

MAY 2025

Landscape Analysis: *Somerville Fair* *Housing Commission* *Engagement*



In this presentation

- What is a Landscape Analysis?
- How does it fit in the context of this project?
- What do we already know about the Somerville community landscape?
- How will we conduct the Landscape Analysis to learn more?

What is a Landscape Analysis?

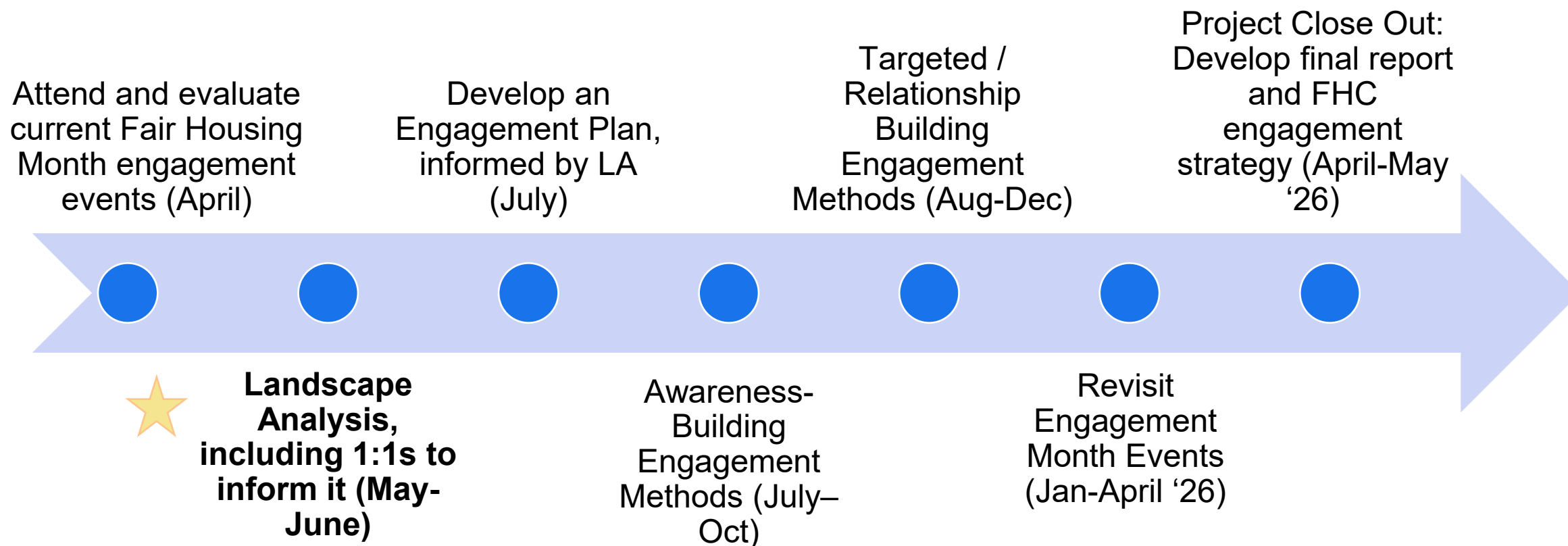
The purpose of a Landscape Analysis is ***to identify key potential partners, opponents, and community resources*** that have an interest in or influence over the project and any proposed changes. The information gathered can be applied again in future initiatives.

Guiding Questions:

- Who would be *most impacted* by the change you seek?
- Which organizations or people *are already working towards this change*? Are you collaborating with them?
- Who has the *decision-making power* to approve your change? Who *influences decision-making* informally?
- Who is *responsible for implementing the change*, and who holds them accountable?
- Which organizations or people could provide relevant *data, resources, or other support*?

How does this fit in the Somerville FHC Project?

Scoped Tasks



How will this inform the FHC's work?

Draft Project Goals (Based on 1:1s with Commissioners)

Who:

When you say "community" who exactly do you mean? Who are the priority community groups or stakeholders you will engage?

While the Landscape Analysis will provide a holistic understanding of the community, the Commission has limited capacity and should prioritize communities for outreach and relationship building.

Today, we will use demographic data to help us start to define priority groups.

What:

What do you need to educate or keep the community informed about? What power do community members have over decision making?

Improve the reach of the Fair Housing Commission's **education on housing rights** to tenants and landlords in Somerville.

How:

What are the principles by which you plan to approach the community engagement work? How will you enact values like accessibility, transparency, equity, etc.?

- Focus on **relationship building** with municipal departments and community-based organizations
- Build **awareness of the FHC as a resource**
- Build **awareness of fair housing rights**

Somerville FHC Landscape Analysis

~~Deliverables~~



List of potential partners and resources, with information about existing relationships, contacts, etc.



