

OVERVIEW

Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion was adopted by Metro Council in 2016. It is Metro's commitment to advancing racial equity in the region. The Plan states 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 destination. By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups. (Strategic Plan p.8)

While the Strategic Plan guides the entire agency, each Metro department will have its own priorities and actions that most effectively advance racial equity. The zoo was part of the first Action Item Development Cohort, launched in August 2016, with three other departments and the support of Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team, particularly our liaison Cassie Salinas. Project managers were Pam McElwee, Katie Hentges and Jennifer Payne. Project and Executive sponsorship were provided by Stephanie Cameron, Grant Spickelmier and Don Moore. The zoo's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Team and zoo staff and volunteers from all divisions volunteered their time through surveys, community and staff conversations, and writing workshops.

ZOO ACTION PLAN STRUCTURE

We began our work by developing Impact Statements for each of the five Strategic Plan goals, which provide a vision for what each of the goals would look like if achieved at the zoo. This allowed us to tailor our actions to zoo-specific issues, challenges and opportunities. What follows is:

- A narrative outlining the issues we will need to focus on overcoming to achieve our goals.
- Each Strategic Plan goal, with the zoo's Impact Statement below.
- The specific outcomes we want to achieve at the zoo to achieve our Impact Statement vision
- A chart for each outcome that contains the challenge the action is addressing, the specific actions, lead and support roles for accountability and the start year.

ISSUES TO CONSIDER

While there is strong support for the outcomes below among all stakeholders, there was also consistent feedback about the barriers the zoo will need to address to achieve them.

Time, fiscal and planning resources: To advance racial equity, the zoo will need to dedicate resources to this work as it would any priority. As a busy venue, the zoo will need to balance financial and time constraints with the budget and time necessary to advance equity, which is critical for keeping it relevant as a community institution.

Training resources: Staff expressed a strong desire and need for more in-depth training. Since many of our actions are about how we do what we do, training for staff at all levels is a priority. Specific concepts referenced in the plan are bias and use of an equity lens.

Dominant workplace culture: This is the culture that is the most powerful, widespread, or influential within an organization in which multiple cultures are present. As related to a racial equity strategy, we focus on white culture, which has norms around what is professional, effective and important. We must challenge and negotiate these unspoken characteristics that manifest in ways such as emphasizing quantity over quality of programs or valuing tangible products over relationships.

Institutional racism: As defined in the Strategic Plan, institutional racism are policies, practices, and procedures that work better for white people than for people of color, often unintentionally. To this end, we must dismantle systems and norms that uphold structural racism in decision making and power.

GOALS, IMPACT STATEMENTS AND ZOO-SPECIFIC OUTCOMES

GOAL A

Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity

Impact statement: The Oregon Zoo utilizes its role to advance racial equity in the zoo and aquarium community and throughout the region.

Actions

A1. As a leader in the conservation and zoo and aquarium fields, the zoo commits to bringing equity into conversations with partners.

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Many of the zoo's partners operate primarily in white-led spaces and may not be working to advance racial equity as a priority	Zoo staff bring an equity lens to collaborations, including initiatives and events, with community partners, providing regional and national leadership that advances racial equity.	Executive team	Zoo's DEI Action Team, Metro's DEI team (training, tools)	2018-19

GOAL B

Metro meaningfully engages communities of color

Impact statement: All zoo staff view input by communities of color as an asset and have the time and training to ensure meaningful engagement is the practice, not the exception. A staff position focused on outreach and engagement ensures coordination of efforts and accountability.

