FAIRFAX CITY
CONNECTING THE CITY'S PAST and PRESENT TO BUILD A MORE EQUITABLE AND INCLUSIVE FUTURE

Racial and Social Equity and Nomenclature in Fairfax City

City Council Work Session

October 6, 2020

Staff contact: Susan Inskeep Gray, Director, Historic Resources

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Need for Community Conversations

Fairfax City recognizes strength in its diversity and acknowledges the urgent need for a broader community conversation around the issues of racial and social equity.

We are inviting the Community to come together through thought provoking, candid and open conversations to connect our current realities with the City's historic past, and to ultimately connect the present to a more equitable and inclusive future for all our residents, businesses, and visitors.

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Historical Past + Current Realities → More Equitable & Inclusive Future

Examples of Decision Points

Monuments, markers and memorials

Names of streets, roads, and neighborhoods

Images incorporated in the City Seal

George Mason University Partner

Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School
for Peace and Conflict Resolution

Dr. Juliette Shedd
Associate Dean & Associate Professor
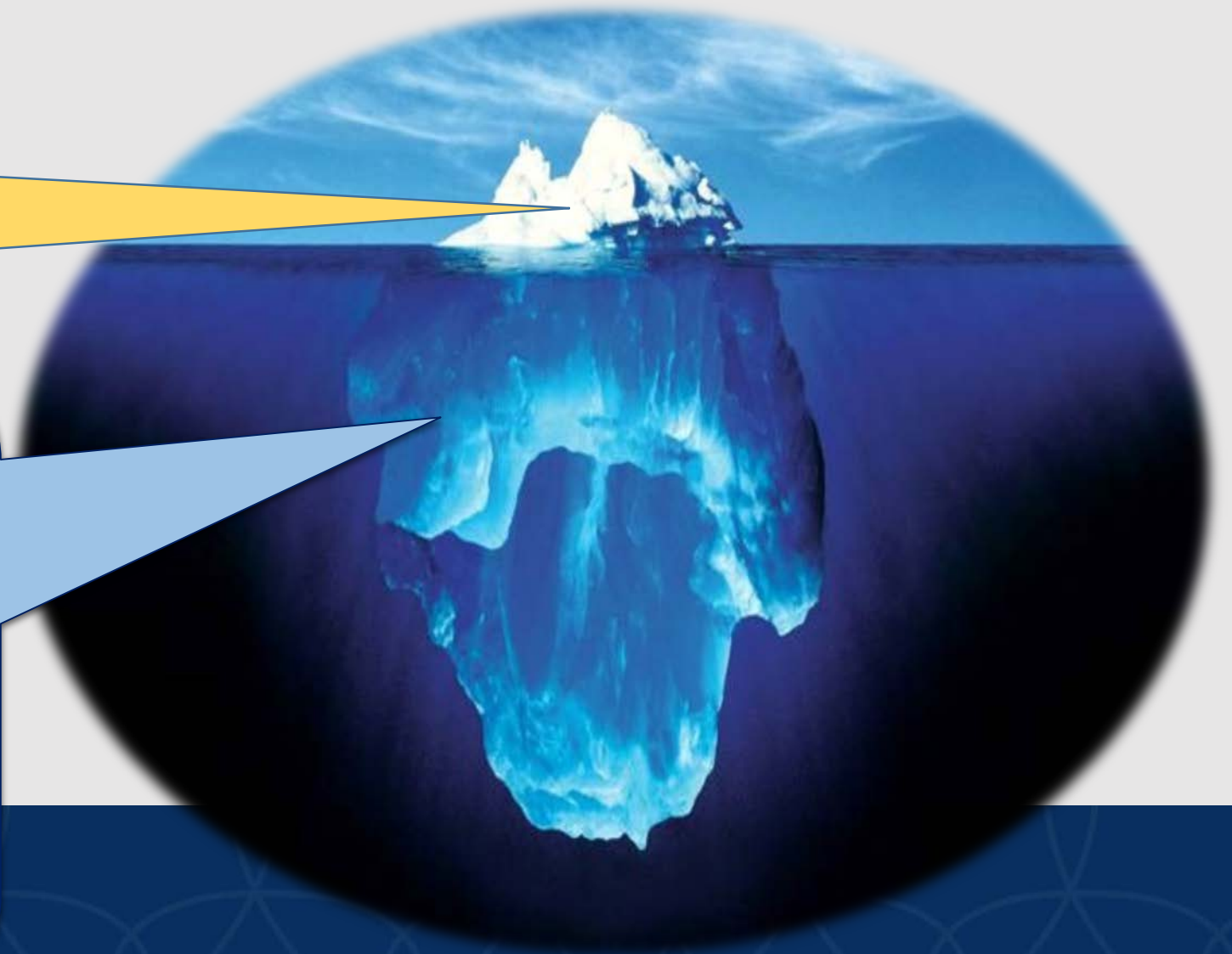
Dr. Adina Friedman
Adjunct Professor