Graphical
**visualization of
Somerville Fair
Housing Landscape**

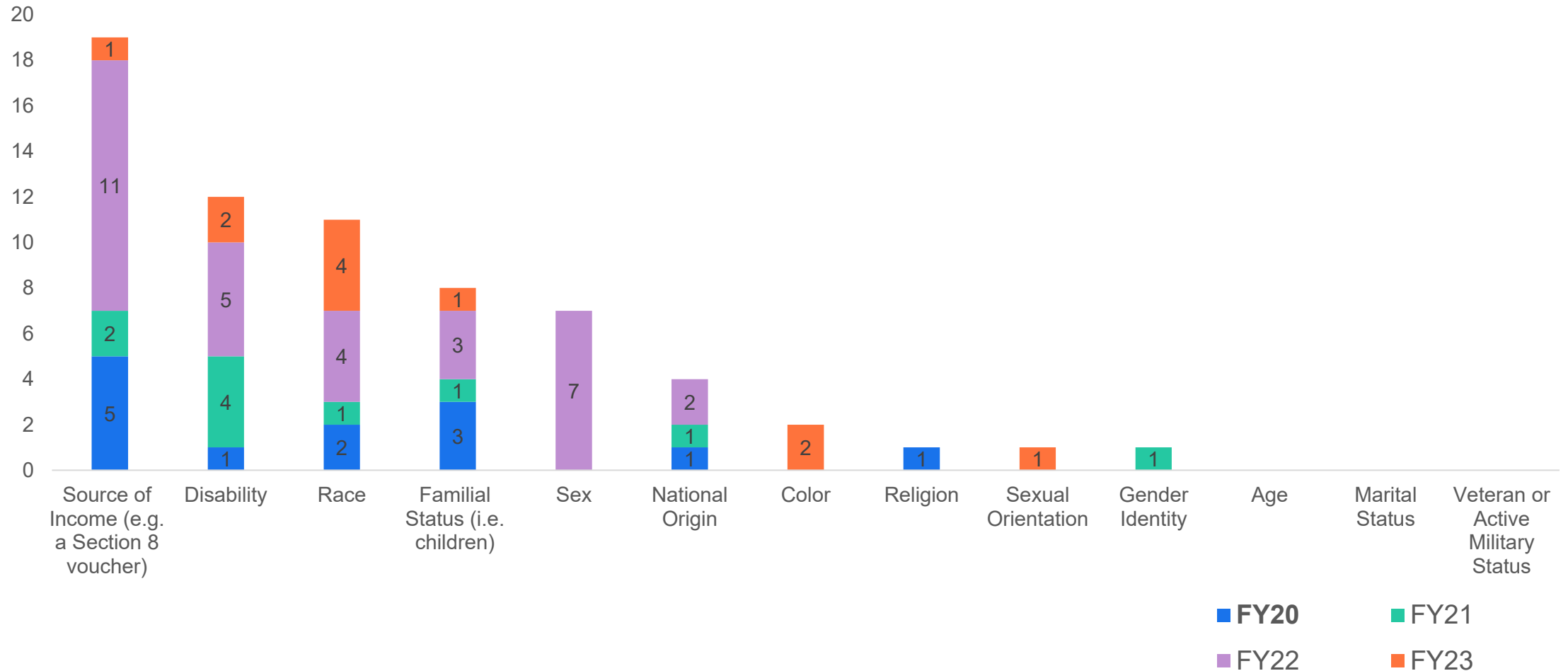


Analysis of findings
to develop
engagement plan

What do we already know about the landscape?

Fair Housing Complaints by Protected Class

Housing Discrimination Complaints by Protected Class



Fair Housing Complaints by Protected Class

Housing Discrimination Complaints by Protected Class Over Time



Housing Discrimination Complaints by

Ward

Ward 7:

- FY20: 1
- FY21: 1
- FY22: 2
- FY23: 2

Ward 5:

- FY20: -
- FY21: -
- FY22: 2
- FY23: 1

Ward 4:

- FY20: 2
- FY21: -
- FY22: 1
- FY23: 2

Location unknown:

- FY21: 1
- FY22: 9
- FY23: 4

Ward 6:

- FY20: 3
- FY21: 2
- FY22: 3
- FY23: 1

Ward 1:

- FY20: 3
- FY21: 2
- FY22: 1
- FY23: 3

Ward 3:

- FY20: 3
- FY21: 1
- FY22: 1
- FY23: -

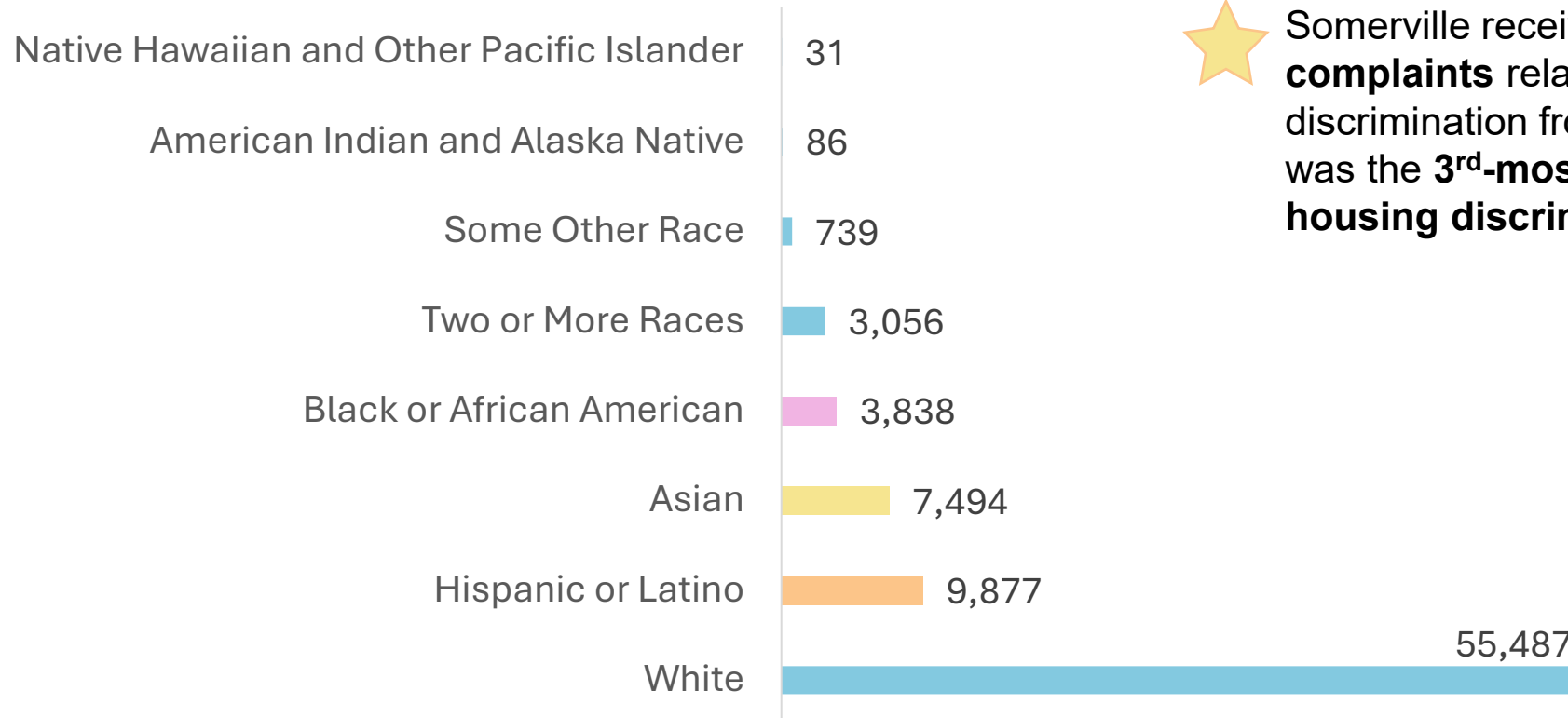
Ward 2:

- FY20: 1
- FY21: 2
- FY22: 0
- FY23: -

Protected Class: Race, Color

Total Population: 80,608
Total Households: 32,105

Somerville Population by Race

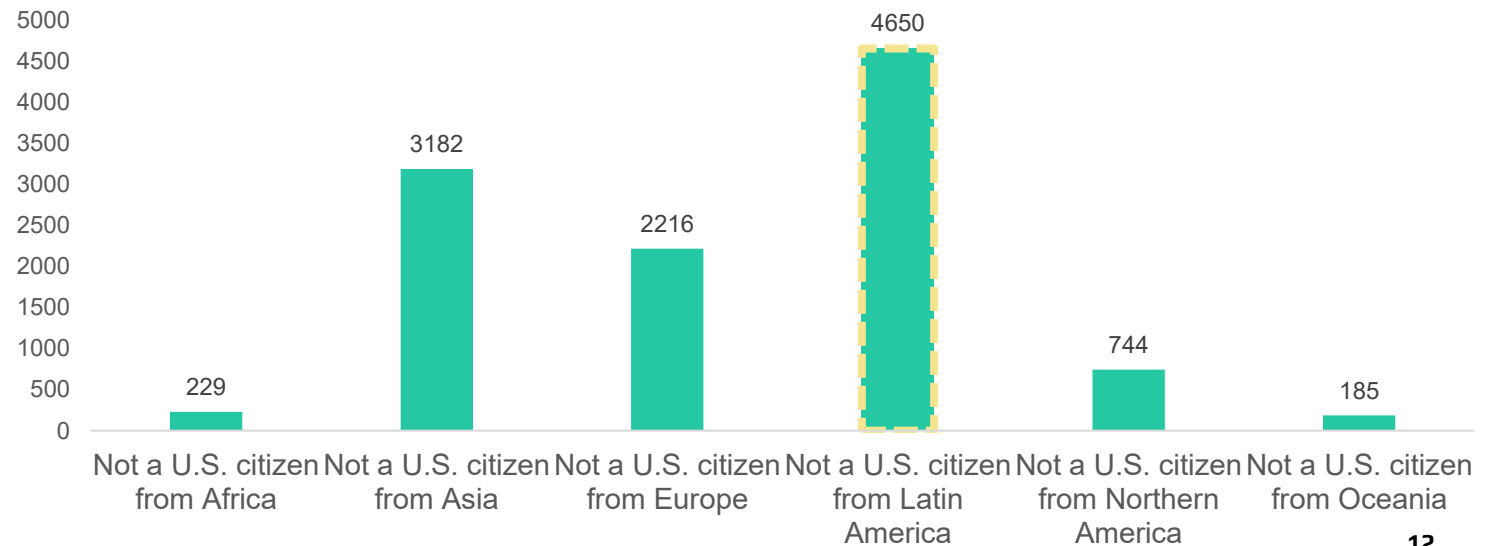
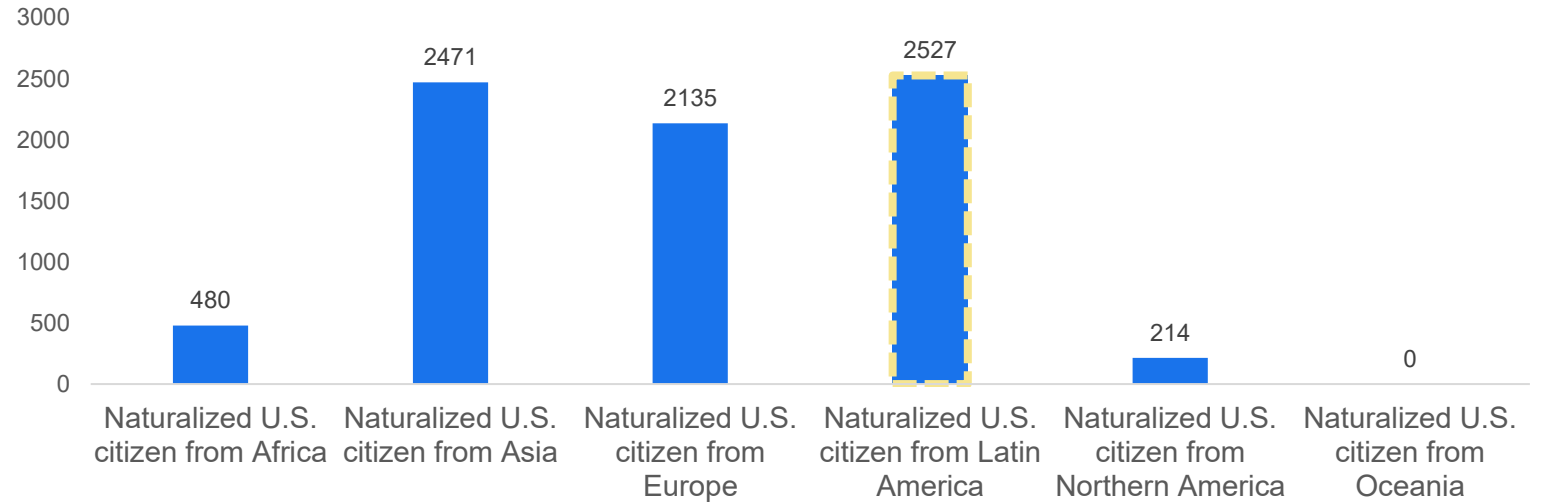
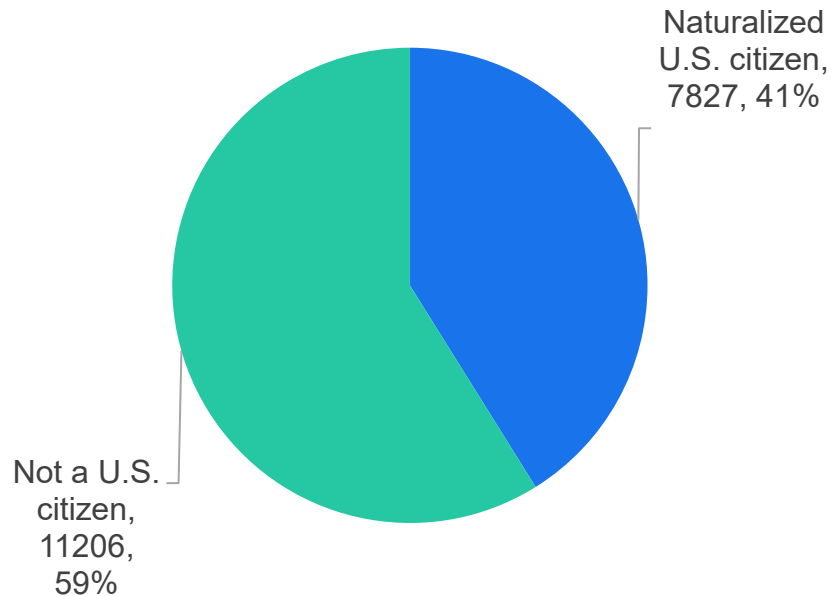


While nearly 70% of Somerville residents identify as White, **12% identify as Hispanic or Latino, 9% identify as Asian, and 5% identify as Black or African American.**

★ Somerville received **11 complaints** related to race-based discrimination from FY20-23. It was the **3rd-most cited cause of housing discrimination.**

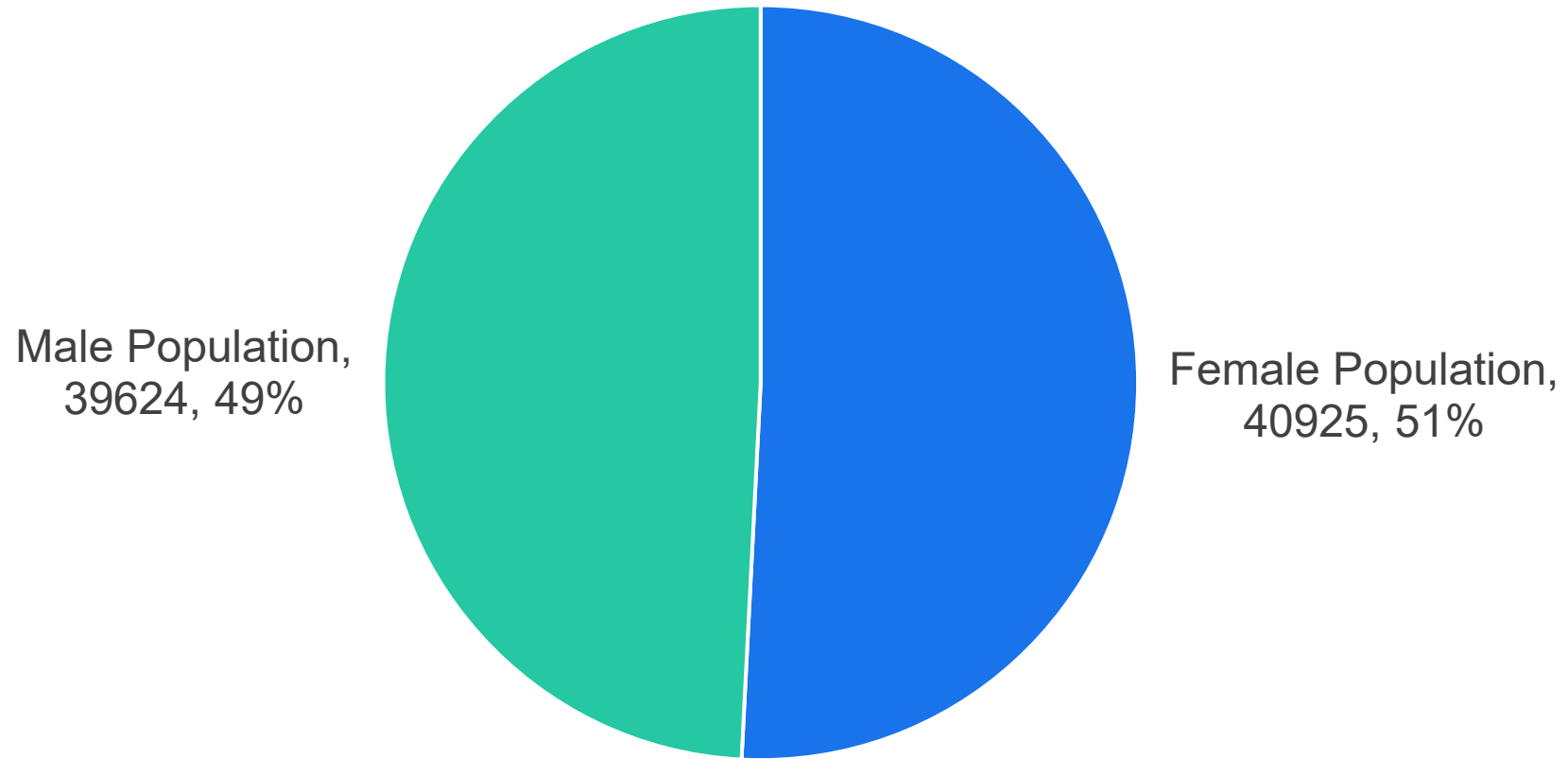
Protected Class: National Origin

Foreign born: 19,033
Native U.S. citizen: 61,431

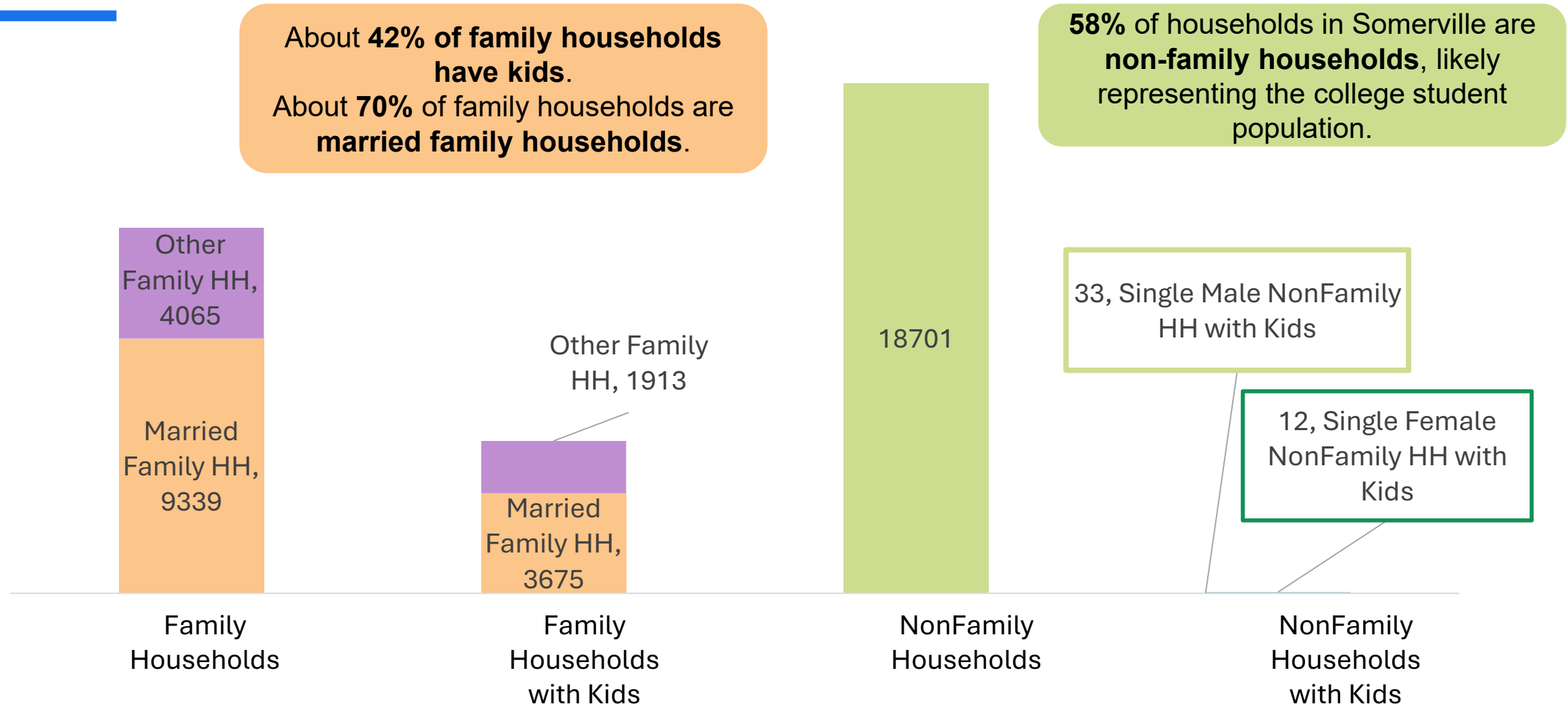


Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2018-22

Protected Class: Sex

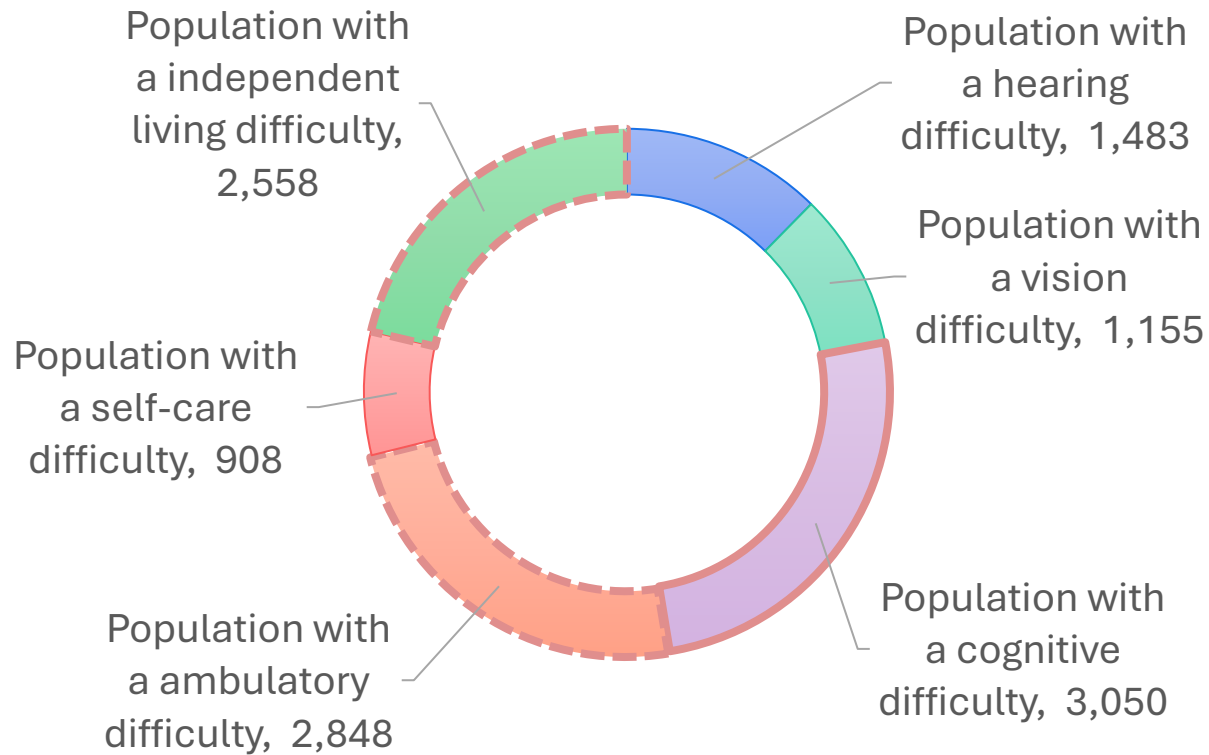


Protected Class: Familial Status; *Marital Status*



Protected Class: Disability

Population with a disability: 6,839 (8.5%)

