

Metro | Meeting minutes

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee
Date: Monday, August 26, 2013
Time: 3 to 5 p.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center, 370A/B, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, 97232
Purpose: Facilitated discussion on communication framing; identification of draft vision and key concepts to be included in Metro's equity definition

Attendees

Equity strategy advisory committee	Carl Talton, Chair; Rey España, Vice Chair; Joseph Berezinskiy; Ben Duncan; Kirsten Kilchenstein;; Julia Meier; Pam Treece; Daniel Vázquez; Sydney Webb;
Equity strategy steering committee	Teri Dresler; Jim Middaugh; Paul Slyman; Molly Vogt; John Williams
Metro	Sam Chase, Metro Councilor; Martha Bennett, Metro COO; Nuin-Tara Key, Peggy Morell, Cassie Salinas, Patty Unfred, Valerie Cuevas
Guest	Janet Byrd, Executive Director Neighborhood Partnerships; Alison McIntosh, Neighborhood Partnerships

Absent

Advisory committee: Sheila Murty Job, Betty Dominguez, Virginia Nguyen, Philip Wu, Judi Martin
Steering committee: Scott Robinson, Metro Deputy COO; Ina Zucker

Welcome and introductions

Carl Talton opened the meeting with introductions, giving everyone a chance to briefly introduce themselves. This was the first introduction of Sydney Webb, Advisory committee, and John Williams, Steering Committee. Sydney Webb recently retired after serving 8 years on the Tigard City Council and has special interest in homelessness. John Williams, Metro Planning Manager, serves on the Steering committee.

Martha Bennett led a discussion about the upcoming recruitment process for the Equity Strategy Program Manager position which will be vacated by Nuin-Tara Key in November. Metro is pursuing an expedited hiring timeline and a job description will be posted by end of the day August 26. Metro will invite community stakeholders and Advisory committee members to participate in

the hiring process, please pass on this announcement to your contacts and let Nuin-Tara Key know if you are interested in participating in the process or have suggestions about the candidate process. Preliminary plans are to review applications after 3 weeks so there can be some overlap with Nuin-Tara Key. Pam Treece and Jim Middaugh suggested an open until filled with a posted initial screening start date as alternatives to a hard closing date for applications.

Julia Meier called for external representation on the interview panel, in addition to more informal meetings and clarity of the hiring process from the beginning for those involved and the candidates. Pam Treece and Rey España echoed the need to clarify and publish the hiring process for reference by candidates and community members. Martha outlined the process by identifying herself and Scott Robinson as the hiring managers. She then provided an overview of the proposed recruitment process, outlined as follows; an initial screening by human resources for minimal qualifications, followed by internal screening to identify first round candidates, then 12 to 16 candidates participating in first round interviews and finally 3-6 candidates selected for final interviews. Martha committed to incorporating the Advisory Committee's feedback into the process and sending out a summary to the group via email.

Pam Treece noted the importance of informing candidates and panel participants of all the program work that has already occurred up to this point.

Ben Duncan asked for clarification on the Advisory committee's role in future hires like this. Martha Bennett and Carl Talton responded that there is not a formalized role for this committee but as the work continues, there will be opportunities to use current projects as beta-tests for involvement and recommendations.

Communication framing

Janet Byrd presented framing techniques to aid the committee to begin to develop a common, working definition of equity. The working definition of equity will be revisited and refined over the course of this committee's work and precedes the task of identifying indicators for the equity baseline.

Framing is an important technique to assist in setting up the images we want to be perceived in our communication. Values and metaphors were discussed as framing tools.

Values are the starting place and can trigger more conversation to move forward. Metaphors are powerful tools in directing both problems and solutions.

Janet Byrd referenced Anat Shenker-Osorio's article [*Inequality as Barrier*](#), to discuss the consequences of barrier, gap and vertigo metaphors.

The dominant stories about government should be considered when defining Metro's role.

Techniques, pitfalls and choices highlights

- Avoid unhelpful triggers, "elephants"; don't use "but" as a qualifier, instead lead with positive languages
- Avoid "gap" language like zero-sum game, divide, redistribution, level playing field, give and take
- Draw on themes of connectivity and mutuality
- Focus on a solutions orientation
- Structural problems require structural solutions, not morality themes
- Do not assume data proving the existence of inequality will carry your argument; mere documentation does not spur action

- Be mindful of charged subjects and think carefully about the various lenses your audience will apply
- Look to extend inclusion and avoid unintentionally categorizing people which makes them the other
- Targeted universalism focuses on a universal benefit as the goal and then acknowledges that there will be different strategies for different communities to achieve that universal goal

Small group discussions

Attendees split up into 3 small groups to brainstorm the vision of what the region will be like when equity has been realized and the values of why equity matter.

