



**Metro**

600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736

# Meeting minutes

Meeting: Committee on Racial Equity Meeting  
Date/time: Thursday, January 18, 2018  
Time: 6 to 8 p.m.  
Place: Metro Council Chamber, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232  
Purpose: Continue the work of the Committee on Racial Equity

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## **Attendees**

**Co-Chair:** María Caballero Rubio and Sharon Gary-Smith

**CORE Members:** Martine Coblentz, Karla Hernandez, Duncan Hwang, Laura John, Patricia Kepler, Shweta Moorthy, Dele Oyemaja, Daisy Quiñonez, Katie Sawicki, Effie Stansbery and Olivia Walker

**CORE Liaisons:** Metro Councilors Shirley Craddick and Sam Chase

**Metro staff:** Raahi Reddy, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu and Nyla Moore from DEI, Jon Blasher and Heather Nelson-Kent from Parks and Nature (P+N); and Paul Slyman, Molly Chidsey and Matt Korot from Property and Environmental Services (PES)

**Absent:** Kari Herinckx and Donna Maxey

## **Welcome**

### **Public comment – Members of the public**

No public comment was offered.

### **Background, context and ground rules for the presentation of the department-specific racial equity action plan drafts – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu**

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Equity Strategy Program Manager, reviewed the intent and expectations for the P+N and PES presentations to the CORE.

- The Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, on whose implementation the CORE advises Council and staff, focused on agency-wide goals, objectives and actions.
- And one of the most important actions in the Strategic Plan is the creation of department- and venue-specific racial equity action plans, so the Metro departments and venues can advance equity in their specific activities.
- Since Aug. 2016, four pilot departments and venue, P+N, PES, Planning & Development, and the Oregon Zoo, have been developing the first racial equity action plans in the agency, with support and guidance from DEI staff.
- The four pilot departments are getting closer to the end of the process, and they want to get input and advice from the CORE members on the draft action plans, so they can incorporate it into the final versions.
- P+N and PES presented an overview of their work to create department-specific racial equity action plans, and asked the CORE members to consider two questions for input. Each department had 35 minutes for their presentation and feedback from the CORE.

- CORE members will have a second opportunity to provide more in-depth feedback at the CORE subcommittee meetings in February and April. The Feb. subcommittee meetings will both take place on Monday, Feb. 5, at 5:30 p.m., here at Metro.
- Members of the evaluation subcommittee are welcome to attend the Feb. 5 subcommittee meetings in order to provide more detailed input. If that date does not work for them, they can also provide written feedback. Juan Carlos will follow up with you about this after the meeting.
- Juan Carlos asked that as the members listened to the presentations that they think about two questions, to frame the discussion and feedback component after each presentation:
  1. What is your perspective on the priorities that each department presented? And
  2. What might be missing from these departments' draft racial equity action plans?
- After the presentations, the CORE members separated into three small groups to discuss the questions. Department and DEI staff took notes and answered questions.

**Presentations on the department-specific racial equity action plan drafts from the Parks + Nature (P+N) and Property & Environmental Services departments (PES) –Staff from P+N and PES**

Presentation by the Parks + Nature Department:

Jon Blasher, P+N Director, and Heather Nelson Kent, Program Manager and project sponsor, presented on the Parks + Nature equity action plan. The presentation highlighted the department's guiding P+N System Plan, and its major programmatic areas, including: access to nature, protection and management of natural areas, planning and design of new access opportunities, educational programs, community engagement, and community investments.

The presentation also discussed the work that the department has undertaken to align with the goals of objectives of the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion ("Strategic Plan"), especially to create its own department-specific racial equity action plan. The draft action plan, which will be presented in more detail for in-depth discussion to the CORE External Policies and Internal Policies & Work Culture Subcommittees in February has five outcomes (economic equity, environmental equity, cultural equity, attachment to place, and civic engagement) and a number of internal and external priorities. The presentation also highlighted the timeline and next steps to the completion of the action plan in the spring of this year.

CORE members asked several questions after the presentation:

Duncan Hwang asked for more specific action steps. And also, what challenges have they had with implementation that CORE members could help with? Jon replied that they need to figure out how to do the work in a meaningful way and work with other departments and the community. He used the example of a hiring process they changed to add a racial equity lens and remove barriers. They worked with Centro Cultural and other community partners to get feedback and make changes to the job description and recruitment process.

María Caballero Rubio asked about the process to determine the action items. Jon explained that they assessed their departments work and talked to the community to define the guidelines for the department to focus on.