How We See Differing Perspectives
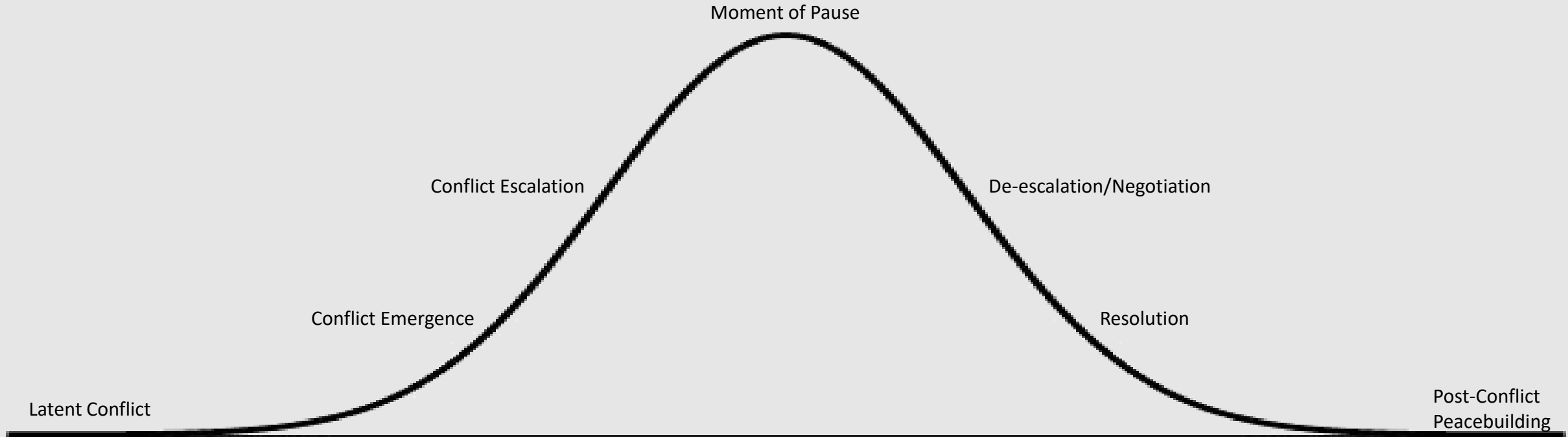
VISIBLE DIFFERENCES

- Irritants
- Misunderstanding
- Arguments
- Stonewalling
- Leaving

INVISIBLE DRIVERS
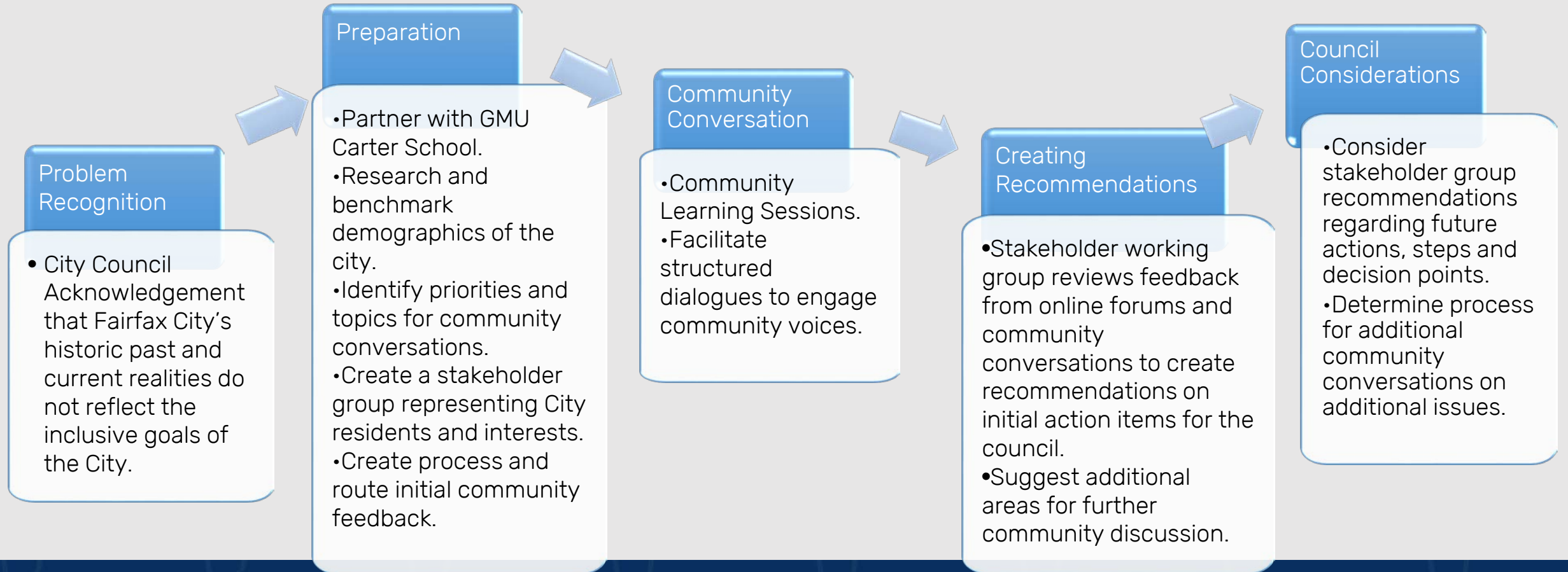
- Values
- Judgements
- Work views
- This means that
- Internal representations
- Desires vs. expectations
- Societal issues applied to relationships
- Shrines to past pain
- Ancestral memory
- Timeline triggers

