



Metro

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Memo

Date: April 9th, 2021
To: Committee on Racial Equity (CORE)
From: Raahi Reddy, DEI Program Manager
Subject: Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion – Progress report

General overview

Adopted in June 2016, the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion is a major building block in Metro’s goal to advance equity in the Portland metro region. The plan set forth a clear agency-wide direction while also outlining actions to advance the work forward over its five year horizon. The 77 actions outlined in the plan are foundational and will require numerous additional actions in order to reach the plan’s objectives and goals.

Metro has completed year four of the Strategic Plan implementation. This report details the status of all actions outlined in the plan that have not yet been completed. Actions that were completed in previous years are not included in this report. In total, 60 actions are outlined here. In previous years 17 actions of the Plan’s 77 were completed. In the past year an additional three were completed. Work towards many other actions continued, while many efforts were put on pause due to the COVID-19 health and economic crisis. Only three actions outlined in the plan remain not started.

Highlights

Metro’s Committee on Racial Equity, along with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team, have selected the following highlights among the multitude of work done towards advancing DEI at Metro in the last year:

- [Input and highlights from CORE will go here]

The detailed status of each action item is shared in the following section of this memo.

cc: Andrew Scott, Chief Operating Officer
Heidi Rahn, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Status of actions

Goal A – *Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity*

Action title	Status	More information
In partnership with the community, develop and pilot regional public engagement forums to connect Community -based organizations to resources, engagement opportunities, contracting opportunities and staff at Metro and other public agencies across the region.	In progress.	Due to the public health crisis, there were fewer opportunities for direct engagement with community based organizations, from both due to community capacity and focus and Metro's adjustment in work. Spring 2020 continued the effort to connect CBOs to Metro project managers to support the development of the transportation funding regional investment strategy; late 2020 included connecting CBOs to the opportunity study for Expo. A public engagement forum of community leaders on transportation issues was postponed to 2021.
Use existing committees and additional new opportunities to convene and work collaboratively with regional partners to advance equity related to public engagement, affordable housing, welcoming and inclusive parks and venues, safe transportation, equitable solid waste system and economic opportunity for communities of color through local government contracts and projects.	In progress.	Collaboration with regional partners, community organizations and community experts did not slow down in 2020 as Metro advanced efforts to build the Supportive Housing Services program, prepared for the roll out of the Parks and Nature Bond, and geared up for local implementation of the Regional Waste Plan.
Convene regional partners to discuss solutions to increase the participation of local MWESB in government contracts.	In progress.	Monthly meetings with regional procurement staff from regional agencies. Meeting with State COBID Department to begin discussions about system improvements. COVID-19 has led to significant shrinking of COBID registered firms from going out of business or certification lapses. The pool is now the smallest it has ever been. Loss of a state certification program would be detrimental. 3,250 before COVID and now there are only 2,600 firms. Focus is now on outreach/community engagement to uncertified firms to get certification and education for businesses about what is required for being a business in Oregon and for certification.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal B – *Metro meaningfully engages communities of color*

Action title	Status	More information
Create a system to better coordinate engagement with communities of color across Metro departments. This system should include the maintaining of a record of community-based organizations’ involvement with Metro to support relationship continuity.	In progress.	Due to budget restrictions Metro did not acquire a relationship management tool to coordinate across the agency, however, COVID-19 pushed DEI and Communications staff to compile a comprehensive list of partners, grantees and grantee applicants for the purpose of better coordinating relationship management and outreach.
Work with communities to co-create community-specific public engagement plans that work to develop long-term community relationships, as opposed to episodic engagement.	In progress.	The development and ongoing implementation of the Civic Engagement Capacity Building grant program will support long-term, trusted relationship building between Metro and community-based organizations as well as the Black, Indigenous and communities of color they serve. The program's first round of grantees will be announced in June 2021.
Metro departments set aside resources for contracting and partnering with CBOs or community groups for engagement. Results are included in quarterly management reports.	In progress.	This work is successful and growing, with CBO contracts for engagement happening in departments across the agency. Recent examples include contracts in WPES with Unite Oregon and Centro Cultural to support robust engagement around the potential transfer station developments. The Social Vulnerability Project, led by the Research Center and DEI, also stipends seven CBOs to participate in a community advisory group to define and map social vulnerability across the region.
Identify and propose ways to improve youth engagement and youth involvement in Metro decision-making.	In progress.	The youth-led equity cohort was cancelled due to COVID-19, but the Civic Engagement Grant program will invest in leadership development for youth of color to support their involvement in Metro decision-making.
Identify and propose the creation of new opportunities within public engagement activities for emerging and established community leaders to work with decision makers to help drive plan, policy and program outcomes.	In progress.	Even within the context of COVID-19 Metro continued to find ways to deepen community partnerships and bring community leaders into decision-making processes, expansion that will continue as the Civic Engagement Capacity Building grant program is implemented in FY 21/22..Additional examples include collaborative and co-creative engagement on the Supportive Housing Services program and the Parks and Nature Bond. Metro Council also engaged in direct dialogue and partnership with Reimagine Oregon that informed a suite of decision-making aimed at protecting and investing in Black lives.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal B – Metro meaningfully engages communities of color - Continued