Sharon Gary-Smith asked about how you educate the historical constituents about the change around equity and inclusion when it comes to parks and nature. Jon replied that they work with community partners to have conversations about the changes they want to implement.

At this point, the CORE members were asked to divide into three groups to provide more specific feedback to the P+N Department. The notes from those small group conversations are as follows:

Feedback from small group discussion 1:

- What do you specifically mean by “community engagement”? Sometimes it means going through organizations only, but there are other voices within communities.
- For the Native American community, differentiate between community engagement and tribal consultation. Tribal consultation does not have to only happen at the Metro Council-to-Tribal Council level only. It can happen at the department level, too.
- When considering hiring and recruitment activities, consider adding the retention work to maintain the diverse employees that are hired. How many staff of color are involved in decision-making?
- Coaching candidates to help them be more employable and elevate their chances to be hired is important.
- Ensure that people of color have greater access to nature.
- Provide more detail at the Feb. 5 presentation to the subcommittees, especially on specific action items included in the draft plan.

Feedback from P+N small group discussion 2:

- It was hard to understand what was being presented. Would have liked to see more of the specifics of the equity plan.
- It sounded like the “right buckets” of topics were introduced, but it is hard to weigh in without more details.
- How are concerns from seasonal workers being addressed?
- Is there an issue of homelessness in your facilities?
- Are you perpetuating the criminal justice system (regarding responses to illegal dumping; trespassers criminalized)?
- Question about mandate of P+N vs. racial equity considerations – the response sounded disjointed, or separated.
- I would like to see a better connection/integration in the plan and presentation to racial equity.
- Action plan outcomes all seem externally oriented, not internal.
- Plan / approach would benefit from stepping back to reframe and retell the story about the relationship to nature more fully recognizing ownership of stolen land, as well as the more advanced relationships indigenous groups have to the land – see them as experts for grounding reference point. This may help contribute to plan and culture shift.
- Recognize communities’ relationship to the land.

Feedback from P+N small group discussion 3:

- Like the internal and external priorities.
- How confident is the department that it has buy-in from staff for the plan?
- It takes time and effort to move forward.
- Equity and empowerment lens: Is the department considering using a tool like that?

- Learning more about action plan outcomes: what kind of engagement with tribes? Co-stewardship. Or reparations treaty with local tribes with water and land rights.
- We need Metro to have liaison [with the tribes]. Not just in Parks + Nature, but for all of Metro. One more investment.
- It would be great to have a coordinated, regional plan to work in partnership with tribes.
- Like the priorities to provide staff time and budget. It is great to invest in time and tools.
- Interested in learning about resource allocation piece. This was not called out as a priority.
- Spaces and places being developed. Not just access.

Presentation by the Property & Environmental Services Department:

Paul Slyman, PES Director, and Molly Chidsey, project manager, presented on the Property and Environmental Services Department equity action plan. Paul provided a thorough description of the work carried out by PES, which consists of three large programmatic areas: managing the regional garbage and recycling system, managing the Metro Regional Center campus, and conducting construction project management in all Metro facilities.

Molly shared PES's four equity outcomes (create economic opportunities, provide services equitably, minimize negative impacts of the solid waste system, and generate positive benefits of the solid waste system). She also shared the current strategic equity priorities: engage and educate employees, create job opportunities, solid waste plans and policies, community partnerships, procurement and contracts, Metro Regional Center operations, and evaluation for accountability. Molly also provided an overview of the timeline for completion of the racial equity action plan, and the internal and external actions in progress.

Due to time constraints, the CORE members as a single group asked questions and provided feedback to the PES team:

Duncan Hwang asked whether PES makes a profit or loses money. Paul Slyman explained that PES operates like a public utility and uses an outcomes-based budgeting process: the department calculates the cost of running the garbage and recycling system and then sets the garbage collection rate to cover that cost. That rate is currently ninety-five dollars per metric ton (\$95/ton). The money collected through solid waste can only be used in solid waste, although some of those funds may be used for general fund and Metro Council priorities. The garbage and recycling system is not designed to make a profit but to provide a public service.

Martine asked about barriers for PES to partner successfully with small firms in the garbage collection industry. Paul explained that garbage collection operators compete with one another, and that there are large, franchised companies in the industry. PES provides grants to smaller operators to give them a better opportunity to participate in the hauling system. This can be controversial because the only thing the operators like less than Metro's regulations is someone else's competition.

