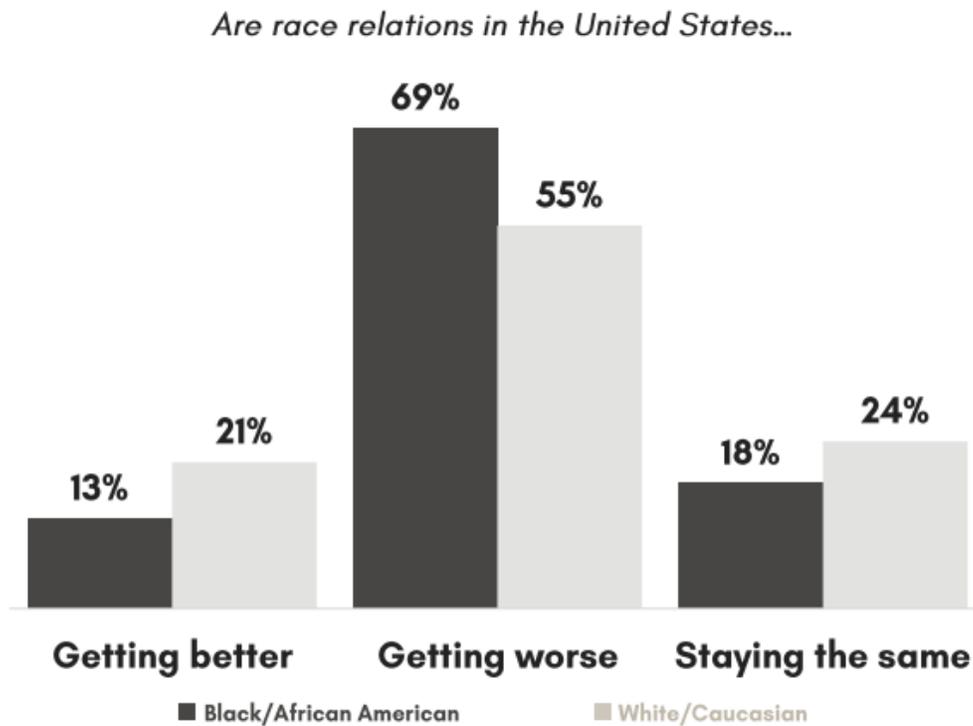


Source: ACS 2014-2018 5 Year Data Map Courtesy of Plan Hillsborough Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan 2021.

### 3.3.2 Racial Unrest

In late 2020, the State of the Region initiative released the 2020 Regional Equity Report, which included survey analysis of current trends in racial sentiment in the Hillsborough County region. This survey measured the perception of race relations within Hillsborough County and the attention paid to racial issues. The survey further studied specific areas of concern, explicitly investigating local sentiment on the Black Lives Matter movement, police in Hillsborough County, and racialized experiences within the region. The survey sampled 450 Hillsborough County residents, a representative sample size for a 95% confidence level. This information helps contextualize different racial groups understanding and interaction with race on a macro level.

Figure 2-5. Perceptions of Race Relations Across the United States

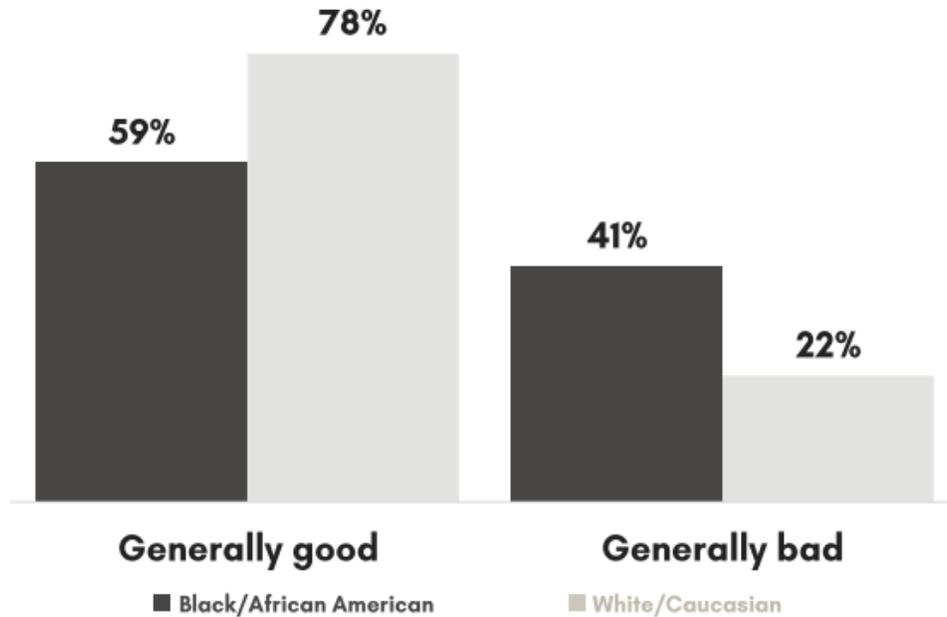


Source: State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey 2020.

The State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey identified that most Hillsborough County citizens generally find race relations in the United States today poor and in a state of decline. Approximately 71% of respondents indicated that race relations are generally bad in the United States today. By race, 82% of African American Respondents and 68% of Caucasian respondents reported that race relations are generally bad in the United States. Additionally, 59% of respondents indicated that race relations in the United States have worsened over recent years, with 21% expressing perceptions of an improvement and 20% indicating stagnation. Of the 59% that responded, 69% the African American respondents and 55% of Caucasian respondents were represented in their belief that race relations are worsening across the US. This data tells us that across race, the people of Hillsborough County believe that race relations in the

United States are poor and continuing to worsen; however, this trend doesn't necessarily apply to the county particularly.

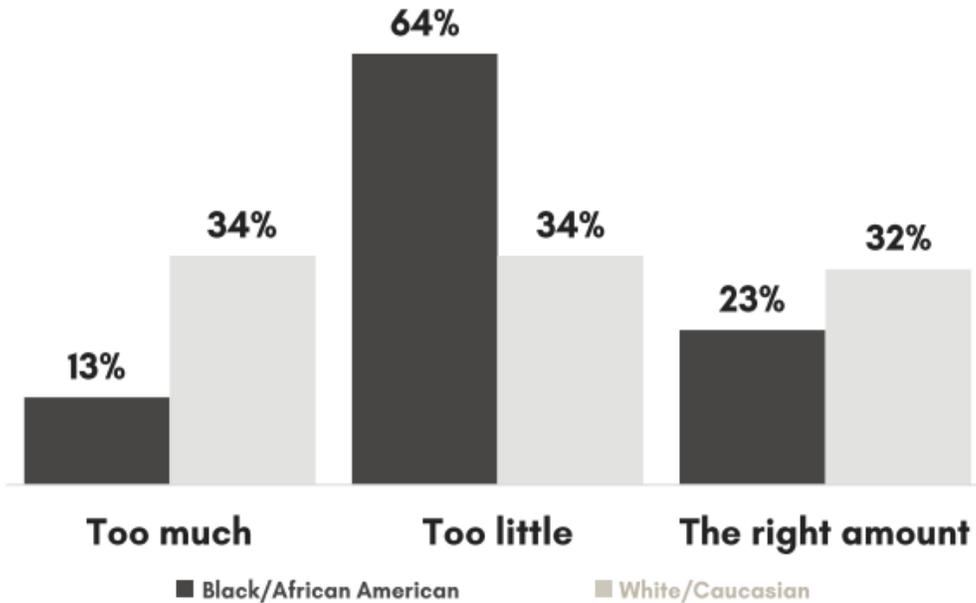
*Figure 2-6. Perceptions of Race Relations in Hillsborough County*  
**Thinking about today, race relations in your community are...**



Source: State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey 2020.

When the same respondents were asked about race relations in Hillsborough County specifically, there is significantly more variation than with the US as a whole. Seventy-two percent of respondents indicated that in Hillsborough County, race relations are generally good. Of the 28% that responded that relations are bad, African American respondents were twice as likely to be represented than their Caucasian counterparts. Additionally, 78% of Caucasian respondents indicated that race relations are generally good, with only 59% of African American people indicating that relations are good. Since this study didn't account for the overrepresentation of Caucasians in Hillsborough County, this likely skewed the numbers towards generally good. Further, this hints at a racial divide in Hillsborough County, specifically how Caucasian and African American individuals perceive race locally.

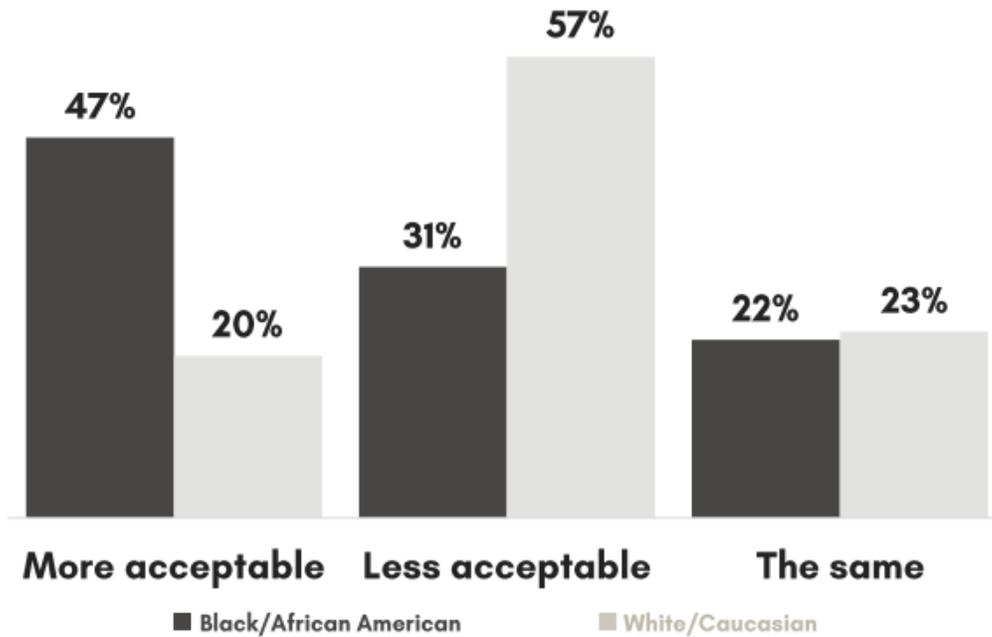
*Figure 2-7. Perception of Attention Being Paid to Race Across Hillsborough County*  
**How much attention is being paid to race and racial issues in your community these days?**



Source: State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey 2020.

The Racial Sentiment Survey asked respondents to opine on whether enough attention is paid to issues of race within the local community. 31% of respondents felt that too much attention is paid to issues around race, 38% felt that race is receiving too little attention, and 31% felt that the attention being paid is the correct amount. When broken down by race, these findings also show a stark divide between the opinions of Caucasian and African American citizens of Hillsborough County. Nearly two-thirds of African American respondents felt that too little is being done regarding racial issues while their Caucasian counterparts split evenly across all three response categories.

*Figure 2-8. Perception of Change to The Acceptability of Racially Insensitive Views*  
***In recent years, people expressing racist or racially insensitive views has become...***

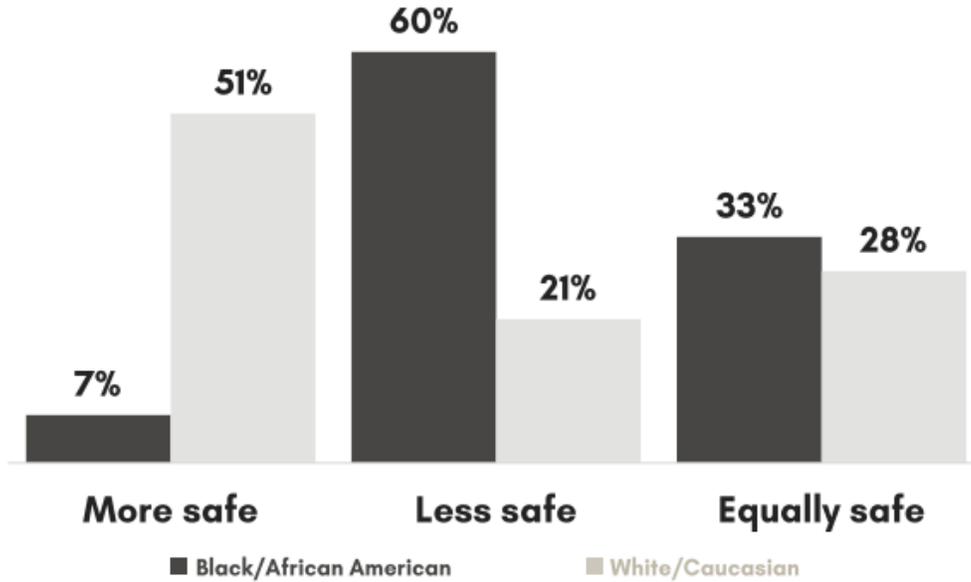


Source: State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey 2020.

In order to understand the acceptability of interpersonal racism within Hillsborough County, respondents answered questions on their perceptions of the acceptability of expressing racially insensitive views. 45% of respondents indicated that expressing racially insensitive views is becoming more common. In comparison, 31% of respondents stated that it is less common, and 24% said it has stayed the same. Of the 45% reporting an increase in the frequency of racially charged views, 75% of the African American Respondents were represented, with only 36% of Caucasian respondents concurring. Further, a similar question was posed to the respondents inquiring to the acceptability of expressing racially insensitive views. 54% of respondents indicated that it is less acceptable now to express racially insensitive views, whereas only 23% of respondents indicated racially insensitive views are becoming more acceptable. Once again, there is a dramatic difference between the experiences of African American individuals to Caucasian individuals. 57% of Caucasian individuals surveyed felt that expressing racially insensitive views is less acceptable; however, 47% of African American individuals felt the acceptability of people expressing racially insensitive views has increased. This again shows a dramatic disproportionality between the experiences of African American and Caucasian individuals within the county.

Figure 2-9. Perception of Police

*When you personally see a police officer, does it usually make you feel more or less safe?*



Source: State of the Region Racial Sentiment Survey 2020.

This Racial Sentiment Survey came in the wake of the murder of George Floyd; as such, the survey also investigated the effects of policing on the experiences of Hillsborough County citizens. 62% of citizens felt that the deaths of African American People at the hands of police are a sign of a broader problem instead of individual isolated incidents. In Hillsborough County, African American individuals do not feel safe in the presence of the police. 51% of Caucasian individuals surveyed indicated that they feel safer in the presence of a police officer, whereas 60% of surveyed African American individuals feel less safe around police. Nevertheless, most Hillsborough residents are relatively satisfied with the services provided by the Police and Sheriff’s departments present in Hillsborough County.