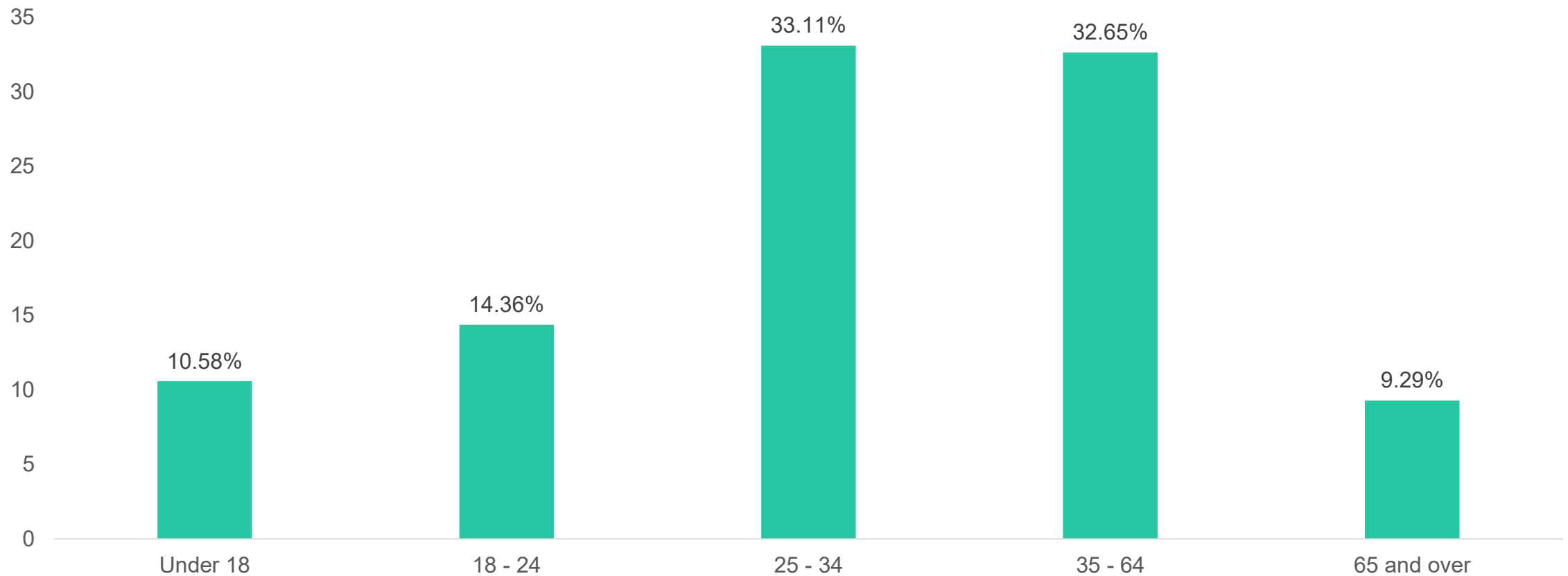


Of the 8.5% of Somerville residents living with a disability, the most common disability is **cognitive difficulty**, followed by ambulatory and independent living difficulties.

★ Somerville received **13 complaints** related to discrimination based on disability from FY20-23. While cognitive difficulty is the most common in the population, we may anticipate that **ambulatory** and **independent living difficulty** are more relevant to cases of housing discrimination.

Protected Class: Age

Somerville has a large population of young adults, **aged 25-34**.



Source: American Community Survey (ACS) 2019-23

Protected Class: *Limited or missing data*

- Veterans, 2019-2023: **1,145** (ACS 2019-23)
- Religion
- *Gender Identity*
- *Sexual Orientation*
- *Source of Income (e.g., a Section 8 voucher)*



Somerville received **19 complaints** related to discrimination based on disability from FY20-23, making it the most frequently-cited cause for housing discrimination. We are seeking out data to understand the number of SHA, BHA, and other housing vouchers circulating in Somerville and who holds those vouchers. This information will help us better understand the scope of the problem and whether there may be correlations with other protected classes.

Takeaways

- Many Somerville residents report housing discrimination based on **Source of Income**. **Disability** and **Race** are also frequently cited in housing discrimination complaints.
- Most of the complaints received in recent years come from **Wards 1 and 6**.
- Takeaways by Protected Class:
 - While nearly 70% of Somerville residents identify as White, **12% identify as Hispanic or Latino**, **9% identify as Asian**, and **5% identify as Black or African American**.
 - The majority of naturalized US citizens and non-citizens are from **Latin America**, followed by **Asia**.
 - **58%** of households in Somerville are **non-family households**, likely representing the college student population.
 - About **42% of family households have kids**.
 - About **70%** of family households are **married family households**.
 - Of the 8.5% of Somerville residents living with a disability, the most common disability is **cognitive difficulty**, followed by ambulatory and independent living difficulties.
 - Somerville has a large population of young adults, **aged 25-34**.

**Who comprises the
“community” we seek to
engage in this work?**

Landscape Analysis Exercise: Part 1

Part 1 - Specifying Who Will be Engaged

Instructions: The protected classes under Fair Housing law are listed below. Use the stickies to brainstorm what groups within these protected classes are typically underrepresented in the FHC's community engagement in Somerville. *Consider who are the folks that have been more challenging to reach and reference the demographic data collected on each.*

Race / Color	Disability	National Origin	Religion	Source of Income
Familial Status	Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity	Military Service	Age	Marital Status

**How do we reach residents
from these protected
classes?**



Landscape Analysis Exercise: Part 2

Part 2 - Mapping Landscape Resources, Players, and Connections

Instructions: The protected classes under Fair Housing law are listed below in yellow. Other groups that might include people who fall under the protected classes are listed in green. Use the stickies to brainstorm organizations and contacts through whom we can reach residents potentially underrepresented in typical community engagement in each class, as identified above

Protected Classes					Proxies for Reaching Protected Classes	
Race / Color	Disability	National Origin	Religion	Source of Income	Individuals with low credit score (assoc. w/ race and income)	Unhoused individuals
Familial Status	Sexual Orientation / Gender Identity	Military Service	Age	Marital Status	Small Landlords	Other?

