



**STRATEGIC PLAN TO
ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY,
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

**This section is to be completed in the final
drafted plan in spring 2016**

FOREWORD

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction

Why equity?	7
Racial equity as Metro’s strategic direction	8
Metro’s commitment	9
About this document	10

Where is Metro going?

The destination	11
Organizational goals	12
Metro department specific action plans.....	18
Metro’s five-year objectives and action items	19

What path is Metro using to get there?

The strategy	31
Racial equity	32
Implementation	35
Evaluation	35
Racial equity analysis and decision-support tool	36
Diversity Action Plan integration	40

What are the historical and current conditions?

Racial disparities	43
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What information is guiding this strategy?

Community engagement	45
Staff engagement	46
Organizational self-assessment related to racial equity	47
Agency-wide plans and initiatives	49

Glossary	51
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INTRODUCTION

Why equity?

Metro works to improve the quality of life for the Portland metropolitan region's 1.5 million residents by providing land use and transportation planning; entertainment, educational and convention-related venues; parks, natural areas, cemeteries and outdoor recreation facilities; and recycling and garbage services. The data research for which Metro is known shows that, like most of the nation, the Portland region's communities are becoming more diverse. It is projected that by the year 2045, communities of color will be the majority.

Our current and future diversity will help the region develop and maintain sustainable economic growth *if* we proactively address the issue of equity. Research shows that regions that attain more economic growth are those with greater racial inclusion and smaller racial income gaps.¹ Unfortunately, most communities of color in the Portland metropolitan region currently experience the worst economic and social outcomes of any demographic group, due to a long history of exclusionary and discriminatory policies.

To prepare for a healthy and prosperous future, Metro, other jurisdictions, community organizations and the business and philanthropic communities are taking a long, hard look at equity. It's not only the right thing to do; it's the smart way to improve our present and plan for our future.

¹ Treuhaft, S., Blackwell, A.G., & Pastor, M. (2012). America's Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model. Retrieved January 2016: http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/SUMMIT_FRAMING_WEB_20120110.PDF

Racial equity as Metro’s strategic direction

The Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, referred to hereafter as the “Strategic Plan”, is the culmination of Metro’s efforts to articulate how the agency intends to advance equity in its crucial work in the Portland metropolitan region.

The strategic direction selected is to advance racial equity. Metro will concentrate on eliminating the disparities that the most vulnerable in

Historically marginalized - Groups who have been denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination in the United States.

the Portland metropolitan region, people of color, experience in all aspects of social well-being, especially in those related to Metro’s policies, programs, services and destinations. People of color share similar barriers with other historically marginalized groups such as people with low income, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community, older adults and young people. **By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups.** The result will be that all people in the Portland region will experience better outcomes.

This strategic direction allows Metro the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of the most vulnerable communities while having a positive impact on the Portland region’s overall quality of life.

Metro's commitment

As a government agency, Metro is committed to advancing racial equity as the key strategic direction to eliminate the stark racial disparities in quality of life among the people who live in the Portland metropolitan region. The solutions identified by focusing on removing the barriers that affect people of color, the most vulnerable in the region, will also be effective to identify and remove barriers for other historically marginalized groups. The Strategic Plan will focus on removing barriers for people of color, and Metro's Diversity Action Plan, approved by Metro Council in 2012, will continue to remove barriers for low income, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community, older adults and young people.

The Diversity Action Plan and this Strategic Plan, both coordinated by Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Program, will continue to coordinate efforts, create synergies and eliminate duplication to meet the agency's obligation to effectively serve all communities in the region.

This Strategic Plan intends to be iterative. The following sections contain Metro's current best effort to create the methodology and the practice of institutional and structural change to eliminate racial disparities. As the Strategic Plan is implemented, it will reveal further opportunities for adjustment and improvement. Future strategic plans will build on the successes and lessons of this first iteration, but Metro's commitment to advancing racial equity will remain constant.

About this document

This Strategic Plan has several important elements:

1. *Theory of change:* Metro will utilize several interlocking strategies that will lead to long-term institutional and structural change.
 - Structural** – The ways in which public policies, institutional practices, cultural representations and other norms interact.
 - Institutional** – The ways in which policies and practices within and across an institution interact, intentionally or not.
2. *Goals, objectives, actions:* Five long-term goals that will advance racial equity at the institutional and structural level. Each goal contains several objectives that can be achieved within a five-year horizon. Each objective contains several related action items.
3. *Implementation vision:* A preliminary vision of an implementation structure that includes participation of community members and interdisciplinary and interdepartmental staff teams.
4. *Evaluation framework:* A proposed approach to measure outputs, outcomes and ultimately the impact of Metro’s equity efforts in the lives of people in the Portland region. The evaluation framework includes mechanisms for community members to be more involved in the evaluation of Metro’s equity efforts and uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.
5. *Analysis and decision-support tool:* An outline of an analysis and decision-support tool that will be used to incorporate racial equity into existing and future policies, programs, procedures and services at Metro.
6. *Relationship between racial equity, diversity and inclusion:* Metro understands racial equity, diversity and inclusion to be interconnected strategies to ensure that all people in the Portland metropolitan region have the opportunity to reach their full potential. This section explains how this Strategic Plan relates to past efforts in these areas, such as the Diversity Action Plan adopted in 2012.

WHERE IS METRO GOING?

The destination

Metro is committed to inspire, teach and invite people, businesses, nonprofit organizations and public partners to arrive at a Portland region where:

- All individuals and communities benefit from quality jobs, living wages, a strong economy, stable and affordable housing, safe and reliable transportation, clean air and water, a healthy environment and sustainable resources.
- Metro and other public agencies recognize that racial equity is a cornerstone of good governance to ensure the success of everyone, especially historically marginalized communities, by working together to end the avoidable inequities that prevent the realization of an individual's full potential and are detrimental to us collectively.
- We, as a metropolitan region, change our public structures, institutions and processes to address social and economic disparities for people of color that are rooted in our historical and public decision-making.
- Diversity is celebrated and all communities are meaningfully engaged in public decision-making.

People of color and communities of color - include Native Americans, African Americans, African and Slavic immigrants, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Latinos or Hispanics. The Slavic immigrant community has been included in this collective term because their overall well-being and health outcomes are experienced through a racial lens.

Diversity - The variance or difference amongst people. This variance includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, nationality, language preference, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and others. These differences are tied to a variety of other aspects of diversity such as experience, work styles, life experience, education, beliefs and ideas.

Organizational goals

Metro is committed to ensuring that all people on the region have the opportunity to thrive in all aspects of social well-being, regardless of their background or zip code. This is Metro's overarching organizational goal, which is a moral imperative, an economic necessity, and the purpose of good government: to effectively serve all people. In order to achieve this overarching goal, Metro has identified racial equity as its strategic direction, and has developed this Strategic Plan to be the blue print for its implementation.

This Strategic Plan is built around five long-term goals. The goals are intentional guideposts that direct Metro in creating specific objectives, actions, and measures of evaluation and accountability as the agency works to help the Portland metropolitan region reach its equitable and prosperous destination. Each goal has several related objectives and action items, contained in the tables starting on page 21.

Metro has the authority and ability to address many of the goals, objectives and action items unilaterally. Others will require collaborative effort with partners.

In addition, some action items are implementable within Metro's current budget and work scope while others will require additional investment of resources, including staff time and funding. Items potentially requiring additional resources are flagged in the tables. Metro is committed to investing in the additional effort needed to turn this plan into a functional implementation framework.

The section titled "Metro department-specific action plans" on page 18 describes where much of the implementation thinking will take place. **Stakeholder comments on this discussion draft of the Strategic Plan will be vital to ensure that the final Strategic Plan lead Metro to implementation. Metro staff invites the readers to make suggestions on the value of potential actions, their relative priority, and potential resources that could be developed for their implementation.**

Evaluation is the final key element of this Strategic Plan. Metro will use an evaluation approach that brings together community members and Metro staff to identify qualitative and quantitative data measures for each of the five goals.

A high-level measure of the success of each goal will be included in the final version of this Strategic Plan.

The evaluation process will enable Metro to collect and analyze data on the condition of people of color and other historically marginalized groups in all issue areas identified in the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan. These data will highlight who is experiencing disparity levels similar to communities of color, and provide a starting point for the Diversity Action Plan to continue to generate solutions to address the needs of all other historically marginalized groups.

A. Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.

Metro brings together diverse partners from across the Portland metropolitan region to reduce racial disparities and improve outcomes in communities of color through coordinated and innovative approaches. Metro leads by convening decision-makers and providing research and technical support to assist local jurisdictions in equity initiatives.

What does this goal mean for the community?

Community - All individuals who live, work, play or pray in the Portland metropolitan region.

As a regional government, Metro is in a unique position to bring together public, private, philanthropic, and community partners throughout the Portland region to coordinate efforts to advance racial equity. Key policy areas to address collaboratively include: improving access to government services and decision-making processes, building relationships, expanding workforce development to create strong employment pipelines for people of color, creating affordable housing to meet the urgent need for stable housing choices, ensuring accessible, safe and affordable options for travel, managing the regional solid waste system in ways that improve access to service and create benefits, and operating parks so that health-promoting natural areas are preserved and made culturally accessible for all.

What does this goal mean for Metro staff and leaders?

Metro will strengthen partnerships and take a leadership role in breaking down the silos between regional partners that prevent the coordinated advancement of racial equity in the areas of community involvement, workforce development, affordable housing, transportation, solid waste management and parks/natural areas. Metro staff will continue and increase their current work providing research and technical support to regional and local partners.

B. Metro meaningfully engages communities of color.

Community relationships based on trust, policies that strengthen community involvement and participatory accountability practices work to ensure that communities of color are meaningfully engaged and influence the Metro decisions and programs that impact their lives. Metro commits to co-creating with the community, learning from the collective wisdom and building the capacity of community leaders.

What does this goal mean for the community?

Metro will pass policies, create systems and invest resources to break down the social, historical and institutional barriers that prevent communities of color from meaningfully engaging in Metro decisions and policies, programs and plans design. Barriers include the time and location of meetings, the provision of childcare and language services, the financial cost for communities to participate, the community's authority to influence decisions and access decision makers, and the investment of Metro staff and community partners' time to build relationships. In partnership with communities, Metro will establish and continue to refine culturally informed involvement practices to ensure respectful and effective engagement of the Portland region's diverse communities. Additionally, Metro will strengthen and build lasting relationships and partnerships in order to foster greater understanding and capacity building in the community and internally. Metro will also work with the community to develop evaluation practices that increase public accountability.

What does this goal mean for Metro staff and leaders?

Earning community trust and establishing strong community relationships will be a priority for all Metro staff and leaders. Supported with the necessary resources, Metro staff will also work to ensure that engagement efforts with communities of color are coordinated and culturally informed, to provide meaningful opportunities to shape decisions and designs. Also, engagement efforts will place importance on building relationships through meaningful, one-on-one or small-group dialogue sessions with community. Metro staff will be responsible for reporting how community feedback was used and its impact on decision-making. Metro will adopt a standard practice of partnering with community to co-design engagement and evaluation measures for Metro policies, practices and plans.

C. Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce.

Metro has an organizational culture that is welcoming and inclusive of all people of color. Through training and hiring practices that break down barriers for applicants of color, Metro will achieve a racially diverse workforce with opportunities for advancement and strong retention and promotion rates for staff of color. All Metro staff will receive the training and support necessary to become culturally proficient and equitably serve all residents of the Portland metropolitan region.

What does this goal mean for the community?

Metro will have an organizational culture that makes all staff feel welcome and included, with a workforce that reflects the racial diversity of the Portland region. This diversity will be visible throughout all positions and leadership levels at Metro. Such a workforce will bring new, innovative ideas to guide policy direction and advance racial equity and produce more informed equity champions within Metro. It will also strengthen Metro's ability to provide effective and appropriate services to all communities to ensure equitable and culturally informed access to Metro resources. This diverse workforce will strengthen community connection with Metro to increase involvement in and awareness of Metro's programs, services, destinations and decisions.

What does this goal mean for Metro staff and leaders?

Metro's inclusive culture and hiring practices will result in diverse staff at all levels, an environment where diverse opinions are valued and increased connections with community. It will be a culture that actively encourages staff to take bold action to break down racial disparities, while members of management will be leading advocates for diversity, equity and inclusion. This culture will welcome and foster safe and authentic conversations around equity and staff will have the tools to more inclusively support communities and fellow staff members. Metro will continue to develop hiring policies and procedures to ensure staff diversity throughout all position levels and create opportunities for advancement through mentorship and training. Additionally, clear and intentional investments will be made in front-line, temporary, seasonal and part-time staff to advance their careers within Metro.

D. Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations.

Communities of color are aware of and feel welcome to access Metro's diverse services, programs and destinations. Through better understanding of the needs of culturally specific communities and the impacts of its programs and services, Metro will provide safe and welcoming environments and experiences that enrich the lives of community members.

What does this goal mean for the community?

Metro will partner with communities of color to identify and break down barriers so that Metro programs and services match community needs. Communities of color will be better informed about the availability of Metro programs, services and venues through culturally appropriate communication channels and tools. Metro properties will welcome visitors with culturally informed and representative environments.

What does this goal mean for Metro staff and leaders?

Metro staff will work to ensure that diversity, equity and inclusion are foundational pieces that inform the provision of culturally appropriate services and programs. Metro will also strive to ensure that all its properties are welcoming to all communities by creating a culturally informed environment that is accessible by people with all kinds of needs and abilities. Each department and venue at Metro will develop its own equity action plan to best deliver its unique services and programs equitably to the community, based on the goals of this Strategic Plan.

E. Metro's resource allocation advances racial equity.

Metro advances economic opportunities for communities of color through various avenues including equitable contracting practices, distribution of investments, grant programs, apprenticeships and proactive convening of regional partners to support a racially diverse construction workforce.

What does this goal mean for the community?

By addressing barriers in its contracting processes, Metro will support and facilitate applications for Metro contracts by COBID-certified

COBID certified firms – State of Oregon's Certification Office of Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID).

firms, community-based groups and nonprofit organizations. Metro will apply an equity decision-making tool to its allocation of resources, both human and financial, to ensure more equitable investment in communities of color. Additionally, Metro will assume a regional leadership role to bring together partners to coordinate investments and create new employment pipelines through internships, apprenticeships, resources and training, helping increase the number of minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses in the Portland region, as well as skilled professionals of color in the construction trades.

What does this goal mean for Metro staff and leaders?

Metro staff will continue to assess and strengthen contracting processes to ensure the removal of barriers and increased support for COBID- certified firms, community-based groups and nonprofit organizations. Staff will receive support in using an equity decision-making tool to assess and allocate resource investments in programs and services, including grants. Additionally, Metro will assume a leadership role in strengthening cross-regional partnerships to create new employment pipelines that expand the number of minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses in the Portland region, as well as skilled professionals of color in the construction trades.

Metro department-specific action plans

The following section presents several proposed actions to move the agency toward reaching each of the five goals presented above. The actions listed are centered on agency-wide practices involving areas such as engagement, procurement, resource allocation, communications, hiring, retention and accessibility of facilities.

These actions are not focused on specific programs, projects or services because a major recommendation of this Strategic Plan is for each Metro department to develop its own equity action plan within 18 months of the adoption of this Strategic Plan. Directors and staff in each Metro department and venue are best positioned to identify implementable actions that will have the greatest impact on racial equity, diversity and inclusion related to each of their programs, projects, services and plans.

Recommendation – Each Metro department will develop its own equity action plan within 18 months of the adoption of this Strategic Plan.

Guided by the toolkit in Appendix F and supported by staff from Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program (DEI), the development of each department and venue's action plan will be a multistep process involving staff and community stakeholders. Each action plan will ultimately be a list of concrete actions that the department and venue will commit to implementing and evaluating over the next five years.

Departments and venues will also use the [Equity Framework Report](#) to guide the development of their action plans. The Equity Framework Report was a Metro-commissioned, community-led report resulting from a yearlong collaborative effort conducted by six community-based organizations: Adelante Mujeres, Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon, Center for Intercultural Organizing, Coalition for a Livable Future, OPAL – Environmental Justice Oregon and the Urban League of Portland. The report presents foundational definitions and information that will support each department and venue in more fully understanding its roles and responsibilities to address the barriers faced by communities and staff of color.

Metro's five-year objectives and action items

Each of the five goals in this Strategic Plan encompasses several specific objectives with an associated list of action items. Each objective is set along a five-year horizon for completion, although there will likely be additional work remaining at the end of that period. The detailed lists of organizational goals, objectives and actions are summarized in the tables on pages 21 to 30.

These objectives and actions were identified and distilled from the results of the community, stakeholder and staff engagement conversations conducted by Metro councilors and staff, in partnership with community-based organizations.

These objectives and actions are agency-wide. Assisted by DEI Program staff, the development of additional department- and venue-specific strategic plans during the implementation phase will provide more informed objectives, actions and timelines than can be provided in this agency-wide strategic direction.

Reflecting Metro's desire to be a continuous learning organization, this Strategic Plan's goals, objectives and actions will be periodically updated and modified as needed according to the results they achieve and evolving conditions in the Portland metropolitan region, future changes within Metro and other unforeseen events. The entire Strategic Plan will be updated in 2021, to coincide with the five-year implementation horizon of this initial plan.

NOTE: This discussion draft of the strategic plan may contain more action items than can feasibly be accomplished in a five-year time frame. Staff has intentionally left action items broad to allow community members, local partners and other stakeholders the opportunity to help prioritize the actions during the public comment period. A final list of action items will be included in the final version of the plan.

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The table below contains more action items than may feasibly be accomplished in a five-year time frame. This has been intentionally done to allow community members, local partners and other stakeholders the opportunity to help prioritize the actions during the public comment period. A final list of action items will be included in the final version of the plan.

GOAL A

Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.

Using a racial equity approach to:

- Increase regional collaboration to improve public engagement in the region
- Invest in more stable and affordable housing choices
- Ensure the provision of accessible, safe and affordable transportation options
- Ensure the provision of welcoming and inclusive parks and natural areas
- Ensure equitable practices in the solid waste system and reduce amount and toxicity of waste

Goal Statement

Metro brings together diverse partners from across the Portland metropolitan region to reduce racial disparities and improve outcomes in communities of color through coordinated and innovative approaches. Metro leads by convening decision-makers and providing research and technical support to assist local jurisdictions in equity initiatives.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1
 Convene regional partners to advance coordinated regional equity efforts.

Issue	Actions
Limited opportunities for jurisdictional partners to come together to work collaboratively to advance equity.	Work with jurisdictional partners to advance racial equity efforts throughout the region. ✓
Limited opportunities for jurisdictions to work together to reduce engagement burdens on communities.	Implement one-stop forums to connect CBOs to resources, engagement opportunities, contracting opportunities, and staff at Metro and other public agencies across the region. \$
Limited opportunities for jurisdictional, business and community partners to share best practices, tools for evaluation and other resources.	Convene regional partners to share best practices related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •public engagement - sharing of community input, best practices, tools for evaluation and other resources. •stable and affordable housing •welcoming and inclusive parks and venues •accessible, safe and affordable transportation •equitable practices in the solid waste system •expand economic opportunity for communities of color through local government contracts and projects. \$

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required \$ = Additional financial resources required

Objective 2

Provide technical support to regional jurisdictions to advance equity efforts.

Issue	Actions	
<p>Limited resources for jurisdictional, business and community partners to conduct technical analyses to advance equity.</p>	<p>Work with jurisdictional staff to identify and provide technical support that can assist in advancing racial equity efforts.</p>	<p>Provide technical support to assist in expanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •stable and affordable housing •welcoming and inclusive parks and venues •accessible, safe and affordable transportation •equitable practices in the solid waste system •expand economic opportunity for communities of color through local government contracts and projects. ✓

Objective 3

Produce and provide research and information to support regional jurisdictions in advancing equity efforts.

Issue	Actions	
<p>Limited resources for jurisdictional, business and community partners to conduct research to advance equity.</p>	<p>Work with jurisdictional staff, community based organizations and businesses to identify research and information that can assist in advancing racial equity efforts.</p>	<p>Provide research and information support to expanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •stable and affordable housing •welcoming and inclusive parks and venues •accessible and safe transportation •equitable practices in the solid waste system •expand economic opportunity for communities of color through local government contracts and projects. ✓ \$

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required

\$ = Additional financial resources required

The table below contains more action items than may feasibly be accomplished in a five-year time frame. This has been intentionally done to allow community members, local partners and other stakeholders the opportunity to help prioritize the actions during the public comment period. A final list of action items will be included in the final version of the plan.

GOAL B

Metro meaningfully engages communities of color.

Goal Statement

Community relationships based on trust, policies that strengthen community involvement and participatory accountability practices work to ensure that communities of color are meaningfully engaged and influence the Metro decisions and programs that impact their lives. Metro commits to co-creating with the community, learning from the collective wisdom and building the capacity of community leaders.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1
 Establish and strengthen relationships with communities of color.

Issue	Actions		
Lack of consistent Metro investment to support community leadership development.	Partner and invest in existing community leadership programs. \$		
Engagement is often transactional instead of long-term and culturally appropriate.	Work with CBOs to increase small-group sessions with communities of color to better develop relationships. \$	Work with communities to co-create community-specific public engagement plans. \$	Design and implement a workshop series for Metro staff on how to strengthen relationships and improve culturally informed engagement. \$
Communities are over-burdened by engagement processes.	Develop resources and a system to increase staff engagement with CBOs and communities of color and better coordinate engagement across Metro. This system should include the maintaining of a record of community-based organizations' involvement with Metro to support relationship continuity. ✓ \$		

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required \$ = Additional financial resources required

Objective 2

Increase accountability by ensuring community involvement in the evaluation and implementation efforts.

Issue	Actions			
Lack of resources for Metro staff to help ensure that equity informs the development of programs, policies and plans .	DEI program provides support to each department to customize and employ the Racial Equity Analysis and Decision-Support Tool. ✓			
Lack of Metro accountability to the community related to agency-wide equity efforts.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Create a Metro Council-appointed body to provide community oversight on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.</td> <td>DEI program creates, publishes and submits annual equity report to leadership. Leadership annually presents this report to the region.</td> <td>Create mechanism to involve the community in the implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Plan. \$</td> </tr> </table>	Create a Metro Council-appointed body to provide community oversight on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.	DEI program creates, publishes and submits annual equity report to leadership. Leadership annually presents this report to the region.	Create mechanism to involve the community in the implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Plan. \$
Create a Metro Council-appointed body to provide community oversight on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.	DEI program creates, publishes and submits annual equity report to leadership. Leadership annually presents this report to the region.	Create mechanism to involve the community in the implementation and evaluation of the Strategic Plan. \$		
Lack of Metro accountability to the community related to department-specific equity efforts.	Departments add a new category in their quarterly management report, or other tool, to identify their equity actions and investments.			

Objective 3

Increase participation of communities of color in Metro decision-making.

Issue	Actions			
Public engagement meetings may not be supportive or conducive to participation.	Identify, assess and remove barriers to participation for communities of color. Barriers include: public meeting times and locations, lack of food and childcare, and location of meetings. \$			
Lack of direct interaction with decision-makers.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Create opportunities within public engagement activities for emerging community leaders to work side by side with decision makers to help drive plan, policy and program outcomes.</td> <td>Create opportunities within public engagement activities for decision-makers to receive direct community input and to meaningfully consider and discuss what they've heard.</td> <td>Create supported seats on advisory boards and committees for youth of color, community members, and CBO representatives. \$</td> </tr> </table>	Create opportunities within public engagement activities for emerging community leaders to work side by side with decision makers to help drive plan, policy and program outcomes.	Create opportunities within public engagement activities for decision-makers to receive direct community input and to meaningfully consider and discuss what they've heard.	Create supported seats on advisory boards and committees for youth of color, community members, and CBO representatives. \$
Create opportunities within public engagement activities for emerging community leaders to work side by side with decision makers to help drive plan, policy and program outcomes.	Create opportunities within public engagement activities for decision-makers to receive direct community input and to meaningfully consider and discuss what they've heard.	Create supported seats on advisory boards and committees for youth of color, community members, and CBO representatives. \$		
Lack of simple and easy ways for communities to become aware of engagement opportunities.	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Improve digital tools for communities of color to get involved including employment, volunteer, contract, committee, and public engagement opportunities.</td> <td>Create a resource for community-based organizations and residents on how to get involved in Metro's work and participate in the decision-making process. \$</td> </tr> </table>	Improve digital tools for communities of color to get involved including employment, volunteer, contract, committee, and public engagement opportunities.	Create a resource for community-based organizations and residents on how to get involved in Metro's work and participate in the decision-making process. \$	
Improve digital tools for communities of color to get involved including employment, volunteer, contract, committee, and public engagement opportunities.	Create a resource for community-based organizations and residents on how to get involved in Metro's work and participate in the decision-making process. \$			
Lack of longstanding, direct Metro investment to support community engagement.	Metro departments set aside resources for contracting and partnering with CBOs or communities for engagement.			

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required

\$ = Additional financial resources required

The table below contains more action items than may feasibly be accomplished in a five-year time frame. This has been intentionally done to allow community members, local partners and other stakeholders the opportunity to help prioritize the actions during the public comment period. A final list of action items will be included in the final version of the plan.

GOAL C

Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce.

Goal Statement

Metro has an organizational culture that is welcoming and inclusive of all people of color. Through training and hiring practices that break down barriers for applicants of color, Metro will achieve a racially diverse workforce with opportunities for advancement and strong retention and promotion rates for staff of color. All Metro staff will receive the training and support necessary to become culturally proficient and equitably serve all residents of the Portland metropolitan region.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1			
Metro's culture supports staff's ability to advance regional equity.			
Issue	Actions		
Limited resources for staff to participate in diversity, equity and inclusion work at Metro.	Include equity, diversity and inclusion as a job duty for every staff member and as part of the performance management review (PACE).		Build equity, diversity and inclusion time into staff work scope.
Equity is not perceived by all to be a central priority at Metro.	Adopt policy that Metro management positions must attend required DEI related trainings.	Reassess Metro values to include equity.	Incorporate equity discussions into all Metro advisory committees to ensure that these bodies uphold the same commitment to equity.
Limited opportunities for Metro staff to hold safe, honest and open conversations about equity.	Create opportunities for staff across the entire organizational structure to discuss how to improve the organizational equity structures at Metro, without fear of retribution.		
Barriers for staff to access tailored trainings on how to advance equity in their work.	Utilize a variety of learning methods and trainings to reach all regular status staff. \$		
Lack of consistently explicit and clear direction to advance equity from Metro leadership.	Develop an internal and external communication strategy to convey Metro's leadership commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.		Leadership demonstrates a commitment to ensure that staff engages in equity, diversity and inclusion work.
Lack of opportunity to collaborate between Metro staff members.	Create opportunities for staff across Metro to develop and deepen relationships in formal and informal settings.		

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required \$ = Additional financial resources required

Objective 2

Increase the skills of staff in advancing regional equity.

Issue	Actions
Limited understanding, skills and resources for Metro staff to advance equity in their work.	Prioritize and provide tailored trainings for all staff on how racial equity can be applied and on the use of the equity analysis and decision-support tool less in budgeting and other decisions. \$
Barriers for staff to access tailored trainings on how to advance equity in their work.	Increase accessibility of DEI trainings for venue staff and temporary/seasonal/part-time/graveyard staff. \$

Objective 3

Racial makeup of Metro staff at every level more closely resembles the demographics of the region.

Issue	Actions
Lack of diversity of Metro hiring committees.	Diversify hiring committees by department including considering gender, age and cultural group. Include community members where appropriate. \$
Limited equity direction regarding opportunities for community members to gain work experience at Metro.	Create clear agency-wide internship policies regarding intern diversity and compensation. \$
Limited partnerships with community-based organizations to advance Metro's diversity efforts.	Partner and invest in local communities of color and CBOs to attract diverse applicant pools. ✓ \$
Unintentional barriers in the Metro application process that limit application pool diversity.	Review recruitment processes and questions to include value on skills and abilities beyond purely technical skills. ✓
Lack of ladders for staff advancement at Metro.	Develop succession plan and career ladders for all levels in organization including temporary and seasonal employees. ✓ \$
Limited understanding, skills and resources for Metro hiring managers to advance equity through their hiring process.	Provide support and training for hiring managers to access job requirements and understand the value of diverse hiring. ✓
Limited community relationships prevent knowledge of and willingness to promote employment opportunities at Metro.	Provide resources for Metro staff to act as ambassadors in the community. Examples include recruitment, contracting and volunteer opportunities. ✓ \$

Legend: **✓** = Additional personnel resources required

\$ = Additional financial resources required

The table below contains more action items than may feasibly be accomplished in a five-year time frame. This has been intentionally done to allow community members, local partners and other stakeholders the opportunity to help prioritize the actions during the public comment period. A final list of action items will be included in the final version of the plan.

GOAL D

Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations.

Goal Statement

Communities of color are aware of and feel welcome to access Metro’s diverse services, programs and destinations. Through better understanding of the needs of culturally specific communities and the impacts of its programs and services, Metro will provide safe and welcoming environments and experiences that enrich the lives of community members.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1

Increase the number of individuals of color who access Metro services and facilities.

Issue	Actions
Limited awareness of resources for Metro staff to advance equity at facilities and through services.	Communicate available language resources and translation tools to staff and the public.
Lack of diverse, cultural events held for communities at Metro destinations.	Celebrate diverse array of cultural holidays at all properties (e.g. Día de los Muertos). \$
Lack of community awareness of Metro’s services, programs and destinations.	Create new opportunities for communities of color to learn about Metro programs and services. \$
Limited staff awareness of the communities who are utilizing services, programs and destinations.	Use newly standardized demographic questions across the agency and establish methods for aggregating results for agency-wide public engagement efforts.

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required

\$ = Additional financial resources required

Objective 2

Metro’s properties are more welcoming and reflective of all cultures.

Issue	Actions		
Limited acknowledgement of community, historical and cultural significance of Metro destinations.	Recognize the connection of Metro destinations to specific communities of color and acknowledge traumatic historical events associated with those destinations (e.g. significance of Metro parks and natural areas for the local Native American community). \$		
Metro facilities and destinations may not be welcoming to all.	Improve wayfinding at all Metro destinations, customized to the facility and the audience. \$	Involve communities of color in the feasibility and space study for the Metro Regional Center and other facilities.	Reassess the guidelines for availability and usage of Metro properties for community-based organizations, and create awareness of those guidelines to communities of color. \$

Objective 3

Increase the accessibility and relevance of Metro’s programs and services to communities of color.

Issue	Actions
Lack of strategic equity direction in each of Metro’s departments.	With the support of the DEI program, all departments and venues will develop a specific plan of action to advance equity within their programs, services, plans, and policies within 18 months of this plan’s adoption. ✓ \$
Lack of culturally specific promotion of Metro programs and services.	Communicate program and service announcements using culturally specific language and channels. \$

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required

\$ = Additional financial resources required

The table below contains more action items than may feasibly be accomplished in a five-year time frame. This has been intentionally done to allow community members, local partners and other stakeholders the opportunity to help prioritize the actions during the public comment period. A final list of action items will be included in the final version of the plan.

GOAL E

Metro’s resource allocation advances racial equity.

Goal Statement

Metro advances economic opportunities for communities of color through various avenues including equitable contracting practices, distribution of investments, grant programs, apprenticeships and proactive convening of regional partners to support a racially diverse construction workforce.

Objectives and Actions

Objective 1
 Advance social equity contracting at Metro.

Issue	Actions		
Lack of data on regional conditions regarding social contracting needs.	Undertake a procurement disparity study that identifies the contracting needs for firms in the region. \$		
Barriers in Metro contracting processes prevent COBID certified firms and community partners from realizing contracting opportunities.	Continue the social equity contracting program that focuses on the removal of barriers and the creation of accessible contracting opportunities for vulnerable business communities.	Create an equity tool to legally determine waivers for contract insurance.	Involve the COBID contractors in the development of RFP’s and grants to increase accessibility as long as they do not bid.
Diversity, equity and inclusion are not consistently central priorities for Metro contracts.	Build equity, diversity and inclusion metrics into contract proposal evaluation.	Require project managers to attend procurement training on developing RFPs.	If applicable, establish a process that requires an explanation as to why a COBID contractor was not utilized.
Limited community relationships prevent knowledge of and willingness of communities to promote contract opportunities at Metro.	Provide resources and training to Metro staff to cultivate partnerships with existing and potential COBID contractors.	Increase intentional outreach to communities and community-based organizations regarding contracting opportunities, working through business partners. \$	Increase Metro staff participation in professional networking opportunities for communities of color.
Limited opportunities for potential contractors to learn how to strengthen their firm and become COBID certified.	Continue to invest in providing regular and accessible trainings that assist companies to become certified as COBID and help COBID vendors apply for RFP’s. \$		

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required \$ = Additional financial resources required
 COBID = Certification Office of Business Inclusion and Diversity

Objective 2

Increase the utilization of equity criteria in resources allocation

Issue	Actions
Lack of an equity lens that can be applied to Metro resource allocation.	Develop a budget tool to make decisions and evaluate investments including contracts, grants, and sponsorships from a racial equity lens. \$
Lack of simple and easy ways for communities to become aware of financial opportunities (e.g. grants and contracts).	Create a “one-stop” tool to communicate all financial opportunities at Metro to communities of color. (e.g. a page in the Metro website, and a weekly email message sent to an interested parties list) \$
Lack of an agency-wide coordinated approach to tracking community investment.	Create a system to track resource investments in CBOs and grant sponsorship contracts. \$

Objective 3

Work with regional partners to increase the utilization of local minority, women, and emerging small businesses and the number of skilled construction tradespeople of color.

Issue	Actions
Lack of data on regional conditions regarding the racial demographic makeup of the construction trades workforce.	Conduct a market study to better understand the current composition of the construction trades workforce. \$
Lack of a coordinated regional effort to create a pipeline to increase the number of skilled construction tradespeople of color.	<p>Convene regional partners to discuss solutions to increase the number of skilled construction tradespeople of color available to work on large projects. This would include the following topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhancing apprenticeships • Identify technical and resources needs • Continuing to invest in and convening the Workforce Diversity Summit <p>✓ \$</p>
Persistent underutilization of local MWESB firms in governmental contracts throughout the region.	Convene regional partners to discuss solutions to increase the participation of local minority, women and emerging small businesses (MWESB) in government contracts (e.g. create joint workshop to advance COBID certification of MWESB firms). ✓ \$

Legend: ✓ = Additional personnel resources required \$ = Additional financial resources required
COBID = Certification Office of Business Inclusion and Diversity

WHAT PATH IS METRO USING TO GET THERE?

The Strategy

Metro will utilize several interlocking approaches that will lead to long-term institutional and structural change:

- **Leading with race:** Focusing on eliminating the disparities that people of color experience in all aspects of social well-being, especially in those related to Metro's policies, programs, services and destinations.
- **Targeted universalism:** Addressing the disparities that affect the most vulnerable will generate solutions to address the needs of all other vulnerable groups.
- **Building infrastructure:** Creating the frame and space for Metro councilors, directors, staff and other stakeholders to normalize the conversation about race, operationalize changes at the institutional level and organize for structural change.
- **Generating support:** Working with internal stakeholders and regional partners to promote an equity approach that creates institutional and structural change.
- **Partnering with communities of color:** Ensuring that members of these communities are involved in Metro's equity efforts to create greater trust and accountability.
- **Measuring progress:** Measuring and recognizing milestones and significant developments to increase and maintain momentum along the route to greater racial equity and change.

Racial equity

This Strategic Plan envisions a Portland region where conditions enable all individuals and communities to participate and prosper. To get to this destination, Metro believes it is time to use a strategy founded on **racial equity**.

A racial equity strategy focuses on “closing the gaps” so that race does not predict one’s success. To do so, Metro has to target strategies to focus improvements for the most vulnerable, moving beyond services to work on changing policies, institutions and structures.

To this end, this Strategic Plan intentionally focuses on the barriers that affect people of color. People of color share similar barriers with other historically marginalized groups such as people with low income, people with disabilities, LGBTQ community, older adults and young people. **By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color in the Portland metropolitan region, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups. The result will be that all people in the region will experience better outcomes.**

Metro’s working definition of equity

Our region is stronger when all individuals and communities benefit from quality jobs, living wages, a strong economy, stable and affordable housing, safe and reliable transportation, clean air and water, a healthy environment and sustainable resources that enhance our quality of life.

We share a responsibility as individuals within a community and communities within a region. Our future depends on the success of all, but avoidable inequities in the utilization of resources and opportunities prevent us from realizing our full potential.

Metro will continue to remove barriers for the disadvantaged groups mentioned above through the implementation of its Diversity Action Plan, which was approved by Metro Council in 2012.

Equity and Equality – Not everyone needs glasses to see. Those that do require glasses need specific prescription levels to enable them to see.

Equality: Believing that everyone should get the same glasses regardless of need or level of prescription.

Equity: Understanding that some have greater visual difficulties than others, therefore only those that need glasses get them, with the prescription that fits each person's specific needs.

The solutions identified through the Strategic Plan will strengthen Metro's ability to serve and benefit all people in the region. For example, when the Metro Council "banned the box" that asked employment applicants to disclose prior criminal convictions on job applications, it eliminated a barrier that disproportionately affects people of color, who are incarcerated at much higher rates than whites². But this action also benefits people with criminal convictions from all communities, who often struggle to find employment.

Another possible action calls for reducing barriers for communities of color to participate in Metro meetings and events – things like time, location, availability of child care, transit access and so on. Addressing these barriers will improve the ability of other community members to attend as well. Similarly, creating inclusive and welcoming environments will ensure that all people will feel comfortable accessing all Metro venues and facilities, whether for entertainment or educational purposes, to seek services or to participate in the agency's decision-making process.

² Curry-Stevens, A., Cross-Hemmer, A., & Coalition of Communities of Color (2010) Communities of Color in Multnomah County: an Unsettling Profile. <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/cc-dataaresearch>

The Portland region's population is growing and changing. People of color have the highest rates of population growth.

Additionally, economists and researchers continue to illustrate that equity and economic growth are complementary. Regions with greater racial inclusion and smaller racial income gaps are more primed for economic growth.³ Research also points out that:

- the public sector plays an important role in enhancing local economy
- deconcentrating poverty has positive impacts on the regional economy
- having large immigrant populations enhances economic growth
- having an influential minority middle class can help regions combine the interest in prosperity and the commitment to fairness
- efforts to create shared social norms through ongoing dialogue are crucial for the vibrancy and vitality of regions⁴

Inclusion - The degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making process within an organization or group. While a truly "inclusive" group is necessarily diverse, a "diverse" group may or may not be "inclusive."

There is no need to choose between equity and economic growth in the Portland region. Equity and community diversity are positive influential factors and therefore have become the superior economic growth model for regions across the country.

Therefore, Metro will use a racial equity approach and apply racial equity decision-making tools and evaluation metrics to the objectives, action items and outcomes in this plan. By addressing barriers and evaluating outcomes for communities of color, Metro intends to improve outcomes for all underserved or marginalized communities.

³ Treuhaft, S., Blackwell, A.G., & Pastor, M. (2012). America's Tomorrow: Equity is the Superior Growth Model. Retrieved: http://www.policylink.org/sites/default/files/SUMMIT_FRAMING_WEB_20120110.PDF

⁴ Benner, C., Pastor, M. (2015). *Equity, growth, and community: What the nation can learn from America's Metro areas*. Oakland, CA. University of California Press.

Implementation

This section will describe the proposed plan for Metro to implement the recommendations and actions within the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. It will include a description of the resources needed as well as the agency structure required.

This section is to be completed in the final draft plan in spring 2016.

Evaluation

The evaluation plan is a partnership between Metro staff and the regional community to create and implement tools that will measure the progress of the five-year objectives. This process is fundamental to the implementation of this Strategic Plan and is guided by principles of accountability, participation and community. This section will describe the evaluation approach and process timeline.

This section is to be completed in the final draft plan in spring 2016.

DRAFT

Racial equity analysis and decision-support tool

Developing a racial equity analysis and decision-support tool is an important component of this Strategic Plan. This tool is intended to help the agency proactively filter out unconscious bias and institutional racism, and counteract policies and practices that inadvertently maintain inequity.

Unconscious Bias - Unconscious attitudes and stereotypes toward individuals and social groups that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions.

Government agencies working to advance racial equity use evaluation tools, often referred to as “equity lenses,” that are customized to meet their specific goals and needs. In some large agencies, such as the City of Seattle and the City of Portland, specific departments or programs have customized the equity lens for their own specific purposes.

Successful racial equity analysis and decision-support tools are used within the context of a larger racial equity strategy. Staff is trained on the appropriate way to use the tools. Facilitators are available to help staff utilize the tools and engage in the intentional dialogue on racial equity that the tools set up. Facilitators also assist staff in incorporating the findings made through the use of the tools into the agency’s policies, procedures, services and decisions to ensure that the needs of historically underserved populations are fully vetted and considered throughout the planning and implementation phases.

Engagement with the communities most impacted by the policies, procedures, services and decisions being analyzed is another important step in the correct utilization of these tools.

According to the Resource Guide for Advancing Racial Equity & Transforming Government⁵, there are four major components of an effective racial equity tool:

- It proactively seeks to eliminate inequities and advance equity.
- It has identified clear goals, objectives and measurable outcomes.
- It poses questions about who would benefit or be burdened by a given decision, the potential unintended consequences of the decision, and who has been involved with developing the proposal and will be involved with implementation.
- It develops mechanisms for successful implementation.

⁵ Government Alliance on Race and Equity. (2015) Advancing Racial Equity and Transforming Government: A resource guide to put ideas into action.

Used without the required training, facilitation and community engagement, however, the tools could become a simplistic exercise of answering a set of decontextualized questions without the proper support to implement the ideas and innovations that may come to light during the process.

In general, successful racial equity analysis and decision-support tools:

1. Promote a racially inclusive collaborative process.
2. Use data to set and monitor goals to achieve equity, and promote accountability and transparency.
3. Integrate program and policy strategies to implement resulting pro-equity actions.
4. Work across sectors, not just inside institutions, through partnerships to create lasting change.
5. Educate and communicate about racial equity to continuously raise racial equity awareness.

Metro's racial equity analysis and decision-support tool will include the three elements mentioned above: training and support for staff to successfully use the tool, the questionnaire that guides the incorporation of equity into the agency's activities, and community engagement to ensure that the people most affected by the agency's activities have the opportunity to shape those activities.

Training on the appropriate use of the racial equity analysis and decision-support tool will be included as part of the diversity, equity and inclusion curriculum created by DEI Program staff. Training for volunteer facilitators of the tool implementation will also be offered. DEI Program staff will coordinate the deployment of trained facilitators and help troubleshoot the customization and utilization of the tool by Metro staff. Training on the tool will be complemented by the unconscious bias training series that DEI Program staff will implement in 2016 for all Metro staff.

DEI Program staff has developed a draft 13-point questionnaire to guide the analysis of existing policies, procedures, programs and services to determine how well they advance or hinder the practice of racial equity in the agency. The 13-point questionnaire is also intended to help staff ensure that new policies, procedures, programs and services fully consider and incorporate racial equity. The questionnaire can be customized during the implementation phase of this Strategic Plan by individual departments, divisions, programs and venues to meet their specific needs.

The draft racial equity analysis and decision support tool includes the following questions:

1. Identify the established racial equity-related outcome desired by the policy/procedure/program/service/decision that will undergo the application of this tool.
2. Describe the policy/procedure/program/service/decision that will undergo the application of this tool.
3. Describe the existing data or information that will guide this policy/procedure/program/service/decision. If no relevant data is currently collected, describe the data that should be collected and identify ways to do so.
4. Describe the historic and current inequities and disparities related to this policy/procedure/program/service/decision.
5. Identify what individuals, groups or communities will benefit from this policy/procedure/program/service/decision.
6. Identify what individuals, groups or communities will be burdened by this policy/procedure/program/service/decision.
7. Identify the factors that may be causing and maintaining the benefits and burdens on the individuals, groups and communities identified above.
8. Engage the individuals, groups or communities that are most impacted by this policy/procedure/program/service/decision to learn from their lived experience and enhance value and impact of the application of this tool.
9. Describe the geographic distribution of public resources or investments associated with this policy/procedure/program/service/decision.
10. Identify how this policy/procedure/program/service/decision can mitigate its disproportionate burdens and enhance its positive benefits.

For decision-support applications of the tool:

11. Describe how the decision about this policy/procedure/program/service will be made, including:
 - a. Who will make the ultimate decision?
 - b. Who will be consulted about the decision?
 - c. Who could be missing in the decision-making process? And how can they be included in it?
12. Identify and describe the barriers that staff, community members and decision-makers may encounter to make changes in the policy/procedure/program/service to advance racial equity.
13. Describe the action plan to remove the barriers in decision-making to advance racial equity through this policy/procedure/program/service.

The customization of the questionnaire and the overall tool for each department and venue's specific needs will include additional participation of community members. They can inform and enrich the process by providing the perspective from their lived experience and particular expertise.

This racial equity analysis and decision-support tool will be most effective if it is first used in a few test cases within each department, division, program or venue. The results of the tool's application in those cases will then be vetted in a process led by DEI Program staff in order to make adjustments and changes to questionnaire, concurrently with the customization of the tool by each department. The continuous application and refinement of this frame will reinforce Metro's commitment to being a learning organization where continuous improvement and innovation are valued and practiced.

Diversity Action Plan integration

The Metro Council adopted Metro’s Diversity Action Plan in 2012. The plan identifies and implements strategies and actions to increase diversity and cultural competence at Metro in four key areas: internal awareness and diversity sensitivity, employee recruitment and retention, public involvement and citizen advisory committee membership, and procurement.

Metro recognized the interconnectedness of equity, diversity and inclusion, so it brought these three functions together to create the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program (DEI) in September 2014. For DEI, equity is the *Why*, diversity is the *Who*, and inclusion is the *How* it should do its work.

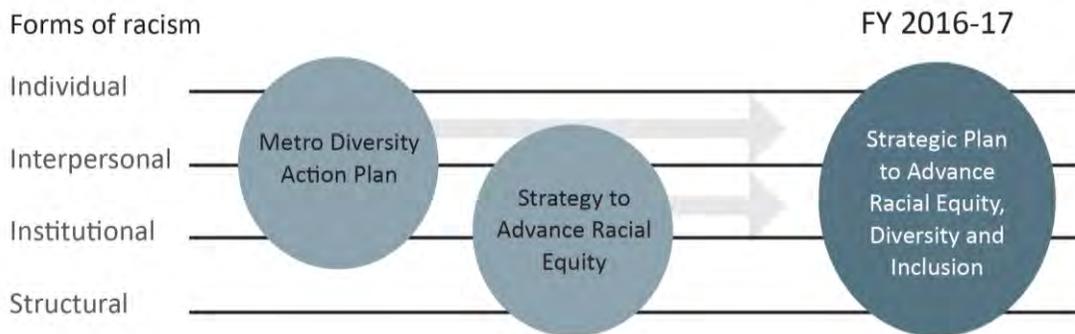
The Diversity Action Plan focuses primarily on addressing issues at the interpersonal level, while also confronting some issues at the individual and institutional levels. On the other hand, Metro’s approaches to advancing equity and inclusion largely focus on issues related to institutional and structural racism, while also addressing some areas of interpersonal racism.

Individual Racism: Refers to an individual's assumptions, beliefs or behaviors.

Interpersonal Racism: Refers to directly perceived discriminatory interactions between individuals whether in their institutional roles or as public and private individuals.

Institutional Racism: Policies, practices, and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally.

Structural Racism: A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.



The overlap between the Diversity Action Plan and this Strategic Plan falls within the interpersonal and institutional levels. Artificially separating these two plans could create a troubling disconnect between them, potentially leading to agency-wide inconsistencies in approaches, unnecessary redundancy or competition of resources and staff time. However, the definition of diversity in the Diversity Action Plan is much broader than just racial diversity, so taking a racial equity approach while ensuring diversity and inclusion efforts target all marginalized groups will take some time to sort out. To ensure successful outcomes and a thoughtful process, DEI staff recommends developing an approach on how to most effectively integrate the Diversity Action Plan with this Strategic Plan during the first year of implementation.

In integrating the two efforts together, the structure for the Diversity Action Plan can be adjusted to incorporate content from this Strategic Plan. This would allow for the quicker implementation of the actions recommended here, which may have originally fallen outside the scope of the Diversity Action Plan.

Recommendation - Develop an approach on how to most effectively integrate the Diversity Action Plan with the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion during the first year of implementation.

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WHAT ARE THE HISTORICAL AND CURRENT CONDITIONS?

Racial Disparities

As the Portland metropolitan region’s demographics change, Metro needs to plan for the future by addressing long-standing institutional barriers that inhibit success for all. Through its programs, policies and services, Metro is committed to creating conditions which allow everyone to participate and enjoy the bounty of the region for generations to come.