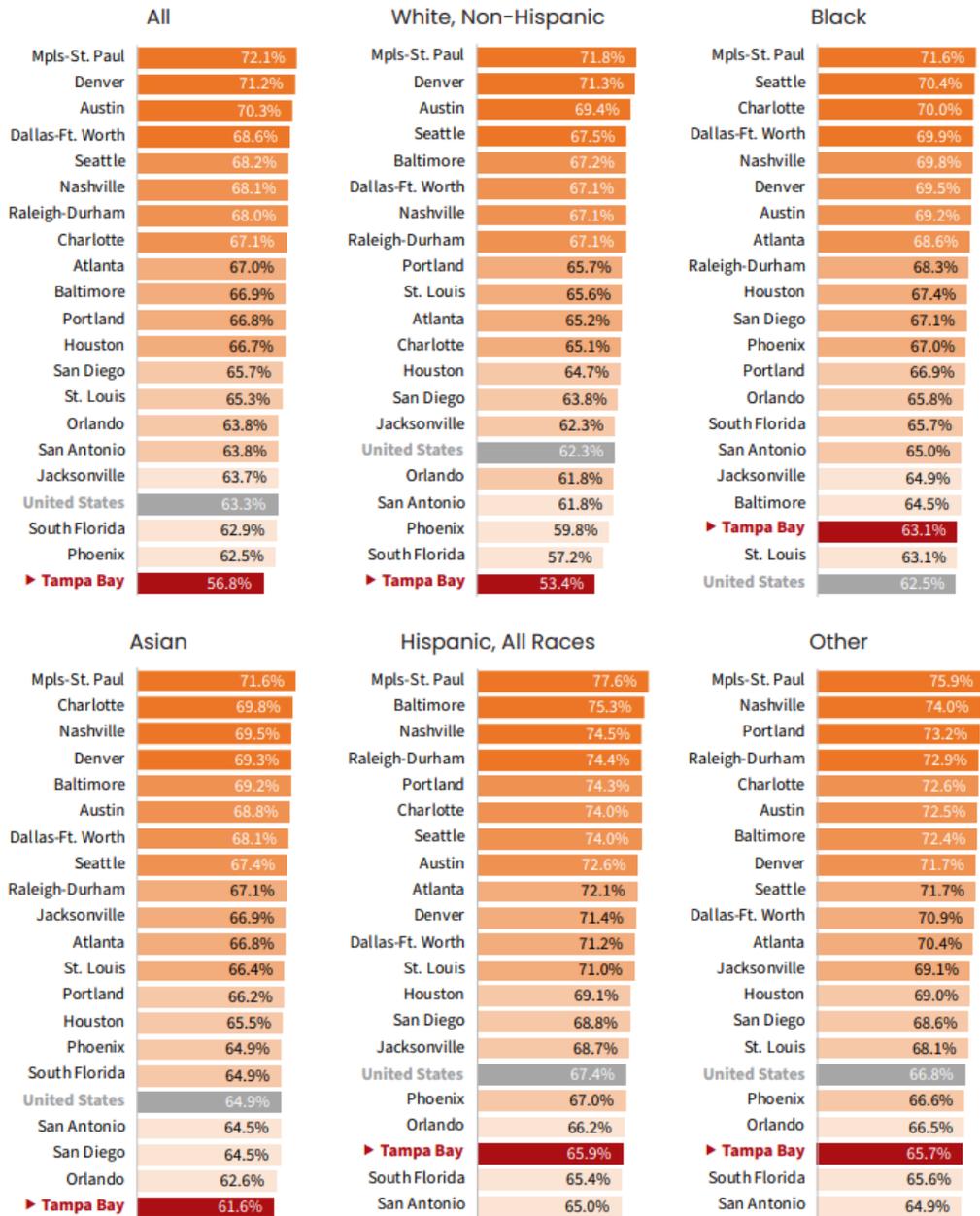
The information provided by the 2020 Racial Sentiment Survey gives us a window into the opinions of the Hillsborough community regarding the persistent issues of race. People of all races recognize that the impacts of systemic racial disparities are still alive and well in America; however, attitudes towards these disparities in Hillsborough County are divided between African American and Caucasian populations. In general, African American Populations see racial disparities and the impacts of them as well, while their Caucasian counterparts feel that Hillsborough does a good job compared to other jurisdictions. Additionally, African American respondents have noted that the acceptability of racially inflammatory rhetoric within the community appears to be rising, while Caucasian Respondents felt that this was not the case. This experiential difference ultimately highlights a dramatic contrast of experience between the Caucasian and African American populations of Hillsborough County. The following sections highlight

several key findings that demonstrate disparities and disproportionality in the community, which play a key role in stratifying this experience.

### 3.4 Analysis of Economic Trends

To understand the economic reality within Hillsborough County, MGT first investigated the population within the labor force. Overall, only 56.8% of people are employed in Tampa Bay compared to 63.3% across the United States. Caucasian, Non-Hispanic people are the least employed demographic, proportionally employed at a rate of 53.4%. On the other hand, African American residents of Tampa are employed at a rate of 63.1%, which is slightly above the national average for African American individuals. However, this does not eclipse the fact that Hillsborough is dramatically below the US average for labor force participation and that every other minority is employed at a rate dramatically under the US average.

Figure 2-10. Total Population in Labor Force

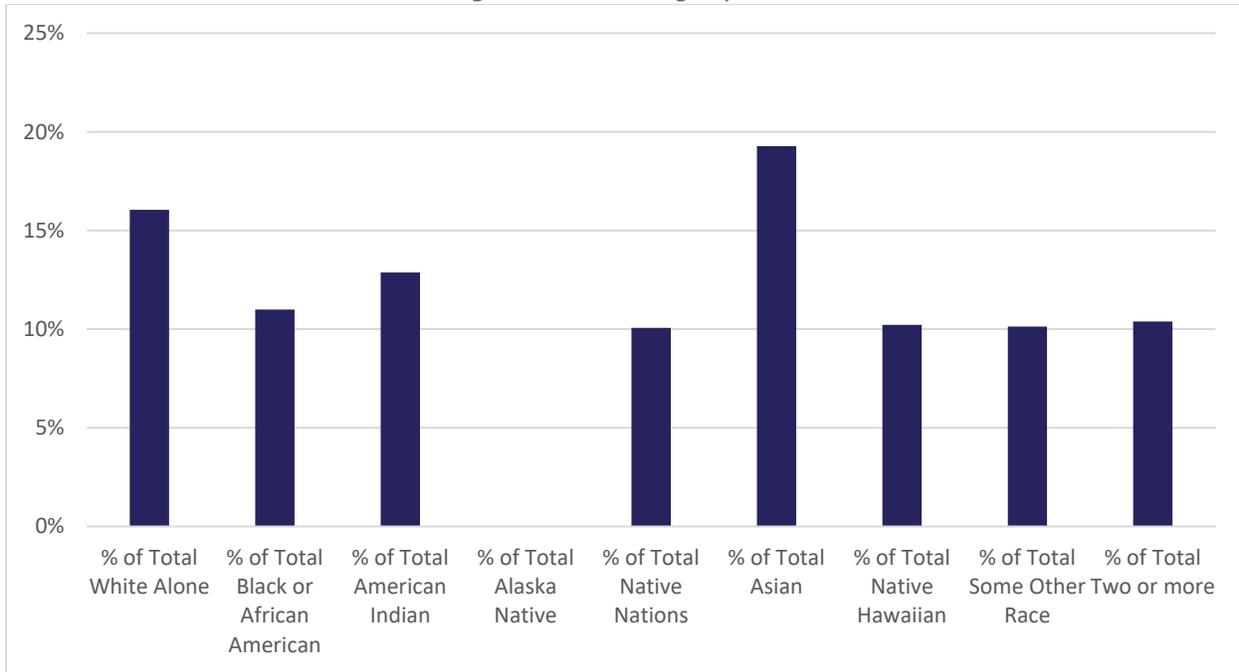


Source: 2020 State of the Region Regional Equity Report.

While understanding the population engaged in the labor force is helpful analysis, MGT quantified both racial and gender-based wage gaps in Hillsborough County. **Figure 2-11** demonstrates the distribution of total earnings by race in Hillsborough County. Asian Americans earn the largest portion of wage on average accounting for 19% of wages in Hillsborough County. White residents were the second largest earner accounting for 16% of wages earned on average across Hillsborough County. American Indians account for 13% of earnings on average with Native Nations earning just slightly less with 10% of earnings

on average. Black Americans typically only earn 11% of the wages which is disproportional to their share of the population.

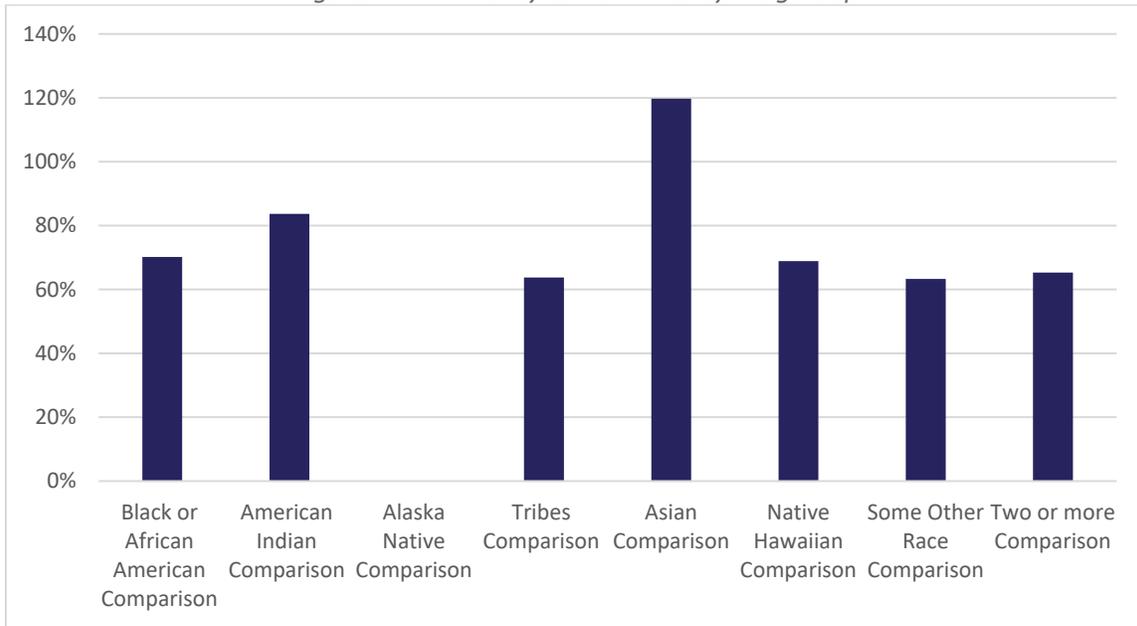
Figure 2-11. Earnings By Race



Source: US Census Bureau 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey PUMS

Another economic indicator closely related to earnings is the racial wage gap. The most barebones explanation of a wage gap is the difference per dollar in pay between individuals by race. **Figure 2-12** illustrates the racial wage gap as it exists within Hillsborough County. On average, African Americans earn 70% of what their white peers earn. American Indians earn 84% compared with white peers while individuals belonging to Native Tribes only earn 64%. Asian Americans are the only racial group consistently out earning white respondents making on average 120% of their white peers.

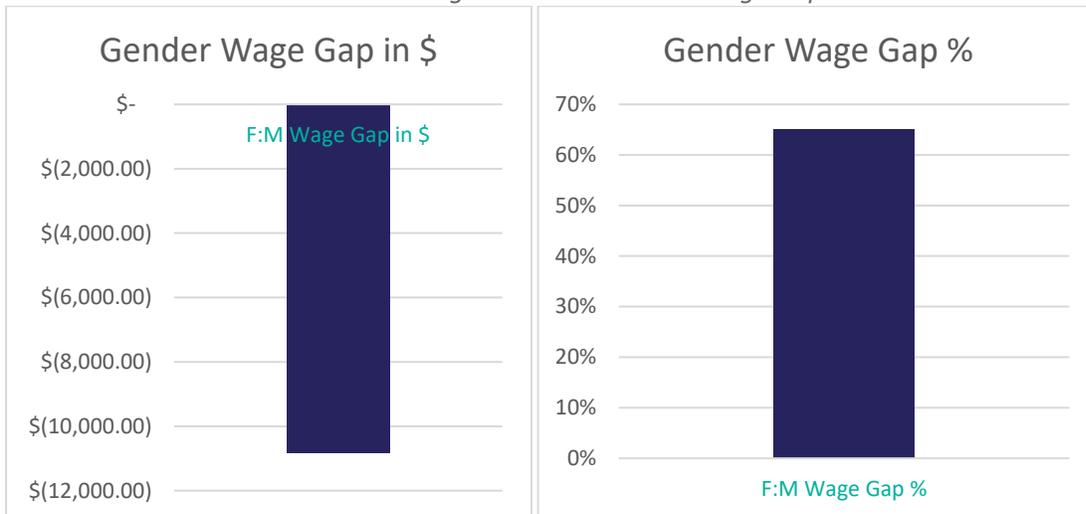
Figure 2-12. Minority to Nonminority Wage Gap



Source: US Census Bureau 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey PUMS

The reality of the wage gap not only exists across race, but also gender. Across Hillsborough County men on average earn 61% of available wages while women on average earn 39%. This translates to a wage deficiency of over \$10,000 per person per year. In Hillsborough County on average, women make 60% of their male counterparts which is dramatically under the 2020 US average for all workers which is 84% ([Barroso & Brown 2020](#)).

Figure 2-13. Gendered Wage Gap



Source: US Census Bureau 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey PUMS

**Figure 2-14** compares the overall poverty rate within Hillsborough County with that of other similarly sized regions around the country. In 2008 Hillsborough County had 17% of the population living under the federal poverty level. Over the next ten years, the percentage of people living in poverty dramatically reduced to 10%. Over the same period, many peer cities experienced dramatic increases in the rate of poverty. Out of the 20 cities included in the review, the Tampa region was identified as dramatically improving its competitive position based on the significant reduction in the poverty rate over the last decade.

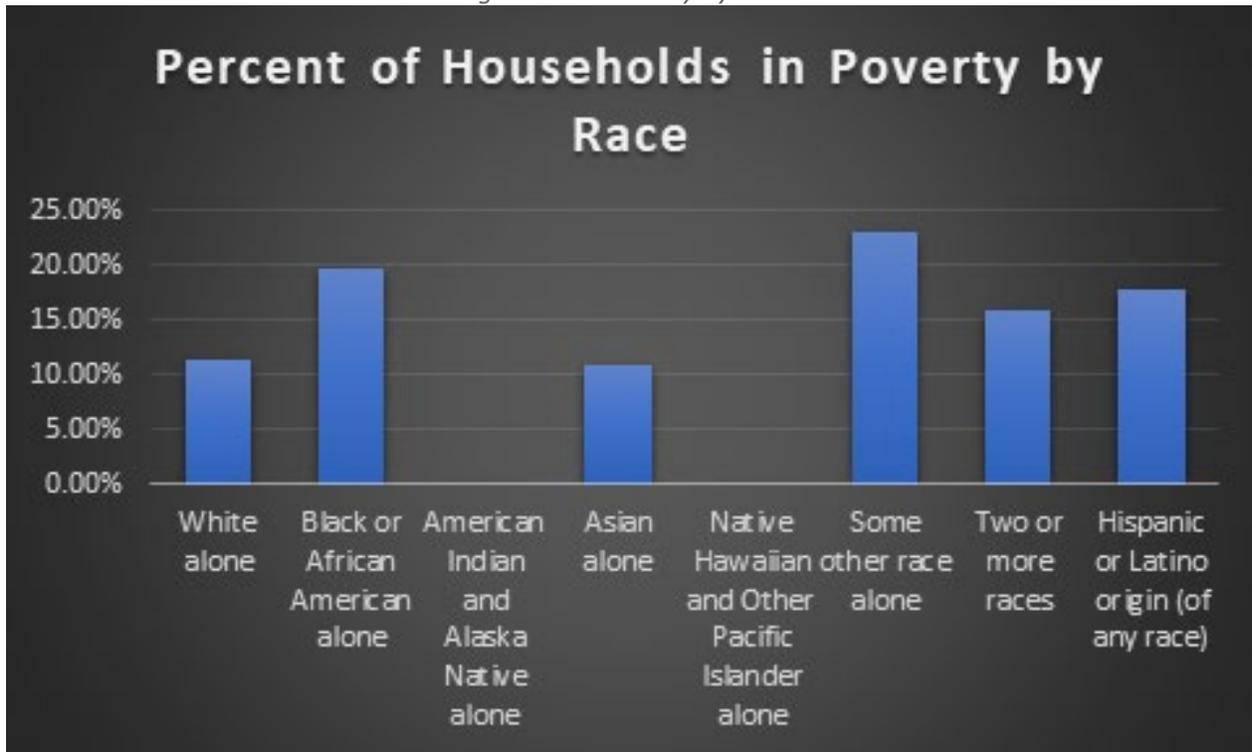
Figure 2-14. Poverty Rate Overall



Source: 2021 State of the Region Economic Insights Report

While the successful mitigation of individuals living in poverty in Hillsborough County is laudable, the actual distribution of this reduction is inequitable at best. While African American individuals are employed at a rate above the US average in Hillsborough County, they are nearly twice as likely to live under the federal poverty line. In addition, 11% of Caucasian families live under the federal poverty level, whereas 20% of African American families are experiencing poverty. Hispanic populations are also significantly more likely to experience poverty, with 17% of families experiencing poverty. Finally, Asian people are the least likely to experience poverty in Hillsborough County, with 10% of families actively experiencing poverty. These findings suggest that while poverty in Hillsborough County is decreasing, this reduction is not being equitably distributed.

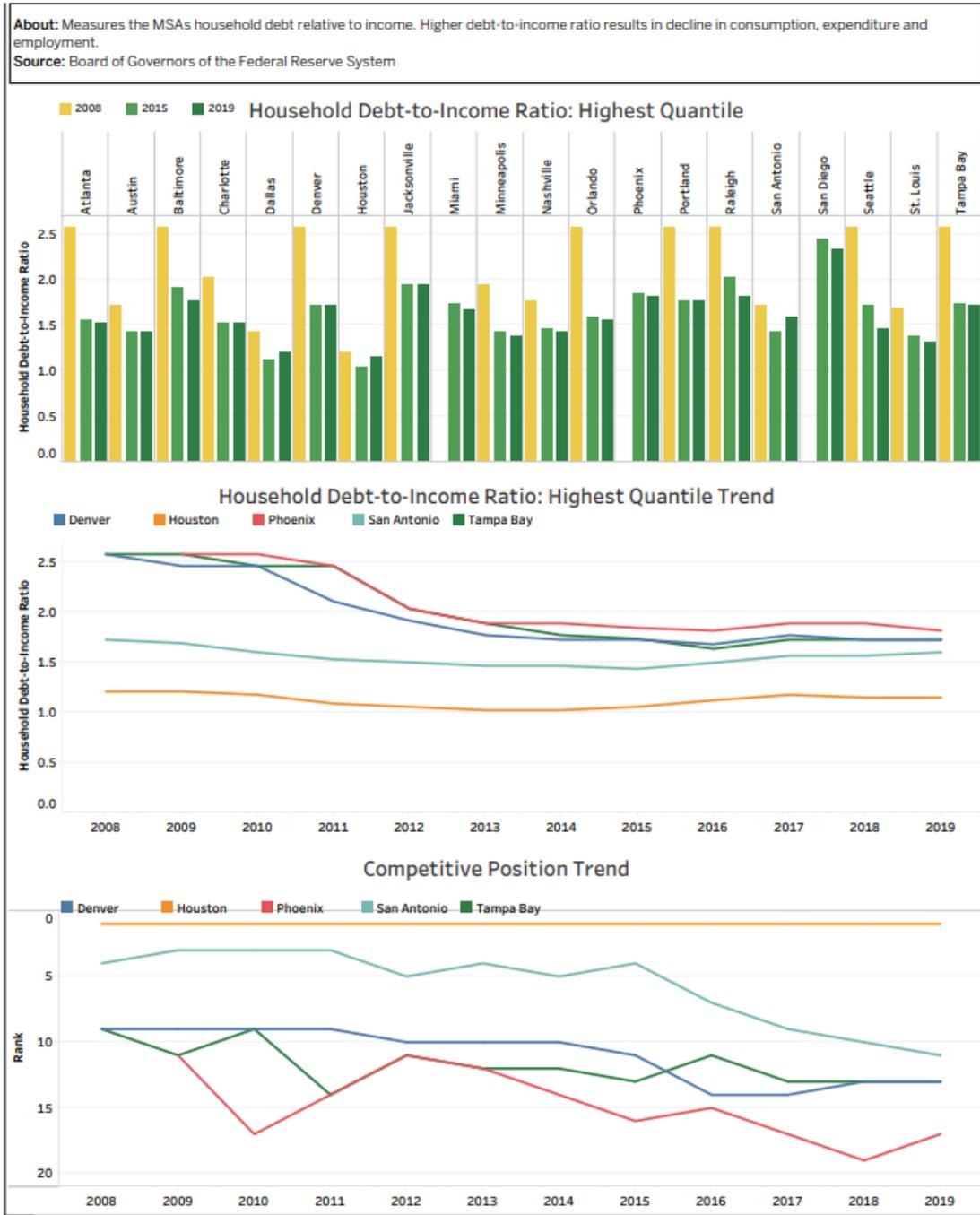
Figure 2-15. Poverty By Race



Source: US Census Bureau 2015-2019 5-Year American Community Survey PUMS

ACS data demonstrates that a critical indicator that gives insights into the cause of this poverty is the relationship between a household's debts versus their income. **Figure 2-16** compares the same 20 peers now investigating the household debt to income ratio. Between 2009-2019 the average debt-to-income ratio in Hillsborough County decreased from 2.5 to just under 2.0, meaning that households usually carry twice the amount of debt to income. In addition, higher ratios result in reduced consumer spending, expenditure, and employment which means that these debt ratios are likely bringing employment numbers down. Finally, the high proportion of debt to income is above most of Tampa's peer cities placing it in the bottom 25% of its peers.

Figure 2-16. Debt-To-Income Ratio

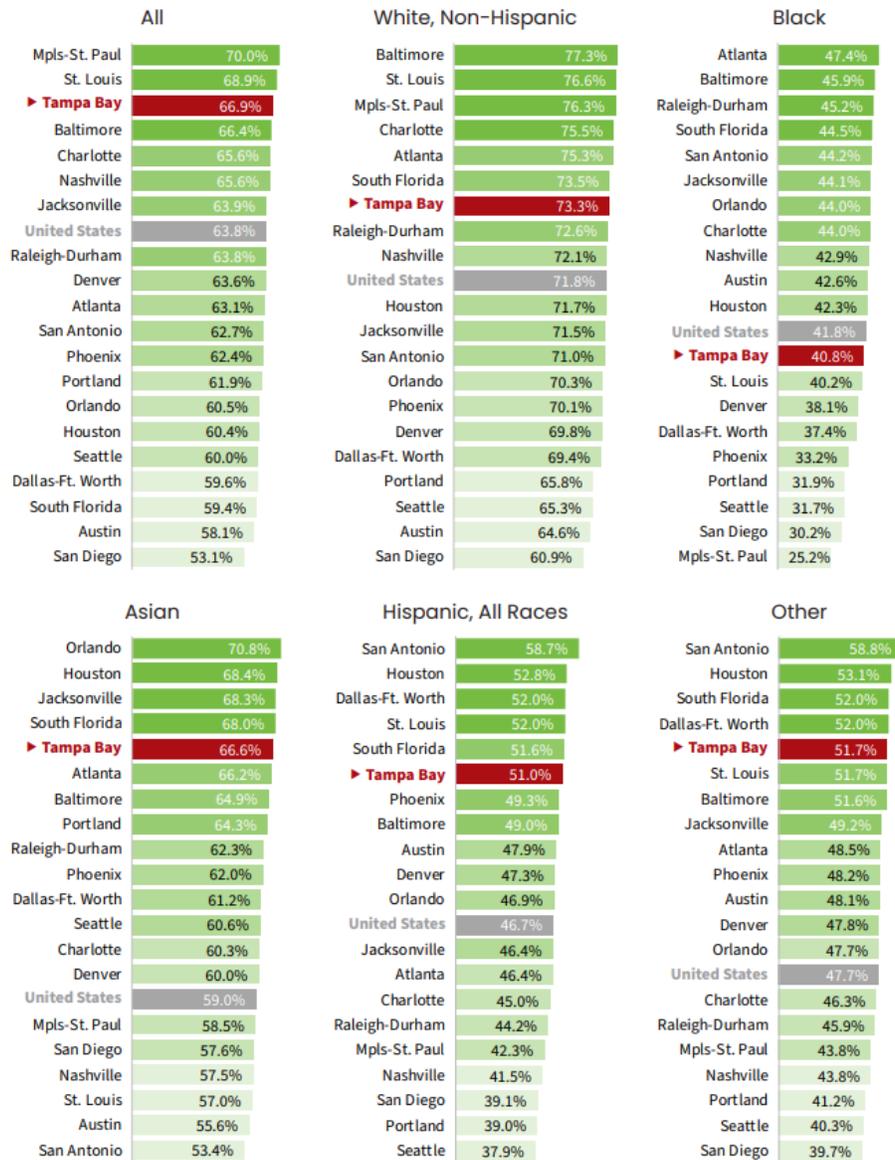


Source: 2021 State of the Region Economic Insights Report.

The reality of a high debt-to-income ratio in Hillsborough County is partially attributed to homeownership for the county being above the US average. **Figure 2-17** demonstrates that Hillsborough County is above average for most racial demographics except African American people who are 1% below the US Average.

Unsurprisingly, Caucasian non-Hispanic individuals are the most likely to own their own home, with approximately 73.3% of them owning their own home. Asian Americans in Hillsborough are the next most likely racial demographic to own their own home, with 66.6% purchasing a home. African American individuals are the least likely to own their own home, with 40.8% owning their own home.

Figure 2-17. Home Ownership by Race



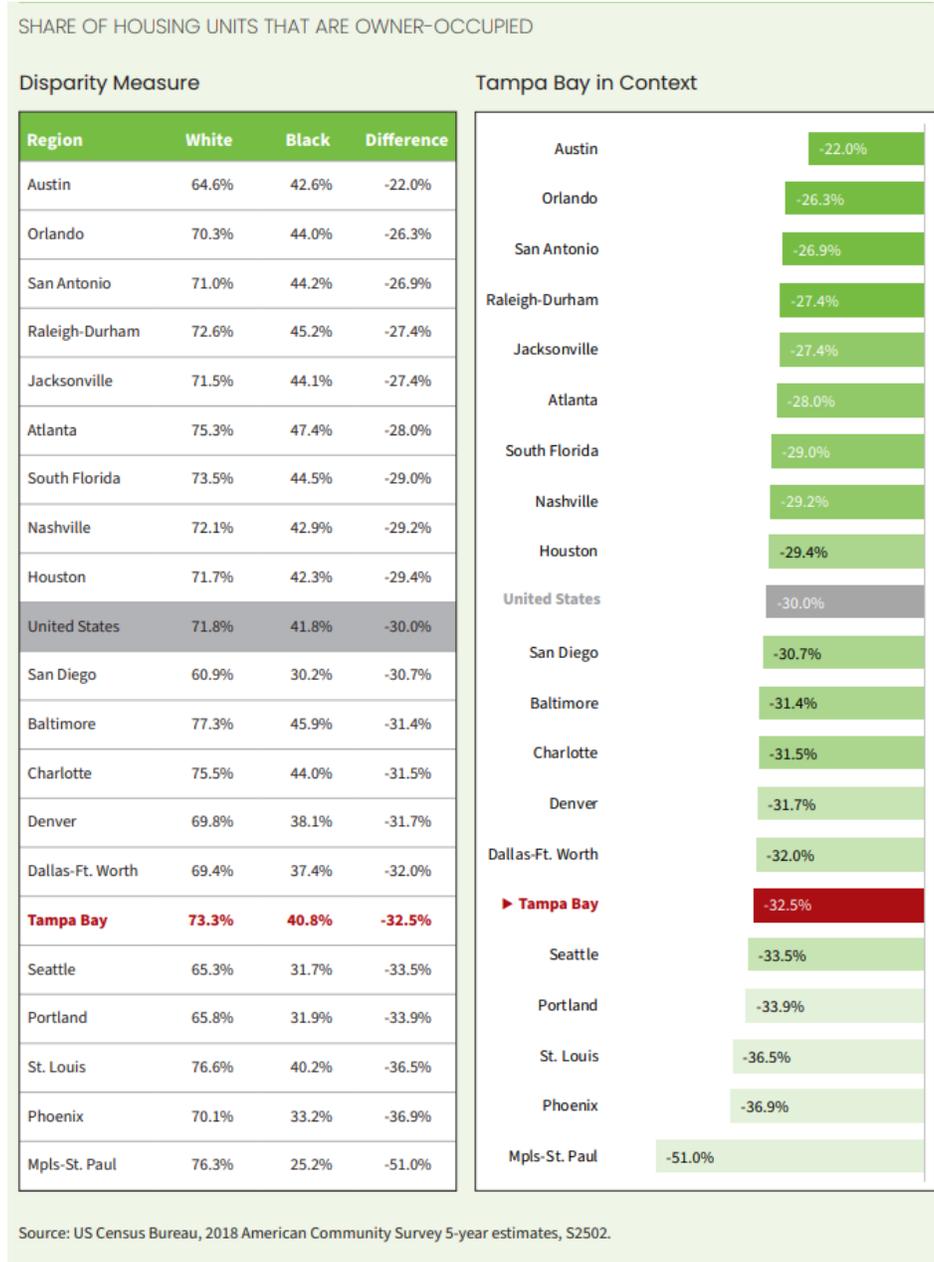
Source: US Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, S2502.

Source: 2020 State of the Region Regional Equity Report.

While this demonstrates that two-thirds of individuals in Hillsborough County own their homes, there is still a significant disproportionality between rates of Caucasian homeownership and African American

homeownership. The average gap across the US is 30% between these two racial groups; however, when compared with peers, Tampa’s 32.5% disparity places it in the bottom third of comparable peer cities.

Figure 2-18. African American-Caucasian Home Ownership Disproportionality

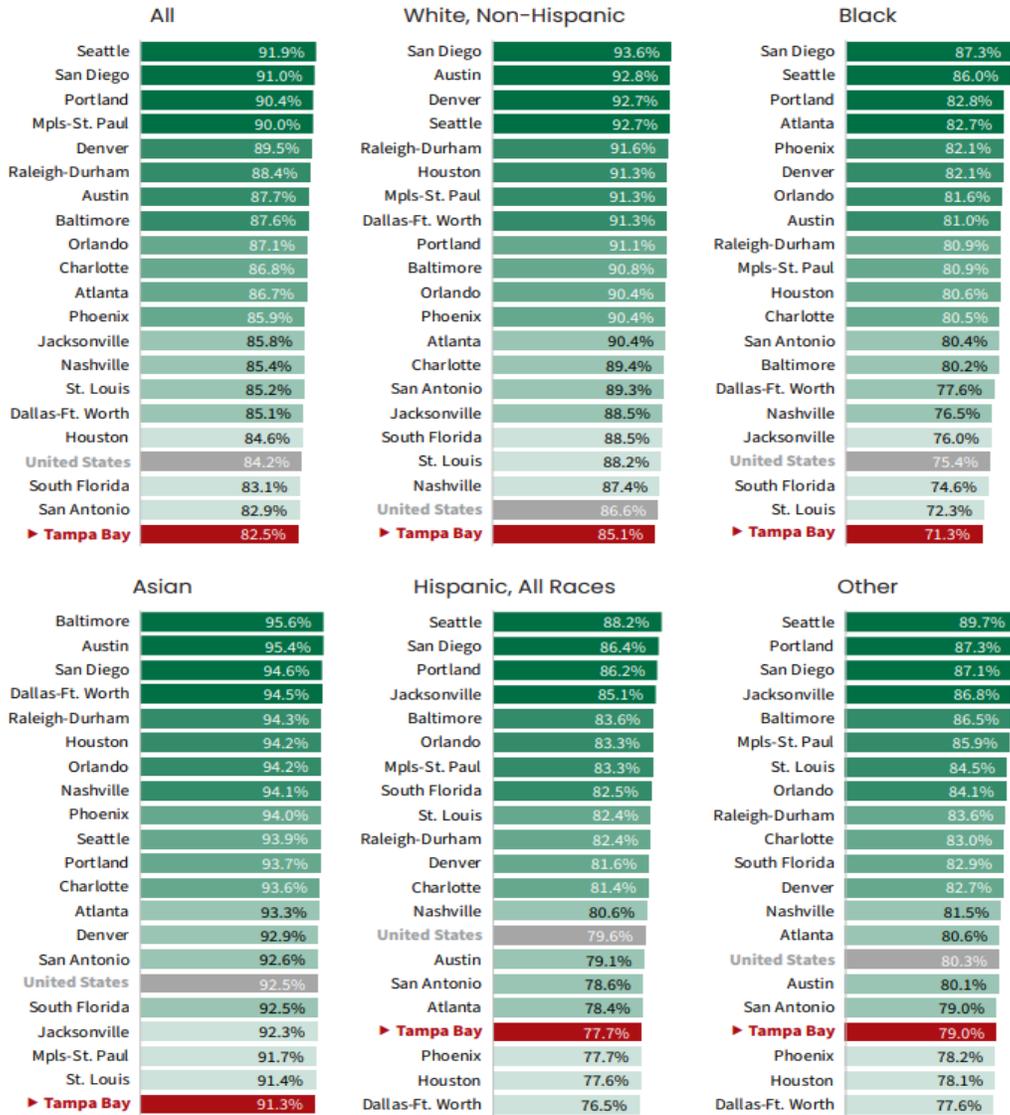


Source: 2020 State of the Region Regional Equity Report.

The modern economy demands digital access; however, digital access itself requires sustained financial investment through broadband subscriptions and regular updates to antiquated hardware. While this economic hurdle is easy for some families to overcome; however, for others, it creates an insurmountable

financial barrier that creates disparities in regular access to the internet and digital services. Sociologists refer to this disproportionality as the digital divide. 82.5% of Hillsborough residents live in a household with a computer and broadband internet subscription compared to 84.2% US Average. Out of 20 peers, the Tampa region consistently ranks last across race. 77.7% of Hispanic families live in a household with a computer and broadband subscription compared to 79.6% with the US average. Similarly, 71.3% of African American households live in a household with a Computer and Broadband Internet Subscription compared to the US average of 71.3%. Caucasian households are significantly more likely than Hispanic or African American individuals to live in a household with a computer and broadband, with 85.1% having access. Based on this data, there is a 13.8% disproportionality between African American and Caucasian households.

Figure 2-19. Digital Divide Comparative Ranking by Race  
SHARE OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH A COMPUTER AND A BROADBAND INTERNET SUBSCRIPTION



Source: US Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, B28009.

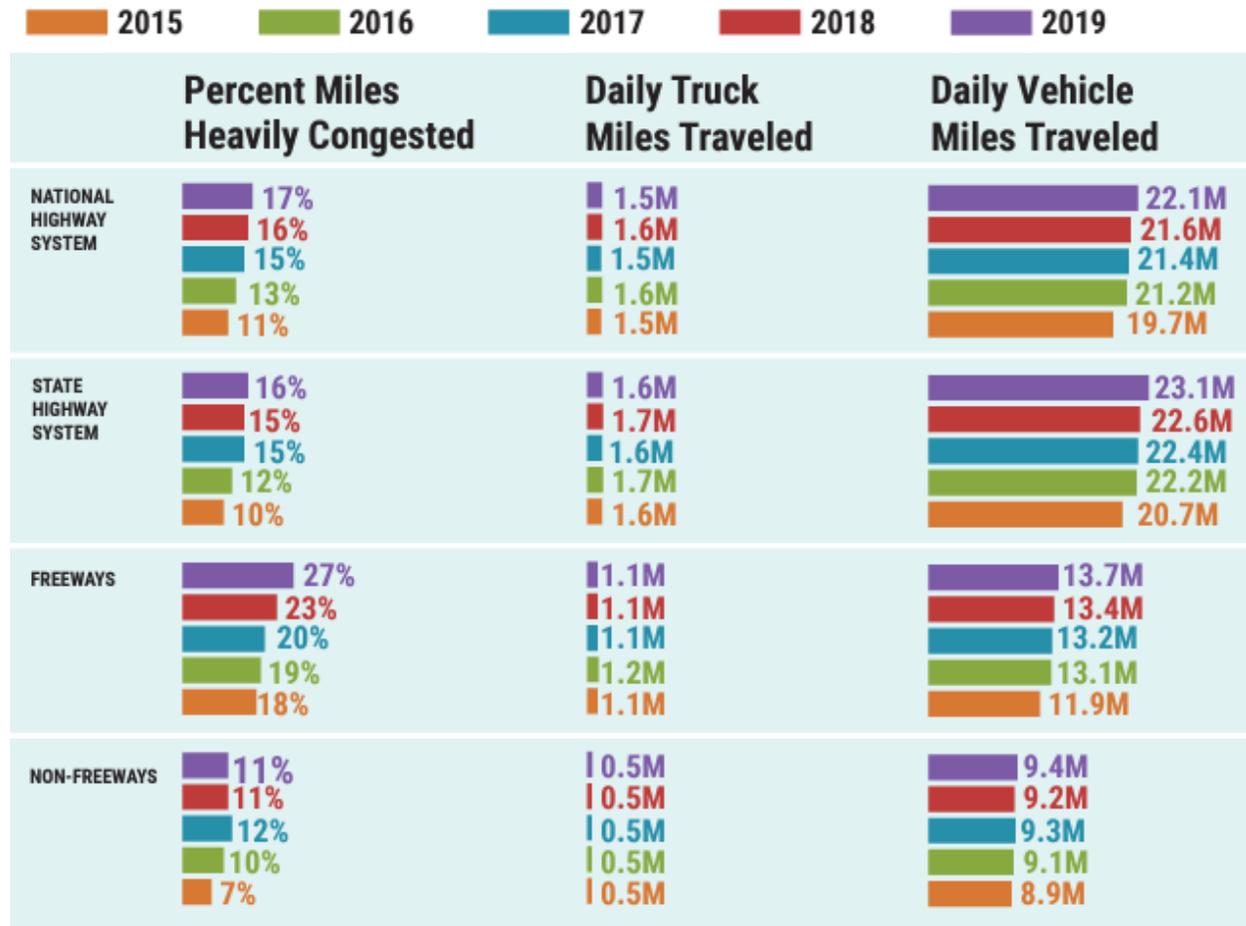
Source: 2020 State of the Region Regional Equity Report.

### 3.5 Transportation

The Hillsborough MPO Mobility Profile published in 2021 offers a comprehensive snapshot of the data available to the MPO in 2019. The report identified six key performance measures of Hillsborough County’s State Highway System (SHS) adjusted for the size of the county. For a county of its size, Hillsborough hosts 52.8 thousand hours of vehicle delay daily which corresponds to the median for the state. 16% of the county’s SHS is considered heavily congested compared to the 12% statewide median.

On average, residents of Hillsborough County travel 23.1 million miles on the SHS which is just under the statewide median of 28.3 million miles. Hillsborough County is also just under the state median of 1.8 million miles of daily trucking averaging 1.6 million miles a day. When taking the freeways in Hillsborough County residents arrive at their destination on-time 76% of the time while the statewide median is 82% on-time arrival.

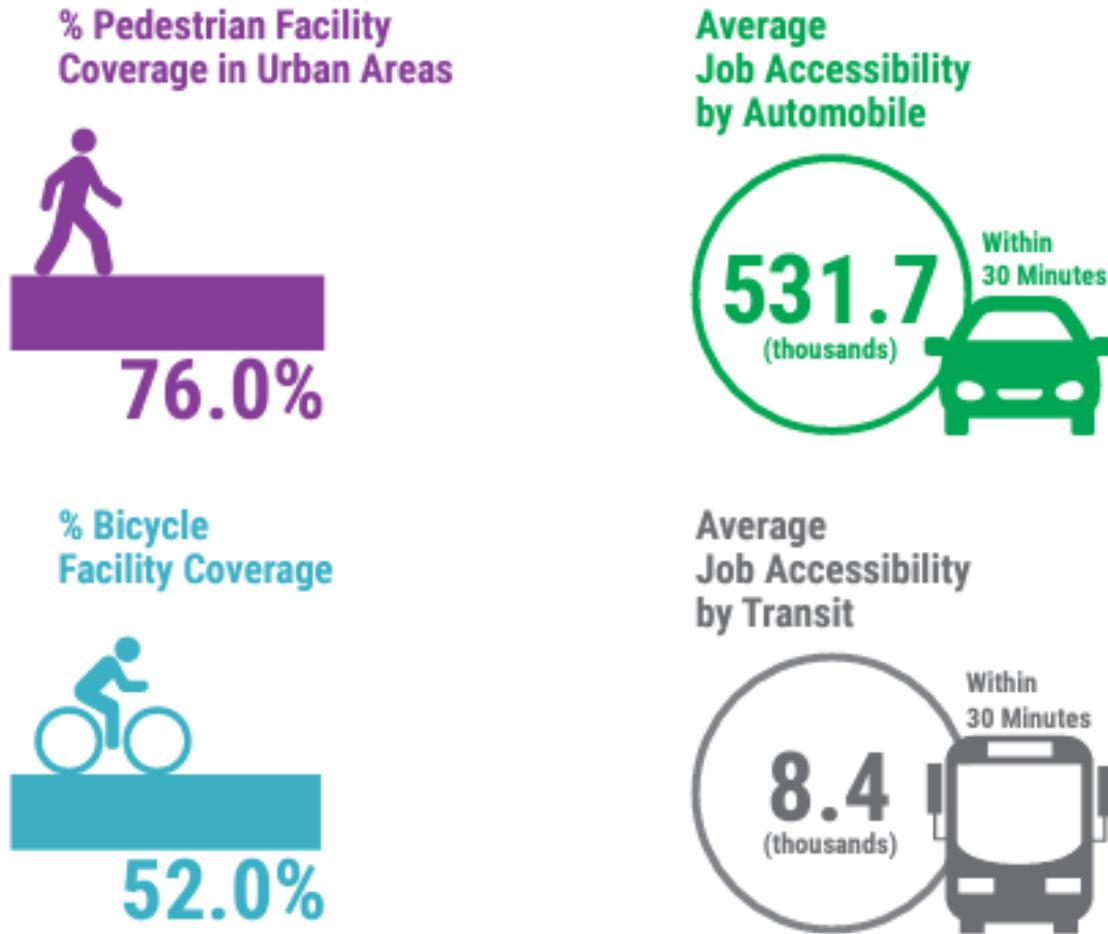
Figure 2-20. Highway Use Data



Source: Hillsborough MPO Mobility Profile 2021

While the SHS is a staple of mobility within Hillsborough County, it is not the only form of transit **Figure 2-21** demonstrates the comparison of commute accessibility between citizens utilizing personal automobiles versus public transit. 531.7K of the citizens of Hillsborough County commute 30 minutes or less in a personal vehicle to get to work while 8.4K commute 30 minutes or less by public transit. In total this only accounts for 37% of the population of Hillsborough County meaning that 63% of Hillsborough County commutes more than 30 minutes to get to work.

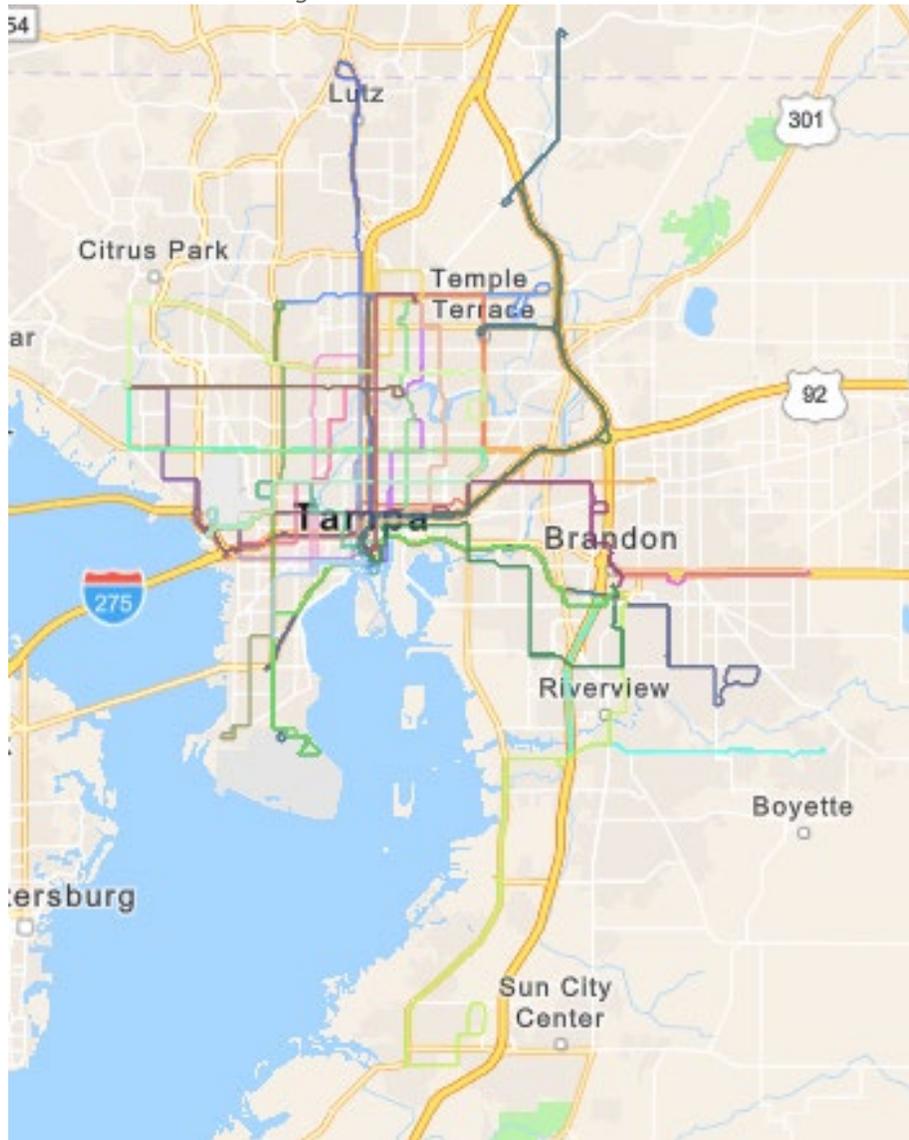
Figure 2-21. Commute and Accessibility



Source: Hillsborough MPO Mobility Profile 2021

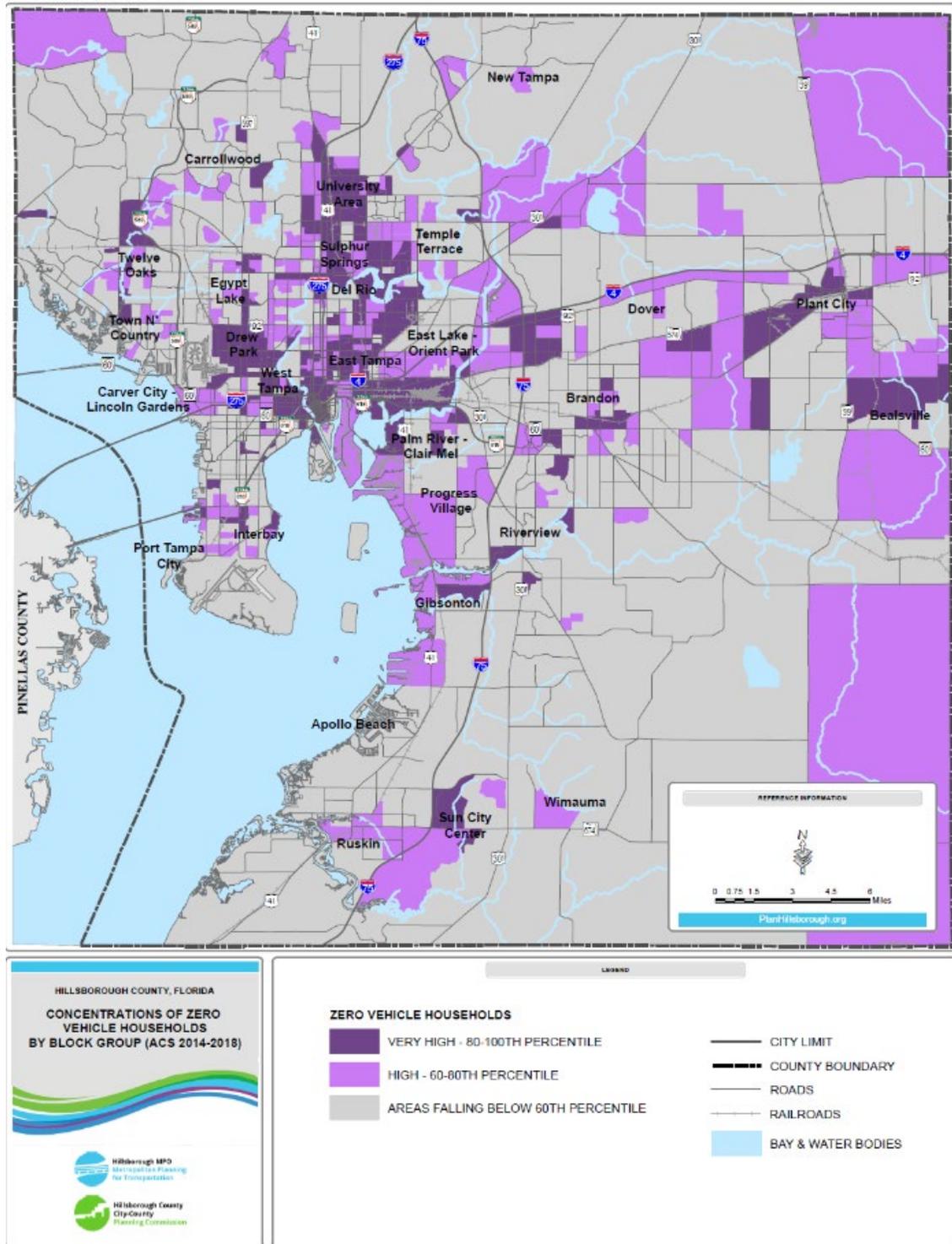
Long commutes to and from work can have serious impacts on zero vehicle households who rely on public transit and other means to get to work and other destinations. **Figure 2-22** represents the current Hillsborough Area Regional Transit (HART) lines. HART services many areas that have high levels of zero vehicle households as seen in **Figure 2-23**. However, the eastern shore of Hillsborough Bay south of Tampa and around Sun City and Wimauma have very little to no access to public transit, but large concentrations of zero vehicle households. According to the Plan Hillsborough Health Atlas, new HART routes are planned to begin servicing some of these areas; however, areas further from the center of Tampa have very little in the way of planned routes.

Figure 2-22. Current HART Lines



Source: Plan Hillsborough Health Atlas

Figure 2-23. Zero Vehicle Households by Zip Code



Source: ACS 2014-2018 5 Year Data Map Courtesy of Plan Hillsborough Nondiscrimination and Equity Plan 2021.

## 3.6 Criminal and Juvenile Justice

### 3.6.1 Criminal Justice

The reality of a racial opportunity gap is clear throughout the information related to economic opportunity within Hillsborough County. According to hundreds of studies across decades, there is a strong relationship between an increase in poverty and an increase in crime and policing. Therefore, MGT examined the realities of the criminal justice system in Hillsborough County. According to nearly a decade worth of data sourced from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement, over the study period there were 165,000 pending, ongoing, and resolved cases. While African American individuals make up only 20% of the population, they account for 41% of all cases adjudicated in Hillsborough County over that period.

Figure 2-24. Comparative Dispositions of African American Cases Compared to the Whole County

Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Data Transparency.