Group 1 notes (Rey España, Kirsten Kilchenstein, John Williams, Sydney Webb; facilitated by Cassie Salinas)

Vision

- Future generations
- Families thrive = outcome
- Share in stewardship in natural resources
- Access to safe neighborhoods
- High quality education for all
- Deeper understanding of various cultures
- Rich community experience
- Uniqueness of community
- Honor and respect in individuality
- Appreciation of community
- Assets
- Community fabric
- Access to opportunity
- Equal access to the Metro benefits
- Everyone in the region has access to the region's benefits
- Healthy communities = outcome

Values

- Why I should care
- Realizing human potential
- Safety
- Common good
- We are all in this together
- Self-reliance
- Sense of greater common good
- Working together on a common goal
- Greater appreciation of difference
- Authentic relationships
- Find things to connect to/with
- Connectivity
- Prosperity
- Safety
- Future generations

Group 2 notes (Carl Talton, Paul Slyman, Julia Meier, Joseph Berezinskiy, Teri Dresler; facilitated by Patty Unfred)

Vision

- People benefit and thrive from opportunities for education, employment and wellness
- Economic competitiveness with rest of world
- Home-grown
- Individual ability to compete for prosperity
- Cultural differences embraced and respected
- Community and self-determination
- Race ceases to predict life outcomes
- Participatory, representative decision-making
- Transparency in structure and decision-making
- Invitation to participate
- Community definition of healthy and prosperous, “well-being”; ensure systems support outcomes
- Education
- Natural environment

Values

- Inter-connectedness
- Keeper/facilitator of vision
- Safety
- Opportunity
- Making the world better for future generations
- Acceptance; embracing all cultures
- Equal access
- Equity
- Well-informed community
- Shared understanding of history and appreciation for where we are now
- Pride in our cultural heritages
- Common culture for decision-making and resolution of common issues

Group 3 notes (Jim Middaugh, Ben Duncan, Daniel Vázquez, Pam Treece; facilitated by Peggy Morell)

Vision

- All have access to opportunities needed to enjoy and succeed in life
- Services and resources delivered and administered proportionally to community member demographics
- Healthy people in healthy communities
- Elimination of racial and ethnic disparities
- Metro desired outcome: The benefits and burdens of growth and change are distributed equitably.
- When equity is realized, the region will more effectively collaborate on common goals
- When equity is realized, the region will more effectively compete for global opportunities

Values

- Ensure racial and ethnic justice
- Relational and inclusive
- Transformative
- Empowering
- Honoring of culture and historic context

- Collaboration
- Respect
- Proportional allocation thinking framework
- Acknowledging how Metro perpetuates inequalities
- Organizational awareness
- Government systems have the power to impact positively and negatively
- Valuing feelings of community
- Relational worldview
- Opportunity, succeed, provide
- Self-determination
- Empathy
- Community strength
- Accountability-solution takes place after realization of problems we have
- Getting underserved and underrepresented perspectives in policy-making

Debrief/report out

Each group shared some highlights of their small group discussions. Alison McIntosh captured the following high level themes.

Vision

- Future generations
- Thrive
- Safety
- Opportunity
- Stewardship
- Honor
- Respect
- What is the experience of prosperity?
- All have access to opportunity
- Healthy people
- Elimination of disparities
- Benefits and burdens of growth are distributed equitably
- Complete for global opportunities when there is equity
- Benefits and opportunities of education, employment, health
- Cultural differences are respected
- Participation, transparency

Values

- Realizing potential
- Safety
- Future generations
- Connectivity
- Common good
- Working together
- Appreciation of differences
- Racial/ethnic justice
- Empowering
- Collaboration
- Respect
- Acknowledge perpetuation of inequality

- Value feelings of communities, holistic
- Opportunity, provide, empathy, self-determination
- Accountability
- Getting underrepresented perspectives

Next steps

Metro staff will weave together these brainstormed elements for themes and differences to bring back to the Advisory committee for further discussion in pursuit of the working definition of equity. Handouts with the Northwest Health Foundation's and the Community Investment Initiative's definitions of equity were provided for additional consideration. Julia Meier suggested the Coalition for a Livable Future Regional [Equity Atlas definition](#) for additional consideration.

The next scheduled meeting is Monday, September 30, 3 to 5 p.m.