Action title	Status	More information
Develop and apply criteria to consistently partner and invest in existing community leadership programs that have greatest benefit to community.	In progress.	The Civic Engagement Capacity Building grant program was launched in February 2021 and the selection process is underway. Waste Prevention and Environmental Services partnered with Unite Oregon and Centro Cultural to build capacity in Clackamas and Washington counties to inform development of the potential transfer stations. Parks and Nature also rolled out their first round of capacity building grants to support emerging organizations improve access to nature for under-represented communities and communities of color.
Create mechanisms to involve the community in the implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Plan.	In progress.	The DEI Program will continue involving Metro's Committee on Racial Equity as we co-create a framework for evaluating progress towards the Strategic Plan's goals.
Utilize the racial equity analysis and decision support tool on four pilot projects representing each of Metro's four lines of business.	In progress.	In winter 2021 Metro adopted the racial equity framework to support analysis and decision-making agency-wide and will be piloting the framework's use and evaluation for select projects during FY 21/22.
Develop equity performance measures to include in Metro's By the Numbers performance measurement program.	In progress.	Equity performance measures will be created during the Impact Evaluation project which was put on hold, again, due to pressing issues related to COVID-19 and community calls for racial justice.
Provide training and support to Metro departments on the Racial Equity Analysis and Decision-Support Tool to most effectively meet specific departmental portfolio.	In progress.	In winter 2021 Metro held its first training for the racial equity framework for project managers. Additional trainings are scheduled and a small cohort of project managers will be piloting the framework's use and evaluation for select projects during FY 21/22.
With the direct support of the DEI program, expand the pilot for utilizing the racial equity analysis and decision support tool within each department.	In progress.	The racial equity framework is scheduled to be used agency-wide for the FY 22/23 budget process starting in early 2022 and roll-out for additional projects beyond the pilot projects will occur later that year.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal B – Metro meaningfully engages communities of color - Continued

Action title	Status	More information
Identify barriers and propose solutions to increase participation of communities of color in Metro engagement opportunities. Such barriers may include: public meeting times, lack of food and childcare, and location of meetings.	In progress.	COVID-19 forced Metro Council and staff to adapt its approaches to public meetings and community engagement. Best-practices of providing stipends and interpretation services were continued and virtual access may have improved accessibility for some community members, however, other strategies like providing child-care or meals were temporarily discontinued.
Identify and propose the creation of new opportunities within public engagement activities for decision-makers to receive direct community input and to meaningfully consider and discuss what they've heard.	In progress.	Metro continues to evolve and increase opportunities to engage with Metro decision makers through forums, engagement activities, committees, granting and more.
Create financially supported volunteer seats on advisory boards and committees for youth of color, community members, and community-based organization representatives.	In progress.	Three advisory committees, including the CORE, the Regional Waste Advisory Committee, and the Parks and Nature Equity Advisory Committee provide stipends for volunteer seats for community members and community-based organization representatives.
Conduct user testing to inform improvements to the accessibility and usability of digital tools for communities of color to get involved. Invest in outreach and promotion strategies to raise awareness of individual opportunities and online tools.	In progress.	Metro video, brochures, recruitment, Ask Metro and other promotional materials used more robust input from communities of color. The web upgrade work will include user testing. Our Big Back Yard and other Parks content has been evaluated with an audience emphasis on younger people of color. WPES content has been assessed with an audience focus of communities of color. Communications is working to develop a more robust support system for translation and trans-creation, with a Spanish-language trans-creation contract in place. Outreach and promotional budgets for 2020 and 2021 have been reduced due to the public health crisis and related budget reductions.
Create a framework to track and measure equity actions and investments across the agency.	In progress.	An agency-wide framework will be developed in the Impact Evaluation project which is slated to re-start in late 2021. An approach was piloted for the creation of the Supportive Housing Services evaluation metrics during the summer/fall of 2020. This process was co-led by Planning and Development and DEI and involved community members, subject matter experts and Metro staff.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal C – *Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce*