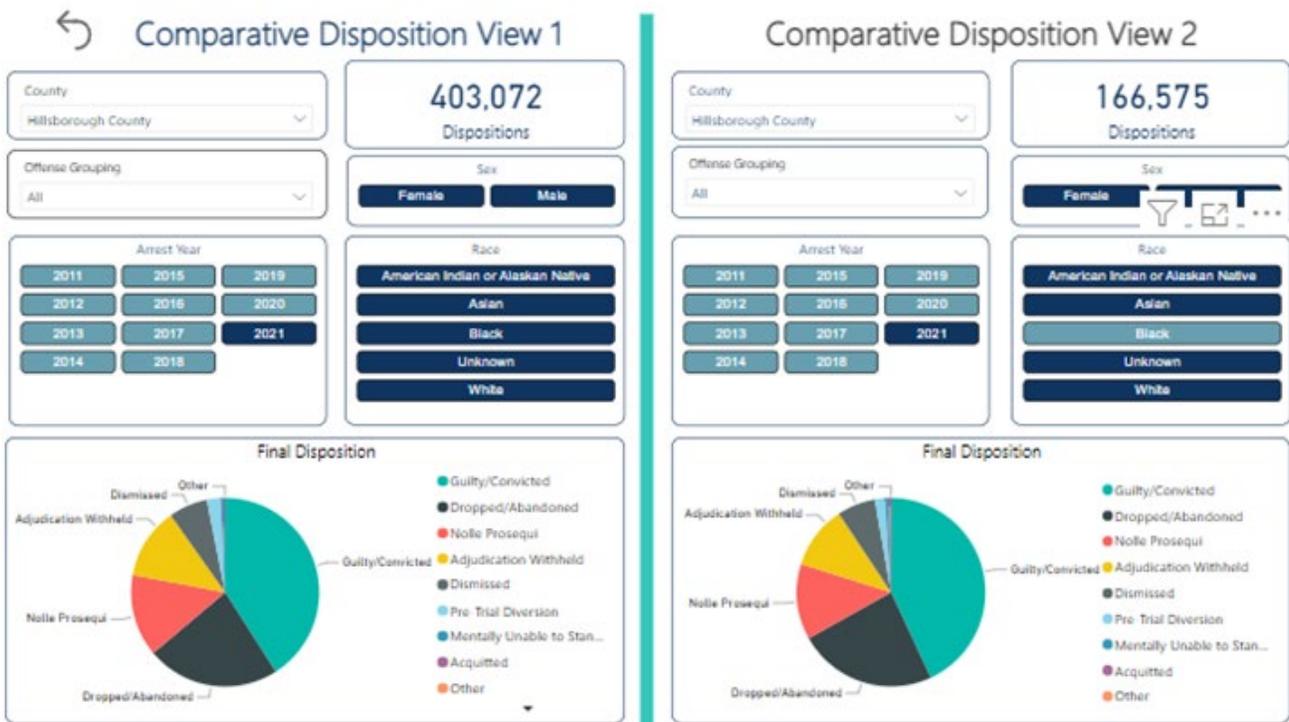
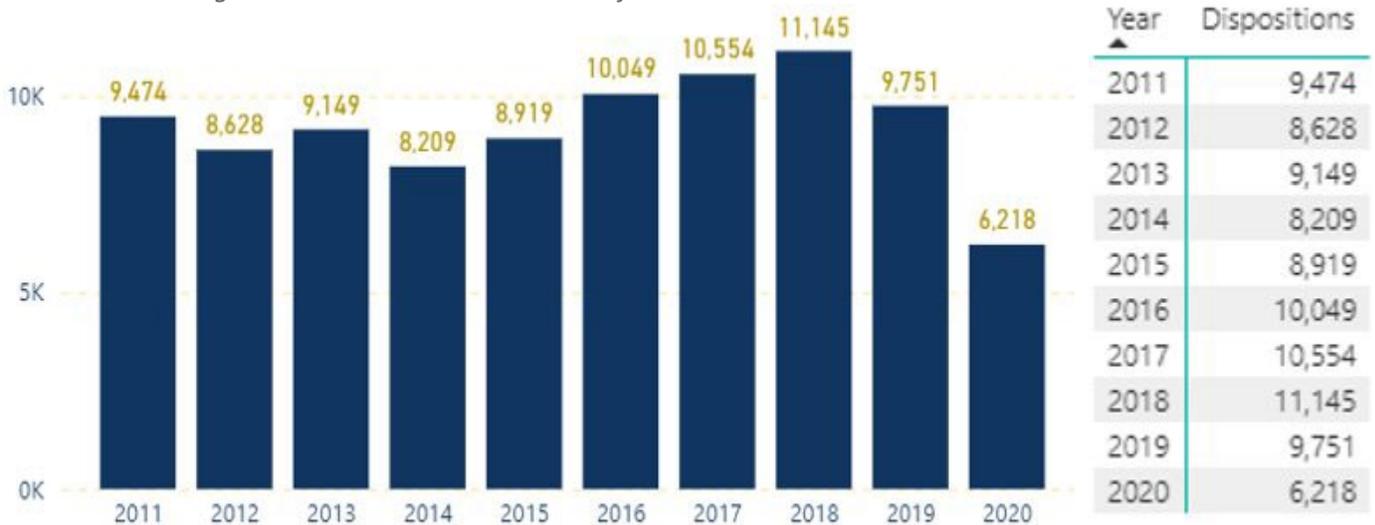


Figure 2-25. Criminal Prosecutions of African American Individuals 2011-2020



Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Data Transparency

Figure 2-26. Criminal Prosecutions of Caucasian Individuals 2011-2020



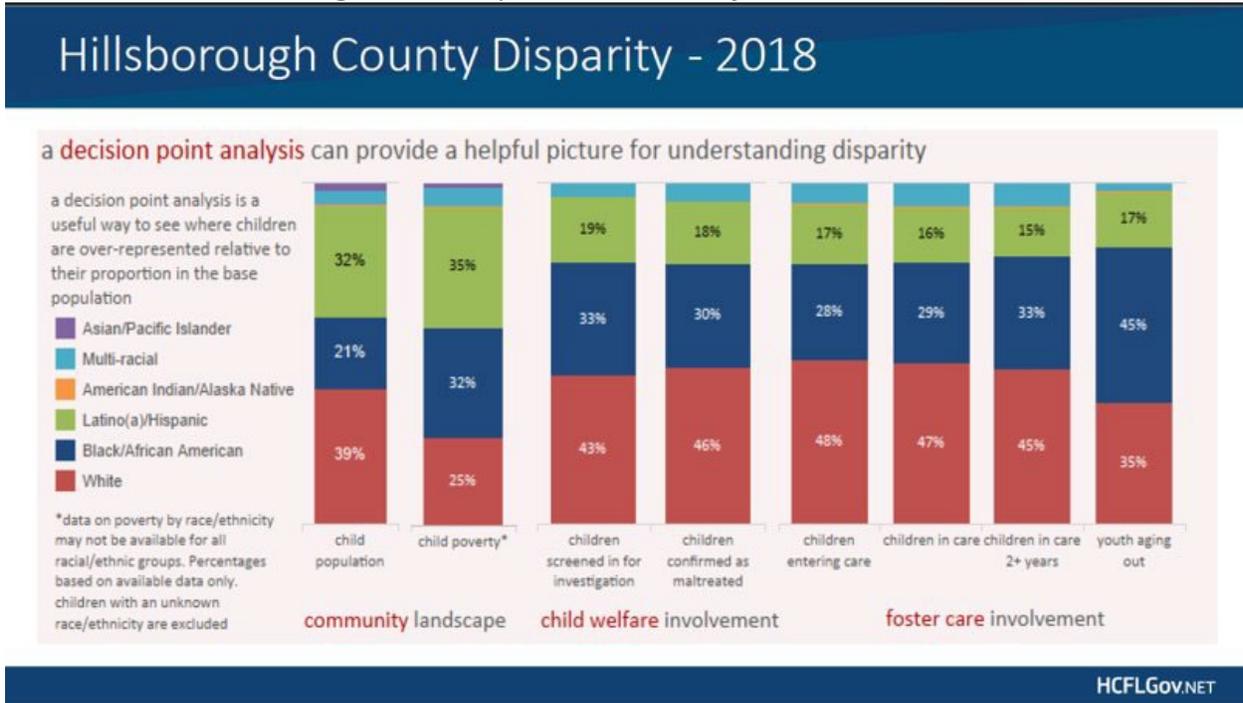
Source: Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Data Transparency

In addition to making up more cases than their Caucasian peers, there appears to be a connection between racial groups and convictions. **Figure 2-27** and **Figure 2-28** are weighted word clouds of convictions by race accompanied by the top 10 most frequent convictions by race. In a word-cloud the relative frequency or weight that a word has is characterized by its size. Larger words are those that occur more frequently than smaller ones. In this instance, while both African American and Caucasian individuals are most frequently incarcerated for larceny, that is where similarities end. Caucasian individuals are likely to be convicted of generic “drug possession,” whereas African American individuals are charged with specific drug-related convictions such as “Marijuana-Possession” and “Cocaine-





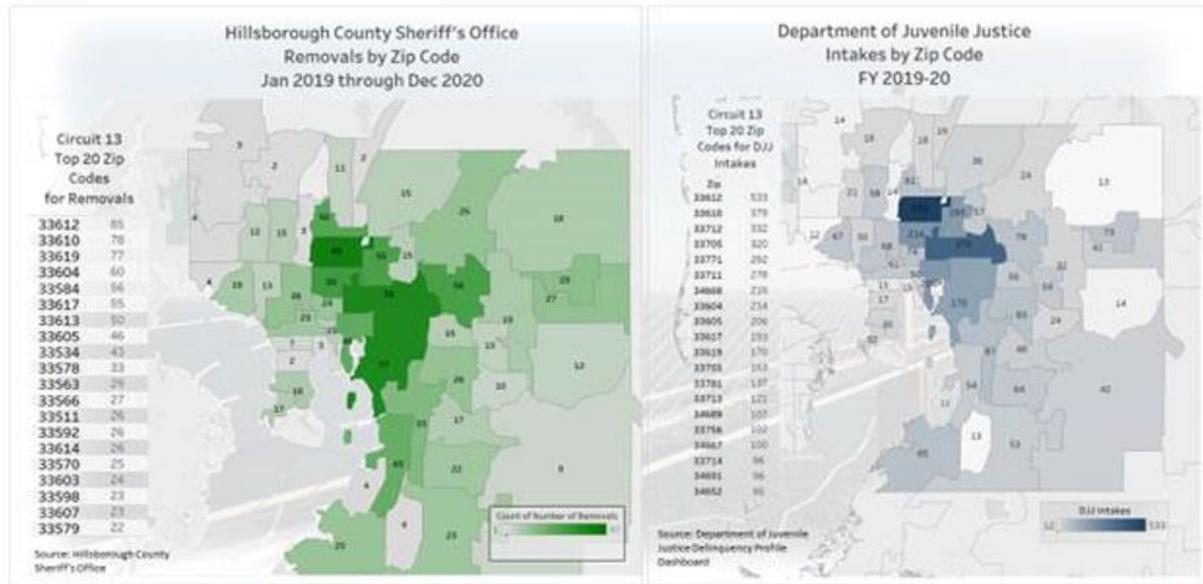
Figure 2-29. Disparities in Child Welfare Involvement



Source: Image prepared by Casey Family Programs

The Hillsborough County Sheriff’s Office (HCSO) is a critical partner providing support and collaborating with the Assessment Center toward reducing intakes into child welfare. The maps in **Figure 2-30** are zip-code maps of Hillsborough County that demonstrate child removals executed by the HSCO and instances of Juvenile Justice intakes. Despite Hillsborough’s two-pronged strategy to reduce intake and expedite permanency for those who have been removed, both these maps reveal high removal rates along the I-275 corridor, where the highest concentration of African American families lives in Hillsborough County. This revelation indicates that African American families are significantly more likely to experience child removals by the Sheriff’s department and more likely to be the source of intakes into the juvenile justice system. While these communities are likely not being expressly targeted, these impacted areas are adjacent to the redlined regions in the 1930s suggesting that these historical policies’ social and economic impacts are leading to disparate outcomes regarding child welfare.

Figure 2-30. Child Welfare Contact Maps



Source: Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office

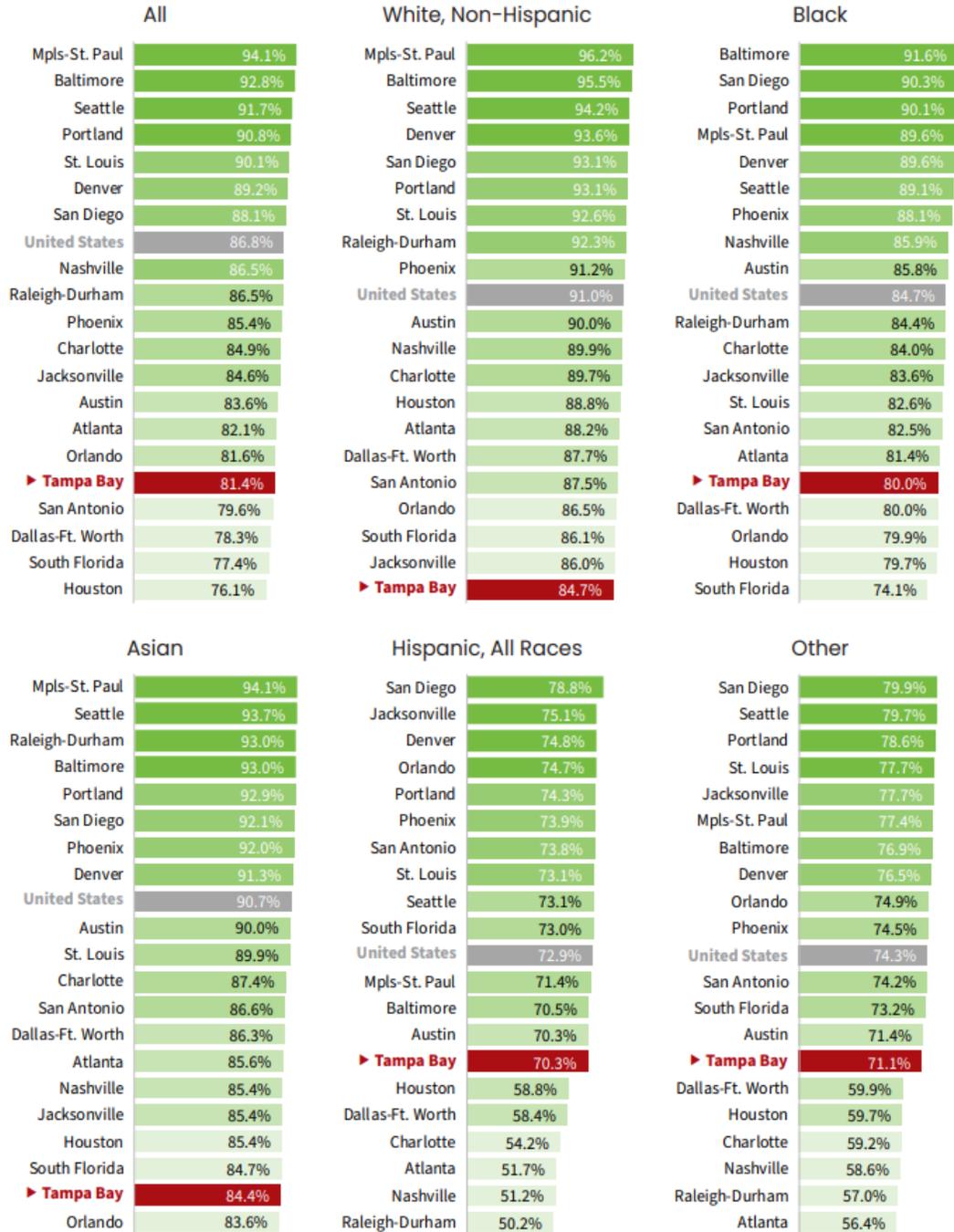
Note: Updated maps routinely provided by HCSO to the Community Alliance

### 3.7 Healthcare

Healthcare is another indicator that is dramatically impacted by the economic health of a region. Hillsborough County's citizens are generally far behind the US average for insurance coverage. Overall, 81.4% of Hillsborough County residents are insured as compared to the US average of 86.8%. Further, among the Caucasian, Non-Hispanic population of Hillsborough, only 84.7% of individuals are insured compared to 91.0% compared to the US average. Even with this deficit compared to the US average, a more significant portion of Caucasian, Non-Hispanic individuals are insured compared with other racial demographics. Hispanic individuals are the least likely to be insured in Hillsborough County, with only 70.3% of individuals being insured. 80.0% of African American individuals are insured, which is a 4.7% disparity between African American individuals and their Caucasian peers.

Figure 2-31. Comparative Health Insurance Coverage by Race

SHARE OF THE POPULATION WITH HEALTH INSURANCE



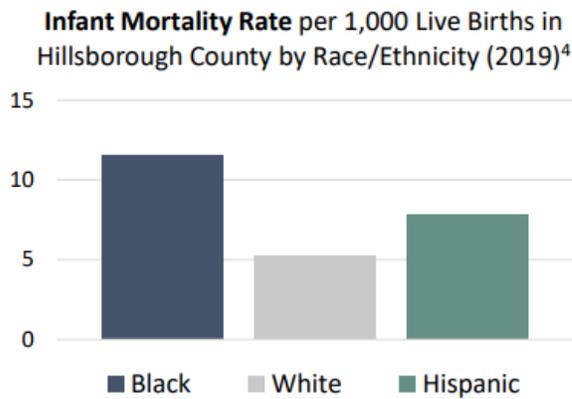
Source: US Census Bureau, 2018 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, C27001.