Duncan asked where the funds for construction projects come from, and who benefits from the contracts for those projects. Paul indicated that PES is focusing on emerging relationships and partnerships with the Oregon chapter of the National Association of Minority Contractors (NAMC), to help its members become more competitive in their bids for bigger construction projects. It is

hard for smaller companies to compete for bids. It sometimes cost them more to prepare them than they can earn from the contracts.

María Caballero Rubio mentioned that community education seems to be missing from the draft PES plan. There are many people eager to learn about the work of PES and the available opportunities. The engagement should go beyond PES staff.

Raahi Reddy, Metro Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Program Manager, indicated that staff are working to compile all the common action items from the four draft racial equity action plans, that relate to the work of the Metro central services departments and potentially create a unified, common work plan for those departments. DEI staff will aim to bring the list of common action items for central services departments' work in March 2018.

#### **Updated CORE Work Plan review and approval – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu**

Juan Carlos focused the attention of the CORE on the review and approval of the updated CORE Work Plan document for 2018. The Work Plan now includes a detailed description of the month-by-month activities for both the general CORE meetings and the Subcommittee meetings. The document presented to the CORE members includes a few additional revisions, which were printed in red.

The highlights of the updated Work Plan version for 2018 include:

- Updates from major Metro projects, including the affordable housing funding measures, Southwest Corridor and the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update
- Community Forum in Sept. 2018, to provide direct information and accountability opportunities to the public
- Joint Work Session with Metro Council in Nov. 2018, to report on work conducted and discuss Council priorities and vision for the next year
- Annual planning retreat in early Dec. 2018

Juan Carlos asked if CORE members have any questions about the Work Plan, and answered them:

Martine Coblenz mentioned she was concerned about the presentation from three department equity plans in April. She would prefer not to have more than two presentations at a time. She would also like to make the tour of Metro facilities a priority, especially for CORE members who have not participated in it. Sharon Gary-Smith concurred, indicating that now that the members are further along in the work, a tour might enhance their understanding of Metro even more.

Shweta Moorthy wondered if Metro can add debrief time from subcommittees along the way in the general meetings. The Impact Evaluation Subcommittee members would like to share and discuss work that is being done and be able to give feedback or take action on the other subcommittees' work.

After the comments and requests, Sharon asked for a nomination on the CORE Work Plan draft. Shweta moved to approve the plan as presented. Daisy seconded the motion to approve the Work Plan. All members present voted "yes." The motion carried and the CORE Work Plan was approved as presented.

**Consideration of the minutes from the Sept. 21, and Nov. 16, 2017 regular meetings, and the Nov. 4, 2017 CORE retreat – Co-Chair Sharon Gary-Smith**

Sharon mentioned that Metro DEI Program staff created the draft minutes for both the Sept. 21, 2017 regular meeting, the Nov. 4, 2017 retreat, and the Nov. 16 regular meeting. The Sept. 21 and Nov. 4 minutes were not approved on Nov. 16 due to a lack of quorum. CORE members received the three sets of minutes in the link to the meeting packet.

Sharon opened the consideration of the Sept. 21, 2017 CORE meeting minutes. No changes were requested. Daisy moved to approve the minutes for the September 21 meeting, and Shweta seconded the motion. Olivia and Laura abstained because they were absent from that meeting. The other CORE members voted yes.

Sharon then opened the consideration of the Nov. 16, 2017 CORE meeting minutes. No changes were requested. Katie moved to approve the minutes for the Nov. 16 meeting. Dele seconded the motion. Daisy, Laura and Patricia abstained because they were absent from that meeting. The other CORE members voted yes.

Sharon then opened the consideration of the Nov. 4, 2017 CORE retreat minutes. No changes were requested. Patricia moved to approve the minutes for the Nov. 4 retreat. María seconded that motion. All CORE members voted to approve.

**Overview of next activities and steps – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu**

The CORE External Policies and Internal Policies & Work Culture Subcommittees will hold their inaugural meetings on Monday, Feb. 5, 2018, at the Metro Regional Center. All CORE members and the public were invited to attend the Feb. 5 CORE subcommittee meetings.

Dele Oyemaja and Donna Maxey are helping to identify future meeting locations for the CORE. This information will be sent to the CORE members soon.

Shweta announced that the Coalition of Communities of Color is holding its fifth lobby day at the Oregon Capitol in Salem on Feb. 2, 2018. All CORE members are invited to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:06 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Nyla Moore and Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu