



Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee
Date: Monday, November 18, 2013
Time: 3 to 5 p.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center, Room 270, 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, 97232
Purpose: Finalize Equity Strategy Advisory Committee charter; continued discussion on group operating principles; continued discussion on Metro's equity definition

Attendees

Equity strategy advisory committee

Carl Talton, Chair; Rey España, Vice Chair; Joseph Berezhinskiy, Kirsten Kilchenstein, Betty Dominguez, Philip Wu, Judi Martin, Julia Meier, Virginia Nguyen, Daniel Vázquez,

Metro

Martha Bennett, COO; Scott Robinson, Deputy COO; Pietro Ferrari, Peggy Morell, Valerie Cuevas

Facilitator

Joan Brown-Kline, Brown-Kline Consulting

Absent

Sydney Webb, Pam Treece, Ben Duncan

Welcome and introductions

Carl Talton welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. Martha Bennett introduced Pietro Ferrari, new Equity strategy program manager. Pietro Ferrari, former executive director at Catholic Charities and Hacienda CDC, has more than two decades' experience of service to improve the economic and social conditions of low and moderate income people here in Oregon and abroad. Martha Bennett expressed enthusiasm for Pietro Ferrari's experience designing strategic agendas and addressing root causes. Martha Bennett thanked Pam Treece, Carl Talton and Julia Meier for their efforts in the selection process. Pietro Ferrari greeted the committee noting that the complexity of Metro will take a disciplined approach to embed equity values in everything the agency does. Committee members each took a moment to introduce themselves.

Valerie Cuevas announced the creation of a Google site for the committee to use to communicate with each other. <https://sites.google.com/site/equitystrategycommittee/> The web page is simple and intended for the committee to use as is helpful to communicate with each other, view upcoming meetings, look up contact information and post messages. In accordance with government records retention practices, Metro will not post documents to this website.

As a reminder, comprehensive program information for public consumption is posted at www.oregonmetro.gov/equity, including the program timeline, Equity Inventory and work plan.

Review of timeline

Pietro Ferrari reviewed the program timeline, highlighting the next steps in the advisory committee's charges on developing an agency equity definition and recommendations on equity indicators to be used in the Equity Baseline.

Carl Talton asked how the advisory committee will interact with information from the technical workgroup. Scott Robinson replied that the technical workgroup will work through evaluating indicators to present to the advisory committee for consideration in the advisory committee's deliverable of recommending indicators for the Equity Baseline.

Julia Meier asked for clarification on roles and responsibilities that she felt were not discussed with the committee beforehand, noting her surprise that advisory committee members were ineligible to apply for the technical assistance RFP. Rey España echoed those sentiments that there should have been more discussion with the advisory committee before the RFP was published to avoid surprises with the advisory committee. Clarification was asked for on who is guiding the scope of work and making decisions about how details of the work plan are carried out. Julia Meier also expressed that the Equity strategy joint sub-committee has been an ineffective tool for bringing up these kinds of questions since meetings have been cancelled. Scott Robinson answered that Pietro Ferrari is supposed to manage the work plan and the advisory committee should bring any specific concerns about what's happening to Pietro Ferrari.

Scott Robinson explained that the advisory committee is the approving body for the work coming out of the technical workgroup. The technical assistance organizations will help develop a rubric for evaluating the nearly 300 indicators for equity and make recommendations to the advisory committee. The technical workgroup will function as the arms and legs for the advisory committee and broaden the conversation. Betty Dominguez noted that working with organizations not represented in the advisory committee was an opportunity for additional input.

Carl Talton asked the committee how comfortable they are with the representation in the selected organization. Betty Dominguez expressed interest in finding the best overall representation possible with respect to the limited resources available and taking into consideration the representative experience that the advisory committee members themselves bring to the program. Carl Talton and Joseph Berezinskiy expressed concern over gaps in representation after seeing who contracts were awarded to; for instance none of the awarded organizations have experience working with Slavic communities. Julia Meier shared that she was under the impression that since advisory committee members were ineligible to apply for the RFP that they would have a role in the selection process.

Scott Robinson noted that if selection criteria were to be changed somehow, the public procurement process would dictate that the RFP would have to be completely redone. A new RFP is possible but will move the program timeline. Betty Dominguez noted that a new RFP may not yield the full coverage desired by the committee because awarded organizations still must meet technical qualifications. Pietro Ferrari suggested that the scope of work for the technical assistance contracts can be amended for detail about including the most outreach possible, looking to include groups that the advisory committee feels may be left out. Carl Talton stated that he may be leaning toward starting the RFP process over with a new RFP but is open to considering administrative solutions to the existing RFP selected contracts that can address the concerns being voiced by the advisory committee. Rey España agreed that the program timeline is tough and that Metro made a good faith effort in the procurement process but there needs to be more to fill the gaps.