This commitment is tempered with the recognition that people of color across the country experience the most disparate outcomes in nearly every category of social well-being, including housing, transportation, access to nature, education and health.

This situation is no different for the communities in the Portland metropolitan region. Sources such as the Regional Equity Atlas⁶, A Community of Contrasts⁷, Communities of Color in Multnomah County: an Unsettling Profile⁸, the Greater Portland Pulse⁹, and the State of Black Oregon¹⁰ clearly show the extent of these disparities, from educational to health outcomes.

Unfortunately, data alone cannot encapsulate the experience of what it is like to live in the Portland region as a person of color. Further, often data aren't disaggregated by race, ethnicity or language.

MEAN PER CAPITA INCOME

American Indian or Alaskan Native	\$19,232
Black or African American	\$19,264
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	\$16,663
Asian	\$29,054
Hispanic or Latino	\$14,591
White	\$33,510
Two or more races	\$16,021
Some other race alone	\$13,667

PERCENT BELOW POVERTY LEVEL

American Indian or Alaskan Native	27%
Black or African American	34.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	23.4%
Asian	12.5%
Hispanic	27.6%
White	10.9%
Some other race	31.7%

Data: Portland Metropolitan Region
2009-2013 ACS 5-year

DATA NOTE: Due to the general nature of the race/ethnicity categories developed by the U.S. Census Bureau, some categories may misrepresent actual circumstances.

One category in particular that demonstrates this issue is the “Asian” category. Due to the fact that the “Asian” category compiles many different communities and cultures into one category, the resulting data output will be an underrepresentation of the burdens faced.

⁶ Coalition for a Livable Future (2010) Regional Equity Atlas 2.0. <https://gis.oregonmetro.gov/equityAtlas/>

⁷ Asian Americans Advancing Justice (2015) A Community of Contrasts. http://www.apano.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AAAJ_Western_Dem_2015.pdf

⁸ Curry-Stevens, A., Cross-Hemmer, A., & Coalition of Communities of Color (2010) Communities of Color in Multnomah County: an Unsettling Profile. <http://www.coalitioncommunitiescolor.org/cc-dataresearch>

⁹ Portland State University. Greater Portland Pulse. <http://portlandpulse.org/>

¹⁰ Urban League of Portland (2015). State of Black Oregon. http://ulpdx.org/programs/advocacy-and-civic-engagement/advocacy-and-public-policy/publication_archive/state-of-black-oregon-2015/

Structural racism is at the heart of these inequalities and continues to create unsettling levels of disparity in social well-being. This multi-generational trauma is the culmination of the negative impacts produced by previous discriminatory practices and policies and perpetuated by existing racist systems that people of color face every day. Previous exclusionary practices include redlining or voter discrimination. Current systems create gentrification and displacement, utilize racial profiling and impose unfair school discipline practices for students of color. Although racism often occurs at an interpersonal level, institutional and structural forms of racism create profound disparities and trauma in communities that last many generations. Trauma directly impacts the emotional, psychological, physical and economic well-being of an individual. It is an additional burden shouldered by people of color.

HOMEOWNERSHIP BY RACE AND INCOME

American Indian or Alaskan Native	39.2%
Black or African American	33.1%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	27%
Asian	62.6%
Hispanic or Latino	34.8%
White	64.2%
Some other race	31.6%
Low-income Households	39.4%

Data: Portland Metropolitan Region
2010 U.S. Census Bureau

DATA NOTE: Due to the general nature of the race/ethnicity categories developed by the U.S. Census Bureau, some categories may misrepresent actual circumstances.

One category in particular that demonstrates this issue is the "Asian" category. Due to the fact that the "Asian" category compiles many different communities and cultures into one category, the resulting data output will be an underrepresentation of the burdens faced.

Since the landmark civil rights legislation of the 1960s, government has primarily used a color-blind approach to combat racial discrimination and establish a race-blind standard.

Color-blind: The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture, or ethnicity. It focuses on commonalities between people, such as their shared humanity.

This approach is founded on the well-intended idea of equality, which means that everyone receives the same treatment. Unfortunately, equality assumes sameness – that everyone faces the same barriers. Equality does not take into account historical or

current forms of discrimination that are present in our public institutions and structures, such as redlining, which prevented many people of color from owning property and accruing wealth, or predatory lending practices targeting communities of color.¹¹ As a result, these policies have contributed to the current situation, where people of color continue to experience the worst outcomes.

Metro is committed to arriving at an equitable and prosperous Portland region where everyone has opportunities to enjoy a strong quality of life. Taking a racial equity approach by removing the barriers of our most adversely impacted communities is the most intentional and effective path to get there.

¹¹ Badger, E (May 28, 2015). Redlining: Still a thing. *The Washington Post*. Retrieved: www.washingtonpost.com/news/wonk/wp/2015/05/28/evidence-that-banks-still-deny-black-borrowers-just-as-they-did-50-years-ago/

WHAT INFORMATION IS GUIDING THIS STRATEGY?

This section describes each aspect of the multi-pronged engagement and research effort that Metro has conducted to inform the direction of this Strategic Plan. DEI Program staff created various points of input to collect diverse feedback from community members and staff to ensure the development of a strategic direction that will provide Metro with the greatest opportunity to reach its equity goals and vision.

Community Engagement

Beginning in spring 2015, DEI Program staff sought the advice of local elected officials, government staff and business and philanthropy leaders throughout the Portland region. Metro councilors and staff held more than 50 meetings in a three-month period, with three objectives:

1. Inform key regional stakeholders of the development of the Strategic Plan.
2. Elicit feedback into critical regional equity issues and potential roles for Metro to help advance equity throughout the Portland metropolitan region.
3. Cultivate regional partners to work with Metro on the implementation of the Strategic Plan.

In addition to this initial engagement, Metro partnered with a local community-based consulting firm, MultiCultural Collaborative, to help organize, recruit, facilitate, record and summarize comments from 18 discussion groups with communities of color, youth and experts in the fields of transportation, parks and housing. These discussions, divided into two rounds of nine sessions each in June and October 2015, were led by culturally-specific community-based organizations. In all, more than 250 individuals participated in these discussion groups.

The first round of discussion groups, held in June 2015, focused on gathering input on potential programs, policies and initiatives that Metro could implement to increase equity, and to address regional or community-specific disparities, barriers and opportunities to increase long-term, meaningful engagement with Metro. The results of these discussions were approximately 140 ideas related to strategies and actions that Metro could pursue (Appendix B).

In October 2015, Metro staff, community-based organizations and MultiCultural Collaborative held a second round of discussions with the same nine groups that participated in the first round. The objectives of these follow-up discussions were:

1. Ensure that Metro correctly captured the comments, feedback and insight of each stakeholder group.
2. Identify any new ideas that may have not been collected during the first round of discussions.
3. Enlist community insight into prioritizing the ideas captured during the first discussion groups.

The second round of discussions uncovered several new actions and strategies, and consistent priorities across the groups (Appendix C). The identified actions, strategies and suggested priorities were foundational to the development of this Strategic Plan and will continue to help inform Metro's equity actions.

Metro staff engagement

Building off the recommendation from the Equity Framework Report, Metro also engaged in a community-led internal equity assessment. Continuing its collaboration with the six community-based organizations that comprised the Equity Baseline Workgroup, Metro contracted with them to design and facilitate a three-month internal staff engagement effort to better understand Metro's roles and responsibilities to advance equity in the Portland metropolitan region and the authority it has to impact existing disparities.

Collaborating with representatives from the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee (ESAC), the community-based organizations created a four-step staff engagement process to achieve the desired outcomes of the internal assessment:

Step 1: Preparation survey — Each staff participant completed a survey that assessed their current level of awareness and understanding of the term “equity” and provided initial opportunities to share insight related to Metro's role and authority to advance equity in the Portland region.

Step 2: Kick-off meetings — Each participant attended a kick-off meeting that provided standard baseline information, definitions, and context related to the Strategic Plan. These meetings' purpose was to ensure that each participant felt prepared for subsequent equity discussions.

Step 3: Small group engagement sessions — Over a two-month period, 10 small group meetings were held to gather ideas, insights, suggestions and direction on how Metro could address current equity issues or expand its equity efforts. Each small group meeting was facilitated by two representatives of community-based

organizations or ESAC and involved five to 14 staff members representing various departments and programs throughout Metro.

Step 4: Optional closing survey — To provide additional opportunities for staff to share suggestions or insight, each participant received an optional survey at the end of each small group discussion.