Actions

B1. Develop best practices and tools around engaging communities of color

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Due to its historic lack of relationships with communities of color, the zoo has little baseline engagement information	Determine resources for ongoing staff support of outreach and engagement. Work with communities of color to develop authentic relationships based on relevant connections	Executive team Patty Unfred	Metro DEI, zoo marketing and communications, Metro communications, Cary Stacey, Patty Unfred	FY2018-19
The zoo has no consistent way to engage communities of color on issues that matter to them	Develop an equity lens, engagement framework and associated materials for staff	Patty Unfred and executive team	Metro DEI, zoo marketing and communications, Metro communications, DEI Action Team	FY2019-20

B2. Create a culture in which meaningful engagement is considered part of the zoo’s operations

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
The need to engage communities of color is not widely understood or championed	Staff who develop programs understand concepts of bias, an equity lens, relevance and engagement	Division managers	Patty Unfred (as part of framework), Metro communications, Metro DEI team (for concepts and tools), Jody Van Riper (as training liaison), zoo DEI Action Team	FY2018-19
Racial equity is not a current consideration when developing new initiatives	Staff use an equity lens tool when launching new initiatives Staff engage	Division managers	Patty Unfred (as part of framework), Metro communications,	FY2019-20

	communities of color if they will be impacted (participants, guests, partners, etc)		Metro DEI team (for concepts and tools), Jody Van Riper (as training liaison), zoo DEI Action Team	
Accountability around racial equity when developing new initiatives does not currently exist	Decision makers ensure an equity lens has been applied and weigh the equity impact of a new initiative when deciding to proceed	Division managers	Patty Unfred (as part of framework), Metro communications, Metro DEI team (for concepts and tools), Jody Van Riper (as training liaison)	FY2020-21

B3. Meaningfully collaborate with communities of color on the Integrated Conservation Action Plan and Master Plan

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
The zoo has not historically engaged communities of color on conservation and zoo priorities	Work with communities of color so that the ICAP and Master Plan are relevant	Cary Stacey (ICAP) Executive team and Heidi Rahn (Master Plan)	Patty Unfred, ICAP work teams, DEI Action Team	FY2018-19 FY2019-20

GOAL C

Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce

Impact statement: The Oregon Zoo will have an organizational culture that makes all staff feel welcome and included, with a workforce that reflects the racial diversity of the Portland region, including volunteers and interns. This diversity will be visible throughout all positions and leadership levels at the Oregon Zoo. Such a workforce will bring new, innovative ideas and strengthen the Oregon Zoo’s ability to provide effective and appropriate services to all communities to ensure equitable and culturally informed access to the Oregon Zoo and its programs. This diverse workforce will strengthen community connection with the Oregon Zoo to increase involvement in and awareness of the zoo’s conservation work. The Oregon Zoo commits to a bold shift in its hiring practices to achieve greater diversity and will support and hold hiring managers accountable.

C1. Ensure recruitment process for all levels of the organization intentionally includes communities of color

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Position descriptions are not clear or concise, they don't currently value lived experience, civic engagement, overseas credentials, and more	Review all job descriptions for new positions to ensure they are clear, friendly, and relevant and that they don't require unnecessary credentials	Division managers and Metro HR	Metro HR, Metro DEI	FY2018-19
Understanding of core concepts regarding inclusive and equitable hiring practices is inconsistent throughout the organization	Hiring managers will receive tools and training to improve competencies around inclusive and equitable hiring	Executive team and Metro HR	Metro HR, DEI team, Jody Van Riper (to liaise with Metro-wide DEI core concepts rollout)	FY2018-19
No system or process exists for intentional recruitment of communities of color	Hiring managers will develop a process for inclusive hiring that results in a more diverse workforce	Division managers and Metro HR	Metro HR, Metro communications, zoo marketing and communications	FY2018-19
Intention to hire staff of color is good, but impact is lacking and no individual accountability	Hiring managers will be held accountable for processes and impacts of their hiring practices	Executive team	Metro HR	FY2019-20
Resources are not committed for intentional outreach and recruitment	Set aside funds and time for intentional outreach and recruitment	Executive team and Metro HR	Metro HR, Metro communications, zoo marketing and communications	FY2019-20
We do not effectively reach out to communities of color about job openings	Participate in a pilot outreach project	Zoo DEI Action Team, managers (volunteers for the pilot), Metro HR	Metro HR, Metro communications, zoo marketing and communications	FY2019-20