Action title	Status	More information
Review and adjust recruitment processes and the criteria for job descriptions using accessible language so that more value is placed on applicant’s skills and abilities beyond the purely technical.	Complete.	Completed. This project may require a second phase that dives deeper into the distinctions necessary for developing minimum qualifications, and when lived experience is a consideration.
Create a plan to address space limitations for interns	Complete	The process for re-envisioning the Metro Regional Center took into account space requirements for interns as well as all Metro staff and the reconfiguration of space (e.g. drop-in-desks) and new approaches to work more generally (e.g. remote working options) should support interns in finding spaces that best suit their needs.
Staff and management from every department are actively involved in the implementation of the Strategic Plan and DAP through a clear and representative process.	In progress.	Staff and management primarily advance the Strategic Plan by implementing their department-level DEI plans. The Zoo, P&D, P&N, and PES completed their plans in 2018. OCC, Expo and P5 have started work on their plans, with OCC almost completing their plan, but this work was put on hold because of COVID. HR, the Research Center and Communications have begun work.
Create opportunities for staff across the entire organizational structure to discuss how to improve the organizational equity structures at Metro.	In progress.	DEI will convene the first meeting of the agency-wide equity leaders team made up of equity practitioners in April 2021. Employee Resource Groups, including the new Black ERG, also increasingly advise leadership on a variety of workplace and equity issues.
Adopt policy that Metro management positions must attend required DEI related trainings.	In progress.	HR and DEI have developed a curriculum and training plan to build DEI competency as part of the required trainings for Metro managers and will be implementing this in 2021.
Develop an internal and external communication strategy to convey Metro's leadership commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.	In progress.	Metro has developed an internal Communications plan, added communications capacity to support DEI efforts, and is implementing new communications strategies like the bi-weekly DEI Intersections newsletter. Work on an external communications strategy was paused due to COVID but Communications continues to highlight equity efforts and engagement opportunities externally through a variety of platforms. Communications also used Metro's social media platforms to share space with leaders of color from across the region as part of its #sharethemic series.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal C – Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce – continued

Action title	Status	More information
Provide support and training for hiring managers to assess job requirements, create accessible job announcements and understand the value of diverse hiring.	In progress.	The Recruitment team conducted a roadshow to showcase new recruitment policies. Additionally, Human Resources launched a Supervisors Essentials Program that includes a segment on recruitment. The second tier of the Supervisors Essentials Program will include a learning that dives deeper into inclusive recruitment strategies and the role of managers.
Identify and propose ways to connect existing community leadership programs with career opportunities as Metro.	In progress.	Metro's past agency-wide partnership program resulted in a number of youth of color and others getting employment at Metro. While COVID-19 impacted Metro's ability to hire for new positions, community relationships continued to connect community leaders with the few job opportunities available.
Reassess Metro values to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion are equally recognized as guiding principles.	In progress.	Communications has led an update of Metro's mission, vision and values that integrates DEI values. Roll out of this work was put on pause due to COVID-19.
Incorporate equity discussions into all Metro advisory committees to ensure that these bodies uphold the same commitment to equity.	In progress	Metro piloted DEI trainings for our advisory committees in 2019, including JPACT and MPAC, but no further work has been done to systemize training opportunities for Metro advisory committees.
Identify and propose new opportunities for staff across Metro to develop and deepen relationships in formal and informal settings.	In progress.	COVID has created barrier to staff engagement but also created unprecedented opportunities (and needs) for Metro-wide staff engagement. In the last year the COOs office held multiple town halls, information sessions and informal virtual gatherings to build relationships and community among staff. The ERGs also met frequently to support staff and build community.
Identify and propose new ways to increase accessibility of DEI trainings for venue staff and temporary/seasonal/part-time/graveyard staff.	In progress.	COVID-19 forced DEI to temporarily suspend its training program in the Venues, though it is being restarted in the coming months. Lessons learned about virtual engagement and access will be brought forward to support accessibility to folks from all work-sites and job types.