Judi Martin asked what options besides a new RFP would give the advisory committee more interface with the technical workgroup; would it be possible to have advisory committee members be guest voices at technical workgroup meetings? Philip Wu recognized that the technical workgroup will be working at a granularity level that the advisory committee hasn't dealt with

before and that some advisory committee members are not in a position to be on that granular of a level. Also noted was the importance of transparency of the process and being honest about the fact that this committee isn't supposed to mirror exact representation and exact representation may not be possible to obtain. Scott Robinson spoke to this call to transparency that the total process must be considered and how it looks for independent contracted organizations (the technical workgroup) to make recommendations to another independent body (the advisory committee) who then makes recommendations to Metro Council.

Rey España also noted that the technical contracts are an opportunity for investment and capacity in addition to representation. Daniel Vázquez expressed concern that the awarded organizations seems like the usual suspects and this could have been an opportunity to break the cycle and get the benefits of the \$15,000 contracts to new groups. The awarded groups need to reach out to as many as possible and not just the persons usually engaged with. Joseph Berezhinskiy echoed that sentiment and asked for awarded organizations to show a plan for how they would reach as many communities as possible, working beyond their usual groups.

Carl Talton made the final suggestion for the advisory committee to look at the list of selected organizations and send comments about where the gaps were. Metro will look into possible administrative solutions, like amended scopes of work, and use of the allocated resources (presently 6 organizations each receiving \$15,000 contract). Betty Dominguez also asked that staff provide the committee with the list of organizations solicited for the RFP, organizations who responded and those that meet the technical criteria published.

Operating principles

Joan Brown-Kline opened the discussion on the draft operating principles by asking the group about transparency. Philip Wu said transparency meant no hidden agendas and Rey España noted it was an intentional desire to do things something differently. The group agreed that transparency was a value that could be added to the wording of the operating principles but could also be added to the group's values brainstorm notes that are being used to create a definition of equity.

From the decision-making process section, Julia Meier asked for clarification on the last bullet about compromise and if the process was consensus, did the third bullet on compromise call for voting? Philip Wu suggested using a thumbs up/thumbs sideways/thumbs down signal to be used at checking points throughout discussion to identify and resolve areas of discomfort along the way as a tool to reach consensus. The idea is that the committee is listening to each other and is mindful of each other's concerns. Joan Brown-Kline and Judi Martin shared that a similar green/yellow/red card tool was used at recent TriMet meetings and work well to move discussions to where everyone was at least at a yellow to move forward. Daniel Vázquez and Julia Meier spoke about respecting any red card indications, not putting pressure on an outlier voice but agreeing to do no harm in moving forward with seeking consensus. Rey España suggested removing that bullet point on compromise from the operating principles. Pietro Ferrari suggested replacing that bullet point's language with language from the Metro Public Engagement Review Committee: *Consensus means that all parties can live with a recommendation, though they may not agree with it in its entirety. Silence will be considered consent.* The group was agreeable to this replacement language.

The discussion turned to representation and Carl Talton reminded the committee that although they each are not here to directly represent their organization, each member's experience with their organization is valuable and it is advantageous to pull information from respective networks into this committee's work. Scott Robinson echoed that sentiment by saying that each committee member was selected based on their depth of knowledge of their respective fields and the expectation is advising based on that experience but not advocating on behalf of any particular organization. With this view, Julia Meier suggested removing the reference to constituents in the operating principles.

The group was agreeable to the Chair, and alternatively the Vice Chair, identified as the official spokesperson for the committee.

The conversation around quorum requirements ended with the group deciding to remove that bullet point from the operating principles. Instead, the committee can decide on a case-by-case basis when decisions are made if there is the feeling that enough members are present to have a discussion then enough are present to reach consensus.

Next steps

Staff will send the advisory committee the list of organizations solicited, responded and selected for the technical assistance RFP. Advisory committee will respond by identifying any gaps for staff to address with possible solutions.

The final draft of the operating principles will be emailed to the advisory committee for final comments and then will be considered adopted by the committee.

The continued discussion on the equity definition, group discussion on response, has been postponed to the Jan. 6 advisory committee meeting.

The next meeting is January 6, 3 to 5 p.m.