More than 80 staff members from every Metro department and division participated in this internal engagement effort. The consistent themes elicited from the small group discussions and surveys were compiled and used to inform the direction of this Strategic Plan (Appendix D).

Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Racial Equity

Upon recommendation from the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee, DEI Program staff decided to use the Tool for Organizational Self-Assessment Related to Racial Equity as a crucial input to inform this Strategic Plan. Developed by local organizations Coalition of Communities of Color and All Hands Raised, the tool is designed to gather a holistic snapshot of an organization's practices and policies as they relate to racial equity.

In summer 2015, DEI staff assembled a workgroup of 15 Metro staff members representing different departments and venues of the organization to answer questions posed in the tool, identify gaps and make recommendations.

This workgroup met in September and October 2015 and jointly answered questions to assess racial equity in three major organizational categories:

1. **Organizational commitments**, which includes the areas of leadership and governance; racial equity policies and implementation practices; workforce composition and quality; and resource allocation and contracting practices.
2. **Customer and client service**, which includes the areas of service-based equity, service-user voice and influence; and data metrics.
3. **Community interface**, which includes the areas of organizational climate, culture and communications; community collaboration; and continuous quality improvement.

DEI Program staff also engaged with additional Metro staff of color, who discussed the following questions from the self-assessment tool:

- Do the organization’s senior leaders act consistently around racial equity, for example by allocating sufficient resources for equity initiatives, making racial justice a standing agenda item at key meetings, and ensuring people of color are decision-makers?
- Does your organization encourage or support difficult conversations about race in a safe, confidential, private space?
- Describe your organization’s primary physical space (Metro Regional Center) and what it may communicate to diverse stakeholders. Is it welcoming and accessible? Consider the use of height, open spaces, natural or artificial light, art, signage and visual representations and facilities such as gender neutral bathrooms and lactation rooms.
- Describe whether, and how, the Metro Regional Center’s entrance area is welcoming and supportive of diverse individuals and families. For example, is there comfortable seating and supports for those with children?
- Please provide a couple of examples of how your organizational meetings that involve the public are conducted in a manner that supports equity and inclusion, and values diverse ways of speaking, thinking, debating, reflecting and making decisions.
- Are racial equity and cultural competency training and capacity-building made available to your workforce?

The overall analysis and the resulting report identified progress and gaps (Appendix E). The recommended actions to fill these gaps have also helped guide this Strategic Plan.

Agency-wide plans and initiatives

Over the past decade, many Metro divisions and programs have prioritized diversity, equity or inclusion efforts. Much of this work has been successful and, in some cases, has guided the practices of other government agencies throughout the country. A major intent of this Strategic Plan is to build off past success and provide a space to highlight the full extent of the diversity, equity and inclusion work already taking place within the agency.

To ensure that this strategy is guided by past efforts and accounts for ongoing ones, DEI Program staff completed a multi-step process. First, staff worked to identify past, current and future work related to diversity, equity and inclusion by hosting more than a dozen meetings and discussions with various department staff and leadership throughout the agency.

Once these past and ongoing efforts were identified, DEI Program staff used them to guide and frame the direction of this Strategic Plan. Additionally, the recommendations and actions from these efforts are incorporated into the objectives and actions outlined on pages 21 to 30.

The following Metro plans, programs and initiatives inform the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:

- Affirmative Action Plan (2015)
- Diversity Action Plan (2012)
- Environmental Literacy Framework (2016)
- Equitable Housing Initiative (2016)
- Limited English Proficiency Plan (2015)
- Oregon Innovation Award (2016)
- Parks System Plan (2016)
- Public Engagement Guide (2015)
- Regional Transportation Plan (2014)
- Six Desired Outcomes (2010)
- Title VI Plan (2012)

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GLOSSARY

Color-blind - The racial ideology that posits the best way to end discrimination is by treating individuals as equally as possible, without regard to race, culture or ethnicity.

It focuses on commonalities between people, such as their shared humanity.

- Wise, T. J. (2010). *Colorblind: the rise of post-racial politics and the retreat from racial equity*. San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books.

Community - All individuals who live, work, play or pray in the Portland metropolitan region.

Communities of Color - “Communities of color” and “people of color” include Native Americans, African Americans, African and Slavic immigrants, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, and Latinos or Hispanics. Although “officially” identified as White by the United States Census, the Slavic immigrant community has been included in this collective term because their overall well-being and health outcomes are experienced through a racial lens.

Cultural proficiency - A comprehensive collection of behavior, attitudes, practices and policies that creates an inclusive environment for people of diverse backgrounds. Culturally proficient organizations have the awareness, knowledge base and learned skills to effectively and sensitively work with and provide services to people of diverse backgrounds.

- Metro (2012). *Diversity Action Plan*.

Culture - A social system of meaning and custom that is developed by a group of people to assure its adaptation and survival. These groups are distinguished by a set of unspoken rules that shape values, beliefs, habits, patterns of thinking, behaviors and styles of communication.

- Maguire, John, Sally Leiderman, and John Egerton (2000). *A Community Builder’s Tool Kit – 15 Tools for Creating Healthy, Productive, Interracial/Multicultural Communities*. Claremont, CA: The Institute for Democratic Renewal and The Project Change Anti-Racism Initiative.

Diversity - The variance or difference amongst people. This variance includes race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion nationality, language preference, socioeconomic status, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity and others. These differences are tied to a variety of other aspects of diversity such as experience, work styles, life experience, education, beliefs and ideas. Honoring these differences while upholding our value for respect is central to our diversity philosophy.

- Metro (2012). *Diversity Action Plan*.

Equity - Metro’s working definition of equity reads:

“Our region is stronger when all individuals and communities benefit from quality jobs, living wages, a strong economy, stable and affordable housing, safe and reliable transportation, clean air and water, a healthy environment and sustainable resources that enhance our quality of life.

We share a responsibility as individuals within a community and communities within a region. Our future depends on the success of all, but avoidable inequities in the utilization of resources and opportunities prevent us from realizing our full potential.

Our region’s population is growing and changing. Metro is committed with its programs, policies and services to create conditions which allow everyone to participate and enjoy the benefits of making this a great place today and for generations to come.”

Historically marginalized - A limited term that refers to groups who have been denied access and/or suffered past institutional discrimination in the United States and, according to the Census and other federal measuring tools, includes African Americans, Asian Americans, Hispanics or Chicanos/Latinos and Native Americans. This is revealed by an imbalance in the representation of different groups in common pursuits such as education, jobs, housing, etc., resulting in marginalization for some groups and individuals and not for others, relative to the number of individuals who are members of the population involved.

Other groups in the United States have been marginalized and are currently underrepresented. These groups may include but are not limited to other ethnicities, adult learners, veterans, people with disabilities, lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender individuals, different religious groups and different economic backgrounds.

- University of California, Berkeley (2015). Berkeley Diversity – Glossary of Terms.

Inclusion - Inclusion refers to the degree to which diverse individuals are able to participate fully in the decision-making process within an organization or group. While a truly “inclusive” group is necessarily diverse, a “diverse” group may or may not be “inclusive.”

- Metro (2012). Diversity Action Plan.

Individual racism - Refers to an individual's assumptions, beliefs or behaviors.

- Henry, F., & Tator, C. (2006). *The colour of democracy: Racism in Canadian society*. 3rd Ed. Toronto: Nelson.

Institutional racism - Policies, practices, and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally.

- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (2015) *Advancing racial equity and transforming government: A resource guide to put ideas into action*. http://raciaequityalliance.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

Interpersonal racism - Refers to directly perceived discriminatory interactions between individuals whether in their institutional roles or as public and private individuals.

- Krieger N. (1999). *Embodying inequality: A review of concepts, measures, and methods for studying health consequences of discrimination*. *International Journal of Health Services*.

Social equity contracting – Removing barriers and creating accessible contracting opportunities for vulnerable business communities.

Structural racism - A history and current reality of institutional racism across all institutions, combining to create a system that negatively impacts communities of color.

- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (2015) *Advancing racial equity and transforming government: A resource guide to put ideas into action*. http://raciaequityalliance.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

Unconscious bias (or implicit bias) - Unconscious attitudes and stereotypes toward individuals and social groups that affect our understanding, actions and decisions..

- Adapted from the Center for Social Inclusion (2015). *Talking about Race Toolkit*.