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 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal C – Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce – continued

Action title	Status	More information
Identify and propose a variety of new learning methods and trainings to reach all regular status staff.	In progress.	COVID-19 forced DEI to shift to on-line trainings and shift training topics like Trauma Informed Care practices which have been highly utilized across the agency. Lessons learned about virtual engagement and access will be brought forward to support accessibility to folks from all work-sites and job types.
Diversify hiring committees by department including considering gender, age and cultural group. Include community members where appropriate.	In progress.	This is a best practice that is currently utilized in many departments, per the recommendation of HR and DEI, and is widely recommended by Recruiters.
Create agency-wide policies regarding intern diversity and compensation.	In progress.	Work was started but put on pause due to COVID-19. Some departments, however, do recruit for, focus on, and support underrepresented youth through their internship programs.
Further the job market preparation of interns by providing skill building opportunities	In progress.	Intern program mainly put on hold during pandemic. No additional work has been done at the agency-wide level to support managers in providing skill building opportunities to interns.
Expand hiring interview format option for increased cultural sensitivity	In progress.	Recruitment team is developing an SOP to identify inclusive best practices to consider during the interview, hiring and selection processes.
Identify and propose new opportunities for potential applicants to learn more about job positions.	In progress.	Due to the pandemic and significant layoffs agency-wide, this has been postponed.
Identify and propose ways to increase pathways for Metro staff to gain skills for career advancement.	In progress.	Human Resources is currently expanding its suite of training opportunities to improve access to professional development for staff across the agency.
Communicate job announcements using culturally specific languages, channels and organizations.	In progress.	Job announcements were updated to include more inclusive language to attract a wider and more diverse audience.
Partner with and invest in local communities of color and CBOs to attract more diverse applicant pools.	In progress.	Human Resources maintains a list of diversity-focused organizations/CBOs to post job opportunities.
Department leadership work with DEI program staff to determine how equity, diversity and inclusion can be addressed as part of staff's work duties.	In progress.	Long-term plans include reviewing all classifications and potentially identifying agency-wide competencies that could be embedded into job descriptions and work duties. This work has been done on individual work teams and across some departments but is not yet done agency-wide.

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Goal C – Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce – continued

Action title	Status	More information
Develop a succession plan for all levels in the organization.	Not started.	Developing a success planning strategy that includes a diversity-focus would require additional FTE capacity to create, implement and manage the program.
Create a pilot professional mentorship program to cultivate front-line staff of color for leadership positions.	Not started.	Developing a Mentorship programs could be very value-added but would require additional FTE capacity to create, implement and manage the program. Discussions are underway to assess feasibility in years to come.
Determine diversity, equity and inclusion criteria so that they can be clearly incorporated as part of the performance management review (PACe) for all staff.	Not started.	Revamping the performance management system is a critical goal that will not be addressed until FY 22. HR is purchasing the performance management module in PeopleSoft which will support improved system capability. HR also plans on gathering feedback from key stakeholders (like ERGs) in revisioning the performance management process. Some managers and work teams already incorporate equity criteria into their performance reviews but it is not yet widely adopted.

Goal D – *Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations*

Action title	Status	More information
Communicate program and service announcements using culturally specific language and channels (e.g. tribal newspapers and Russian radio stations)	In progress.	It is not standard practice to translate formal notices into multiple languages, however, it is now standard to include an offer for translation in multiple languages with every formal notice. Outreach opportunities targeted to specific communities are always translated accordingly. Specific departments use culturally specific language and channels on a project specific basis. For example, the Ask Metro program has transcultural culturally specific programming for Latinx, Russian and African American communities and communicated through culturally specific channels.
Use newly standardized demographic questions across the agency and establish methods for disaggregating results for agency-wide public engagement efforts.	In progress.	Standard demographic questions were developed in 2019 and are widely used. Standard methods for disaggregating community engagement results have not been developed but there is growing consensus about the importance of and need for a central repository of community engagement information.
Identify and propose ways to increase community cultural events held at all Metro properties.	In progress.	Prior to COVID-19 the venues held a variety of cultural events and culturally-specific programming including AAPI heritage month, Black Violin and a diverse range of performers for the Music on Main series. The Expo center has also held culturally- and historically-relevant events.
Identify and propose new opportunities for communities of color to learn about Metro programs and services.	In progress.	Work continues to happen at the department level, in particular within WPES, to improve workforce development opportunities for communities of color. Metro's many grant programs continue to strive to expand communication networks to reach more communities of color and the organizations that serve them. Parks and Nature also developed a trauma-informed regional approach to water safety, including working with culturally-specific CBOs to distribute life jackets in summer 2020 and will expand the program in 2021.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal D – *Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations - continued*