Source: 2020 State of the Region Regional Equity Report.

The substantial disproportionality in healthcare has dramatic impacts across the county. Two indicators frequently used by public health officials to measure healthcare quality in a region are the instances of infant mortality and novel HIV cases. In Hillsborough County, African American families are nearly twice as likely to experience infant mortality compared to their Caucasian counterparts. While Hispanic families are not quite as likely to experience infant mortality as their African American peers, they are still approximately 50% more likely to experience infant mortality than Caucasian peers. In addition, when it comes to instances of novel HIV cases, African American individuals are more than 5 times more likely to experience novel cases of HIV than their Caucasian counterparts. Hispanic individuals are about twice as likely to experience novel cases of HIV compared to their Caucasian counterparts.

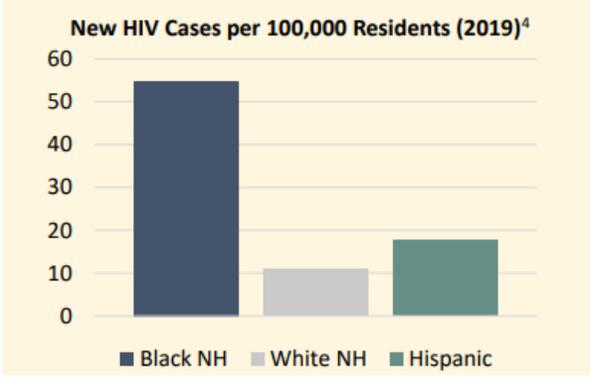
Figure 2-32. Disproportionality in Health Indicators

**There are many health inequities in Hillsborough County. These are just a few.**



**Severe Maternal Morbidity** is the presence of a complication during a delivery hospitalization. In 2019, Black women were almost twice as likely than White women to experience complications during pregnancy or delivery. These complications can lead to negative outcomes for the woman and the infant. Monitoring trends and disparities in severe maternal morbidity allows public health and medical professionals to improve the health of women and children<sup>4</sup>.

Many new HIV cases are among young people who were unaware of their HIV status due to lack of testing. A lack of testing may indicate a larger equity issue related to access to healthcare for HIV testing and prevention services, as well as inability to access HIV medications that can reduce the risk of transmission to their sex partners<sup>20, 21</sup>.



**INJURY & VIOLENCE<sup>4</sup>**

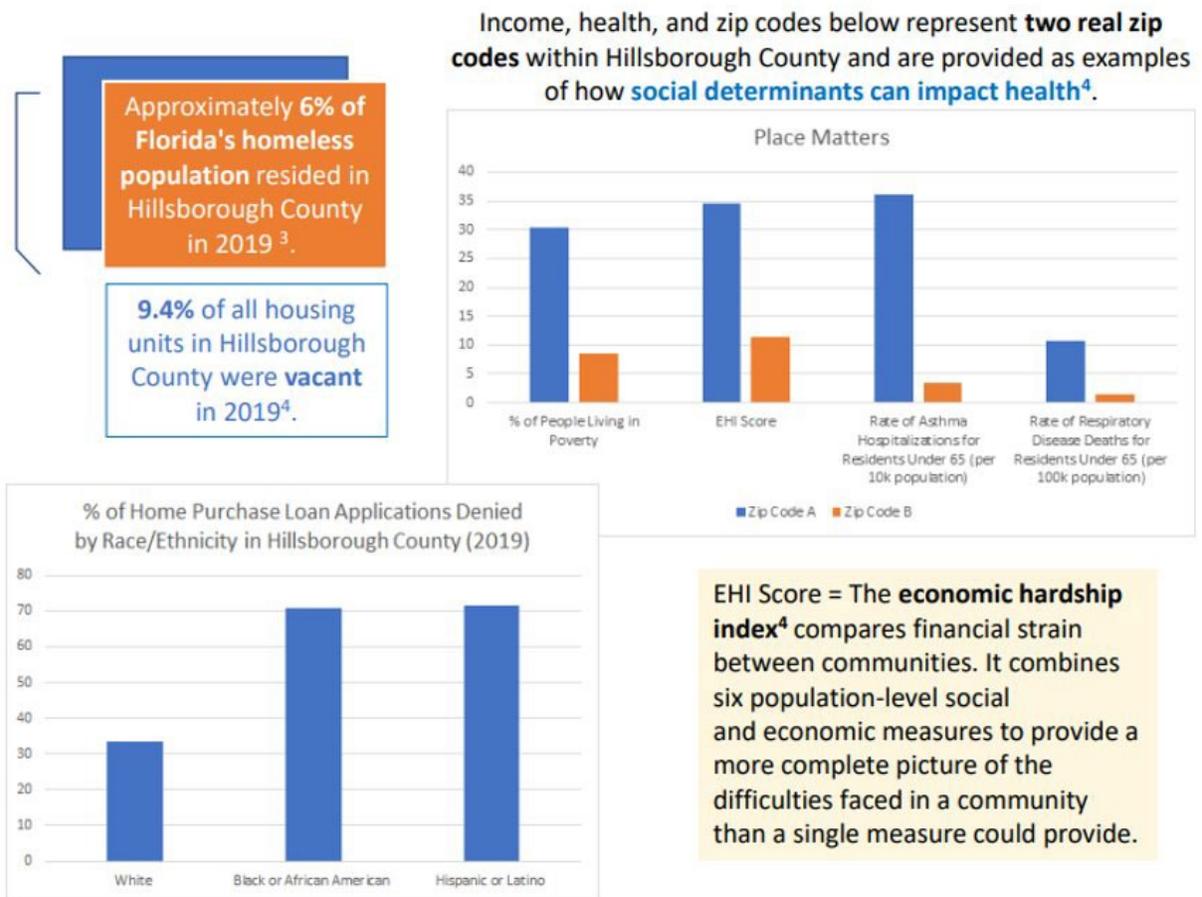
In 2019, Black residents were hospitalized with non-fatal firearm injuries at 5.8 times the rate of White residents. In the same year, Black residents died from homicide at 5.8 times the rate of White residents.

These rates of death and injury are consistent with a greater public health violence crisis that impacts Black communities. Factors influencing it include historical and current systemic inequities in economic and educational opportunities, justice practices, geographic location, other health issues and access to care, and toxic stress from life conditions. The result compounds stress and strain already experienced by Black residents and particularly Black youth<sup>22</sup>.

Source: 2020 Health Equity Report.

These public health indicators demonstrate that while Hillsborough County has a low insurance coverage rate, health outcomes for African American individuals are dramatically worse than other demographics. Worse health outcomes, with or without insurance, increase the cost of living dramatically by introducing treatment costs which can be a financial strain on many individuals and families alike. The Economic Hardship Index or EHI compares financial strain between communities combining six social and economic measures to provide a complete picture of the difficulties faced in a community. **Figure 2-33** demonstrates that the health outcomes in areas with a high EHI score are more likely to experience worse health outcomes.

Figure 2-33. Economic Hardship Index

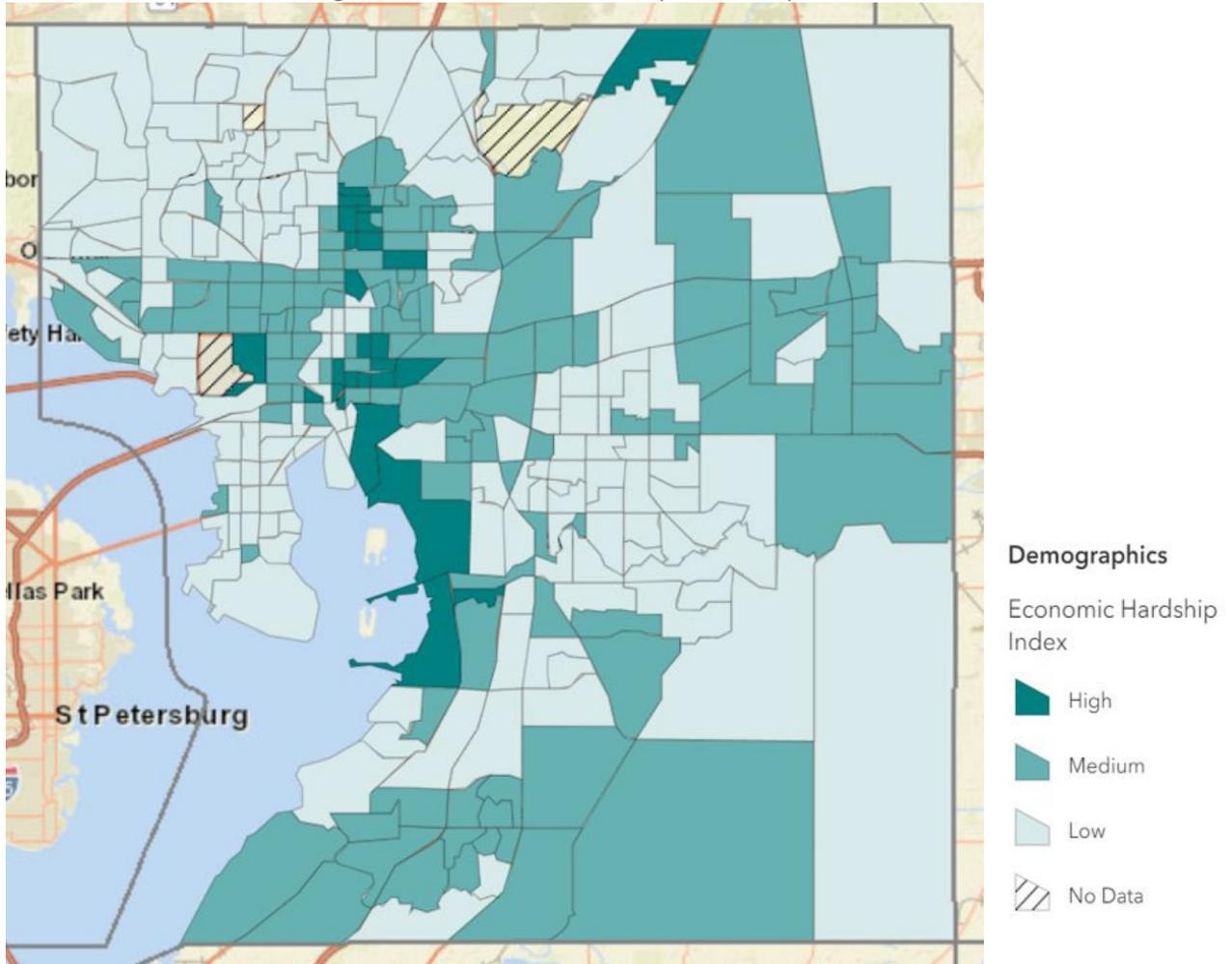


Source: 2020 Health Equity Report.

The Florida State University Health Explorer is a database that has mapped out the EHI across Florida's various counties, including Hillsborough. **Figure 2-34** constitutes a map of the county's highest EHIs. The darker areas have the most economic strain on them and have worse health outcomes. Once again, we see the area to the east of I-275 bearing the brunt of high economic hardship. This demonstrates that the

financial strain in this region has a dramatic impact on health outcomes throughout Hillsborough County and further illustrates why African American individuals have uniquely worse health outcomes beyond disparities in insurance coverage.

Figure 2-34. Economic Hardship Index Map



Source: Community Health Explorer.

### 3.8 Quantitative Thematic Analysis

This section presents critical themes and trends identified within the quantitative data assessment of DEI in Hillsborough County, FL. There are several vital themes MGT has identified within this data assessment. First, as MGT, in part, is creating a policy-making framework to increase DEI within the community, it is necessary to reflect on how current inequities and disproportionality are directly related to historic systemic oppression. The second key theme is the reality that while each variable investigated has an autonomous impact. Every variable affects the economic realities of citizens in tangible ways. Disparities within an indicator such as criminal justice are frequently mirrored in economic inequality. Finally,

discussing criminal justice, Hillsborough County appears to have dramatic inequalities around criminal justice and sentencing. If this goes unaddressed, the impacts of over-policing can and will exacerbate many of the disproportionalities identified.

Early in this section, MGT provided the HOLC redlining map alongside a demographic dot density map, which demonstrated that Hillsborough County is still an extremely segregated city even 100 years after the HOLC policy. Further, maps developed across a multiplicity of data sets illustrate that predominantly Caucasian areas typically do not struggle with the same issues as areas home to POC populations. Data pulled from the Economic Hardship Index, Hillsborough County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, and American Community Survey discretely demonstrate that different disparities negatively impact the same areas. Starting in the University area and following Interstate 275 south is a predominantly African American area with some of the highest measures of underrepresentation across all the listed datasets. Further, Interstate 275 divides the African American community between East and West Tapa stemming from a federal policy outlined in the 1950s. The Hispanic community has also borne many of these impacts, with a large portion living in the Egypt Lake and Drew Park regions and the Twelve Oaks region. This community is also divided, with a tollway bifurcating the community. These Hispanic-dominated areas also tend to be overrepresented in the data sets as areas uniquely experiencing disparities related to historic inequities. Before moving forward with new policies to increase diversity and inclusion, it is necessary to acknowledge how and where the County has failed its minority communities.

The areas referenced above demonstrate the continued impact of historical racialized policies towards historically underrepresented communities. The consensus among sociologists studying the effects of systemic racial disparities is that economics is the key to addressing these impacts. Each disparity identified within this report links to economics in one way or another. For example, the segregation apparent in Hillsborough County perpetuates and reinforces the African American-Caucasian wealth gap and unequal access to education opportunities. According to the Century Foundation, a progressive think tank, "Racial residential segregation also means that African Americans are more likely to be steered toward high-poverty neighborhoods, further contributing to the opportunity gap." (Quick, Kahlenberg, 2019) Based on the various maps presented in this chapter, it is evident that this is the reality within Hillsborough County. African American and Hispanic American families are segregated from their Caucasian peers and have decreased opportunities resulting in the high economic hardship index in these communities.

There is a well-established causal connection between increased poverty rates and increased instances of crime which leads to an increased police presence. If the underlying cause of poverty related to segregation is not addressed, this policing turns into over-policing minority communities. The data presented here suggest that Hillsborough County is over-policing its minority populations, dramatically impacting these communities. In both the criminal and juvenile justice system, African American people are substantially overrepresented. In the criminal justice system, African American individuals represent over 40% of the active cases over the last decade. Similarly, in the Foster Care system, African American children make up the largest racial demographic and are the least likely to find a permanent home. The literature demonstrates that the consequences of these policies are that these targeted populations are less likely to experience success or economic opportunities. In addition, many African American

individuals are convicted of specific drug crimes that have significantly stricter sentencing guidelines than their Caucasian peers convicted of general drug crimes. There are a variety of stakeholders that hold power in those sentencing decisions, from the District Attorney to Judges, any of which can have their own biases. While this study cannot make any conclusions based on this data, Hillsborough would benefit from a study explicitly designed to understand whether there are disparities in criminal justice and how funding for criminal justice in Hillsborough County can be reallocated to address the issues of poverty and segregation.

## 3.9 Conclusion

MGT has reported statistical evidence of racial disproportionality and disparities in outcomes across a multiplicity of indicators throughout Hillsborough County. The impact of systemic racial disparities is still being felt by minorities across the region creating high levels of economic strain, which create artificial barriers towards success and frequently reinforce patterns of systemic disadvantage.

While Hillsborough County is growing economically, this growth is primarily being felt only by the Caucasian population of Hillsborough County, with many of the pains associated with a growing economy being externalized onto minority populations across Hillsborough County. This externalization can lead to many other problems, including the overrepresentation of minorities in the criminal justice system, demonstrated in Hillsborough County. According to scores of research studies exploring racial disproportionality in criminal justice systems in various jurisdictions, our findings reveal that Hillsborough County is far from unique in this regard. MGT contends that the disproportionalities identified would benefit from further causative research. Any effective remedy must also confront the overarching causal factor on which most scholars, professionals, and practitioners agree as to the primary cause of minority overrepresentation in social and economic disproportionality—socioeconomic disadvantage related to race. For example, when the problem of racial disparity in criminal justice is viewed through this lens, the most effective remedies for socioeconomic disadvantage and criminality will likely not be found in the criminal justice system, per se, but in remedies that correct the economic crisis in minority communities that remains the disastrous economic legacy of historical systemic racial disparities, we have yet to address as a society. In the case of Hillsborough County, “defining the problem,” in this context, will likely require more dedication and effort than solving the “problem” itself. It will require extraordinary measures of courage, honesty, and self-reflection than any American community has exhibited to date.

