

Metro | Meeting minutes

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee
Date: Monday, January 26, 2015
Time: 3 to 5 p.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland

Attendees

Equity strategy advisory committee	Ben Duncan, Kirsten Kilchenstein, Irene Konev, Judi Martin, Carl Talton, Pam Treece, Daniel Vázquez
	Absent: Betty Dominguez, Judi Martin, Julia Meier, Virginia Nguyen, Philip Wu
Equity baseline workgroup	Scotty Ellis, Jared Franz, Cat Goughnour, Duncan Hwang, Kayse Jama, Andrew Riley, Professor Meg Merrick
Guests	Michael Alexander, Mara Gross, Jon Ostar
Metro	Martha Bennett, Craig Beebe, Sam Chase, Grace Cho, Shirley Craddick, Pietro Ferrari, Jim Middaugh, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chú, Nellie Papsdorf, Scott Robinson, Cassie Salinas, Jill Schmidt, Gabriele Schuster, Paul Slyman, Becca Uherbelau, Patty Unfred, Nikolai Ursin, Molly Vogt, John Williams, Hilary Wilton, Ina Zucker, others

Welcome and announcements

Carl Talton opened the meeting with introductions, reviewed the agenda and welcomed everyone.

Councilor Sam Chase expressed appreciation for the work that Metro staff and the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee members have done, emphasizing the importance of equity at Metro. He acknowledged the critical need for both short-term and long-term strategies in order to thoughtfully address diversity issues.

Metro COO Martha Bennett thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. She noted that the Equity Baseline Workgroup was an important step in the ongoing process of addressing equity issues at Metro, and expressed her interest in the report. She reminded members that the committee will be making a recommendation to her for a strategy and action plan

to address issues concerning equity, and that the Equity Baseline Report is an opportunity to consider what that strategy should be. This strategy will then be sent to the Metro Council for consideration, as part of an important conversation about Metro's ability to better serve historically underserved communities. She agreed with Councilor Chase in addressing immediate needs while considering the long-term perspective is the best approach, and recognized the committee and workgroup's perseverance in these efforts.

About the Equity Baseline Report

Pietro Ferrari introduced the 14-month work of the six-community based organizations that culminated in producing the "Equity Baseline Report: A Framework for Regional Equity" noting that it was a milestone in the creation of a final Equity Strategy and Action Plan. He gave a step-by-step overview of the equity strategy development scope and process, noting that Metro needed to first understand the root causes of outcome disparities in order to create opportunities to address them. He explained that this report fulfills that goal.

He then updated members on what has been done so far: the 2011 Equity Inventory Report, the Equity Strategy program workplan, a shared definition of equity, and the Equity Framework Report. He then provided an overview of what's to come, including Strategic Stakeholder Engagement, a series of meetings with key constituencies and community leaders, organized around the ten equity indicators, to hear from the groups about how the equity strategy should work; developing performance and accountability measures for equity; building Metro's capacity of inclusion and a draft Equity Strategy to take to the Metro Council.

Pietro Ferrari acknowledged the dedication and thoughtful contributions of each and all of the 6 workgroup members who worked hard to produce a useful framework that will serve Metro well in assessing its role to effectively advance equity in the region.

Indicators, datasets and the complexities in measuring equity

Professor Meg Merrick of the Institute of Metropolitan Studies at Portland State University gave a brief overview of the workgroup's findings. She noted that the effort undertaken by the workgroup provided the committee and Metro with a baseline set of equity indicators, but also an enduring framework of equity that could continue to evolve. She explained how the workgroup had come to its decisions through day to day immersion in equity datasets and indicators, and went over three main concepts that were identified through this process. First, equity would need to be reframed at Metro. Instead of being one of Metro's six desired outcomes, equity needed to be integrated into the five other desired outcomes as it plays a significant role in each. Second, equity is a complicated issue that includes individual, institutional, and structural factors, and to oversimplify it is to miss it entirely. Third, it needs to be understood that for Metro to successfully utilize its influence on regional equity, a direct relationship between the indicators and Metro's authority must be made. She noted that the report provides the direction necessary to move forward and expressed her pleasure working with the group.

