



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting minutes

Meeting: Committee on Racial Equity Kick-Off
Date/time: Thursday, November 16, 2017
Time: 6 to 8 p.m.
Place: Metro Council Chamber, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232
Purpose: Continue the work of the Committee on Racial Equity

Attendees

Co-Chair: Sharon Gary-Smith

CORE Members: Martine Coblentz, Karla Hernandez, Duncan Hwang, Donna Maxey, Shweta Moorthy, Dele Oyemaja, and Oliviah Walker

CORE Liaisons: Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick, Councilor Sam Chase, Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) Commissioner Karis Stoudamire-Phillips

Metro staff: Raahi Reddy, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, and Nyla Moore

Guests: Peggy Morrell,

Absent: María Caballero Rubio, Kari Herinckx, Laura John, Patricia Kepler, Daisy Quiñonez, Katie Sawicki, and Effie Stansbery.

Welcome

Public comment – Members of the public

No public comment.

Consideration of the minutes from the July 27, 2017 meeting – Co-Chair Sharon Gary-Smith

There was no quorum at this meeting, so the CORE tabled the vote to the next meeting on Jan. 18. The Committee continued with the discussion of the other items on the meeting agenda.

CORE retreat follow-up – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Equity Strategy Program Manager

- **Recap of decisions**
- **Follow up on questions from the CORE members**

Juan Carlos mentioned that the first retreat activity was to have CORE members reflect on people who have influenced them to be active in social change work, write about them, and then share it with a partner and with the group. The writing was then posted on a wall. Scotty created a word cloud image to show who were the Committee's biggest influences. He then asked the CORE members to share reflections from the retreat. Several CORE members shared their perspective:

- Donna indicated that the members were able to accomplish a lot, but she wished they had the opportunity to get to know one another better.
- Daisy was able to learn more about the work they are committing to and the subcommittees they will have the opportunity to sit on. She said she would also like more opportunities for members to get to know one another.
- Duncan was excited about the work plan and subcommittees.

- Dele appreciated the discussion about the structure of Metro led by Raahi and Juan Carlos. He agreed that the CORE members achieved a lot and learned about the best ways to work with one another in the future.
- Sharon echoed what was said by other members. She also enjoyed being in nature on the drive. The retreat location, Cooper Mountain, was significant to the stewardship of CORE members and the work they will be doing. She enjoyed learning more about the scope of work and how CORE fits in. Sharon, like majority of the group, would have liked to get to know the members more.
- Olivia added that she would like more relationship building and appreciated having more information about what the CORE will accomplish during the first year.

Raahi shared they spent a lot of time on the roles Metro plays, CORE's the role, and work CORE will do during the first year. It is important to emphasize that the CORE agreed to function at the policy level and work closely with Metro Council.

Donna mentioned that the meetings' location is very important. Between the Metro tour and being in Cooper Mountain, Donna learned more about of the diverse scope of work that Metro manages. She suggested having the CORE meetings at different Metro sites.

Updated CORE Work Plan review and approval – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chiu

Juan Carlos called the CORE members' attention to the updated Work Plan document that was included in the meeting packet. The updated work plan includes the items that the CORE identified as priorities for this year at the Nov. 4 retreat. The document includes the anticipated initiation date for each line item, any deliverables, and the anticipated completion date. Juan Carlos then asked members to take five minutes to review the work plan again, and then share any reactions, questions or comments they might have.

Duncan Hwang indicated that the work plan does a good job of sharing the work for the next year, but he would like to know more about the input CORE will have on department specific equity strategy plans beyond the first year. He also asked for similar information about other major projects at Metro and the amount of influence CORE will have prior to decisions being made.

Shweta Moorthy requested to know how we staff will close the information loops on major projects. She pointed out that this is especially important when those projects involve community forums and a timeline for when those would take place, so that projects are not scheduling those events at the same time.