There is undoubtedly a multiplicity of disparities and disproportionality identified within the quantitative analysis of this study. There are seemingly limitless opportunities for policymakers to implement means of alleviating the results of hundreds of years of systemic oppression; however, there is a limit to the ability of Hillsborough County to invest in minority populations. With this in mind, the question is: What does the data suggest the County prioritize? The data presented in this chapter suggests that the region of highest need is the region of Tampa south of the University Area along Interstate 275 to Interstate 4. This region was identified across 4 data sets as requiring significant investments. The history of this region throughout the 20th century was characterized by redlining, hostile building practices, and neglect. This is a prime opportunity for Hillsborough County to acknowledge and rectify the historical wrongs experienced by its minority communities.

## CHAPTER 4. Community Engagement

### 4.1 Qualitative Data Collection and Statistics

#### 4.1.1 Outreach Methodology

To solicit community input for this equity profile, MGT, with the help of Hillsborough County, was able to receive high-quality community input to understand the impact of the nine pillars on the citizens of the County. Maximizing engagement was key to MGT's strategy. While there were initially some barriers to marketing public meetings to the community, MGT readjusted its approach and ensured that the citizens' voices were amplified.

Chapter Sections	
3.1	Qualitative Data Collection & Results
3.2	Discussion & Recommendations

This work would not have been possible without the incredible efforts of Sylvia Farrington President and Lead Consultant of Farrington & Associates. Farrington & Associates is a local minority owned firm which, among other services, provides comprehensive, strategic planning offering emergency management resources for community education/outreach and planning activities and initiatives for public, private, academic, and nonprofit community stakeholders. MGT subcontracted with Farrington & Associates, and we worked together on the development and execution of both the focus groups and community meetings. Miss Farrington's deep local knowledge, stemming from over 15 years working with various methods of community engagement in and around Tampa, was an important driver through the course of our community engagement.

MGT conducted four types of community engagement: focus groups, community meetings, open voicemail service, and email inbox. In partnership with the County, MGT initially identified community-based organizations (CBOs) whose work focuses on one or more of the pillars. These organizations were subsequently invited to send representatives to participate in focus groups. In total, MGT led six focus groups with 33 community leaders represented. Organizations represented in the focus groups included: The Minority Business Enterprise Council, Hillsborough Community College, Tampa Chamber, Tampa Economic Council, HOPE, Hillsborough County Diversity Advisory Council, Hillsborough County Community Action Board, Hillsborough County Transit Planning Organization, Hillsborough County Development Services Department, Tampa Bay Builder Organization, Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority, Florida's Children First, Arts Council Division, Enterprising Latinas, Florida EDU Fund, The Urban League, and the University Area Community Development Corporation. The smallest focus group consisted of three members, and the largest consisted of nine participants.

MGT conducted a total of four community meetings to understand, apart from CBOs, how the community engages with barriers related to the established pillars of this study. MGT scheduled two community sessions in late October 2021; however, due to low turnout at each session, MGT added two more sessions in early January 2022, one in person and one virtual. Barriers to participation in the first community meeting consisted of limited communication, lack of virtual options, and inaccessibility of the locations selected for the community meetings. In January, the second round of community meetings drew much

larger crowds and provided grounds for comprehensive input. In total, 184 citizens attended the four community meetings.

A chief complaint noted in the initial set of two community meetings was that the time of the meetings was inconvenient for many people. Therefore, to give Citizens as much access as possible, MGT established a phone and email line designed for individuals to express input on this equity profile. In total, 43 individuals responded with emails, and five left voicemails. Table 3-1 details the full participation of all four community engagement options.

*Table 3-1.  
Community Engagement Totals*

Date	Description	Attendees
10/4/21	Economic Opportunity & Income Bias Focus Group	4
10/5/21	HOPE Focus Group	5
10/6/21	Housing & Land Use Focus Group	9
10/6/21	Public Service, Transit, Digital Divide Focus Group	3
10/14/21	Catch All Focus Group	6
10/20/21	Catch All Focus Group	6
10/27/21	Community Meeting (In-Person)	15
10/28/21	Community Meeting (In-Person)	14
1/11/22	Community Meeting (Virtual)	55
1/11/22	Community Meeting (In Person)	52
1/31/22	Voicemail Box	5
1/31/22	Email	43
<b>Total</b>		<b>217</b>

## 4.1.2 Coding Methodology

Upon completing our community engagement efforts, MGT began analyzing the qualitative data collected. Each focus group and community meeting were recorded with permission from the participants and transcribed into markable text documents for internal review. All audio recordings, transcripts, voice mails, and emails were imported into MGT’s internal mixed-methods tool for coding and analysis. Prior to analysis, MGT developed nine codes based on the nine pillars the County directed as the focus of this study. Two additional parent codes were added outside the scope of the nine pillars due to the frequency in occurrence in comments. Specifically, these codes are “Political & Social Barriers” and “County Communication.” While the Board of County Commission (BOCC) explicitly commissioned neither of these topics for study, the residents of the County felt these topics were also necessary to discuss in relation to DEI. In addition, MGT developed child codes (subsets under the enumerated parent codes), each established after at least two community members spoke to that subtopic. A total of 34 child codes were developed and used over this review.

Once the parent codes were established, MGT analyzed and coded all community engagement documentation. Most speakers spoke on a single topic associated with one of the pillars or addressed critical aspects of several pillars. The speaker’s entire speech was coded with the appropriate parent code in the first instance. Each section was tied to a parent code in the latter instance, depending on the content. Once the parent code was identified, child codes were assigned to each subtopic. For example, a speaker might speak on affordable housing, meaning the entire speech would be associated with the “affordable housing” code. If the speaker spoke on investors, homeownership, and the cost of rent, each of these topics would be assigned a child code, thus creating intersections between parent and child codes to understand better how these various pillars intersect within the lives of the citizens of Hillsborough County. Additionally, child codes from other parent codes were added where appropriate. Returning to the affordable housing example, if the speaker also spoke about wages being too low to afford housing, the child code “Wages/Income” would be applied, even though it is a child code of “Economic Opportunity.” This process helps illustrate the interrelated nature across all nine pillars. **Table 3-2.Complete** offers a complete list of codes used for this review.

*Table 3-2.Complete List of Applied Codes*

Parent Codes	Child Codes	
<b>Access/Digital Divide</b>	♦ Hardware Barriers	
<b>Affordable Housing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Cost to Build</li> <li>♦ Regulatory Fees</li> <li>♦ Down Payment</li> <li>♦ Workforce Housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Home Ownership</li> <li>♦ Investors &amp; Gentrification</li> <li>♦ Rent Costs</li> </ul>
<b>County Communication</b>	♦ County Accountability	
<b>Criminal Justice</b>	♦ Child Welfare & Safety	♦ Sheriff’s Department Culture
<b>Economic Opportunity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Contracting</li> <li>♦ Education Barriers</li> <li>♦ Retirement</li> <li>♦ Wages/Income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Debt/Student Debt</li> <li>♦ Employment</li> <li>♦ Transferable Skills/EDU</li> </ul>
<b>Food Security</b>	♦ Distance to Food/Food Desert	♦ Low Quality Food in Community
<b>Health Care</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ COVID</li> <li>♦ Medical Expenses</li> <li>♦ Senior Care</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Insurance</li> <li>♦ Mental/Behavioral Health</li> </ul>
<b>Income Bias</b>		
<b>Land Use &amp; Zoning</b>	♦ Community Garden/ Green Space	

Parent Codes	Child Codes	
<b>Political &amp; Social Barriers</b>		
<b>Transportation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Public Transit</li> <li>◆ Transit Funding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Traffic</li> <li>◆ Transportation Infrastructure</li> </ul>

### 4.1.3 Focus Group Results

A total of six focus groups were conducted, and MGT successfully engaged 33 community leaders. At the beginning of each focus group, MGT asked attendees for permission to record, which was unilaterally granted. Next, the focus group host introduced the equity audit and the pillars being studied. Each participant was then invited to introduce themselves and the organization they represented. After completing introductions, two questions were posed to the attendees:

- ◆ What policies and practices by the County are barriers to equity?
- ◆ What has the County done to advance equity in relation to the nine pillars?

Each focus group diverged in content as input and expertise led to conversations around concerns.

Across all focus groups, every organization represented was highly concerned about the lack of affordable housing. The parent code of “Affordable Housing” was applied 23 times across all focus groups, and various child codes were mentioned 34 times for a total of 57 mentions around affordable housing. Concerns around investors driving up both rent and housing prices is the biggest concern across the focus groups related to affordable housing. These investments frequently lead to gentrification, pricing residents out of their homes and apartments due to rising tax rates and rent costs. One focus group participant, when asked a follow-up question regarding the impact of investors and developers, indicated that land is so expensive nonprofits are unable to make ends meet. Increased costs are even forcing affordable housing nonprofits to look at property development as a lifeline to keep the lights on. Further, due to the costs associated with development, these same organizations cannot offer affordable housing, which undercuts their mission and further accelerates the affordable housing shortage evident in Hillsborough County.

The focus groups also identified economic opportunity as being extremely limited in the County while also being of paramount importance. The parent code of “Economic Opportunity” was applied 22 times across the focus groups and child codes were mentioned by participants 34 times for a total of 56 mentions overall. A lack of wages and income was the most frequently cited barrier to economic opportunity. The community perceives that while the County has grown rapidly, wage growth has not kept up. This directly ties into the affordability of housing, and speakers in each focus group addressed the intersectional nature of this barrier. The second most common barrier towards economic opportunity is related to “Transferable Skills & Higher Education.” Participants cited multiple financial barriers to accessing higher education, including the rising cost of tuition and textbooks and the high cost of living in Tampa, forcing students to choose between continued education and survival. K-12 education is also a barrier to

economic success. One participant pointed out that only 45% of Hillsborough County residents have a GED. Other barriers related to economic opportunity also included a lack of a meaningful Minority Business Enterprise (MBE) program and student debts carried after graduation.

While MGT directed the focus groups around conversations related to the nine pillars, two additional concerns were consistently voiced by the participants. First, many community leaders were disappointed with the frequency and quality of communication from Hillsborough County. A frequent problem is a lack of clear communication or information from the County. One such leader mentioned, “So if someone were to try to go through the right channels, it is very burdensome, there’s so much technical language, there’s not really someone designated to help them understand that.” At the same time, there is an acknowledgment of the digital divide’s role in this communication gap. Another resident who defines themselves as having some ‘politically savvy’ indicated that community members come to him before going to the County “[when] somebody wants to see what’s going on, I want to go and say this is what I heard, this is what’s going on, because I get a lot of requests for information. People call me up for all kinds of information and all kinds of requests and knowledge because I’ve been around here for a long, long time.”

A second concern was the frequent acknowledgment of political and social barriers to equity. Many participants acknowledge that creating a more equitable society is essential, however, there is a lack of confidence in the County to implement changes successfully. One community leader remarked while speaking on the issue of policing in Hillsborough County, “[A] Citizens Review Board was established even though there was some opposition of trying to establish it number one and number two there was some board processes that it did not have enough power to bring about change” but does close on an optimistic note saying “Recently some modifications to it have been made such that the board have been expanded and the powers expanded.” Another community leader pointed out within the realm of workforce housing, “It’s hard to justify utilization of public funds because of the political landscape and the social capital that certain groups have, we’ve seen certain pushes where money has not been used in the best way.” While there were social and political barriers related to the attitudes of fellow citizens as well as small governing bodies (i.e., HOAs), this report is focused on how the County itself can change to better support its citizens.

The above indicators of economic opportunity and affordable housing were mentioned over 30 times within the focus groups, and the two additional concerns were mentioned by participants over 20 times each. Participants discussed other major topics of concern, the most frequently addressed out of these topics is transportation. Multiple community leaders indicated that as housing and additional costs of living increase, individuals and families are forced out of center city, increasing their commute times and further congesting the County. In addition, there are frequent complaints regarding the quality of the public transit system concerning efficiency. Short trips under a few miles can take hours to complete due to the convoluted nature of the public transit system. Further, the public transit infrastructure in some neighborhoods have not been effectively maintained, meaning that bus stops are at best unaccommodating and at worst a safety hazard.

Finally, while participants did not discuss the digital divide and food security at length, community leaders still have concerns over these issues. Namely, the reality that food deserts exist throughout the County in

both urban and rural communities. According to the organization Feeding Tampa, nearly 12% of Hillsborough County is food insecure, which is partially attributable to these food deserts; however, it is unclear where specifically these food deserts are located. Given Feeding Tampa’s local knowledge and particular expertise, it could be worth partnering with them to determine the exact location of food deserts. Unfortunately, while it is established that these deserts exist, MGT cannot confirm the precise location of these deserts. Additionally, the lack of nutritious food in these areas were a concern because it leads to irreversible health conditions, increased healthcare costs, and decreased economic opportunity.

In conclusion, focus group engagement with community leaders was successful. There were consistent concerns around the intersection of affordable housing and economic opportunity, which the County can address. While Hillsborough County could establish a national exemplar with how to deal with this intersectional issue, if the current communication model continues, this will be irrelevant as the citizens of Hillsborough County will remain uninformed about resources available to them. While transportation is a significant concern, the Hillsborough Transportation Planning Organization and Tampa Bay Area Regional Transit Authority are aware of many of the problems and suggestions made. They have addressed several of them in their strategic plan, including the addition of new, more efficient bus routes. However, transit infrastructure will still be crucial to address for both comfort and safety.

#### 4.1.4 Community Input

While the focus groups helped contextualize barriers toward equity within the community, further engagement with the larger community was undertaken by MGT in partnership with Hillsborough County. This additional community input included four community meetings (three live, one virtual) and an email and voicemail box to garner community input. The email and voicemail box remained open until January 31, 2022, and open for unlimited comment. The community meetings were structured with MGT introducing the Equity Audit, an introduction to the nine pillars, followed by a quick straw poll to gauge the importance of each of the pillars. MGT then opened the floor to public comment.

The totality of the community engagement closely reflected the conclusions of the focus groups, indicating consistency across findings. The parent code of “affordable housing” was applied 24 times, with an additional 32 children codes used for a total of 56 mentions of barriers towards affordable housing. The community at large classified the cost of rent as being prohibitive and pinpointed the rising cost of rent and homeownership on the rapid growth of investment properties and new developments. While these are not inherently bad things, they create barriers to equity when middle- and working-class families are being priced out of rental units and unable to afford a mortgage. One community member remarked, “Our families cannot afford \$1,600-\$1,700 rent for a one- or two-bedroom apartment when they’re still making minimum wage.” Another resident cited a running joke between residents “The bank stated I cannot afford a \$1,000 mortgage, so I need to continue paying \$1,500 in rent.” Yet another resident came to Hillsborough County to pursue their teaching career. This citizen stated that “I truly feel that the state doesn’t value residents and makes things easier for business and corporations. Who is here to protect me as a resident, a parent, a teacher?” This teacher further explains, “Many days I actually think that I will be better living in my car with my baby in another state. It makes me sad that I even consider living in my car

as before I moved to Florida, I had a really great life, good credit and wasn't depressed. While this is a somewhat extreme example, it demonstrates the reality for professionals and tradespeople alike, the constant refrain heard across the entire County was that housing is no longer affordable, wages are insufficient, and residents are actively being displaced because of these barriers.

Once again paralleling the focus groups, the second most frequently applied code was "Economic Opportunity," which was applied to more than 20 speakers. Including child codes, there were a total of 56 mentions. The two most frequent barriers cited were employment opportunities and wages. Several residences indicated that while there are jobs available, wages are not keeping pace with the growth of the region. This stagnation of wage growth means that residents in existing roles are not making enough and cannot find higher-paying jobs. This comment often dovetailed into a conversation around the cost of housing. One citizen succinctly describes this relationship in reference to the Wimauma region "The farmworkers who have been putting food on our table have low wages and these workers are the first ones being displaced and moving out." Another citizen speaks to this relationship, saying "Give these people jobs with some value, with some worth to it. The Walmart down the street, they start people off at \$13 an hour. But then you have a house in this community that starts at \$250,000." When discussing wages specifically, one community member stated, "We don't just need living wages here. We need thriving wages. You can do all the bandage you want around transportation and housing costs and all that. But at the end of the day, people have to make money, and our incomes need to keep up with the growing place that we're living in."

Beyond just wages and income, citizens indicated that education is creating a barrier towards equity regarding economic opportunity. Citizens were concerned with the K-12 system and childcare. Many citizens indicated they could not afford childcare outside of school hours. Other citizens also stated that early education opportunities in the County are lacking, particularly in middle- and lower-income communities. One community member, during an impassioned speech, said, "We can't wait until first grade to enroll or kindergarten. We've got to talk about and advertise and encourage, and even plea with our parents, if we are going to make a difference educational wise. We can't just wait." A different speaker is directly impacted by the lack of early education opportunities "I also believe it would be beneficial to invest in universal pre-K. As a young parent, I do believe it is important to focus on early foundational skills. As it is at the moment, not only can I not find childcare for my son, I also can't afford it! Neither can any of my friends." In addition to discussions about K-12 and early education opportunities, higher education opportunities, upskilling, and transferrable skills were also on the community's mind. One prominent citizen mentions "So from educational opportunities in digital divide, it's all about access, but removing barriers for individuals to actually get the educational attainment that they need [...] So if you're able to get more education, meaning a certificate, associates or higher-education degree, that helps multiply their income in their home. So that's where we need to start." While a degree from an institution of higher education is one mode of economic mobility, it's not the only means of mobility". Unfortunately, other models have become deemphasized as one community member observes, "We all know that going to college is important, but it's not the only option. So, I guess getting people's perception about what they think they need to do in order to get a good job, a good-paying job with benefits. Those are available, and those are out there without having to have a bachelor's degree. But I think really helping people get into the door and finding those programs opens the door for them, and they can build upon that."

