
Strategic Plan to Advance Equity

January 2016

SECTION 1:

1. Why a Strategic Plan to Advance Equity?

- Metro believes that our region is stronger when everyone has the same opportunity to succeed. Research also shows the more prosperous regions are also the regions where there is a greater degree of equity among all their residents.
- Despite government's best efforts to create equal opportunity for everyone, numerous local and national studies show that Native Americans, African Americans, African and Slavic immigrants, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Latinos or Hispanics, to whom we collectively refer to as "people of color," experience disparate outcomes in nearly every category of social well-being, including housing, transportation, access to nature, education and health.
- People of color share the same barriers to better outcomes with other vulnerable communities like people with low income, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, and the LGBTQ community. However, people of color experience those barriers more deeply, and face additional barriers due to their race, language and immigration status.
- For the past fifty years, government has used primarily a color-blind approach to improving the situation of all people. However, those color-blind policies and programs have led us to the current situation in which people of color experience the worst outcomes.
- Metro believes that it is time to use a different strategy. The selected strategy consists in intentionally removing the barriers that people of color face. By removing the barriers experienced by these, the most vulnerable people in our region, we will effectively also remove the barriers they share with other vulnerable groups, so all people in the region will experience better outcomes as a result.

2. Metro's Vision for the Future of our Region related to Equity

- As an organization, Metro is focused on charting the best possible path for the region to be prepared for the future, whether by making sure farm and forest land is protected from sprawl, that people have transportation choices to reduce congestion, or that we can accommodate the growing number of people who move to our region from around the country and around the globe.
- The Metro region has been experiencing a significant demographic change for the last 30 years: we are attracting more people than many other regions in the country. This population growth has also brought increased racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity. Metro is committed to being an effective government entity for all people in the region. Metro is establishing this Strategic Plan to Advance

Equity in order to address the barriers that people of color face to improve outcomes for all disadvantaged residents of the region.

- Metro also seeks to partner in this effort with the 25 cities and three counties in the region, to increase the region's capacity to effectively serve our changing, increasingly diverse communities.

3. Metro's Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
4. Metro's Definition of Equity

SECTION 2:

1. About Metro (General Overview)
2. Detail of How Metro Works and Metro's Four Lines of Business

SECTION 3:

1. Table of Contents

SECTION 4:

1. Equity +5 Recommendation

SECTION 5:

1. Overview of the intent of this Strategic Plan to Advance Equity.
 - Identify strategic internal goals, objectives and actions that can be completed over the next five years, which will advance equity in the Portland metropolitan region.
 - Identify strategic external goals that Metro will address in the long-term, in partnership with a wide range of stakeholders.
 - Establish the foundation for a data- and community-driven implementation and evaluation approach.
 - Outline how this plan will interweave elements from other plans (i.e. Affirmative Action Plan and the Diversity Action Plan).
 - Establish long-term agency-wide goals.

SECTION 6:

2. Detail how Metro's approach to equity will focus on addressing racial disparities

Despite government's best efforts to create equal opportunity for everyone, numerous local and national studies show that communities of color experience disparate outcomes in nearly every category of social well-being, including housing, transportation, access to nature, education and health. People of color share the same barriers to better outcomes with other vulnerable communities like people with low income, people with disabilities, seniors, youth, and the LGBTQ community. However, people of color experience those barriers more deeply, and face additional barriers due to their race, language and immigration status.

Addressing racial disparities, therefore, is at the core of Metro's work and of this Strategic Plan. This section will overview Metro's commitment to addressing racial disparities in more detail and explain how it will guide the implementation of the work identified in this document. This section will use data to highlight the racial disparities that are evident in our region and underscore current and historical realities that communities face, which calls for urgency in this effort. The selected strategy consists in intentionally removing the barriers that people of color face. By removing the barriers experienced by these, the most vulnerable people in our region, we will effectively remove the barriers they share with other vulnerable groups, so all people in the region will experience better outcomes as a result.

SECTION 7:

1. Organizational Equity Goals and Five-Year Objectives - Definitions

This section will outline and define the terms "goals" and "objectives". Metro has identified both internal and external goals. Briefly, external goals are long-term outcomes that extend beyond Metro's authority and would require working in partnership with cities and counties in the region to achieve them in the next 20 - 30 years. Internal goals are the aims that Metro is hoping to achieve in the policies, programs, services, venues and parks and natural areas under its direct control. Within each goal there are specific objectives associated with a list of action items that, once completed, will advance Metro towards completing those goals and objectives. The internal goals in this plan have a five-year horizon for the objectives and action items, although we expect to have additional work remaining at the end of the five year term.