C2. Retain staff of color

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Staff of color sometimes have limited support and can face tokenization	Managers will support staff of color (temporary, regular, volunteers and interns) to attend monthly Employee Resource Group facilitated by Metro	Executive team	Metro DEI team	FY2018-19
There isn't a culture that supports staff of color bringing their true selves to work	Work with Metro DEI team to determine specific actions for zoo employees; e.g. a zoo-specific ERG, all staff training on systemic racism, microaggressions, etc.	Zoo DEI Action Team	Metro DEI team, Metro HR	FY2018-19

C3. Cultivate workforce development for communities of color

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Communities of color face barriers to internships due to the selection process and the impacts of systemic racism on economic mobility and access to social capital	Create and support a paid internship at Oregon Zoo that includes an equity lens	Kimm Foxx-Middleton	Metro HR, Metro DEI team, other zoo managers	FY2018-19
Staff of color are concentrated in entry-level, temporary positions and are rarely hired into regular, benefitted or leadership positions	Institutionalize pathways for staff of color to move into regular and leadership positions	Division managers	Metro DEI team, Metro HR	FY2019-20

GOAL D

Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations

Impact Statement: The Oregon Zoo is culturally, physically and financially accessible for the community. Guests feel a sense of belonging, ownership and inclusion. Their experience is culturally inclusive because exhibits and programs have been designed in collaboration with communities of color. All guests have a meaningful experience at the zoo.

D1. Welcome communities of color to the zoo

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
While the zoo does have programs that provide access for historically marginalized communities, the process is cumbersome and unclear	Clearly communicate access programs for historically marginalized communities and process for using	DEI Action Team	Ivan Ratcliff and Angela Beam	FY2018-19
The zoo hasn't worked with communities of color to develop or promote inclusive or culturally relevant events	Co-create and effectively market events to communities of color	Barbara Bennet-Heck, Ivan Ratcliff, Krista Swan	Patty, Zoo and Metro communications	FY2019-20

D2. Create an inclusive and safe experience for communities of color

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Some zoos have a history of racist and culturally appropriative exhibits that create an unsafe experience	Develop process to ensure that exhibits are culturally appropriate	Executive team	Bond program, Patty Unfred, Grant Spickelmier, zoo marketing and communications	FY2018-19
No system exists to ensure that programming and merchandise are not appropriative or racist	Avoid culturally appropriated programming and merchandise – through effective engagement, use of an equity lens tool, etc.	Division managers	Metro DEI (equity lens tool) and gift shop contractor	FY2018-19

We do not have a gap analysis to consider when we begin working on our next Master Plan	Implement a comprehensive accessibility study, including interpretives	Executive team, Bond program	Parks and Nature (doing a similar study now), Metro DEI team	FY2018-19

GOAL E

Metro’s resource allocation advances racial equity

Impact statement: Committing financial resources to advancing racial equity moves the Oregon Zoo from intent to impact. We envision that funding for equity efforts, such as training, outreach and paying community members for their time, is baked into our operations.

E1. Develop a budget for FY2019-20 to support training and outreach.

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Right now, we are asking managers working on tight budgets to fund trainings, staff time, etc. with no support	Draft a budget to support actions prioritized for year two and beyond	Zoo DEI Action Team, Patty Unfred	Sarah Keane	FY2018-19

E2. Set a goal for percentage of zoo spending that goes to communities of color through purchasing and contracting.

Challenge	Action	Proposed Lead	Support	Start year
Contracting and resource allocation is not consistently evaluated with a racial equity lens at the zoo	Apply an equity lens to the budget process and be transparent about amount of funds that go to communities of color	Executive Team	Metro Finance team	FY2019-20

GOVERNANCE

The zoo’s executive team are the owners and champions of this plan. However, every zoo staff person and volunteer has a role to play, because advancing racial equity is about how we do the work we are already doing. The working group’s strong recommendation is that actions from this plan be

incorporated into the zoo's next strategic plan. Milestones, accountability and implementation would be tracked using existing systems (PACe, strategic mandate goal setting, etc.)

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