Introduction of the Equity Baseline workgroup

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chú introduced the members of the Equity Baseline workgroup. Following the request for workgroup members released in fall 2013, more than 24 organizations responded. The six organizations represented by the Equity Baseline workgroup were selected because of their expertise in data analysis and their extensive experience working with historically underserved communities. Juan Carlos acknowledged that the members of the workgroup spent countless hours preparing the report both at Metro and on their own time and praised them for their efforts.

Presentation of the Equity Baseline Report

Members of the Equity Baseline workgroup gave an overview of the Equity Baseline report, describing it as a framework for regional equity. They explained that using their findings, they created an equity tool and framework to assist Metro in using equity indicators for internal assessment. They emphasized the importance of the Equity +5 system that integrates equity into Metro's five other desired outcomes, and noted that improvements in these five areas will be necessary to improve equity in the region. They explained that by reframing equity in this lens, they were able to better focus on Metro's understanding of equity and how to measure it within the region.

The workgroup then provided an overview of the frames used for indicator development and how they were used to create a comprehensive understanding of equity issues in the region. They outlined the layout of the report and the organization of the indicator sections, and went over key sections of the report.

Members reminded the committee that the report is not an equity strategy, a technical analysis of Metro's equity, or a comprehensive portfolio of Metro's regional impact. Instead, the report creates a common language around equity and directs Metro toward a more complete understanding of its goals and responsibilities concerning equity, and creates the building blocks to develop an eventual strategy to achieve Metro's equity goals. Members of the workgroup emphasized the report's potential, indicating that the report could lead to the development not only of an equity strategy, but also a comprehensive portfolio of Metro's regional impact, a communications strategy around Metro's accomplishments and outcomes, and/or a technical analysis of Metro's roles and responsibilities.

Members recognized that Metro is currently addressing disparities related to all ten equity indicators and commended the groundbreaking creation of a strategic community-based approach to incorporating equity effectively into an agency. They then opened the floor for questions.

Questions & Answers

Committee members thanked the workgroup for their thorough work on the report.

Daniel Vázquez noted in particular the importance of the difference between equity and justice, and thanked the group for making that distinction.

Irene Konev thanked Jared Franz for writing the report and thanked the rest of the members for their time and dedication. She added that she was impressed with the group's thorough investigation of the historical context of equity issues in the region, and asked that Metro staff consider their next budget with equity in mind.

Pam Treece noted that she would like to talk further with Metro councilors about implementing the report's findings in the region's communities and emphasized that the report applied throughout the Metro area. She asked about how to best promote the workgroup's findings. Jared Franz replied that the role for ESAC in the upcoming months would be to review the framework and identify short-term and long-term outcomes they agreed with and others the workgroup might have overlooked in order to come up with a comprehensive strategy for improving equity in the region.

Councilor Shirley Craddick reiterated the Metro Council's commitment to improving equity in the region. Councilor Sam Chase explained that he viewed Metro as a vessel for community engagement, and added that he appreciated the complexities involved in creating the baseline report and recognized the report as a key factor in identifying short-term and long-term goals.

Jim Middaugh asked about how to improve the capacity of community-based organizations involved in the process.

Ben Duncan noted that community-based organizations were a valuable asset in this effort, and encouraged Metro to continue to include them at the center of this process.

Cat Goughnour added that community members need to be compensated for their time and energy.

John Williams added that improving equity is a priority for the Metro Council, and expressed his interest in continuing to make connections between Metro staff and community organizations as the project moves forward.

Kirsten Kilchenstein commended the effort and suggested the utility of this study will apply to philanthropy and other sectors for which asked about release and sharing instructions.

Judi Martin asked about potential strategies to meaningfully engage communities and strengthen community partnerships. Members of the workgroups responded with a number of ideas, including engaging communities in the process earlier, considering where public engagement meetings are being advertised as well as where and when they are being held, and to also consider potential transportation and translation issues. Work group members emphasized the need to be aware of different perspectives and circumstances.

Approval of November 17, 2014 Minutes:

Ben Duncan motioned, and Pam Treece seconded, to approve the November 17 Equity Strategy Advisory Committee minutes.

Before adjourning the meeting, Carl Talton thanked everyone for their participation and reiterated with Pietro Ferrari the next steps in the process.

Next steps

- Members will read and review the “Equity Framework Report: A Framework for Regional Equity” and share their comments electronically using a form provided by Metro staff.
- A subgroup of ESAC was formed to work on a response memo that will meet on February 17 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- The next ESAC meeting will be on February 23, 2015 from 3 to 5 p.m.