

# Metro | Meeting minutes

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee  
Date: Monday, November 17, 2014  
Time: 3 to 5 p.m.  
Place: Metro Regional Center, Room 270, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland

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## Attendees

Equity strategy advisory committee	Carl Talton, Betty Dominguez, Philip Wu, , Julia Meier, Irene Konev, Ben Duncan, Kirsten Kilchenstein, Rey España
	Absent: Daniel Vázquez, Judi Martin, Virginia Nguyen, Pam Treece
Equity baseline workgroup	Jared Franz
Metro	Martha Bennett, Scott Robinson, Gabriele Schuster, Pietro Ferrari, Cassie Salinas, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Valerie Cuevas, Patty Unfred, Molly Vogt

## Welcome and announcements

Carl Talton called the meeting to order, reviewed the agenda and welcomed everyone. Approval of the October meeting minutes will be tabled until the December 8 meeting.

Martha Bennett thanked the committee for all their service and expertise and acknowledged that even though the process is taking a bit longer we are entering an important phase of the work and the committee's input is so valuable. Martha Bennett also reported that additional resources, including staff, have been added to the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) program which is beginning to work as a functional work team for Metro.

Carl Talton expressed appreciation for Metro's commitment shown through the creation of the DEI program. The committee expressed interest in giving input on equity-related projects and initiatives happening right now, while the strategy is being developed. The committee was concerned over a recent RFP concerning lending partners. Martha committed to follow up on that inquiry and communicate back to the group. The committee would like to be a resource as consultative community stakeholders for work happening now even with individual equity-related projects. The committee would like to enhance accountability and be able to answer to the community about equity progress happening now. The Joint Subcommittee may serve as a starting point for advisory committee inclusion on currently projects while balancing the original charge of strategy development.

**Diversity program update**

Patty Unfred gave the Diversity program update in Bill Tolbert's absence. Highlights from the past year include hosting several cultural awareness events, mandatory training Ouch II Your Silence Hurst, Fairview seasonal job fair, MWESB open house and optional training series Race the Power of Illusion. There are four core areas leading the implementation of work plans with staff from all different departments across Metro. The four core areas are Internal Awareness and Diversity Sensitivity, Recruitment and Retention, Committee Membership and Public Involvement, and Procurement; and a fifth core area on accessibility will be added in 2015. Bill Tolbert will be rescheduled to give a more detailed update to the committee on recruitment and retention.

Gabriele Schuster, procurement manager, presented updates on Metro's efforts to grow MWESB utilization in contracting. Recent initiatives include reviewing Metro code for opportunities to hold new outreach activities; implementing new procedures for holding primary contractors accountable for using MWESB in subcontracting including payment reports and spot-check calls; training staff on the benefits and how to increasing use of MWESB; and hosting MWESB training workshops where underserved businesses can learn how to business with Metro, how to get certified by the State, how to write a proposal and where to find RFP/Q. For Fiscal Year 14, Metro awarded about \$20 million in contracts with about 15% to MWESB, which is the Metro goal. Within that 15% MWESB, the breakdown is approximately 37% women-owned, 35% emerging, and 38% minority-owned. These figures are for Metro and not MERC (Portland's, Oregon Convention Center and Expo Center). Generally, MERC issues about 10% of the dollar volume of contracts that Metro does. Per committee request, the MWEBS annual report will be emailed to the committee.

Metro Procurement is working with minority contractors and minority business chambers in a review of Metro code. The advisory committee expressed high interest in participating in the upcoming review of Metro code for MWESB practices.

**Draft indicator definitions update**

Pietro Ferrari reviewed the recent process that the baseline workgroup has been leading to refine their definitions and descriptions of the 10 draft indicators. Carl Talton, Phil Wu and Metro staff provided alternative wording and comments to the baseline workgroup who will consider this input when writing their final versions for the second draft of the Equity Baseline Framework report which will be available to the advisory committee for comments by December with the final draft coming to the committee in January. The advisory committee will have the opportunity to write a response to the report and will then make recommendations directly to Martha Bennett. Jared Franz agreed with the committee that words are powerful and the baseline workgroup is looking to have a consistent voice throughout the definitions and considering alternatives to the term "access." Jared Franz also cautioned that there may be some pushback on suggestions to use "every resident" as opposed to specific references to historically underserved communities.

Ben Duncan added the importance of values-based language the using the racial justice lens; Julia Meier added that an inclusive voice is important but the work needs to be targeted;

Betty Dominguez reiterated the importance of including other low-income mainstream communities as well.

### **Prioritizing indicator data sets exercise**

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu briefed the committee on recent meetings with Metro senior leadership to discuss roles and responsibilities related to each data set within the 10 draft indicators. The exercise today will have each committee member rank the data sets by High, Medium or Low priority from community perspective. The committee's input will be given to the baseline workgroup and will also be used as input to Metro staff in the development of the strategy. Staff input on Metro roles and responsibilities looked at both direct and region-wide potential impacts, both of which may be incorporated into the strategy.

Representing the baseline workgroup, Jared Franz answered some clarifying questions about the draft indicators. Many data sets are yet to be clarified or specified to a finalized point during this framework process so committee members were urged to take the data sets at face-value. Some clarifying comments on data sets included: habitability can be thought of as the quality of housing available; location of high capacity roads is meant to speak to safety and air quality; cultural institutions was an amenity important to the group which was not large enough to warrant its own indicator category so was combined somewhat imperfectly.

Committee discussion during the individual ranking exercise included comments urging Metro to get to the next level in regional leadership as an influencer; using stories and concrete descriptions to engage staff in how their daily work effects equity; and caution that using too many indicators may lead to a diffused strategy.

The committee also expressed strong interest in seeing how Metro is including equity as a key criterion in the upcoming budget planning for FY2015-16. Julia Meier suggested that Metro shall use the 2015-16 fiscal year as the "pilot" year to start demonstrating intentional application of equity in the agency. This idea was unanimously supported by the ESAC members present even though the committee lacked quorum at that point of the meeting to approve it. Program staff agreed to relay this suggestion to Martha Bennett for consideration.

### **Next steps**

- The ESAC meeting for December has been cancelled.
- The next ESAC meeting will be January 26, 2015