Action title	Status	More information
Recognize the connection of Metro destinations to specific communities of color and visibly acknowledge how these connections are foundational to guiding Metro’s work.	In progress.	A variety of work has been done towards this action, including displays created through the OCC renovation, Parks and Nature's presentations on the historic context of water for the Black community, and the work historians have been doing to understand the land being considered for new transfer stations. Metro continues to formalize and invest in relationships with Indigenous community members and tribal governments.
Reassess the guidelines for availability and usage of Metro properties for community-based organizations, and create awareness of those guidelines among communities of color.	In progress.	COVID-19 put this work on pause, but this will be part of the conversation as Metro properties begin re-opening later this year. The MRC remodel, too, opens up new opportunities for sharing space with community-based organizations.
With the direct support of the DEI program, expand the pilot for developing a specific plan of action to advance equity within the programs, services, plans, and policies of each department within 18 months.	In progress.	Racial equity planning was put on hold in the Venues, but work continues in HR and Communications.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal E – *Metro’s resource allocation advances racial equity*

Action title	Status	More information
Require project managers to attend procurement training on developing RFPs.	In progress.	Procurement is unable to mandate training on this topic. Training continues to be offered and individual requests for training are increasing over time.
Develop and implement agency-wide equity criteria for grants, investments and sponsorships to increase impact and investment consistency.	In progress.	Work is happening among grant managers to standardize equity-criteria and utilize best practices to improve racial equity outcomes and improve accessibility. No staff member or department is formally coordinating this work, however.
Research and choose method to identify the contracting needs for firms in the region. These preparations include the identification of financial resources and coordination with jurisdictional partners, Metro’s attorney and procurement office.	In progress.	This work is on hold as a result of COVID-19. Budget cuts resulted in a lack of funding to hire consultants to continue this.
If applicable, establish a process that requires an explanation as to why a COBID contractor was not utilized.	In progress.	FRS currently does not have staff resources to follow up on this content. Recommendation is to eventually establish contract management positions at Metro to follow through with data collection for COBID firms.
Increase Metro staff participation in professional networking opportunities for communities of color.	In progress.	Beyond the ERGs no additional work has been done to create formal spaces or opportunities for professional networking opportunities.
Involve the COBID contractors in the development of RFPs and grants to increase accessibility, as long as they do not bid.	In progress.	This work is currently on hold due to COVID-19. Requires staff time and procurement team also had staff who were laid off. No resources to compensate contractors.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer

Goal E – Metro’s resource allocation advances racial equity – continued

Action title	Status	More information
Develop and implement a budget tool to assist in making resource allocation decisions, including discretionary budget allocation, investments, contracts, grants and sponsorships using a racial equity lens.	In progress.	Parks and Nature is piloting a participatory grant making model in a portion of their bond-funded projects.
Increase intentional outreach to communities and community-based organizations regarding contracting opportunities, working through business partners.	In progress.	Currently, procurement staff offer monthly 1:1 office hours and training on working with Metro for COBID certified firms and to encourage non-certified firms to pursue certification with the State of Oregon. Have a limited budget to find consultants to support firms in writing better proposals.
Conduct user testing to improve access to and awareness of digital tools to communicate all financial opportunities at Metro to communities of color.	In progress.	Certain best practices are now standard at Metro to improve access to financial opportunities for COBID firms. This includes providing 1:1 office hours, sharing opportunities with minority contractor organizations and hosting open-houses.

cc: Marissa Madrigal, Chief Operating Officer
 Andrew Scott, Deputy Chief Operating Officer