

 Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee  
Date: Monday, February 23, 2015  
Time: 3 to 5 p.m.  
Place: Metro Regional Center, Room 401, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland

---

**Attendees**

Equity Strategy Advisory Committee: Carl Talton, Rey España, Irene Konev, Pam Treece, Daniel Vázquez, Betty Dominguez, Julia Meier, and Philip Wu

Absent: Ben Duncan, Kirsten Kilchenstein, Virginia Nguyen, and Philip Wu

Guests: Scotty Ellis

Metro: Patty Unfred, Pietro Ferrari, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Cassie Salinas, Karen Scott-Lowthian, Nyla Moore, and Nellie Papsdorf

**Welcome and announcements:**

Rey España welcomed the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee (ESAC) members, guest and staff to the meeting.

Carl Talton reviewed the agenda, mentioned that a group of ESAC members met to discuss a draft recommendations memorandum from ESAC to Martha Bennett, the Metro Chief Operating Officer (COO). That meeting, which had good discussion, resulted in the draft memo that ESAC members will be considering at this meeting. Carl expressed his hope that ESAC should be able to come to an agreement on the content of the memo at this meeting.

Ben Duncan was not be able to attend the meeting, but he sent a draft letter that he proposed to send to the COO on ESAC's behalf, commending the proposal for Metro to stop asking job seekers to answer the question about involvement in the criminal justice system in the employment application. This change is in response to the "Ban the Box" campaign. Metro Council will consider this change on March 12, 2015. Pietro Ferrari read the letter and ESAC members discussed its content. Pam Treece expressed concerns about specific language in the draft letter about the criminal justice system being inherently discriminatory. Carl and Julia Meier contributed ideas to change the language of the draft letter to acknowledge that people with criminal records face discrimination when applying for jobs, and that "Ban the Box" is about giving people in that situation a better shot at a second chance in employment. Irene Konev proposed to extend this change to volunteer applications. Daniel Vázquez proposed to have a press release in conjunction with the

Council vote on this change. Staff committed to exploring those suggestions. Pam offered to bring a new draft letter with the suggested changes to the March 9, 2015 ESAC meeting. Irene made the motion to officially ask Pam to bring a new draft letter to the next meeting. Phil seconded the motion. The motion was carried with no votes against it or abstentions.

**Discussion of the draft ESAC recommendations memo to the Metro COO:**

Pietro mentioned that a small group of ESAC members was created at the January 26 meeting to prepare a draft memo with ESAC's recommendations in response to the Equity Framework Report and to move forward with the Equity Strategy and Action Plan development. The small group was formed by Carl, Julia and Phil (who serve on the joint [sub-committee](#)), plus Irene and Ben. The small group held its meeting on February 17 and had a robust discussion about the report content and their suggestions for ESAC's own recommendations. Staff drafted the memo based on notes from the meeting and then requested that small group members review and edit the draft. The goal for this ESAC meeting was for the committee members to read the draft memo, discuss it and approve the language, so then it could be formally sent to Martha Bennett, Metro's COO.

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu reminded the committee [that](#) staff requested feedback from ESAC on the report after the January 26 presentation. Five ESAC members submitted their feedback in writing and staff compiled and summarized their input for the small group to discuss on February 17. The resulting draft memo was made available to ESAC members at the meeting, so Juan Carlos asked for the committee members to take 10 minutes to carefully read the document prior to start the discussion.

After ESAC members read the draft memo, they discussed its content as follows:

**Equity+5 framework:** The recommendation that Metro adopt the Equity+5 framework to conceptualize the six regional desired outcomes was supported by the ESAC members. Phil requested that the graphic representation of Equity+5 be different from the graphic included in the report. Juan Carlos mentioned that the graphic would be updated once the recommendation was formally adopted.

Pam questioned the word "improve" in the draft memo. What does that mean? When making a recommendation to improve something, there needs to be follow up that shows the outcome of the improvement. Juan Carlos indicated that the report asserted that equity is fully integrated with the other desired regional outcomes. Therefore, to improve equity you have to improve the other five desired regional outcomes, and vice versa. Equity is a positive outcome that is interrelated to the others.

Julia suggested that the recommendations be written so they start with verbs.

**Racial and economic justice lens:** Phil questioned whether the draft memo language balanced the emphasis on the underserved communities with the need to support everyone. He also questioned whether paying attention to everyone is necessarily a matter of looking forward. Pietro indicated that the community-based organizations that wrote the report recommended the use of a racial and economic justice lens, but it does not mean it is

exclusive. The language ~~of~~ reflected the idea of moving from this point forward in a new direction. Phil remarked that this lens, by definition, required devoting resources not equally across the board: they may be concentrated in certain areas or communities. Carl countered that Metro is responsible for providing services across the entire region. Juan Carlos suggested changing that sentence to eliminate the “forward-looking” words.

Rey stated that, if a lens does not exist yet, it was time to create one. The committee members ~~presented~~ supported that idea. The lens must have intentionality of action and investment. However, Ray expressed concerns about how long time it may take to develop this tool. He would not want to wait too long to create it. Pietro indicated that staff will seek input and assistance to design and implement this lens

Julia mentioned that from her perspective the real recommendations are about item number six (6) on the draft memo: “Suggested approach for strategy development,” which includes the identification of short-, mid- and long-term equity activities, and identification of a few long-term strategic discussions that require significant regional community involvement. The other items on the draft memo are, in Julia’s view, reactions to the report. Pam agreed that the draft memo is a combination of recommendations and reactions. ESAC needed to decide the strategy based on the recommendations, and be accountable for the recommendations. Pam also suggested that ESAC may want to produce two documents: one for recommendations to the COO and another for reactions to the report. ESAC members discussed the benefits of producing either one or two documents.

**Community-led equity assessment:** Julia also indicated that item number three (3) in the draft memo, “Community-led equity audit of Metro’s departments,” was described differently ~~of~~ from how the small group discussed it. She mentioned that the word “audit” has strange connotations, especially for non-profit organizations. Phil added that “audit” has negative implications as well. And despite this challenge, Julia stated that ESAC should recommend that Metro conduct an analysis of its roles and responsibilities at the beginning of the strategy development phase. Scotty Ellis from the Coalition for a Livable Future, and member of the group of CBOs that wrote the report, mentioned that the CBOs are amenable to changing the word “audit” to “assessment,” but the important thing was to have community oversight of how Metro defines its roles and responsibilities and what equity means for the agency.

Rey posed the question of whether ESAC wanted to remove the language about an “audit” being premature at this time, and reframe it as an “assessment” instead. ESAC members agreed with the idea of referring to this item as an “assessment.” Julia emphasized that all the recommendations should be done in partnership with the CBOs as much as possible. Scotty indicated that the CBOs group was going to meet on Friday, Feb. 27 to discuss potential changes in the report language, as requested by some ESAC members, and they would be considering replacing the term “audit” with “assessment.”

**Additional data collection needs:** Julia stated that there is a need for improved data and research practices, and at the same time there is no interest in Metro duplicating or starting new data collection efforts. Rey added that he would like to see something about Metro’s

responsibility for tracking the data and figuring out how the agency will determine if things have changed.

Patty Unfred added that Metro would like to know how broadly ESAC recommends that any additional data collection or tracking efforts be, so they would meet ESAC's objectives on this subject. Julia responded that data should be collected based on the eight demographic categories included in the framework report: race, ethnicity, language, national origin, income, gender, disability and age.

Daniel Vázquez mentioned that he serves on the TriMet Equity Committee and an issue was brought up at the last committee meeting: TriMet staff were upset that they were not consulted in the writing of the report and for that reason the report contains some questionable information about transportation, from the TriMet perspective. His question for staff was whether Metro was planning to work with TriMet. Pietro pointed out that the next stage in the equity strategy development is to work with key stakeholders, including TriMet. For the framework report, however, the CBOs were not required to consult with other stakeholders, since they prepared the report from their own perspectives. Juan Carlos added that the CBOs and TriMet are approaching the subject of transportation equity in different ways. Based on the letter sent to Carl by Johnell Bell, TriMet's Diversity and Transit Equity Director, it appears that a big part of the disagreement stems from the use of different methodologies. Carl mentioned that he would work with Daniel and Metro staff on drafting a response to address TriMet's concerns.

**Other recommendations:** Juan Carlos requested ESAC's input on item (5) in the report, "Other recommendations."

On the bullet about the broader definition of "community," Carl agreed that it would be important to make sure the term covered groups that were not included or considered in the framework report, which focused on people of color, immigrants and people with low incomes. Julia agreed and requested adding a value or principle around the urgency of equity work, and reaffirming its importance for Metro.

On the bullet about the intersectionality of all 10 indicators, Juan Carlos posed the question of whether this topic should be added to a different recommendation. Phil mentioned that the cloud graphic was a good way to represent this idea.

Julia mentioned that she met with Jared Franz, the primary writer of the report, to share the feedback that ESAC members generated at the February 17 small group meeting. Jared is willing to incorporate feedback, but he expressed concerns about the group's capacity and the extent of the changes. Ultimately, the six CBOs as a group will meet on February 27 to decide how to respond to this request. Daniel added his support for the request to the CBOs to make these changes.

On the other hand, Betty Dominguez expressed her concerns about the request to the CBOs to make changes to the report. From her perspective, this request should have been approved by ESAC as a whole. Another concern she has is the fact that the CBOs finished

their work and contract with Metro already when they turned in the report and staff accepted it. Asking for additional change seems extemporaneous at this time.

At this point, several ESAC members had to leave because the meeting had extended past its regular 5:00 p.m. end time and they had other commitments.

Carl asked staff to prepare a new draft memo with ESAC's recommendations to the COO, based on the discussion at this meeting.

The next ESAC meeting will take place on Monday, March 9, 2015, 3 – 5 p.m., at the Metro Regional Center, Room 301.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Meeting minutes prepared by Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu and Nyla Moore