Donna Maxey asked that on the item called "Connecting with community-based organizations ("CBOs")..." the CORE makes sure to identify which CBOs they will work with, and that the committee have their meetings in community spaces to ensure that more community members can attend. She asked about the possibility of providing transportation between Metro and community spaces. She would like for each member to give a presentation on the organizations that they work for. Donna would like to have a Race Talks event about CORE in 2018. Donna shared this is the most integrated committee she's ever sat on. She questioned how Metro communicates about CORE meetings. Finally, Donna asked about whether Metro staff, especially staff of color, have the opportunity to speak freely.

Dele Oyemaja agreed with Donna about taking meetings into the community. He mentioned that community members would be greatly impacted by learning about the work that CORE does. He also pointed out that community members might not work in shifts that are conducive to the current meeting times. Donna replied that the CORE doesn't have to have a large success in attendance at first, but the committee should make the effort to attract more people to attend the meetings.

Karla Hernandez shared that the work plan contains a lot of work, and that it would be good to work in subcommittees. She also said it would be nice to have information about Metro events that are happening in the community.

Raahi Reddy, Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Program Director, shared that the departments with equity plans will begin presenting to CORE in January 2018. She also asked staff to good to outline the meeting locations and the work to be conducted at each CORE general meeting and subcommittee meeting ahead of time.

Metro Councilor Shirley Craddick asked if the meetings could be shorter and more simplified so that more work can be done at the subcommittees. Donna mentioned that the work of the CORE is important enough to require to meet for the full two hours. Sharon shared that the meetings' agendas have been set according to the items that the CORE needs to consider in each meeting.

Raahi asked if some of the members are willing to be a sounding board for helping Metro staff develop a proposal around meeting locations. Donna, Sharon and Dele agreed to help staff with this task.

Juan Carlos mentioned he will incorporate the feedback provided by the CORE members at this meeting into a new version of the document to be discussed at the Jan. 18, 2018 meeting. The vote to approve the draft work plan will take place at that meeting.

CORE regular and subcommittee meetings schedule – Raahi Reddy, DEI Program Director

Raahi reviewed the decision of the CORE to have three subcommittees. Since there are 15 regular CORE members, and five of them are already serving on the impact evaluation cohort, they will become the evaluation subcommittee. The next task, then, is to identify in which of the other two subcommittees the remaining 10 CORE members will serve. Ultimately each subcommittee should have five CORE members on it.

The CORE subcommittees, then, are:

1. Internal policies and work culture subcommittee
2. External policies and processes subcommittee
3. Evaluation subcommittee (already in existence, as part of the impact evaluation cohort)

Shweta raised the need to avoid the subcommittees operating in silos, and for them to communicate about each other's work. She also raised concerns about losing the community perspective in the impact evaluation work, and asked for the other two subcommittees' work to inform the evaluation work. The Evaluation subcommittee needs to keep systems change in the front and center of its work, and incorporate it into the evaluation framework that Metro is developing.

Martine Coblentz asked that part of the general, larger, meeting include time dedicated to hearing updates from the three subcommittees.

Staff shared its suggestion for which CORE members could serve on the two remaining subcommittees:

Internal policies and work culture subcommittee:

1. Patricia Kepler
2. Donna Maxey
3. Dele Oyemaja
4. Sharon Gary-Smith, and
5. Effie Stansbery

External policies and processes subcommittee:

1. Martine Coblentz
2. Karla Hernandez
3. Duncan Hwang
4. Daisy Quiñonez, and
5. María Caballero-Rubio

Evaluation subcommittee (already in existence, as part of the impact evaluation cohort):

1. Kari Herinckx
2. Laura John
3. Shweta Moorthy
4. Katie Sawicki, and
5. Oliviah Walker

Raahi asked the CORE members present from each of the two subcommittees to come together on one side of the room. Evaluation subcommittee members present chose to join either of the subcommittees, according to their personal preference. Then, each subcommittee discussed the following question: What are the questions that Metro staff need to answer in order to keep the conversation at the subcommittees at the systems level? At the retreat, it was clear that the CORE wanted to focus its energy and work at the systems level, so the subcommittees will need to make sure that the conversation stays at that level. Raahi facilitated the conversation of the External policies subcommittee, and Juan Carlos did the same for the Internal policies and work culture subcommittee. The notes from the conversations are as follows:

External policies subcommittee:

- Overall: Language and signage
- Planning & Development Department:
 - How people are going to be engaged
 - Big Planning: why are we planning these?
 - Project development
 - After decisions are made, who's benefitting?
 - What analysis do they do, and how do they impact future deliberations?
 - Evaluate process on current projects

- What did they learn?
 - How does it impact future decisions?
 - How to build partnerships and capacity
 - When to spend your money
 - Data analysis and communities of color
 - How projects are picked, and overlay areas of projects
- Parks + Nature Department:
 - Strategies for addressing accessibility
 - Link with transportation and access
 - Where do they pick projects, and why?
 - If for conservation: how do they help communities connect?
 - What areas are park deficient?
 - What is the guiding frame of your department and strategies?
 - System:
 - How is it developed?
 - Who benefits?
 - What is different?
 - What is the racial equity lens?
 - Who gets centered in the plan?
- Property & Environmental Services Department:
 - Employment system
 - Facilities and communities
 - Relationship with jurisdictions
 - Clarify their role and the role of local jurisdictions
 - Fee system
 - Contractor system

Internal policies and Metro work culture subcommittee:

- Last hired NOT first fired
 - Seniority – HR
 - How do staff of color get recognition for their experience, to offset the lack of seniority?
- How and where hires are made
 - Racial composition of part-time and seasonal staff, as opposed to regular status staff
- Levels of attrition of employees of color
 - Reasons for leaving
 - Retaliation
 - “Beauractivism” – its downside: “selling your soul for a job”
- What flexibility exists to change traditional HR systems?
 - In hiring, promotion, skills, contracting
 - How is Metro considering the flexibility to change current practices?
 - Good intentions vs. actual practice

- Overloading DEI staff
 - Make DEI all departments' work; not just DEI's
- Equity trainings to continue
 - Make equity not just a people of color's issue
- Divide between white, educated staff and uneducated staff of color
 - What's Metro's policy about hiring people without automatic authorization to work in the US?
 - Intersectionality
 - Recruiting people of color more effectively
 - Partnerships with community-based organizations to help advance this work
- Fatigue in community for participating in this work for government
 - Reparations – its role in this work
 - Fear in staff at all levels
 - Inability to communicate
 - Facilitation and mediation assistance
 - Conflict resolution
 - Restorative justice

These notes will help inform the work of the CORE subcommittees in 2018.

Overview of next activities and steps – Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu

Juan Carlos indicated the following next steps:

- The CORE will take December off from meetings, and will reconvene on Jan. 18, 2018.
- Due to the lack of quorum at this meeting, the approval of minutes and the work plan will take place at the Jan. meeting.
- Any members who haven't signed the stipends agreement should connect with Juan Carlos.
- Finally, Metro Councilor Sam Chase requested time at the end of meeting to provide an update on Metro's affordable housing work.

Councilor Chase provided the following update on Metro's current affordable housing work:

- The Metro Council is exploring the possibility of referring a ballot measure to the voters in Nov. 2018, to authorize funding for affordable housing efforts in the region.
- This ballot measure would be developed in coordination with similar efforts planned for later years to fund transportation and parks and nature work in the region.
- There is initial evidence of support among voters for a housing funding ballot measure.
- The Metro Council wants to involve the CORE in these conversations. There is the opportunity to do really impactful work on this vital community need.
- Council wants to make sure that communities of color are at the table during these conversations, to influence the decisions made around this ballot measure.

Duncan asked about the specifics of that involvement, and for deliberate consideration of what programs would be funded, and how they would be implemented, so they benefit communities of color. Raahi mentioned that conversations to engage communities of color in the process will be taking place as early as Dec. 2017.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:09 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Nyla Moore and Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chiu