Stages of Conflict Resolution

Moment of Pause

Conflict Escalation

De-escalation/Negotiation

Conflict Emergence

Resolution

Latent Conflict

Post-Conflict Peacebuilding

Parameters of the Process

Problem Recognition

- City Council Acknowledgement that Fairfax City's historic past and current realities do not reflect the inclusive goals of the City.

Preparation

- Partner with GMU Carter School.
- Research and benchmark demographics of the city.
- Identify priorities and topics for community conversations.
- Create a stakeholder group representing City residents and interests.
- Create process and route initial community feedback.

Community Conversation

- Community Learning Sessions.
- Facilitate structured dialogues to engage community voices.

Creating Recommendations

- Stakeholder working group reviews feedback from online forums and community conversations to create recommendations on initial action items for the council.
- Suggest additional areas for further community discussion.

Council Considerations

- Consider stakeholder group recommendations regarding future actions, steps and decision points.
- Determine process for additional community conversations on additional issues.

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Listening and Learning Together

➢ Opportunities for citizens to learn about the process and gain additional resources both historical and current.

➢ Where to look
  ➢ Web based
    ➢ On-line interactive project page for all to share thoughts, stories, and experiences
    ➢ Dedicated Project Page on the City Website – Summary of the process and timeline
  ➢ Printed resources
    ➢ Cityscene Article/Page – Summary of the process and invitation to engage interested volunteers

Stakeholder/Working Group Formation

➤ Identify stakeholder working group representing the broad demographic spectrum of Fairfax City.
- ➤ Group will help guide the process and route community feedback
- ➤ 10-15 citizens
  - ➤ Directed outreach to interest groups and volunteers interested in serving

➤ Kick off session, group norms and community building session.

➤ Fairfax City and Mason team plan for community learning sessions to include facilitated dialogue among the participants.

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Community Learning Sessions

➢ Community Learning Sessions Topics (proposed)
  - The City's historical past (Fairfax in the Civil War)
  - Context of memorials and individuals
  - Desegregation and Civil Rights
  - Past and Present Realities of Racial and Social Injustice
  - Changing demographics of the City/ Context of City as integral jurisdiction in the Washington Metropolitan Area

➢ Facilitated dialogue

Staff Roles throughout the Process

➢ Group research/data collection on Confederate-related names and past policies of racial and social inequity (i.e. restricted neighborhood covenants)
➢ Collaboration with GMU/Carter School
➢ Liaison and coordination as needed with regional jurisdictions
➢ Review feedback received through online and other platforms
➢ Communication with residents, the press, etc.

GMU Carter School and City Staff

➢ Analyze demographics to better understand the community's stakeholder groups
➢ Facilitate Stakeholder/Working Group process using feedback from Community Learning Sessions to identify priorities and topics for community conversations.
➢ Facilitate dialogue sessions for open community participation.
➢ Receive and review contributed feedback through online platforms, etc.

➢ Assist the working group in development of findings and recommendations to present to Mayor and City Council.

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Timeline for the Process

Fall 2020
- Mayor and Council develop and approve process and timeline
- Project and process announced

Winter 2020 –2021
- Let's Listen Conversations/Gathering of Stakeholders

Spring 2021
- Community Engagement/Conversations

Summer 2021
- Report presented to Council
- Public Hearings
- Council sets process for consideration of recommendations

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Discussion

City Team
Susan Inskeep Gray, Director, Historic Resources
Lesley Abashian, Director, Human Services
Dr. Phyllis Pajardo, Superintendent, City Schools
Matthew Kaiser, Director, Communications
Sara Greer, Director, Human Resources
Erin Schaible, Chief of Police
Daniel Grimm, Deputy Chief of Police
Melanie Crowder, Chief of Staff/City Clerk
Robert Stalzer, City Manager

GMU Partners
Dr. Juliette Shedd, Associate Dean & Associate Professor
Dr. Adina Friedman, Adjunct Professor

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