The overview will also cover how the goals and objectives were identified through community feedback, internal staff engagement, an organizational self-assessment on racial equity, and public comment.

The internal and external goals, either short-term or long-term, can be better visualized in the following graphic. It includes illustrative examples of the goals, objectives and activities

included in the Strategic Plan to Advance Equity. It is not a comprehensive or exhaustive mapping of all goals and objectives, and it is anticipated to change based on community feedback.



For a larger version of this graphic, please see Appendix A.

SECTION 8:

1. Internal Equity Goals and Objectives

The internal equity goals are those goals that Metro has authority to control and can make inroads to achieve over time. Each internal goal will contain a set of objectives, which are targets that Metro aims to achieve within a five-year time span and a set of action items that will assist Metro in achieving the set objectives.

- The following are temporary examples of internal goals and objectives that have been expressed by multiple communities and agency partners. These examples have not been vetted and are subject to change:

Goal 1 - METRO LEADERSHIP AND STAFF REFLECT THE DIVERSITY OF THE REGION

Five-Year Objective 1 – Increase diversity in the Metro applicant pool.

Five-Year Objective 2 – Increase diversity of new hires according to gender, age group, minority group membership, and other indicators of diversity.

Five-Year Objective 3 – Increase retention rate and create clear advancement pathways for employees from historically marginalized communities.

Goal 2 - METRO DISPLAYS CLEAR AND CONSISTENT COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

Five-Year Objective 1 – Develop, implement and refine an agency-wide equity decision-making tool.

Five-Year Objective 2 – Establish an internal structure to address issues of racial equity.

Five-Year Objective 3 – Change Metro advisory and decision-making bodies so they represent the diversity of the region’s population.

Goal 3 – METRO IS INCREASINGLY ACCOUNTABLE TO THE COMMUNITY FOR MEETING ESTABLISHED EQUITY GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Five-Year Objective 1 – Develop agency-wide definitions, approaches and rationales for equity criteria.

Five-Year Objective 2 – Create an organizational evaluation methodology, including impact measures, that goes into action at the outset of policy, program, plan and service development.

Five-Year Objective 3 – Communicate externally and transparently the impacts that Metro’s work has on regional equity.

Five-Year Objective 4 – Develop a consistent, agency-wide approach to equity data definitions and analysis.

Goal 4 – METRO OPERATES IN A CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE MANNER

Five-Year Objective 1 – Create culturally accessible and welcoming policies, programs, plans, services, venues, and parks and natural areas at Metro.

Five-Year Objective 3 – Interweave diversity, equity and inclusion, organizationally and structurally, into all Metro departments, venues and other units.

Five-Year Objective 4 – Practice inclusive community engagement, guided by culturally appropriate practices and community ownership.

Goal 5 – METRO CONTRACTS FOLLOW ESTABLISHED SOCIAL EQUITY CONTRACTING CRITERIA

Five-Year Objective 1 – Develop and adopt an agency-wide policy for the standard social equity contracting criteria that must be met in all Metro contracts.

Five-Year Objective 2 – Transparently track and report on the implementation of the social equity contracting policy in all Metro contracts.

SECTION 9:

1. External Equity Goals and Objectives

The external equity goals are large, long-range goals that will require actions beyond the authority of Metro. Metro will coordinate with regional partners to accomplish the set goals.

- Potential external goals will be set in the following three broad policy areas:

TRANSPORTATION EQUITY: The region provides accessible, affordable, effective and safe transportation choices for all residents of the region.

HOUSING EQUITY: The region ensures affordable, stable and high quality housing choices for all residents of the region.

PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS EQUITY: The region maintains accessible and affordable parks and natural areas for all residents of the region.

SECTION 10:

1. Implementation and Evaluation

This section will describe the institutional infrastructure that will be recommended to efficiently and strategically implement identified actions. The institutional infrastructure will help to normalize the practice of equity and increase the space for community transparency. Moreover, institutional infrastructure will be strengthened by the establishment of equity decision making tools that help to codify the practice of advancing equity in the agency. Lastly, this effort will be driven by evaluation. Evaluation will add a level of accountability to ensure that internal equity efforts are moving in the same direction as well as ensure that Metro can measure the impact of the efforts. This section will outline the evaluation procedures and needs that will be required.

SECTION 11:

1. Alignment with other Internal Plans and Initiatives

This segment will be a brief discussion on how the Strategic Plan to Advance Equity is informed by and aligned with various other plans and efforts that are striving to reach the same Metro equity goals. These plans and initiatives include the Diversity Action Plan, Oregon Innovation Award, the Affirmative Action Plan, the Title VI plan, the Sustainability Plan, and the Equitable Housing Initiative.

APPENDIX A