Other equity indicators garnered far less feedback than the two already discussed; however, residents had important things to say around transportation and the digital divide. While the digital divide was frequently invoked, there was a tacit acknowledgment that the County does not have control over internet service providers or hardware costs, which are the leading causes of the digital divide. A local activist discussed the Wimauma Connection as a model of bridging the digital divide “Basically Wimauma connects [is an] internet free wi-fi service. There’s probably about 22-24 business that are taking advantage of the wi-fi which they provide to their patrons who come to their restaurants and businesses, bakeries, et cetera. And then we have probably about 650 families that are connecting on a daily basis to the internet.”

Like the digital divide, transportation was discussed, but not at the same length as other indicators. The two most significant barriers in transportation are a lack of funding for transportation infrastructure investment and inefficient public transit. As one citizen points out, “I live in an area with little to no public transportation. I do not have access to a car, and so I am isolated and often unable to accomplish tasks such as grocery shopping, [attend] doctor appointments, and participate in community programs. Accessible public transportation would make a big difference in my life and for many others.” When it comes to existing infrastructure, citizens are disappointed with the upkeep and investment “The bus stops I use are not safe and are filthy. Some are so close to the road that standing with your child to wait feels as dangerous as crossing the actual intersection. There is no shade or cover from the rain. There is trash and even alcohol and drug paraphernalia, including biomedical waste like needles on the ground where our children are playing while we wait for transit.” While many of the comments related to transit were related to public transportation, other citizens emailed their thoughts on county roads “We here in Lutz do not believe we are getting a fair shake in our roads/repair. The heavily traveled roads/streets are literally falling apart. There are pothole patches on top of pothole patches, where the streets need to be repaved.”

While the citizens have concerns around barriers to equity within the nine pillars, one topic was mentioned more than anything else. This topic was once again County communication coupled with County accountability. While citizens are hopeful, they doubt any meaningful impact will result from this equity profile. One citizen who is engaged in equity work states, “I think what you are getting at (referencing a prior speaker) is there have been so many reports on equity in Hillsborough. They are all defined a little bit differently but there are efforts going forward, making plans doing data. And I’m one of those people that does plans, who gets the data. But if everyone’s doing the same thing all the time no wonder, we’re not making progress. There needs to be an effort to bring all of these plans together.” Another speaker at the community meetings recognized a similar phenomenon saying, “You have individual organizations spending millions of dollars in the communities, but we’re not coordinating with each other.” Another citizen points out that even setting aside the existence of the digital divide, “It’s not always social media and marketing and digital marketing and advertising, some of it has to be more grassroots. So, I think having some information on how people get their information or learn about different programs that are available would be very helpful.” Essentially, the citizens of Hillsborough County recognize that resources exist; however, the County has failed to connect the citizens to resources either offered by Hillsborough County itself or offered by community organizations. This lack of communication leads to an internalized realization within the community that barring a strong messaging

campaign that educates on new and existing resources, the impact of any new program, policy, or initiative will never actually make it into the hands of the people who need it most.

## 4.2 Discussion and Recommendations

### 4.2.1 Overall Themes

In addition to understanding the frequency of unique codes and citizen input, it's also helpful to know how the parent codes intersect with one another. As is evident, many of these issues are interrelated which is a reality understood by both the citizens and the County. The intersection between economic opportunity and affordable housing was the most frequent intersection invoked during the community engagement. This intersection occurred over 28 times. Another regular intersection was the combination of barriers towards transportation related to affordable housing, which was mentioned by citizens 23 times.

These intersections point to common themes heard across all points of community engagement. Affordable housing and access to programs are the community's number one concern, but this frequently intersects with County communication and accountability. While citizens need support, they have been unable to avail themselves of existing programs and dollars. This is not intended to say that more does not need to be done to address affordable housing, but rather that any new programs, targeted or otherwise, will fail if the County does not change how it engages with its community. Economic opportunity goes together with affordable housing. Owning a home is the number one driver of economic mobility for individuals; however, the reality is that in the county, the working class is unable to afford homes which leads to cyclical poverty and a lack of generational wealth building.

### 4.2.2 Community Recommendations

To address the concerns raised by the community, MGT has established this following draft list of initial recommendations for consideration based upon our synthesis of input and suggestions frequently posed by the community with context aligned with our knowledge of industry and peer reviewed best practices.

#### ❖ Create an Office of Equity and Access

A focus on equity and inclusion is becoming more prevalent across the country and goes by many names: Mayor's Office of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in Atlanta, Georgia, Equity Office in Austin, Texas, Office of Equity and Human Rights in Iowa City, Iowa, and the Office of Equity and Social Justice in Seattle, Washington just to name a few. While the names all differ, the mission remains consistent as the Office of Equity, Community and Human Rights (OECHR) in Champaign, Illinois puts it "The OECHR works to ensure everyone who lives, works, or plays in Champaign is treated in a fair, equal, and inclusive manner." MGT Envisions the Office of Equity and Access (OEA) as being responsible for the following:

- ▶ Primary responsibility for the implementation of the Equity Strategic Plan.

- ▶ In the first 6 months, facilitate creation of a Community Benefits Policy with the Hillsborough County community.
  - Community Benefits Policy: A Community benefits policy is any policy adopted by a local government that requires community benefits on projects undertaken by the government or by a private developer. Common examples include living wage, local hiring, and affordable housing requirements.
  - Community Benefit Agreement: A community Benefits Agreement is a project-specific agreement between a developer and a broad community coalition that details the project's contributions to the community and ensures community support for the project. Properly structured CBAs are legally binding and directly enforceable by signatories.
- ▶ In the first 12 months, host a Community Based Organization (CBO) roundtable inviting key organizations related to affordable housing and economic development to attend in order to establish and ensure alignment across CBOs and the County.
- ▶ In the first 12 months, inventory available programs and resources and facilitate delivery of currently available resources
- ▶ In the first 24 months, conduct a series of neighborhood plan updates focused on addressing affordable housing and transportation investments by neighborhood.
- ▶ Regularly report to the BOCC and community what advancements and investments have been made towards the Equity Strategic Plan.
- ▶ Regularly hold community meetings for input on the progress of equity in the county.
- ▶ Establish a strategic partnership with organizations whose mission and work aligns with the objectives of the equity plan.

### ❖ Invest in Mass Transit

While TBARTA currently has plans to expand the existing bus lines, the community in general agrees that more investment into public transit and transportation infrastructure is needed. Many residents called for mass transit like a light rail system or something similar to ensure timely transportation. Further investment is necessary to repair and maintain existing infrastructure as well. Many community members cited the existing stops are playing host to a multitude of safety issues and dilapidated assets. MGT recommends focusing future investments on the following:

- ▶ Expand existing transportation offerings by adding new transit lines prioritizing the commute from the surrounding areas to and from Tampa.
- ▶ Redesign existing routes to be more efficient and conform with the rapid growth of the city.
- ▶ Consider the construction of a large-scale mass transit system like light rail or other options.
- ▶ Invest in repairing aging transit infrastructure including roads and bus stops in areas of high need (See Chapter 3) as well as low to moderate income areas.
- ▶ Ensure transparency around bond funding and infrastructure investments in the community.

### ❖ Workforce & Wages

Out of the various barriers named by the community, concerns around workforce and wages are the trickiest to address as these concerns are frequently not under the direct control of county and local governments, which requires the manipulation of local incentives to see any meaningful change in local wages. Additionally, any manipulation of incentives comes at a risk of destabilizing the status quo and causing more harm than good. Therefore, MGT suggests the following recommendations to begin to address workforce and wage development:

- ▶ Consider implementing a supplier diversity program and an economic impact study to show the impact of a supplier diversity program at the County level.
- ▶ Consider strategic partnerships with local technical education centers to offer lower tuition costs and communication around available scholarships.
- ▶ Consider creation of apprenticeship programs associated with trades the County retains and incentivize businesses to take on apprentices.

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## CHAPTER 5. Equity Profile Recommendations

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### 5.1 Create an Office of Equity and Access

The Office of Equity and Access (OEA) addresses many of the concerns raised in both qualitative and quantitative chapters of this study. While qualitative analysis highlighted the lack of affordable housing, quantitative analysis highlighted issues around wages and inequitable wage growth. In order to address these and other issues, MGT recommends the creation and staffing of an Office of Equity and Access responsible for the following:

- Facilitate the creation of a Community Benefits Policy with the Hillsborough County Community
- Host a Community Based Organization (CBO) roundtable inviting key organizations related to the nine pillars to attend in order to establish and ensure alignment across CBOs
- Leverage partnerships with CBOs to ensure efficient access to County Services by the community
- Inventory available programs and resources and facilitate efficient delivery of currently available resources
- Conduct a series of neighborhood plan updates focused on addressing key equity issues by neighborhood
- Establish regular dialogue with the community focused on gaining input on initiatives and projects lead by the OEA as well as continuing to assess and address community barriers towards equity

Each of these responsibilities is tied to concerns identified directly in MGT’s analysis. A community benefits policy would be beneficial for addressing rapid urbanization and development and establish a framework for growth that will proportionally benefit the existing community. This is a legal charter that will be binding on the County and any developers that come into the county. Similarly, neighborhood plan updates engage the community and identify at the micro-level what the needs of each community are and how to begin addressing them. Outside of these planning responsibilities, the core design of the OEA is a body dedicated to facilitating the delivery of resources to communities in need. This will require close coordination with community facing organizations as well as government services. Ultimately, this will institutionalize the combined knowledge of existing CBOs and Government Agencies which will allow for direct mobilization to communities in need. As part of its regular reporting to the BOCC, the OEA will make recommendations to fill gaps in the services offered.

### 5.2 Conduct a Risk-Benefit Analysis of Instituting a Disparity Study

To promote the economic success of its citizens, MGT recommends commissioning a disparity study or a Minority Business Economic Impact Analysis. As a demonstration of Hillsborough County’s Commitment to the elevation of equity within the County, over the course of this study, the county has improved its Minority and/or Women Owned Business procurement program (M/WBE). According to the ACS data established in Chapter 2 of this equity profile, there is a 76% average racial wage gap between communities of color and the Caucasian community. This number drops to 69% when adjusted for Asian

American income which on its own out earns their Caucasian counterparts by 120%. These disparities, according to the community, appear to be closely related to workforce and wages, indicating that there is not a sufficient availability of quality work. While a disparity study is necessary as a legal basis for an M/WBE program, a disparity study offers significantly more. A disparity study, by its nature, identifies the current economic impact of the county's spending habits on the community as a whole. It ensures that contracting dollars are being spent equitably, and if not, offers a clear path forward for the County to set race and gender specific goals if warranted. An effective disparity study is not just the legal basis for an M/WBE program but can function as a framework to drive economic change within the County. However, executing a disparity study does not come without risks.

In December 2021, Hillsborough County increased its goals for their M/WBE program. To take advantage of the county's minority business program, firms must not exceed \$5 million which is a million dollar increase in the eligibility requirements. There are concerns that by conducting a disparity study the goals set for the M/WBE program will be negatively affected through requiring a decrease in the goals. At this point, as the goals are unpublished, MGT is unable to confirm whether there would be a net negative impact on the M/WBE program goals.

Based on the foregoing, MGT recommends considering a disparity study for Hillsborough County as the only disparity study was conducted for the City of Tampa in 2006 and is not applicable to Hillsborough County. Another option would be a Minority Business Economic Impact Analysis which is a unique service that MGT offers which is a Disparity Study "on a budget" while not as strong as a disparity study, it gives a more cohesive legal basis for the program.

### 5.3 Establish Apprenticeship Programs in Emergent & Green Technologies

To promote the economic success of its citizens, MGT recommends establishing apprenticeship programs in emergent and green tech. Since the initiation of the Equity Profile, the Hillsborough County Board of County Commissioners voted to approve an agreement funding new Targeted Industry Sector Workforce Training and Placement Program on Dec. 8, 2021. This program is targeted at upskilling different types of workers to maximize the economic success of its citizens. While it is unclear how the program will be operationalized, some considerations should be made not only to ensuring access to apprenticeships within well-established trades, but also technology. Coding "Bootcamps" are designed to quickly upskill workers into lucrative tech positions focusing on the core competencies necessary to effectively develop and manage code. Further, many universities offer bootcamps in addition to regular four-year degrees. While the University of South Florida does offer both a B.S. in Computer Engineering and Computer Science it doesn't offer a bootcamp course. Hillsborough County should consider piloting a course either through CareerSource Tampa Bay or through the University of South Florida. Finally, the City of Tampa has committed to 100% clean, renewable energy by 2035 which is an aggressive timeframe which will need to be supported by a combination of existing and new trades. Unfortunately, there are no upskilling programs in Tampa that help with this transition, which means that to achieve this goal Tampa will necessarily need to bring in foreign talent further driving the inequities discussed in this report.

Additionally, Hillsborough County will be competing with other parts of this state for this qualified talent as Florida is the third leading employer of clean energy jobs in the Nation according to the [E2's 2020 Report](#). Therefore, this type of investment will help Hillsborough County support the City of Tampa's goal to 100% clean and renewable energy by 2035.

## 5.4 Conduct a Disproportionate Minority Study on Criminal Justice

One of the primary concerns that arose from both the quantitative and qualitative chapters were challenges around the criminal justice system in Hillsborough County. Data demonstrated that Black individuals were more likely to be charged with drug-related crimes than their white peers. Similarly, qualitative data obtained through engagement with the community indicated that interactions with Hillsborough County's Sheriff's Department and subsequent criminal justice system results in disparate treatment of suspects and defendants. These issues present a concern and likely underly a deeper systemic issue that must be addressed if the County is to advance an equitable future. Therefore, MGT recommends commissioning a Disproportionate Minority Impact Study on the criminal justice system of Hillsborough County.

## 5.5 Provide Ongoing and Comprehensive DEI Training to All Staff

Best practices indicate that when facilitating DEI related change, it is crucial to the success of the program to establish a shared language and values around DEI. While there a number of ways this can be done, MGT recommends a series of trainings to be conducted over the course of the next twelve to eighteen months to establish shared language and values around DEI with ideally all staff of Hillsborough County. If there are budget limitations to this, the most crucial people to receive this training will be the client facing staff and those who hold director roles and above. Either way, it will be necessary to tailor trainings to the role and level of the staff that is participating in a way that is both applicable and engaging. Potential topics include:

- ▶ Defining Diversity, Equity, Equality, Inclusion, and Access (All)
- ▶ What is Cultural Competency? (All)
- ▶ Intro to Intersectionality: Lived Identity (All)
- ▶ Everyday Equity: Skills for All (All)
- ▶ Power and Justice (Director)
- ▶ Equitable Decision Making (Executive)
- ▶ Confronting our Past to Build our Future (Executive)

## 5.6 Support Enhancements in the Public Transportation System

While TBARTA currently has plans to expand the existing bus lines, the community in general agrees that more investment into public transit and transportation infrastructure is needed. Many residents called for mass transit like a light rail system or something similar to ensure timely transportation. Further investment is necessary to repair and maintain existing infrastructure as well. Many community members cited the existing stops are playing host to a multitude of safety issues and dilapidated assets. MGT recommends focusing future investments on the following:

- ▶ Expand existing transportation offerings by adding new transit lines prioritizing the commute from the surrounding areas to and from Tampa.
- ▶ Redesign existing routes to be more efficient and conform with the rapid growth of the city.
- ▶ Consider the construction of a large-scale mass transit system like light rail or other options.
- ▶ Invest in repairing aging transit infrastructure including roads and bus stops in areas of high need (See Chapter 3) as well as low to moderate income areas.
- ▶ Ensure transparency around bond funding and infrastructure investments in the community.

## 5.7 Enforce the Regular Use of an Equity Decision Guide

The Equity Decision Guide is a tool that Hillsborough County should use to apply a DEI lens to actions taken by the County. It should be assumed that the DEI lens will provide a limited scope as it may not be inclusive of every identity or intersection therein but offers a general ‘best practice’ type of approach for policymakers to use in the decision-making process.

The Equity Decision Guide is primarily focused on the general issues of ability, gender & sex, and race. While the guide will not instruct what choices to make, it forces the user to look critically at the presence of bias, personal motivations, and past practice to support the analysis of the impact of the decision or action on reinforcement of historical inequities, fostering of new inequities, or further entrench institutional policies that limit access for particular demographic groups.

Effective use of the Equity Decision Guide will help ensure that the most impacted populations of a policy will be the first to have their voices heard, and generally encourages community involvement and conversation to ensure equity for years to come.