**Where do we start our
outreach and relationship
building?**



Landscape Analysis Exercise: Part 3

Part 3 - Prioritizing by Engagement Methods

Instructions: Sort the stakeholders brainstormed above based on how they should be engaged throughout the process.

1-on-1 Conversations

Conversation Objectives:

- Listen to the different perspectives of up to 7 relevant participants.
- Understand the trends in challenges that members of protected classes face seeking housing in Somerville.

Pop Up Engagement

Pop Up Engagement Objectives:

- Meet community members in up to 3 places/events where they already gathering.
- Share resources/knowledge on Fair Housing and tenant rights.
- Hearing from community members on what additional resources and supports would be helpful & how they would like to be engaged in the future.

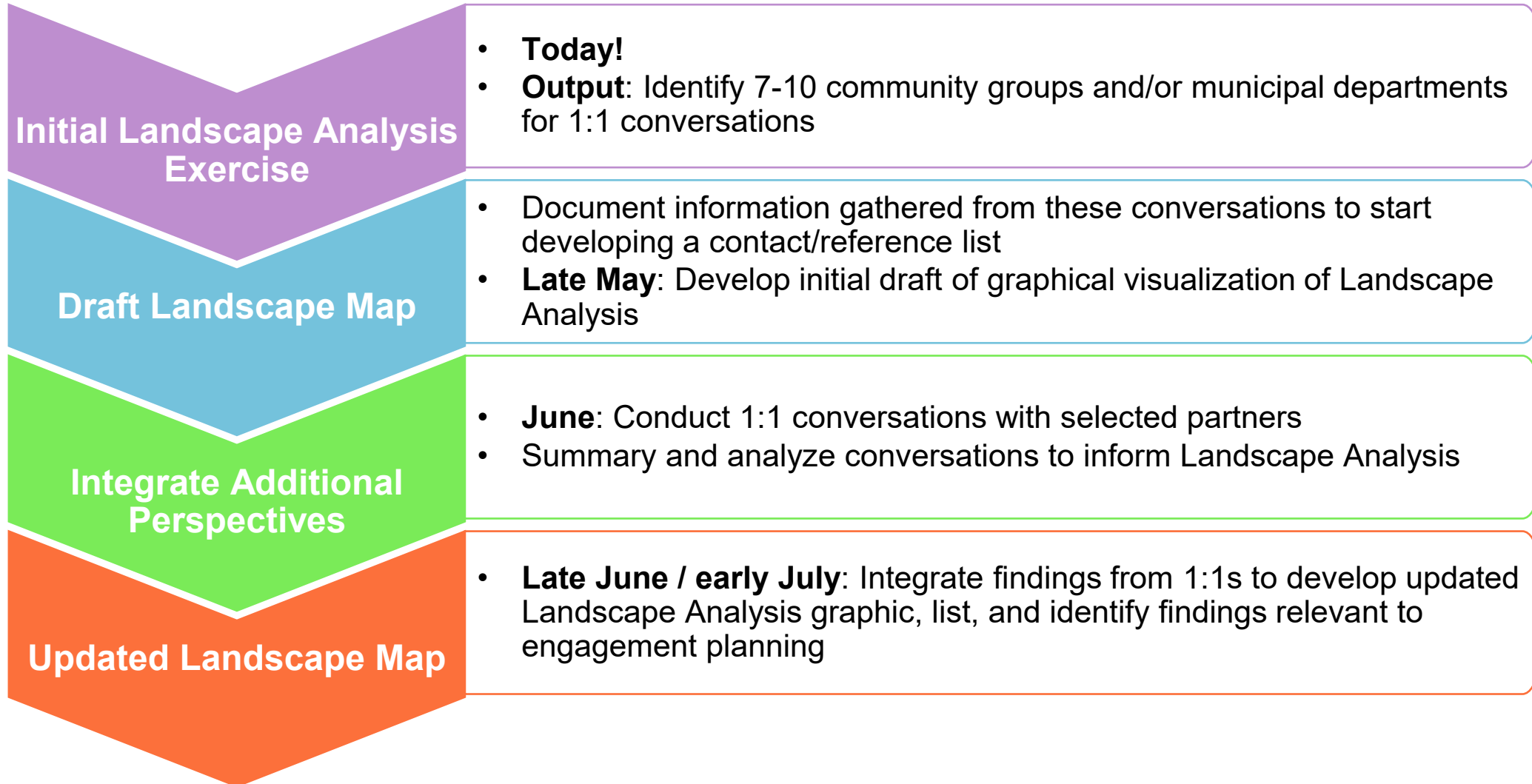
Targeted Engagement

Targeted Engagement Objectives:

- Collaborate with community partners, identify, design and implement up to four (4) events for target populations.
- Share resources/knowledge on Fair Housing and tenant rights.
- Hearing from community members on what additional resources and support would be helpful & how they would like to be engaged in the future.

Next Steps

Landscape Analysis Timeline





Gloria Huangpu, ghuangpu@mapc.org

Sarai Zelada, szelada@mapc.org