

July 1, 2020

Members of Metro's Committee on Racial Equity,

Thank you for your letter of June 18, 2020, and thank you to Co-Chairs Martine Coblenz and Tristan Penn for meeting with Councilor Craddick and staff on June 29 to discuss the letter. We know you have many demands on your time and recognize and appreciate the work you do with us.

As your letter notes, the Committee on Racial Equity is charged with advising the Metro Council on how best to operationalize the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and to advise the agency generally on advancing racial equity. And during this unprecedented time when we are witnessing a surge in awareness and activism on the experiences of Black people in our country and region, we are grateful that you have called on us to add our voices in saying we stand with Black Lives Matter against police brutality.

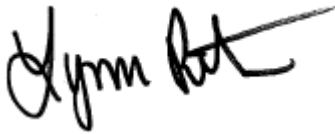
Your letter also calls out the accurate but uncomfortable reality that it has been a struggle for white community members, including councilors, to recognize and acknowledge generations of injustice, and that the health and wellbeing of Black, indigenous and other communities of color are being threatened because of systemic racism and the resultant police violence. We accept your challenge to use or continue using our privileged positions as regionally-elected officials to support organizations that are demanding an end to violence against Black, indigenous and people of color, and reinvest in Black lives and communities. For example, through Metro's voter-supported measures on affordable housing and supportive housing services, we will work toward addressing housing insecurities that disproportionately impact Black, indigenous and people of color, including mental health needs of people experiencing homelessness.

We recognize our role in fighting systemic racism. While we rely on our excellent DEI team, as councilors we will speak up, own Metro's racial equity work, and be prepared to have difficult conversations with our white, elected colleagues, and support and amplify community voices. We will share with CORE the specific commitments we've developed during recent conversations with the region's Black leaders, and other important work Metro is doing or will do to invest in Black lives.

As Martine mentioned during the most recent CORE meeting, this letter is part of an ongoing dialogue between CORE and the Metro Council, and we value that dialogue and hope to build better mechanisms for CORE interaction with the Council. Beyond councilor liaisons attending CORE meetings, we will ask our staff to find opportunities for CORE to inform Metro's equity work, and provide your community-backed advice and expertise to us directly.

Again, thank you for the work you do with Metro to advance racial equity and for this call to action. We are eager to continue the conversation.

Sincerely,



Lynn Peterson, Council President



Juan Carlos González, Deputy Council President  
and District 4 Councilor



Sam Chase, Metro Councilor, District 5



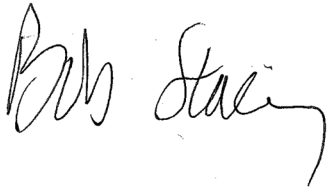
Shirley Craddick, Metro Councilor, District 1



Craig Dirksen, Metro Councilor, District 3



Christine Lewis, Metro Councilor, District 2



Bob Stacey, Metro Councilor, District 6