

Roanoke Change Academy Session Notes and Resources



We'll also post these notes and resources so that you can always go back to them:
www.bookcityroanoke.com/change.

Session 2 (Antiracism & Health) Follow-up

The follow-up surveys are a way to dig a little deeper in on reactions to the session and additional information.

Why does the average lifespan vary between some Roanoke neighborhoods?

6 responses

Opportunities for healthy choices

Access to healthcare, access to health foods, access to a health active lifestyle

Lack of access transportation, health facilities, shopping centers,, food markets,good paying jobs, affect health of residents in some areas

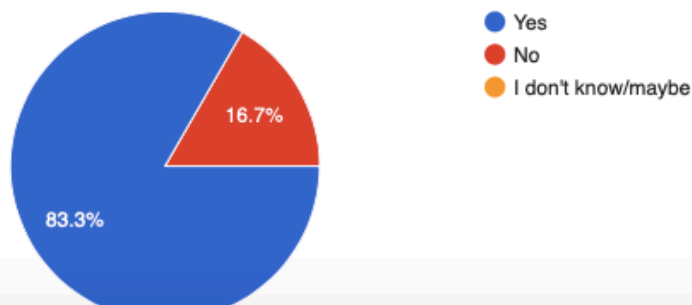
Social determinants are critical and the policies that create them

Income disparities lead to differences in access to healthcare.

Lack of access to healthy food sources

Has your understanding of the impact of policy on people's health changed because of this session?

6 responses



What information presented by Dr. Ackley most shaped your understanding?

6 responses

I knew about redlining but seeing it explained in more detailed and having an example such as the City of Richmond and how years later it still defines a city and how its citizens are segregated was mind-blowing.

Where people live determines their accessibility to services and opportunities.

The connection between the Housing Act and the prior maps of health disparities

Data/maps about distribution of grocery stores among neighborhoods, as well as perceptions of safety which impedes use of healthful outdoor activity.

That where someone lives determines the resources available to them for housing, jobs, education, healthy food sources, health services(clinics,doctors, hospitals, drug stores, etc)

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On page 19, Dr. Kendi writes, "The only remedy to racist discrimination is antiracist discrimination." What antiracist discrimination do you think might improve health outcomes for residents of our community?

6 responses

Education and cross-city conversations

We need to put more of our resources into areas that need it - areas such as Northwest and Hurt Park etc.

Neighborhoods where there is access to healthy food shopping sources

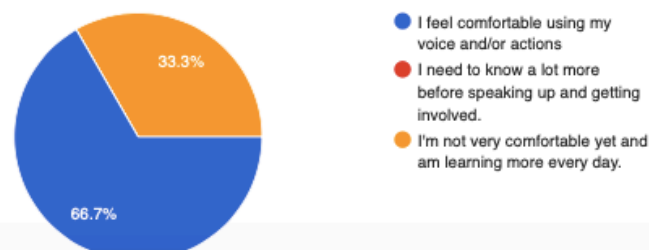
We have to invest in communities where disparity exists. Loans and funds for access to health care, food, transportation are critical

Grocery store development in underserved neighborhoods, improve safe access to parks, etc.

Equal opportunity for Health Insurance coverage with access to medical clinics, urgent care facilities, and health education.

How comfortable would you feel advocating for it or volunteering to help make it happen?

6 responses



Session 3 – The Antiracist Neighborhood (9/28)

This session focused on the intersections of race, class, and space in the antiracist neighborhood with Roanoke City Planning Director Chris Chittum. He was joined in the panel discussion by Tonya Pickett, the City's Neighborhood Services Coordinator.

45 people attended via Zoom

Some notes:

Chris Chittum provided his perspective on the role of the antiracist in effecting change, and the challenges of neutral “not racists” in reinforcing the status quo. “Government is by its nature slow,” he said, “and persistence is key to achieving incremental policy change.” Zoning that created neighborhoods of single-family homes to the exclusion of other housing types is an example of a racist policy. Some policies may have a racist effect, but may not have been developed with a racist intent. Identifying these is a goal of the 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

In order to effect change, we have to be able to get things on the agenda, meaning introducing the conversation. Can we talk? This communication is key to advocacy, the ability to get it on the agenda. Specifically, we need the competency of talking about the issue both in the government agency and with the government agency. He referenced Reverend Lee's comment that Roanoke was “polite” in terms of addressing race issues.

There is a new Equity and Empowerment Advisory Board

There is earned mistrust between some neighborhoods and the City due to a long national history of racism and local actions, specifically during urban renewal. Tonya Pickett talked about PTSD in neighborhoods and among residents. She added that we have to be real with residents, and try to understand what would be healing for them. Not what makes us feel better. We need to talk to and work with those who are affected by policy changes. “People need to know that someone in the City has their backs,” said Chris.

Go deeper: TAKE THE FOLLOW-UP SURVEY: <https://forms.gle/4yxxGS2dXSjtemsM9>

Some questions from the chat that we didn't cover. Great conversations starters with discussion partners.

- What's a more honest term than urban renewal that we could use to describe what really happened?
- Any ideas about how we might work beyond the ideas that continue about urban renewal? Have considerations been made of a form of reimbursement be given to help those so badly affected feel they at least have been recognized in their despair? I've only lived in Roanoke for 4 years, but have to tried to understand the history of our city...What kind of healing ceremony could help? There was a tree planting recently.
- What would an ideal civic engagement process look like?
- Is there anything in the long-term plan to assist homeowners with repairing their homes in neglected neighborhoods? Perhaps partnering with non-profits?
 - Check out some of the [Melrose-Orange Target Area outcomes](#)
- Any thoughts on how to increase access from NW to SW and vice versa? The limited access-how do you get there from here is real. When 10th Street was closed for sooo

long, it sure was apparent how difficult it is for all neighborhoods to be connected. It seems like a powerful message.

- What can we do to unravel racist policies? What are the creative strategies we might try?

Tangible Actions:

- Engage in planning efforts
 - Comprehensive city, neighborhood and organizational planning
 - Question patterns and existing conditions.
- Dig into the comprehensive plan themes: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/Theme-Fact-Sheets.pdf>
- Read the draft executive summary: <https://planroanoke.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Executive-Summary.pdf>
- Check in on www.planroanoke.org

Resources:

- *The Roanoke Valley's African American Heritage, A Pictorial History* by Dr. Reginald Shareef. They sell it at the Harrison Museum.