



PARKS AND NATURE

Racial equity, diversity and inclusion action plan

2018 to 2023

oregonmetro.gov/parks

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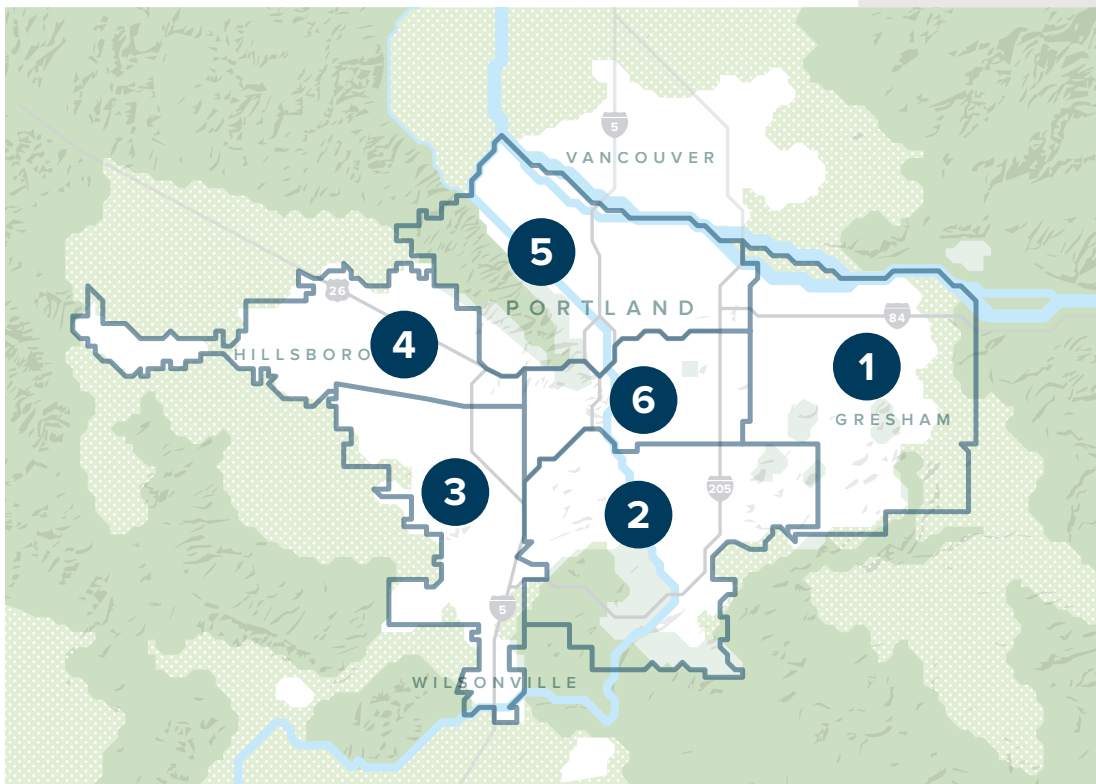
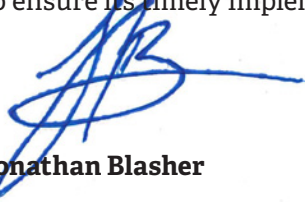


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STATEMENT OF APPROVAL

The Parks and Nature Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is the final product of a process that involved a significant number of stakeholders in the Parks and Nature Department since August 2016. This document is the most recent, accurate version of the document. With my signature below I certify that I approve the Parks and Nature Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and commit the Parks and Nature Department to use it to guide all aspects of our work and to ensure its timely implementation.



Jonathan Blasher

Parks and Nature Director

Concurrence by the Metro Chief Operating Officer:

I have reviewed the Parks and Nature Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan and I concur with its approval by the Parks and Nature Department Director. I look forward to working with Parks and Nature, the DEI Program staff and community stakeholders in the implementation of this important guiding document, which will help Metro fulfill its mission of providing effective services to all people in greater Portland.

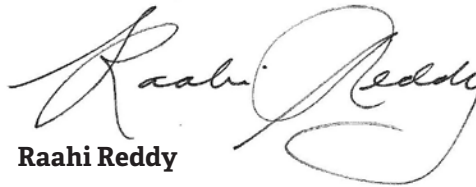


Martha Bennett

Metro Chief Operating Office

Concurrence by the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program:

I certify that the Parks and Nature Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan has been created with input and support from the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program at Metro. The Parks and Nature Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan is appropriately aligned with Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, approved by the Metro Council in June 2016. The DEI Program commits to continuing to support Parks and Nature in the implementation of this crucial plan.



Raahi Reddy

DEI Program Director

Acknowledgments

The process of collectively working on this plan has spanned over 18 months and it would not have been possible without the participation and insights of Parks and Nature staff and management along the way. Our working group led the staff participation process and through their dedication this action plan is grounded in the unique work of Parks and Nature, and the department has gained many internal stakeholders who are advocates for racial equity. We are grateful to Jonathan Blasher, our department director, for stepping into his role mid-planning process and respecting the staff-led work already underway while offering his full support of the plan creation.

This plan is centered on improving racial equity outcomes for the communities we serve and community input was invaluable to the process. The project team is grateful to the organizations that participated in formal conversations about

the development of the plan and those organizations and community members that have provided formal or informal feedback to the department over the years. We are also grateful for the time Metro's Committee on Racial Equity provided us and their indispensable feedback.

Parks and Nature was part of a cohort of four departments led by Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Department to develop department racial equity plans. We would like to thank the DEI staff and our colleagues at the Oregon Zoo, Metro Planning Department and Metro's Property and Environmental Services Department for their time and expertise and for sharing their challenges and solutions along the way.

The project team expresses its profound gratitude to the representatives of the following community organizations and current and former Metro staff. We apologize if we have unintentionally omitted any names:

Community organizations

Adelante Mujeres
Africa House (IRCO)
Asian Family Center (IRCO)
APANO Communities United Fund
Bienestar
Centro Cultural de Washington County
Coalition of Communities of Color Bridges Program
Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde
Confederated Tribes of the Siletz
Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
Get Hooked
Hacienda CDC
Kairos PDX
Latino Network
Momentum Alliance
Mudbone Grown LLC
Muslim Educational Trust
National Indian Parent Information Center

Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)

Unite Oregon
Verde

Wisdom of the Elders

Parks and Nature DEI working group members

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Cesar Anaya
Cory Eldridge
Crista Gardner
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Jonathan Blasher
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Justin Takkunen
Kate Holleran
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Maiya Osife
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Mary Rose Navarro
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Nathan Baptiste
Noelle Dobson
Nyla Moore
Pam McElwee
Patty Unfred
Raahi Reddy
Scotty Ellis
Yuxing Zheng

My colleagues and friends in Parks and Nature,

When I close my eyes and envision the future of Metro's parks and natural areas, I see restored habitats providing our region with clean air; creeks and rivers with clean, cool water and thriving salmon runs; and people communing with each other and with nature. In my vision, a person's ZIP code, the shade of their skin, their place of birth, the language they speak, none of this is used to keep people of color from experiencing the full benefits of nature.

The Parks and Nature Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan will help Parks and Nature achieve this vision.

We in Parks and Nature come to this work with arms open, believing it can bring out the best in our community, our organization and ourselves. We also acknowledge that racism is embedded throughout society and it's tough to uproot. We are clear-eyed about how hard this work can be. We all bring our own experiences and views into this work. We need to respect this and believe in the good intentions in ourselves and colleagues.


We also need to be clear: This is the direction we are heading and racial equity is our goal.

Parks and Nature has been on this trail for several years. The 2016 Parks and Nature System Plan made equity, diversity and inclusion key to the department's work. When the Metro Council later adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, many staff members jumped to make those values integral to their work. Racial equity was a highlight of the levy that voters approved in 2016, and it's been central in the development a potential third bond.

We continue to grow in this work. We continue to learn from our partners, communities and the visitors to our parks and natural areas. Be brave as we carry on. Be bold. Be open to concerns, correction, criticism and even praise. Don't shy from praise: it's how we discover what works and how we can do more of it.

Thank you for being part of this team, for being part of this effort to make racial equity a reality in Parks and Nature.





Parks and Nature director Jon Blasher plays with his family at Blue Lake Regional Park.

Etienne Byiringiro walks along the shore of the Sandy River with his mother, Charlotte Kanyange, during Salmon Homecoming in 2016.



Introduction

In 2016, the Metro Council adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, declaring that “Metro will concentrate on eliminating the disparities that people of color experience, especially in those areas related to Metro’s policies, programs, services and destinations.”

By focusing on race, the Strategic Plan set a new standard for how Metro carries out and evaluates its work. To guide the agency, the strategy laid out five broad goals and many actions required to achieve them. One action calls for every department to create its own five-year racial equity action plan. These plans are tailored to the mission and work of each department and will guide them toward achieving Metro’s racial equity goals.

This is the Parks and Nature Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan. It unifies Metro’s commitment to racial equity, diversity and inclusion with the department’s mission to connect people to nature while preserving and protecting water quality and fish and wildlife habitat.

The action plan covers every facet of Parks and Nature’s work, from hiring to department culture to community engagement to policy-making to contracts to daily tasks. By doing this work, Parks and Nature aspires to make racial equity, diversity and inclusion organizational values that are reflected in all its policies, programs, services and day-to-day-interactions. Over time, the department can move from unconnected programs and pilot projects to personal commitments and formal policies and practices that dismantle racism.

Metro’s five racial equity goals

1. Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.
2. Metro meaningfully engages communities of color.
3. Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce.
4. Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations.
5. Metro’s resource allocation advances racial equity.



Three children, refugees from Nepal, play at Oxbow Regional park during a barbecue co-created by Metro and IRCO, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization.

Framework for action

To achieve racial equity in Parks and Nature, staff and management will work on four levels: in our understanding of racism (the individual level), in our interactions with others (the interpersonal level), and by changing how the organization and the region's parks and nature system works (the institutional and structural levels).

The action plan outlines a department-wide approach to integrate racial equity, diversity and inclusion across divisions and program areas at these levels of change. This section captures the theory of change of this work. Put simply, the theory of change is: what we do as a department, why we do it and how we do it.

Racial equity outcomes

The Parks and Nature System Plan outlines the department's mission: "Metro Parks and Nature protects water quality, fish and wildlife habitat, and creates opportunities for people to enjoy nature close to home through a connected system of parks, trails and natural areas."

This plan ties the mission to three equity outcomes and uses racial equity as the strategy to achieve them. These are the "why" of the plan. If this plan is successful, there will be greater economic equity, environmental equity and cultural equity for people of color in the region.

The three desired outcomes – economic equity, environmental equity and cultural equity – are inspired by Metro's Equity Baseline Report, a 2015 document written by a cohort of community representatives that preceded the racial equity strategy, and by the collective voice of Metro community partners and staff. These three outcomes are often considered categories of equity, part of a group that includes racial equity. For this plan, they are treated as subcategories of racial equity. Other forms of equity could also be included as subcategories of racial equity, but these three are the components of racial equity that Parks and Nature is best positioned to advance. They reflect its role and responsibilities as a regional government managing conservation and outdoor recreation dollars and public lands.

Metro's Definition of Racism

Conduct, words, practices or policies which advantage or disadvantage people based on their culture, ethnic origin or color. Racism is just as damaging in obvious forms as it is in less obvious and subtle forms, and is still called racism whether intentional or unintentional.

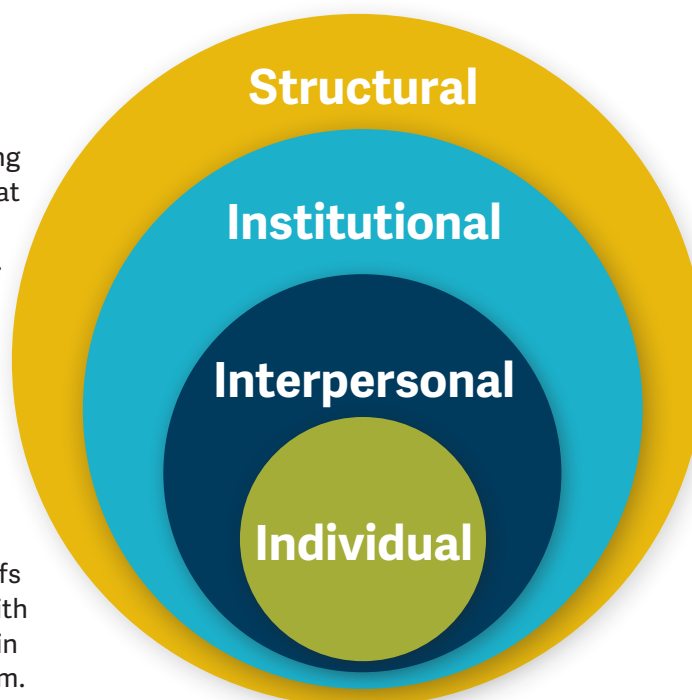
Four levels of change to address four forms of racism

Structural racism

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

Interpersonal racism

Occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.



Institutional racism

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

Individual racism

Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination based on race by an individual.

Definitions:

Environmental equity

Throughout this document, Parks and Nature relies on the definitions used in the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, but it had none for environmental equity. A useful definition of the concept, though framed as justice rather than equity, comes from OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon.

“Environmental Justice (EJ) operates at the intersection of economic, racial and social justice. EJ is a movement led by communities of color and low income experiencing environmental injustices: polluted air, soil and water; unsafe housing, roadways, sidewalks, and bus stops; inequitable investments in housing, green spaces, active transit and mass transit; and disproportionate impacts due to climate change. Many of these problems arise because our communities are not participants in the decision-making process that produces these results. EJ challenges the mainstream environmental movement to address systemic and historical causes of these environmental problems and is a community-driven, multiracial movement to restore justice to our communities.”

Economic equity

Desired outcome: Communities of color prosper economically from the business of Parks and Nature in greater Portland.

The department's role: Parks and Nature builds partnerships to support people of color participating in the conservation and outdoor recreation economies, and it removes barriers that prevent participation.

Examples of what this outcome looks like:

- People of color have equitable access to careers in the fields within and supported by Parks and Nature.
- Equitable allocation of public resources to and benefiting people of color in the form of jobs, contracts, grant funds and technical support.
- A department and teams that are representative of the people of greater Portland.

Environmental equity

Desired outcome: Communities of color in greater Portland enjoy the benefits of clean land, air and water and have equitable access to safe and welcoming parks, trails and natural areas.

The department's role: The department works with partners to diversify the perspectives guiding the environmental movement. Parks and Nature's investment decisions reflect the priorities of communities of color and a commitment to building whole, healthy communities and neighborhoods.

Examples of what this outcome looks like:

- Environmental justice is at the center of the region's conservation agenda.
- A regional system of parks, cemeteries, trails and natural areas that reflects the significance of nature and place to people of color.
- Safe, transit-accessible nature parks and trails and universally accessible park design.

Cultural equity

Desired outcome: People of color connect with nature and with one another in the region's parks and nature system.

The department's role: Parks and Nature strives to create programs and services that are relevant to communities of color. Metro's system of parks, natural areas and cemeteries provide places for community gatherings, celebrations, remembrances and connections to the land.



Staff member Sofia Basto shows an oak leaf gall to a participant in a tour of Chehalem Ridge Natural Area led by Centro Cultural.

Examples of what this outcome looks like:

- Centering Indigenous history and connections to the land in conservation and education programs.
- Social spaces in Metro parks that honor history and welcome diverse cultures.
- Deliberate, systematic inclusion of diverse and contrasting perspectives in policy, planning and community engagement work.

No single program, policy or decision will achieve a desired outcome. It is also true that realizing these outcomes is not solely within Metro's control. These statements help keep the department accountable and centered around a collaborative and transparent culture of partnership, intention and adaptability. Their collective strength lies in presenting the larger context of our work. These outcomes help confirm that achieving racial and social equity in the region will require Parks and Nature to align and leverage its unique position and strengths over the long term and in collaboration with community and partners.



Gloria Ngezaho races his sons on the trail at Glendoveer Golf Course and Nature Trail.

Actions

The department has many reasons to be proud of its work so far. There is a great deal of wisdom to be shared. There's also a great desire to learn and to change, to invest in staff and leadership in order to accomplish these actions. This section presents the objectives and actions that will help guide Parks and Nature toward greater racial equity over the next five years.

Ongoing actions highlight the work that has begun and will be continually built upon and built into practice. Some of the actions are noted as “priority actions” and are in *italics*. These are the building blocks to advancing the department’s work and building the staff skills and knowledge to advance the racial equity outcomes.

Parks and Nature staff identified many actions well suited for other Metro departments, including human resources, finance and procurement.

Find them in Appendix B: Metro central services racial equity actions, page 54.

Plan objectives

This plan presents 12 objectives. Together, the racial equity strategy goals and department action plan objectives and actions are the “how” of this plan. Plan actions are organized by objective and presented in the following section.

Metro racial equity strategy goals	Department action plan objectives	Racial equity outcomes
Goal A: Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.	A1: Contribute to increasing the diversity of people and perspectives in the conservation movement A2: Plan the regional system of parks, cemeteries, trails and natural areas with a racial equity lens	Economic Environmental Cultural
Goal B: Metro meaningfully engages communities of color.	B1: Strengthen internal communications, transparency and accountability B2: Meaningfully engage communities of color in policy and investment decisions B3: Honor Indigenous and community connections to land	Economic Environmental Cultural
Goal C: Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce.	C1: Invest in continuing education and inclusive staff culture C2: Build career pathways for youth and communities of color	Economic Cultural
Goal D: Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations.	D1: Deliver relevant and inclusive programs and services for people of color D2: Manage and operate a safe and inclusive system	Environmental Cultural
Goal E: Metro’s resource allocation advances racial equity.	E1: Build department capacity for equitable community engagement and partnerships E2: Remove barriers for people of color in contracting and grant programs E3: Equitably plan and invest in Metro’s and the region’s system of parks, cemeteries, natural areas and trails	Economic Environmental Cultural

Equity Strategy Goal A

Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.

Objective A1: Contribute to increasing the diversity of people and perspectives in the conservation movement.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Proactively explore issues of environmental justice and racial equity with culturally specific community organizations, Metro leadership, conservation peers and partner agencies.
- Actively engage with professionals of color practicing in the environmental field.

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
A1-1	Create or support opportunities for Parks and Nature grantees and partners to share practices, build capacity and explore issues/solutions collectively. Grantees design or designate what is needed, and Parks and Nature funds and supports. (This could include grantees from other organizations with similar programs).	Community Investments	FY 2019
A1-2	Build relationship with community (in part through existing partnerships with culturally specific leadership programs) to deepen awareness of career interests, and to connect communities of color with career opportunities in the environmental field. Pursue community-based partnerships focused on youth of color.	Science (Volunteer Services, Nature Education, Natural Areas Land Management, Community Investments)	FY 2019

Objective A2: Collaboratively plan the regional system of parks, cemeteries trails and natural areas with a racial equity lens.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic, environmental and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Prioritize investments in parks, natural areas and trails that directly benefit communities of color. Consider direct and indirect financial investments, as well as staff time and energy.
- Co-create public engagement plans focused on long-term community relationship building and equitable service to meet needs of culturally and geographically-specific communities of color.

Years 1-2

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
A2-1 Apply a racial equity and empowerment lens to plan future Parks and Nature funding measures. Begin with the planning process for a potential bond measure.	Bond Planning Team (Directors)	FY 2018 (underway)
A2-2 Priority action: Invite and empower communities of color to help shape the regional conservation agenda, land investment priorities and related policy language and regional funding allocation models. Involve municipalities to build shared understanding of community priorities, with the goal of influencing decision making across the region.	<i>Bond Planning Team</i> <i>(Acquisitions)</i>	<i>FY 2018</i> <i>(underway)</i>
A2-3 In developing a regional funding strategy, work across Metro to create a plan for whole, healthy communities that: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• places priority on improving access to transit, housing and parks, natural areas and trails for communities of color;• avoids and mitigates disproportionate negative impacts of regional investments on/in communities of color.	Bond Planning Team	FY 2018 (underway)

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
A2-4 Inventory the geographic locations of parks and natural areas (Metro and local providers) and Metro program offerings. Identify geographic gaps in program provision and outdoor facilities relative to the geographies of communities of color.	Planning (Nature Education, Volunteer Services)	FY 2018 (underway)

Years 3-5

- As funding is identified, purchase and preserve access to land important for or significant to communities of color.
- Bring park providers and communities of color together to create a regional vision for urban nature parks and regional trails in underserved areas, using a racial equity lens. Use the Connect with Nature toolkit to inform regional priorities.
- In implementation of a regional vision (above), bring together land managers with community-based organizations and individuals with unique knowledge about community needs to prioritize purchase of land in underserved areas. Per the System Plan, identify owners and operators for sites and regional trail system gaps that directly benefit underserved communities.



Walkers and skateboarders on the Marine Drive Trail near Broughton Beach and M. James Gleason Memorial Boat Ramp.

Equity Strategy Goal B

Metro meaningfully engages communities of color.

Objective B1: Strengthen internal communications, agency transparency and accountability.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Build flexibility into project budgets, timelines and work plans so teams can be responsive to requests and opportunities that advance department action plan objectives.
- Dedicate time in standing management and team meetings for learning and discussion about diversity, equity and inclusion.
- Build and sustain a shared understanding of where and how staff and community have influence in decisions.

Years 1-2

Action		Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
B1-1	Recommend an organizational or team-based strategy to help keep the department active and accountable in plan implementation.	Department action plan core project team	FY 2019 (underway)
B1-2	Priority action: Develop and implement an internal communications strategy that supports staff and managers in becoming more and more engaged in action plan implementation. Support communication of plan implementation work across the department.	Communications (Nature Education, Volunteer Services, Management Team)	FY 2019
B1-3	Review with a racial equity lens the development, recruitment and placement of all department internships. Make Parks and Nature internships more transparent and coordinate with other Metro internship programs.	Management	FY 2019

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
B1-4	<p>Work with Construction Project Management Office to add a “racial equity and empowerment tool” section to Project Concept Form and Project Management Plan templates. Pilot revisions for individual projects.</p> <p>Include guidance about specific engagement with tribal governments and Indigenous communities, and how projects will ensure access for and/or involvement of people with disabilities.</p>	<p>Planning (Special Projects)</p>	<p>FY 2019</p>
B1-5	<p>Pilot the use of a racial equity tool (to be developed by agency DEI team) to evaluate Parks and Nature’s budgeting and capital improvement planning processes and related communications.</p>	<p>Special Projects (Management Team)</p>	<p>FY 2020</p>
B1-6	<p>Priority action: Test specific ways to improve budget process and transparency, internally with staff and externally with the public.</p>	<p>Management Team (Special Projects, Communications)</p>	<p>FY 2020</p>
B1-7	<p>Priority action: Working with the department’s new equity advisory committee, develop a framework to measure and report the effectiveness of department action plan implementation.</p> <p>Focus first on land investments (natural areas and trail corridors) and hiring, retention and promotion of staff of color, which are priorities identified by staff and community.</p>	<p>Special Projects (Management Team)</p>	<p>FY 2020</p>

Years 3-5

- Require the use of a racial equity and empowerment tool in scoping and planning all projects and engagement processes.
- Assess the effectiveness of department regional investments in reducing racial disparities, using measures and indicators of the Parks and Nature racial equity impact evaluation framework (see Action B1-7).



Parks and Nature staff member Ellen Wyoming DeLoy and community members come up with ideas for Gabbert Butte Nature Park at a Connect with Nature workshop.

Bright spots

Collaboration: Connect with Nature

In the fall of 2014, the planning team was preparing for a meeting of the Connect with Nature Advisory Committee. They had a plan.

Staff prepared an inspiring presentation with beautiful images and a project proposal to share with the committee. Metro would hire a landscape architect and conduct a series of workshops with people of color. The workshops would explore people's barriers to accessing parks and natural areas and come up with solutions to these barriers, things Metro could build so more people of color would visit parks and natural areas. The goal was to identify how parks and natural areas could better serve the needs of people of color – and then share this with other park providers.

The committee, made of representatives of culturally specific community organizations, was not impressed with the plan. "Hire a landscape architect to conduct workshops?" they asked. "That is what you always do, and it doesn't work. This project has to be different."

The committee's vision for Connect with Nature was about something much bigger than hosting a few workshops to talk about nature and parks with people of color. The committee challenged Metro to "turn the typical business model of park planning on its head." Two key ideas became the vision for the project: First, let community lead. Second, identify and change business practices that continue to exclude people of color from participating in Metro's work.

The committee talked about participation in Metro's work more broadly, going beyond public meetings, workshops or completing surveys. They encouraged staff to think about all the ways people are able to influence and benefit from Metro's work, like being hired as consultants, contractors, managers and staff, and serving on Metro's committees. They asked that staff remember people of color have also been excluded from these types of participation.

Ultimately, the master planning for Gabbert Butte and East Council Creek nature parks was led by Connect with Nature, and Connect with Nature took its direction from people of color. More than 12 multilingual workshops were held, community leaders were paid to help Metro recruit committee members and for the first time at Metro stipends were offered for committee members' time and expertise. Landscape architects did join the work, but as sub-consultants and partners to community-based organizations. Connect with Nature participants have also worked on Metro's parks rules revision, helped write better job posts for park ranger positions, participated in bond planning and been asked to advise other departments.

Connect with Nature project manager Olena Turula says, "Looking back on the work we have done, I am proud to say that this has evolved into a true partnership, with Metro learning from community and community learning from Metro." As Metro stepped back and supported people of color in taking the lead, teams across the agency learned how to do things differently. It took departments across Metro to create new processes. And it required leaders across Metro to stand behind a project because they trusted it would catalyze powerful systemic changes.

Community members learned too. They learned what it takes to plan a park, about Metro's parks and natural areas, how to engage with Metro, they gained confidence to participate in other public conversations, and they saw their voices make a difference.

Two key ideas became the vision for the project: First, let community lead. Second, identify and change business practices that continue to exclude people of color from participating in Metro's work.



Objective B2: Meaningfully engage communities of color in investment and policy decisions.

Related racial equity outcomes: Environmental and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Increase the participation of people of color – including youth and emerging leaders – in department advisory groups and oversight committees.
- Seek tribal government perspective on department's conservation and stewardship, access planning and restoration projects and Metro's portfolio of land overall.

Years 1-2

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
B2-1 Through department bond planning, make changes to local share and/or capital grant programs to prioritize funding focused on land and projects important to communities of color.	Bond Planning Team (Community Investments, Acquisitions)	FY 2019
B2-2 Explore the possibility of expanding the definition of local governments eligible for pass-through or grant funding to include tribal governments with historic and cultural ties to the region.	Bond Planning Team	FY 2019
B2-3 Priority action: Establish a standing Parks and Nature equity advisory committee composed of members of communities of color from across the region. Review the Committee on Racial Equity recruitment and formation process and other examples of promising practices such as compensation, identifying missing voices, terms, how members request to join and who approves them.	Special Projects (Volunteer Services, Communications)	FY 2018 (underway)

Years 3-5

- Formally incorporate racial equity outcomes into guidance and by-laws of Parks and Nature advisory and oversight committees.

Objective B3: Honor Indigenous and community connections to land.

Related racial equity outcomes: Cultural equity

Ongoing actions:

- Seek firsthand perspectives about sites significant to communities of color, and the qualities that make a place special to individuals and communities of color.
- **Priority action:** *Create opportunities for Indigenous communities and tribal governments to foster their own relationships with land managed by Metro.*
- **Priority action:** *Acknowledge and build greater awareness of Indigenous and tribal relationships with Metro sites. This may take the form of acknowledging Indigenous homelands during public meetings/events, in interpretive signage and materials, and in various other ways.*

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
B3-1	Informed by the recommendations Parks and Nature's former Intertribal Cultural Resource Specialist, create a new position and redefine it to ensure it is filled by a person with expertise and experience working with Indigenous communities.	Directors	FY 2019
B3-2	Work with community partners to change the language the agency uses to describe Metro's relationship to the land it manages; the work (e.g. "acquisitions"); and Metro's responsibility to the communities connected to that land. Share/ disseminate and integrate into communications guidance.	Nature Education (Interim) (Communications, Acquisitions, Real Properties, Management, Planning)	FY 2019
B3-3	Chart a transparent and adaptable path for rebuilding Metro's relationship with the Chinese-American community around plans for Lone Fir Cemetery's "Block 14."	Special Projects, Cemeteries	FY 2019
B3-4	Work in partnership with community organizations to develop a funding strategy to create a Lone Fir Cemetery Block 14 memorial in honor of those buried there (individuals from the Chinese community and the mental health community of early Portland).	Directors (Special Projects, Cemeteries, Planning)	FY 2019

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
B3-5 Use the website as a tool to provide historical information about cemeteries, with a focus on diversity.	Cemeteries (Communications)	FY 2020

Years 3-5

- Re-visit site naming process and conventions, and name sites based on cultural and historical importance to Indigenous and other communities.
- Explore formal intergovernmental agreements with tribal governments to advise Metro on engagement and stewardship practices.



Metro staff member Maiya Osife and Savahna Jackson carry cattails they harvested as part of a camas bake at Quamash Prairie Natural Area.

Bright spots

Simpler permits: supporting Indigenous cultural practices

Many of the habitats that Parks and Nature works to protect are ceded lands stewarded and maintained by Indigenous people since time immemorial. Metro has concerns about people harvesting plants and damaging habitat, and so it controls what can be taken through a permit process. For Indigenous people living in greater Portland, the process didn't support culturally appropriate ways to access land for cultural events, culturally significant plant material harvesting or ceremony space.

In the summer 2017 edition of *Our Big Backyard*, then policy coordinator Amy Croover-Payette wrote:

"Community conversations led to the creation of Metro's intertribal cultural resources specialist, a position that was created by listening to what the Indigenous community was saying – that culturally appropriate access to land and traditional ecological knowledge land practices matter.

Metro's intertribal cultural resources specialist is thought to be the first position of its kind to be funded by a local or regional government. The sole purpose of the position is to listen to what the Indigenous community needs and to be responsive in ways that align with Metro's core values under the parks and natural areas levy, including to provide access to nature for communities of color. In this case, the community of color happens to be the country's first people, the people indigenous to the land."

In 2015, Maiya Osife was hired on a temporary basis as the intertribal cultural resources specialist.

In collaboration with greater Portland's Indigenous community, the intertribal cultural resources specialist and other Metro staff

developed a culturally appropriate process for Indigenous people to access land for cultural events, culturally significant plant material harvesting or ceremony space. Permit fees were removed, and barriers like the method of applying for and accessing the cultural resource permit were ameliorated. The intertribal cultural resources specialist helped to remove obstacles to access, simplify the process and made it a more personal, even in-person, process.

The work of the intertribal cultural resource specialist led to other projects with Indigenous communities: for the conservation team, the use of traditional ecological knowledge in restoration science practices at Quamash Prairie; for the nature education team, training by Indigenous educators and a reassessment of their curriculum; for the communications team, a more thoughtful approach to telling Indigenous history and stories; for Salmon Homecoming, the renewed inclusion of the Indigenous community in planning and running the event; and more. The intertribal cultural resources specialist also made connections with over 20 Indigenous-led organizations in greater Portland, and created and hosted an annual public event at the Oregon Zoo for Indigenous People's Day.

While the intertribal cultural resource specialist position was temporary and project-specific, the work showed that a permanent and wider-ranging position was necessary. Staff and managers throughout the department have pushed for this position, including director Jon Blasher requesting it be added to the department's budget. Creating the permanent post was one of the most requested actions during the development of the department's racial equity action plan. That position has been approved.

Equity Strategy Goal C

Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce.

Objective C1: Invest in continuing staff education and inclusive staff culture.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Support participation in the Employee Resource Groups for staff of color and lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, gender non-conforming and queer (LGBTQ+) staff in whatever roles staff would like to engage in.
- Institute various ways for staff to guide managers regarding work climate and culture, including how to strengthen cultural competency and humility and assistance to deepen understanding of racial equity work.
- Provide opportunities, including space and paid time for staff of color to share their expertise and experience and lead conversations and initiatives as those staff are interested.
- Support staff as they pursue learning opportunities unique to their personal journeys in advancing racial equity.



Jonathan Blasher, center, the department's director with staff members at a tour of Deep Creek Natural Area.

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
C1-1	Create a vision for racial equity which is aligned with Parks and Nature's mission and core line of business and establish underlying values that will inform and direct the evolution of department DEI activities. As part of this, revisit racial equity outcomes in partnership with community.	TBD	TBD
C1-2	<p>Build meaningful diversity, equity and inclusion goals into the performance evaluation process for all staff and managers. Use core cultural competencies outlined in modified continuing education plan as a framework for strengthening and adapting staff and management evaluation goals over time.</p> <p>See Appendix D: Staff Continuing Education for Metro core competencies and related ideas.</p>	Management, all staff	FY 2019
C1-3	<p>Priority action: Design and implement a department-specific DEI education plan to complement the agency plan; include required professional development for all staff and managers.</p> <p>Begin with establishing a shared language and common understanding around concepts core to this plan. Include content that is directly relevant to staff job responsibilities.</p> <p>See Appendix D: Staff Continuing Education.</p>	TBD	FY 2019
C1-4	Improve the staff on-boarding process by incorporating elements of the department-specific DEI education plan into the process.	Administration, Management	FY 2019

Objective C2: Build career pathways for youth and people of color.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Directly and meaningfully involve staff (including temporary and seasonal), agency DEI team members, and outside partners in creating job descriptions, recruitment and hiring processes with a racial equity lens.
- Create diverse hiring panels, including for seasonal and temporary positions.

Years 1-2

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
C2-1 To inform the vision for a career pathways program, review existing research and explore data around racial and cultural distribution of participation in development/education programs and the regional parks and natural areas workforce. Build greater department knowledge of existing pathways programs and the barriers disproportionately faced by youth and people of color.	Special Projects (Management, Science)	FY 2019
C2-2 Develop a science internship and identify outcomes, budget and projects. Collaborate with other teams and external partners. Consider as a pilot for expanding internships and as precursor to building a formal career pathways program.	Science (Special Projects)	FY 2019
C2-3 Participate in the Construction Careers Pathways Project, the Metro led-effort to convene government agencies to create construction career pathways for people of color and women through large publicly-owned projects.	Planning, Special Projects	FY 2019
C2-4 Revisit the Youth Ecology Corps model, and explore solutions and regional resources available to re-create a program with similar goals.	TBD (NALM, Nature Education, Volunteer Services)	TBD

Years 3-5

- Develop a formal career pathways program for Parks and Nature, expanding the pilot youth internships program across the department. Work directly with community partners in education, economic development and environment.

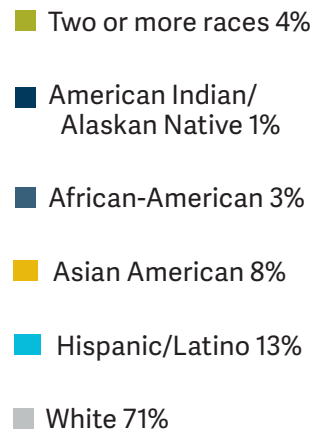
Demographics of greater Portland, Metro and Parks and Nature

One of the key goals of the action plan is to develop a department that is racially diverse. This will help Parks and Nature better reflect the greater Portland community. It will also help the department do even better work. Diverse work groups have been shown to be better at problem solving and navigating change.

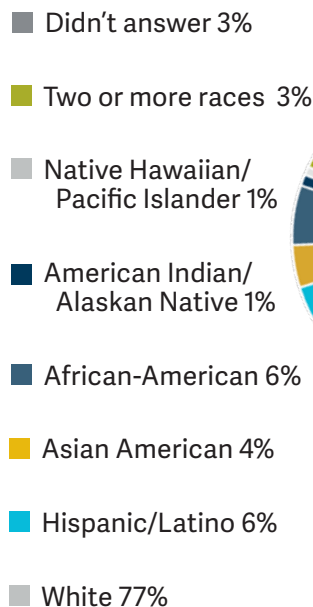
In 2018, Metro released the Data Dashboard, which breaks down the demographics of departments. The numbers show that Parks and Nature is about 10 percent whiter than the region and less diverse than Metro as a whole.

Diversity is not simply about hiring more people of color. A department culture that supports and promotes people of color is required to retain a diverse staff. Metro is committed to creating safe and welcoming spaces for people of color in greater Portland. That includes Metro's workspaces.

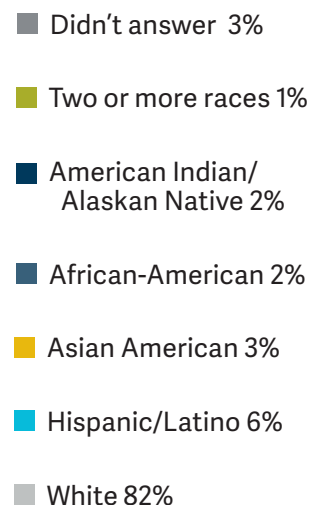
Metro region 2018



Metro staff in 2018



Parks and Nature staff 2018



Equity Strategy Goal D

Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations.

Objective D1: Deliver relevant and inclusive programs and services for people of color.

Related racial equity outcomes: Environmental and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Continue to develop partnerships with community-based organizations to deliver culturally relevant and culturally responsive curriculum and education programs. This includes recruiting and training nature education program staff, contractors and volunteers to provide programs at Metro parks.
- In policy and practice, formalize Parks and Nature's prioritization of community engagement with historically marginalized groups, with broader engagement secondary.

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
D1-1	Expanding upon traditional nature-based curricula, develop and offer a nature education plan that is relevant to communities of color and includes culturally inclusive history of the land.	Nature Education (Volunteer Services)	FY 2019
D1-2	Establish clear goals, outcomes and criteria to guide decisions around community events, to help equitably determine which events are planned, sponsored, and co-created with partners. As one outcome, create a process and criteria for sponsoring community-based, culturally specific events and festivals at Metro sites. Consider direct financial sponsorship as well as in-kind support.	TBD (Park Operations, Community Engagement Team)	FY 2019
D1-3	Review Cemetery operations using a racial equity and empowerment tool, working with community to review policies and pricing structures.	Cemeteries	FY 2019
D1-4	Identify community-based partners to offer an exclusive early reservation period for large-scale holiday celebrations or events at Metro parks one week prior to the posted open public reservation dates.	Park Operations (Communications)	FY 2019

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
D1-5	Evaluate the effectiveness of Parks and Nature programs in connecting youth of color to nature and further explore the department's vision and values around prioritizing service to youth.	Nature Education, Communications (Volunteer Services)	FY 2020
D1-6	Strengthen and share practices that result in welcoming, relatable, clear and concise position descriptions for volunteers. Give weight to personal and lived experiences and cultural sensitivity as part of the application, onboarding and training processes. Consider developing tangible products/ tools to support this.	Volunteer Services	FY 2020
D1-7	Improve the volunteer on-boarding process by adding an education series and resources focused on the racial equity plan and racial equity issues in the environmental field.	Volunteer Services	FY 2020
D1-8	Explore the potential for and Metro's role in events at Metro-managed sites for youth of color, including leadership events and live music in Metro parks.	Communications (Volunteer Services, Nature Education)	FY 2020

Years 3-5

- Working with the Zoo and others, update Metro's environmental literacy framework to address the racial equity strategy. This framework is the foundation for Metro education programs.

Objective D2: Manage and operate a welcoming and inclusive system of parks and natural areas.

Related racial equity outcomes: Environmental and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Invite greater Indigenous community access to Metro-managed natural areas, working together to advance Indigenous land management and conservation goals. Support this work in a formal manner, through contracts or other agreements.
- Build language proficiency of department staff to reflect the most common languages spoken in greater Portland, especially at park destinations including, but not limited to, Blue Lake and Oxbow regional parks.
- Across the Parks and Nature system, provide facilities that support activities identified as significant to different culturally specific communities, including facilities that support larger groups and families and support social bonding and cohesion.

Years 1-2

Action		Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
D2-1	Building on the direction of the COO, research and build understanding of the policies and activities of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and cooperating agencies that have the potential to affect parks, trails and natural area visitors, program participants and site contractors. Plan for and provide ongoing information and support for all staff, and elevate and respond to questions and concerns raised by specific teams.	Management, OMA, DEI (Natural Areas Land Management, Park Operations, Nature Education, Volunteer Services)	FY 2019
D2-2	To help maintain high standards of site safety and cleanliness for all visitors, continue to implement staffing recommendations from most recent assessment, which reflects a need for additional park support staff, greater efficiencies and adjustments to staff allocations.	Park Operations	FY 2019
D2-3	Re-assess guidelines and processes governing community access to undeveloped natural areas. Using the work of the Intertribal Cultural Resource Specialist as a model, work with community, identify access priorities and barriers, and work across the department to remove those barriers over time. Tie back to the special use permit process.	TBD (Volunteer Services, Nature Education)	FY 2019

Action		Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
D2-4	Conduct an ADA program self-evaluation to evaluate accessibility of Parks and Nature's communications, programs, services and policies. This will result in a plan to remove barriers for people with disabilities and to create site interpretive and engagement experiences that are more accessible for people of all abilities.	TBD (Volunteer Services, Community Engagement Team, Special Projects)	FY 2020

Years 3-5

- Create a program scope for collecting visitor use data and for analyzing parks market or service area demographics over time. One possible outcome is building a baseline of data to help evaluate department service to communities of color.
- Update Parks and Nature sign standards to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and to provide guidance around design and investment in multi-lingual signs and materials.
- Revisit the need to establish a low-income parks pass and/or sliding scale fees for park entry and programs.



A contracted worker planting during a wetland during a restoration.

Bright spots

Contract restoration: hiring more minority-owned businesses

Every year, the department spends millions of dollars, with a large portion going to restoration at natural areas and maintenance work at our parks. Most of this work is done by contractors, and it represents the most direct economic benefit the department offers to local businesses. In 2017, it totaled \$16.8 million.

That means contracting is a powerful tool in Parks and Nature's racial equity toolbox. And the department is learning to use it.

In 2014, the department undertook an effort – led in large part by conservation staff members Curt Zonick and Ariel Whitacre – to make sure its contractors included as many businesses as possible that are minority-owned, women-owned and emerging small businesses who are registered by Oregon's COBID program. Each year since then, COBID contractors have been paid between 25 and 32 percent of all Parks and Nature contract dollars.

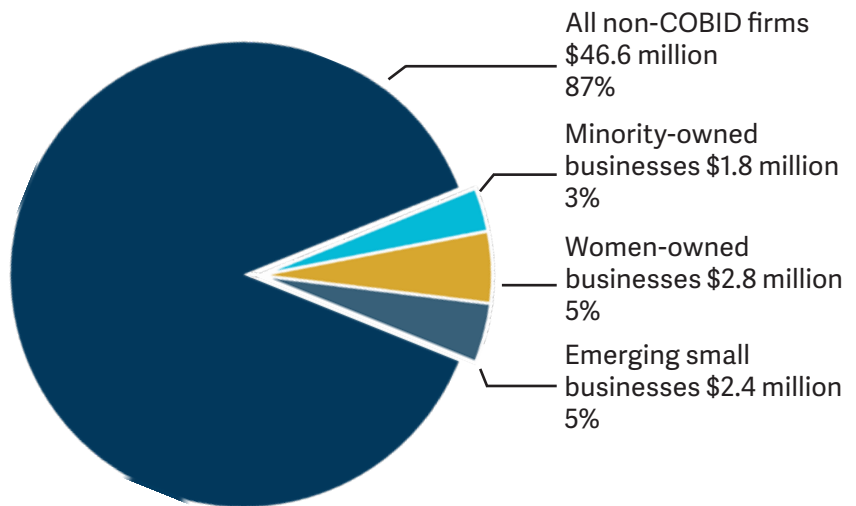
In 2017, COBID firms received 25 percent of the payments made by Parks and Nature to contractors. Among all Metro departments only four others paid a greater percentage. And among departments that spent more than \$1 million on contractors that year, Parks and Nature paid COBID firms the most by far in both the percentage of total spending and in absolute dollars.

Those numbers need to be excavated a bit more to understand how Parks and Nature's contracting dollars affect racial equity. To start, COBID does not necessarily mean minority-owned. COBID firms registered as women-owned or emerging small businesses are, by definition, owned by whites. Also, not all minority-owned businesses are registered as COBID, so the department's use of minority-owned businesses is certainly higher than COBID numbers show.

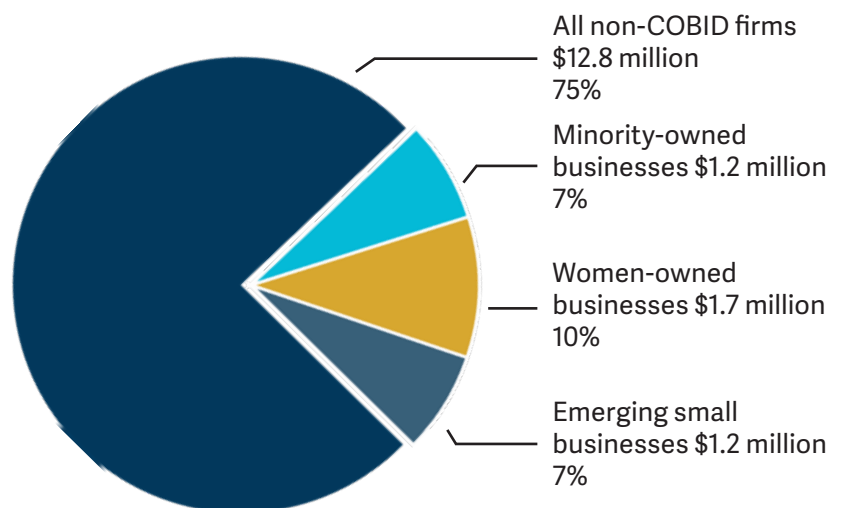
If the COBID categories are separated, minority-owned businesses received 7 percent of the department's contract dollars in 2017. As with all COBIDs, Parks and Nature is a leader among Metro departments. In fact, nearly two-thirds of the money Metro pays to minority-owned firms comes from Parks and Nature.

There's even more room to grow. According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2012 Survey of Business Owners, 14 percent of businesses in the region are owned by minorities. Like all racial equity work, there's a ways to go – but the department is off to a great start.

Metro contract dollars spent in FY 2016-17



Parks and Nature contract dollars spent in FY 2016-17



Equity Strategy Goal E

Metro's resource allocation advances racial equity.

Objective E1: Build department capacity for community engagement and partnerships.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Dedicate time in staff and manager work plans to attend community events, with the goal of building relationships and increasing understanding of different communities, cultures and ways of doing business. This includes events that may not directly relate to current Metro project work or business objectives.

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
E1-1	Develop and implement a consistent, department-wide framework for formal partnerships between Parks and Nature and community-based organizations. Framework is to include shared definitions, conditions for establishing partnerships, and how to coordinate across program areas and measure/report impact and effectiveness.	Community Investments (Planning)	FY 2018 (underway)
E1-2	Develop partnership and engagement goals and objectives for each department program area.	All (Community Investments)	Varies
E1-3	Establish a process to help teams identify partnership and engagement priorities for department program areas. Focus on partnerships with community-based organizations and community leaders that advance implementation of the department action plan and help realize other department priorities.	Community Investments	FY 2019

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
E1-4 Create and communicate clear guidance and expectations related to coordinating community/ partner engagement and related communications. Revisit the need for establishing or adopting a central system, process or tools to support these efforts.	Management	FY 2020

Years 3-5

- Comprehensively evaluate Parks and Nature's engagement with communities of color. When identifying gaps and opportunities, consider community geography, culturally specific communities, as well as the purpose and nature of department engagement and relationships.



Parks operations manager Monty Woods plays soccer with kids spending the afternoon at Oxbow Regional park for a barbecue co-created by Metro and IRCO, the Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization.

Objective E2: Remove barriers for people of color in contracting and grant programs.

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic, environmental and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- Standardize the practice of financially compensating individuals and community-based organizations who provide policy or project consultation, promotion of engagement activities or events, and other forms of support. Build project and program budgets to make this possible.
- Continue to dedicate time in restoration contracting and project processes to hire and support COBID contractors, including businesses led by people of color who are working to build their portfolio of directly relevant skills and experience.
- Continually strengthen grant program equity goals, and improve how they are communicated to prospective applicants.
- Expand outreach of Parks and Nature grant programs to organizations led by communities of color and those supporting/empowering communities of color.
- Improve accessibility of the Parks and Nature grant applications and remove barriers in the reimbursement process experienced by smaller organizations.
- Invest in face to face relationship-building and additional outreach to communities of color in business networking and contract solicitations to increase opportunities in the environmental field.

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
E2-1	Using a racial equity tool, review, update and prioritize Parks and Nature grant and sponsorship programs.	Community Investments	FY 2020
E2-2	Establish a process to evaluate the impact/ effectiveness of Metro grant and sponsorship awards and in-kind contributions.	Community Investments	FY 2020

Years 3-5

- Revisit Section 8 housing in the context of the department's residential property portfolio. With outside support, facilitate an intentional conversation about this. Consider including community advisors and stakeholders.
- Explore the use of partnerships to support businesses owned/operated by people of color and to remove barriers to entering the market.

Objective E3: Equitably plan and invest in Metro's system of parks, cemeteries, trails and natural areas

Related racial equity outcomes: Economic, environmental and cultural equity

Ongoing actions

- In regional and systems planning, invest in projects that have multiple public benefits, explicitly including positive outcomes or benefits for communities of color.
- Allocate resources for successful implementation of the department's ADA transition plan and removal of physical barriers that impact people with disabilities. Ensure that implementation priorities reflect community direction.
- Prioritize investments in parks, natural areas and trails that directly benefit communities of color. Consider direct and indirect financial investments, as well as staff time and energy.
- When planning access to nature, use proximity to town center and/or regional transit, bike or pedestrian connections as an important criterion for selecting the location of primary trailheads and day use areas.

Years 1-2

	Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
E3-1	Identify and explore opportunities to engage with TriMet and others in regional transportation planning processes, with the goal of improving transit access to Metro park destinations.	Planning, Special Projects	FY 2019
E3-2	Finalize the Connect with Nature toolkit. Document and summarize findings and lessons learned from Connect with Nature, partnerships and the region-wide Parks and Nature survey. Share with staff, peer agencies and other partners. Explore findings in partnership with culturally specific partners and communities.	Planning (Special Projects, Planning, Community Investments)	FY 2019
E3-3	Complete the department's ADA transition plan for park destinations. Ensure that the plan priorities and implementation reflect community priorities.	Special Projects (Park Operations, Planning)	FY 2019

Action	Lead teams (support)	Initiation time line
E3-4 Establish policy that adopts Connect with Nature toolkit and ADA transition plan process recommendations as standard practice, including those related to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • design, construction and operation of Metro parks and natural areas • lessons learned for future park planning processes • removing systemic barriers as they relate to system-wide planning and potential future funding 	Directors , Planning (Special Projects)	FY 2019
E3-5 Update the Blue Lake Park Master Plan. Revisit priorities identified by communities of color prior to making significant investment or decisions that impact visitor use at Blue Lake Regional Park.	Planning (Special Projects)	FY 2020
E3-6 Develop a stewardship and engagement plan that promotes Metro cemeteries as community spaces, and that increases accessibility for people of color, seniors, and community overall.	Cemeteries (Community Engagement Team, Planning)	FY 2020



Metro staff member Cory Eldridge reacts to the first successful cast by a camper from Camp ELSO at Blue Lake Park. She was fishing with Get Hooked, a Metro partner.



A camper from Camp ELSO walks through Oxbow Regional Park, looking into the canopy of the Ancient Forest.

Uniting racial equity with Parks and Nature's mission

While the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion establishes clear goals and direction for Metro, every department and every team has its own role and way to achieve these goals. What works for a department planning the future of greater Portland's transportation system might not fit a department that cares for natural areas and provides regional parks. Knowing this, the Metro Council directed every department to create their own action plans.

For Parks and Nature, this means weaving racial equity into the department's core mission of protecting water quality and fish and wildlife habitat and connecting people to nature. The department also has obligations to voters that were spelled out in bonds and levies that affect its approach to racial equity.

That work was made easier because equity, diversity and inclusion were already Parks and Nature policy. Five months before adopting its racial equity strategy, the Metro Council approved the Parks and Nature System Plan, which established the mission and priorities of the department. In its introduction, the System Plan states that "Metro's vision will succeed only if it benefits diverse communities across our region."

The System Plan makes clear, repeatedly, that the department must serve communities that have not benefited equitably from the department's work, it must include these community members in decision-making and it must respond to their needs.

This action plan strengthens Parks and Nature's System Plan, building on its values and commitments to diversity, equity and inclusion by aligning them with Metro's policy of racial equity.

"Diverse communities should feel safe and welcome at parks, trails and natural areas. Working together, Metro and our partners create opportunities for all our residents to work at, play in and care for these special places – ensuring that everyone gains from the benefits of nature."

– Parks and Nature System Plan

Learn more: the history of the conservation movement

Articles

"The Green Movement is Talking about Race? It's About Time" by Brentin Mock in *Outside*

Studies

"The State of Diversity in the Environmental Organization" by Dorceta E. Taylor

Books

Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors by Carolyn Finney

Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer

From The Heart: Voices of the American Indian by Lee Miller

The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection by Dorceta E. Taylor

Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States by Carl A. Zimring

For more recommendations, see Appendix C: Staff continuing education.

Why racial equity in Parks and Nature

Racial disparities represent the deepest, most pervasive social inequalities in the United States, and as such, racism underpins structures of inequality across the spectrum of marginalized identities in this nation. Racial equity is the strategic approach to remove these disparities and requires actions across Metro for structural change. Equity is achieved when it is not possible to distinguish desired quality of life outcomes by race or other social identifiers.

Racial disparities exist in the fields represented in Parks and Nature. These disparities are rooted in the very beginning of the conservation movement and the creation of public parks and natural areas.

In a 2017 article in *Outside* titled "The Green Movement Is Talking About Racism? It's About Time," journalist Brentin Mock writes, "The rise of the conservation movement in the late-19th century came at the expense of America's racial promise to the black Americans it had enslaved for almost 250 years. . . . The U.S. government had promised land to newly emancipated black citizens after the Civil War, but those properties were yanked away from them – and from many Native American tribes – to make room for new national parks and monuments."

This legacy reaches into the present.

One way it reveals itself is the lack of diversity at conservation organizations and parks and environmental agencies. In 2014, University of Michigan professor Dorceta E. Taylor released the study "The State of Diversity in the Environmental Organization." She found that 88 percent of staff at American conservation organizations as well as government environmental agencies are white. Only 60 percent of the U.S. population is white.

Parks and Nature has an opportunity to reshape the conservation movement, make spaces that heal the relationships of people of color with the land, and identify and reduce the barriers that keep people of color from accessing nature. Often, the most important act as a government agency or professionals from the dominant culture: Simply get out of the way.

To learn more about this history and the way racism shows up in parks and nature work, check out the reading list.

A camper from Camp ELSO perches on a mossy log in the Ancient Forest at Oxbow Regional Park.





Parks and Nature staff walk a trail at Graham Oaks Nature Park.

A living plan

The Parks and Nature Racial Equity Action Plan will work with partner organizations and the community as it implements this plan. The racial equity outcomes will be revisited with the community in an effort to ground-truth whether they align with the emerging vision statement for the department (which is in development at the time of this writing).

The start dates for actions are estimates. Plan actions – including those listed as “ongoing” – are intended to inform annual work planning for teams and staff members. While the timelines are important, the goal is to successfully carry out an action while remaining adaptable and responsive to community direction.

Every member of Parks and Nature has a role in implementing this plan. One immediate action calls for an implementation accountability team, which is scheduled to be created in 2019. However, this team will not be responsible for fulfilling actions. The department director and management team carry ultimate responsibility for the success of this plan, and management team members will play essential roles in sponsoring actions and providing resources – time and money – as well as peer and staff support along the way.



Nature educator Alejandra Cortes leads a Spanish-language nature walk at Orenco Woods Nature Park.

Creating the plan

In 2016, Parks and Nature joined a four-department cohort to pilot the creation of department racial equity action plans, joining Planning, Property and Environmental Services and the Oregon Zoo. The Parks and Nature action plan project manager proposed, and the department's management agreed, that the plan should be created by a working group made of staff from the department's teams. Through this setup, the process of developing the plan would also create racial equity advocates.

From late 2016 to June 2018, a working group of roughly 30 representatives from every team in the department met monthly to create the plan. Together, members worked to better understand Metro's racial equity goals and how the department's culture and work would need to shift to achieve them. In spring 2017, the working group members led an internal assessment of team and department strengths, challenges and opportunities. Working with their teammates, they identified, prioritized and refined actions their teams could take to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion.

Community perspective

Along with the actions identified by the working group and department teams, the working group:

- Based initial actions on findings of the engagement process that informed Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. (This work occurred in 2015.)
- Drew inspiration for its three racial equity outcomes – economic, environmental and cultural equity – from the equity indicators identified in 2015's Equity Baseline Report, which was developed by the community-led Equity Baseline Technical Advisory Committee Group.
- Leveraged agency-wide partnerships with the Coalition of Communities of Color and Momentum Alliance to engage youth and emerging leaders in development of the department's racial equity action plan. (Conversations and park tours occurred in spring and fall 2017.)
- Presented draft actions to Metro's Committee on Racial Equity and refined actions based on Committee member feedback. (Parks and Nature presented its work twice in winter 2018.)
- Co-hosted three meetings with and for culturally-specific community partner organizations to ensure that plan actions reflected the needs of their communities and to identify opportunities for partnerships in plan implementation. (Outreach occurred in spring 2018.)

For greater detail and a summary of engagement findings, see Appendix A: Community engagement, page 52.

Refining the actions

After collecting potential actions, teams across the department reviewed and focused the emerging racial equity work plan. These conversations were guided by these criteria:

- Impact: Which actions will best advance the plan equity outcomes?

- Fit: Which actions are most closely tied to your team's work plan, or should be?
- Capacity: Which priority items do we have time and skills to begin in the next six to 12 months? Two to three years?
- Timing: Which actions set the groundwork for future actions and how should this inform the plan implementation timeline?

During the planning process, Metro leadership shared a consistent message: the plan should reflect and align with Parks and Nature's unique role in the agency and across the region. This led many actions to be referred to other departments, included in Appendix B: Metro central services department actions, page 54.

Ultimately, the plan comprises more than 80 actions. Some actions reflect work already underway. Others represent new and different ways of working for Parks and Nature, and others still reflect entirely new actions and approaches to help fulfill the department mission and advance racial equity. By relying on staff's understanding of the parameters and possibilities of their jobs and by heeding community members' clear demands for what racial equity, diversity and inclusion look like in practice, this action plan goes beyond general principles and broad goals. It lays out specific actions needed to build the systems, the culture and the accountability required to improve racial equity.



Olive Nyirabwiza, center in pink pants, visits Oxbow Regional Park with her family and friends during Salmon Homecoming.

Appendix A: Community engagement summary and themes

The Parks and Nature action plan was informed by community members from across the region. This is a brief summary of the engagement activities designed to inform the plan's focus and priorities. The reports or summaries of each engagement can be found at oregonmetro.gov/nature.

Spring 2017

Discussion group with Coalition of Communities of Color

In spring of 2017, the Coalition of Communities of Color proposed a spring and summer partnership with Metro to help build agency understanding of community priorities as they relate to racial equity. This partnership was designed as an opportunity to listen, learn and identify gaps in the development of department racial equity work plans and to help focus racial equity priorities to reflect community perspective. The coalition leveraged support from its Bridges Leadership Development Initiative, comprised of seven member organizations who serve six culturally specific communities. In total, coalition staff recruited 36 participants to share their perspectives.

Discussion group with Momentum Alliance

In May 2017, Momentum Alliance led a half-day session focused on Metro recruitment and hiring practices, in support of department racial equity action plan development. The overall goal of this discussion was to gather diverse youth voices on Metro's job postings, hiring practices and work environments in order to help Metro hire, train and promote a racially diverse workforce. A total of 17 youth participated.

Summer 2017

Park site visits with Momentum Alliance

In June 2017, Parks and Nature hosted a half-day tour of Oxbow, Blue Lake and Canemah Bluff Nature Park for youth of color, followed by an afternoon discussion. Momentum Alliance staff

and youth leaders recruited participants and facilitated conversations. A total of 22 youth participated.

Fall 2017

In fall 2017, Metro re-engaged the partnership with Bridges Leadership Development Initiative. In this listening session 37 participants provided feedback to initial goals and objectives of the department plans.

Winter 2018

In January 2018 Metro's Committee on Racial Equity – the advisory committee to the Metro Council and staff that provides input, advice and oversight for the implementation of the Metro Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity Diversity and Inclusion – invited Parks and Nature to present a draft plan and receive feedback. In February 2018, the department was invited back to present a set of initial actions to their internal and external subcommittees.

Spring 2018

In spring 2018, Parks and Nature staff partnered with three community organizations – Momentum Alliance, Native American Youth and Family Association and Centro Cultural – to host meetings with community partners. The goals for the engagement were to validate the direction and initial actions of the Parks and Nature action plan with community and ensure it aligns with their desires for a more diverse, equitable and inclusive department and to identify community partners who want to co-create implementation on key partnership-oriented actions. A total of 27 people representing 22 culturally specific organizations participated.

Appendix B : Metro Central Services Department Actions

Background

The Oregon Zoo, Parks and Nature, Property and Environmental Services, and Planning and Development are leading the way on implementing Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Each department committed to independent actions specific to their public service. They also identified common actions best coordinated by Metro's central services team at an agency-wide level.

This appendix describes each common action and the central service department responsible for agency-wide coordination.

Communications

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Compile, share and support implementation of a DEI best practice guide that ensures meaningful engagement of marginalized communities is Metro's standard of practice for all projects.	A best practice guide for community engagement, advisory committees, translation support and DEI terminology will provide needed direction to staff and partners and help ensure Metro walks its talk by documenting the importance of building engagement plans with direct input from the communities being engaged. The guide should cover the "how," "why" and "when" components for the topics.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Research Center, line department project managers	FY 18/19
Provide communications direction and resources to assist staff with explaining why Metro is moving forward with a racial equity approach.	Create products and trainings that help staff feel confident they are on message when explaining why Metro is moving forward with a racial equity approach.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; representative Metro staff	FY 18/19

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Establish and host a space for Metro staff to share their experiences regarding community engagement efforts.	Metro will become even more effective in coordinating engagement efforts across the agency by investing more in systems and structures that allow Metro staff to share experiences they have had in their engagement efforts. Such a process should help with cross-departmental learning and strengthen engagement efforts.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; line department project managers	FY 18/19
.....
Create and gain approval of a Metro-wide policy on providing stipends to community members who engage with Metro.	Consistent stipend use across the agency will provide better support for community members who engage with Metro. An agency-wide policy, procedures and guidance on how and when to provide stipends to communities who engage with Metro will improve performance overall.	Communications; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Research Center Office of Metro Attorney	FY 18/19

Finance and Regulatory Services

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Lead an effort to improve the quality and detail of data reporting on the utilization of COBID-certified firms by department and venue.	Enhancing Metro's COBID contracting data tracking and reporting will improve transparency and increase purchasing leaders' ability to meet Metro's goals. The reporting should include the disaggregation of utilized COBID firms by emerging small business, women business enterprise and minority business enterprise.	Research Center; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; line departments	FY 18/19
.....

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Create and implement a communications and training strategy to encourage staff to contract with community organizations.	There is a need to increase awareness about Metro's special procurement authority and the procedures to contract with community-based non-profit organizations.	Communications; Human Resources; line departments	FY 18/19
Propose and implement a solution to improve the ability for directors, staff and the general public to monitor progress of departmental attainment of Metro's COBID utilization goals.	There is a desire for an easily accessible way to monitor departmental and agency-wide progress toward the attainment of COBID utilization goals.	Research Center; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Communications	FY 19/20
Review, approve and support implementation of a Metro-wide policy on providing stipends to community members who engage with Metro.	Communications and DEI are creating an agency-wide stipends policy. FRS will review, approve and support implementation of the policy when it is complete.	Communications; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Office of Metro Attorney	FY 19/20
Work with the DCOO, directors and others to leverage the budget process to create improvements in community involvement in program and plan design.	There is a desire to increase engagement of communities of color in Metro's budget process. The most effective way to do so is by increasing engagement during the design phase of a new program or plan. This phase highly influences the final budget allocation and decision for that program or plan. This action will help ensure increased engagement during this phase of all Metro programs and projects.	DCOO; Communications; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; directors	FY 20/21

Human Resources

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Create and offer training opportunities for Metro staff (required for hiring managers) to conduct equitable recruitment and hiring processes.	Training will increase equitable outcomes and ensure a diverse Metro workforce. The trainings should focus on helping hiring managers conduct an equitable process through the entire recruitment and hiring cycle.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	FY 18/19
Create and ensure consistent use of a DEI lens for the entire life cycle of recruitment and hiring.	Hiring managers will benefit from new tools and improved understanding of important equity considerations during recruitment and hiring.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; hiring managers	FY 19/20
Create evaluation metrics and an accountability plan for recruitment efforts.	The creation of target goals and measures for Metro's recruitment efforts informed by the findings from the DEI Impact Evaluation project are needed to support effective tracking of progress and ongoing accountability for hiring managers.	Research Center; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; Communications	FY 19/20
Develop retention and promotion mechanisms (the "pathway") to ensure staff of color have the opportunity to access regular status jobs and advance their careers at Metro.	More transparent and available career ladders for staff advancement will improve Metro's ability to meet its agency-wide people goals.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	FY 20/21
Develop a strategy to effectively incorporate racial equity in the staff performance evaluation (PACe).	The inclusion of responsibilities or goals related to racial equity in PACe will contribute to ensure all Metro employees are accountable for this key area of their work.	DCEO; Directors; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	FY 20/21

Information Services

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Identify needs, issues and barriers related to non-networked staff having access to important Metro news and information.	Many Metro employees have no or limited access to a computer and internet. Increasing the number of channels used to communicate with non-networked employees will improve engagement. This action will establish a process to better understand the issues and begin exploring potential solutions.	Human Resources; Communications; managers of non-networked staff; non-networked staff	FY 18/19
Propose solutions to the issues identified related to staff access to internet	Once Information Services acquires a comprehensive understanding of issues related to computer and internet access for frontline staff, the department will propose resolutions.	Human Resources; Communications	FY 18/19

Research Center

Action	Action Description	Support	Year
Develop a strategy for the Research Center to increase equity capacity and expertise in order to provide equity data and analysis support.	Develop a strategy to meet the increased demand for Research Center to obtain and maintain data and expertise to appropriately analyze equity.	Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	FY 18/19
Lead the development of an agency-wide equity data plan that includes the establishment of standards of practice, outlines actions to improve community access to Metro data, and identifies key data sets for future collection that are critical to Metro's understanding of racial inequities in greater Portland.	Produce a cross-agency, coordinated plan assessing, acquiring and applying equity data and analysis. Provide strategic direction for Metro in addressing data limitations as well as clarifying data relationships with regional partners.	Coo; Deputy COO; line department directors; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; community partners	FY18/19
Increase Metro staff and community awareness of Research Center's capabilities to assist in analyzing, tracking and forecasting equity impacts.	Improved staff and community awareness and understanding of the variety of tools that the Research Center can offer to assist staff in analyzing, tracking and forecasting equity impacts (e.g. modeling and forecasting) to increase the equity of plans, programs and policies.	Communications; Human Resources; Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; appropriate line department personnel; community partners	FY 19/20

Appendix C: Staff Continuing Education

Racial equity needs to be threaded throughout the department, becoming part of how every staff member and manager works. That's a big shift and a change in skills. To help everyone better understand racial equity and the impact it has on people of color in greater Portland, the action plan carves out space for the members of the department to learn. Staff and managers will have formal education opportunities, both from Metro and the department, and will be empowered to seek knowledge that fits their personal and professional needs.

Parks and Nature aspires to be a place that supports individual growth and development of staff, inside and outside of formal workshops and trainings. This appendix is intended as an initial resource for staff as they explore their respective paths and purpose towards racial equity. This is also a resource in creating the department-specific DEI education plan.

	Individual and interpersonal	Institutional	Structural
Metro DEI core competencies (July 2018)	Awareness and advocacy: A1: Foundational awareness of lens, filters, and dimensions of diversity A2: Self-awareness of intersecting social positionalities to power, privilege and identity development A3: Intercultural communication A4: Team-building via intercultural relationship development A5: Responding to conscious and unconscious bias and micro-aggressions in the workplace A6: Mission-driven storytelling for inclusive narratives that shape organizational culture A7: Coaching for equitable and inclusive leadership A8: Prevention of, and appropriate responses to, discriminatory behavior and harassment A9: Intercultural conflict resolution management and intervention	Organizational change to advance diversity, equity and inclusion: O1: Accountable communication to inform and engage stakeholders about relevant diversity, equity and inclusion information O2: Contextualizing Metro's racial equity strategy goals and strategies O3: Mitigating bias in hiring and/or procurement processes O4: Understanding organizational DEI environmental factors impacting workforce well-being, productivity and retention O5: Organizational change theory O6: Building an equity matrix O7: Creating an equity toolbox O8: Equity impact evaluation O9: Developing an equity plan O10: Inclusive and equitable community engagement methods O11: Understanding organizational power dynamics O12: Inside-Outside government community engagement principles O13: Universal design in accessibility O14: Organizational equity training and facilitation principles O15: Communicating diversity, equity and inclusion within a racial equity framework	Foundations for structural equity: S1: Systems of inequity: individual and interpersonal, institutional and structural levels S2: Rationales for strategic planning with a racial equity lens S3: Equity vs equality S4: Awareness of culturally-specific histories and intersections with power, privilege and oppression S5: Change theory

	Individual and interpersonal	Institutional	Structural
Examples of what is needed to do the work (from Multnomah County Equity and Empowerment Lens Logic Model, 2014)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of purpose towards racial equity • Courage • Prioritization of self-care • Positive cultural identity • Understanding the interconnectedness of climate health, ecology and racial equity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of purpose towards racial equity • Restorative intent • Proper time allocated • Efforts to flatten hierarchy • Disaggregated data • People of color in leadership roles and spread throughout the organization 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity of purpose towards racial equity • Analysis of legal barriers and courageous actions to amend • Regular, purpose-driven collaborative meetings among key leaders • Strong partnerships with community of color leaders and organizations
Personal and professional development topics identified by and for Parks and Nature staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care for people of color in white-dominant workplaces • Understanding Oregon's history of racism and the displacement of people of color • Cultural competency and humility • How to identify and challenge workplace racism (interpersonal) • Self-awareness around power and privilege • Strategies for challenging white privilege • Bystander intervention skills and tools • Gender awareness and inclusivity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racism, whiteness and racial equity in the environmental movement • Local Indigenous history and current uses of Metro parks and natural areas • The fundamentals of environmental justice • Trauma informed care for working with the public in parks and natural areas • Culturally respectful community engagement • Inclusive staff culture and how to deal with difficult situations and conversations for management and project leads • How to identify and challenge workplace racism (structural and institutional) • Applying a racial equity and empowerment lens to projects and in professional roles • Awareness of power dynamics in Metro's relationships with community partners and in community investment programs. • Topics could include how to navigate power dynamics with awareness and humility and how to use power mapping as a tool 	

	Individual and interpersonal	Institutional	Structural
Examples of activities: “beyond workshops and trainings”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-reflection around racial and implicit bias awareness and use of independent assessment tools (ex: Harvard’s Project Implicit) • Read alternative histories around race and racial inequities such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Clean and White: A History of Environmental Racism in the United States</i> by Carl A. Zimring • <i>From The Heart: Voices of the American Indian</i> by Lee Miller • The <i>ReVisioning American History</i> series • <i>The Rise of the American Conservation Movement: Power, Privilege, and Environmental Protection</i> by Dorceta E. Taylor • Read local news publications of culturally-specific communities o • Explore different perspectives through engaging in music and the arts (e.g., explore the works of authors and artists of color) • Participate in Metro DEI book club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize or participate in lunch-time discussions • Peer-to-peer mentoring and coffee: building authentic, mutual relationships between white staff and staff of color to explore questions of privilege and race • Peer-to-peer mentoring and research: learning from what other organizations or agencies are doing to advance diversity, equity and inclusion • Join a project team for an upcoming “DEI” project or initiative • Follow local and national organizations such as OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon, Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society • Learn more about systemic and institutional racism by reading a book from this recommended reading list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America</i> by Richard Rothstein • <i>The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness</i> by Michelle Alexander • <i>Root Shock: How Tearing Up City Neighborhoods Hurts America, And What We Can Do About it</i> by Mindy Thompson Fullilove and Carlos F. Peterson • <i>Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America</i> by Ibram X. Kendi • <i>Uprooting Racism: How White People Can Work for Racial Justice</i> by Paul Kivel 	

	Individual and interpersonal	Institutional	Structural
Examples of activities: “beyond workshops and trainings”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend Metro DEI celebrations, lunch and learns, etc. • Build compassion through service learning with friends, family • Participate in Race Talks • Listen to podcasts and read blogs by people of color • Watch videos and documentaries such as <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Ava DuVernay’s 13th</i> • <i>TED talks such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s “The Danger of a Single Story”</i> • Read a book from this recommended reading list <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Black Faces, White Spaces: Reimagining the Relationship of African Americans to the Great Outdoors</i> by Carolyn Finney • <i>Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants</i> by Robin Wall Kimmerer • <i>So You Want To Talk About Race</i> by Ijeoma Oluo • <i>White Fragility: Why It’s So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism</i> by Robin DiAngel 		

Appendix D: Racial equity guidance questionnaire

This questionnaire comes from the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. Find it on page xxix, Appendix H.

DEI Program staff has developed a draft 13-point questionnaire to guide the analysis of existing policies, procedures, programs, investments 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, investments and services fully consider and incorporate racial equity.

This questionnaire is intended to be customized during the implementation phase of this Strategic Plan by individual departments, divisions, programs and venues to meet their specific needs. Departments and venues will be required to create their own specific equity action plans, and this questionnaire will help them develop and implement those action plans.

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/investment /decision that will undergo the application of this tool.

2. Describe the policy/procedure/program/service/investment/decision that will undergo

the application of this tool.

3. Describe the existing data or information that will guide this policy/procedure/program/service/investment /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/investment/decision.

5. Identify which individuals, groups or communities will benefit from this policy/procedure/program/service/investment/decision.

6. Identify which individuals, groups or communities will be burdened by this policy/procedure/program/service/investment/decision.

7. Identify the factors that maybe 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/investment/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/investment/decision.

10. Identify how this policy/procedure/program/service/investment/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/investment will be made, including:

- Who will make the ultimate decision?
- Who will be consulted about the decision?
- 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/investment 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/investment.

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.

Appendix E: Glossary

COBID - COBID means the State of Oregon's Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity, created within the Oregon Business Development Department or such state agency, department or entity to which has been delegated the responsibility to certify minority-owned businesses (MBE), women-owned businesses (WBE), businesses that service-disabled veterans own (SDV) and emerging small businesses (ESB). MBE denotes firms that are 51 percent ownership by a racial minority; WBE denotes firms with 51 percent or higher woman ownership, SDV denotes firms that are 51 percent ownership by a service disabled veteran. ESB is characterized as an emerging small business with two tiers; Tier 1 requires firms to have 19 or fewer employees whose average annual gross receipts over the last three years are under \$1,699,953 for construction firms and under \$679,981 for non-construction-related firms. Tier 2 requires firms with 29 or fewer employees whose average annual gross receipts over the last three years are under \$3,399,907 for construction-related businesses and under \$1,133,302 for non-construction businesses. COBID is the Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity, which is the sole certifying authority for the state of Oregon.

COBID marketplace - Metro's COBID marketplace restricts bids for public improvement contracts with dollar amounts between \$5,000 and \$50,000 to COBID-certified firms.

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 - For the purposes of this plan, Communities of Color are Native Americans, African Americans, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders, Latinos or Hispanics, and immigrants and refugees who do not speak English well, including African immigrants, Slavic and Russian speaking communities, and people from the Middle East.

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.

Environmental justice - Environmental Justice (EJ) operates at the intersection of economic, racial and social justice. EJ is a movement led by communities of color and low income experiencing environmental injustices: polluted air, soil and water; unsafe housing, roadways, sidewalks, and bus stops; inequitable investments in housing, green spaces, active transit and mass transit; and disproportionate impacts due to climate change. Many of these problems arise because our communities are not participants in the decision-making process that produces these results. EJ challenges the mainstream environmental movement to address systemic and historical causes of these environmental problems and is a community-driven, multiracial movement to restore justice to our communities.

– OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon (retrieved 2018) <http://www.opalpdx.org/ej-101/>

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."

– Metro's Equity Strategy Advisory Committee (2014).

Equity in Contracting Program - Metro's program to advance equity in public contracting, promote economic growth of COBID Certified Businesses and provide additional competition for Metro contracts.

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 - Pre-judgment, bias, or discrimination based on race by an individual.

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

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://racialequityalliance.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

Interpersonal racism - Interpersonal racism occurs between individuals. Once we bring our private beliefs into our interaction with others, racism is now in the interpersonal realm.

– Tools and Concepts for Strengthening Racial Equity, Presentation to School District U-46 Terry Keleher, Applied Research Center, 2011.

Race - A social construct that artificially divides people into distinct groups based on characteristics such as physical appearance (particularly color), ancestral heritage, cultural affiliation, cultural history, ethnic classification, and the social, economic and political needs of a society at a given period of time. Racial categories subsume ethnic groups.

– Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin, editors. Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook. New York: Routledge..

Racial equity - Race can no longer be used to predict life outcomes and outcomes for all groups are improved.

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

Racism - Conduct, words, practices or policies which advantage or disadvantage people based on their culture, ethnic origin or color. Racism is just as damaging in obvious forms as it is in less obvious and subtle forms, and is still called racism whether intentional or unintentional.

– Lopes, T. & Thomas, B. (2006). Dancing on Live Embers: Challenging Racism in Organizations. Between the Lines: Toronto, Ontario.

Sponsor - In project management terminology, the Sponsor is responsible for the project's success and provides oversight, is a decision-maker, and removes barriers. The Sponsor

approves expenditures and project change requests, and reviews the appropriate documentation.

– Metro (2013). Construction Project Management Guide. Retrieved May 2016.

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://racialequityalliance.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/GARE-Resource_Guide.pdf

Targeted Universalism - Targeted universalism alters the usual approach of universal strategies to achieve universal goals, and instead suggests we use targeted strategies to reach universal goals. For example, targeted strategies in hiring for people of color would look at access. If communities of color don't have better access to hiring announcements (e.g. by eliminating lack of awareness of job opportunities, unnecessary job requirements and inaccessible language), then the creation of a new job opportunity will not help much.

– Adapted from Perrius, C. (2011). Targeted Universalism. National Equity Project.

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.



If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we've already crossed paths.

So, hello. We're Metro – nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

Metro Council President

Lynn Peterson

Metro Councilors

Shirley Craddick, District 1

Christine Lewis, District 2

Craig Dirksen, District 3

Juan Carlos Gonzalez, District 4

Sam Chase, District 5

Bob Stacey, District 6

Auditor

Brian Evans

