



Metro | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Equity Strategy Advisory Committee
Date: Wednesday, Jan. 29, 2014
Time: 3 to 5 p.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center, Room 370A 600 NE Grand Ave, Portland, 97232
Purpose: Discussion and approval on definition of equity; update from Baseline Workgroup

Attendees

Equity strategy advisory committee	Carl Talton, Chair; Rey España, Vice Chair; Philip Wu, Judi Martin, Julia Meier, Ben Duncan, Virginia Nguyen, Betty Dominguez
Metro	Scott Robinson, Deputy COO; Pietro Ferrari, Peggy Morell, Cassie Salinas, Valerie Cuevas
Guest presenter	Dr. Larry Wallack, Dean, PSU College of Urban and Public Affairs

Absent

Sydney Webb, Pam Treece, Kirsten Kilchenstein, Daniel Vázquez, Joseph Berezinskiy

Welcome and check-in

Carl Talton opened the meeting by reviewing the agenda and stating the importance of hearing from everyone on the committee. Carl Talton expressed the committee's intent to not just produce a product with the draft definition of equity but really contribute to community engagement with the issues of equity.

Pietro Ferrari reviewed the program milestones, focusing on the current stage of creating the Equity Baseline. An updated work plan timeline will be sent to the committee.

February milestones include Metro Council work session on Feb. 11 and MPAC on Feb. 26 to present the draft definition of equity and program update. The Metro Council work session will be a more detailed presentation than at MPAC, as this is the first program update being presented to MPAC. Also upcoming, the Joint Subcommittee comprised of 3 Advisory Committee members and 3 Steering Committee members will meet on Feb. 10. Advisory committee members should email Pietro Ferrari with any agenda or discussion ideas for this meeting.

Baseline Workgroup update

Pam Phan provided an update on the progress of the Baseline Workgroup. The Baseline Workgroup meets 3 times a month and is at the beginning of developing products and a working trust within the group. Work is organized around two tasks, indicator analysis and feasibility assessment. The subgroup for indicator analysis has met twice to prioritize indicators that include outcomes in housing, economic disparities and education. The subgroup is looking to begin sorting indicators by desired regional outcomes using those three initially buckets. Julia Meier asked how the 3 buckets (housing, economic disparities, education) got chosen. Pam Phan responded that they were chosen

by the workgroup as the most critical from the CLF Regional Equity Atlas headings. At this point, these 3 buckets are being used for initial sorting of the 400+ indicators for further refinement but no indicators are being ruled out at this point in the process. Philip Wu asked where the indicators specific to health would fit. Pam Phan responded that health indicators were not specifically chosen for this initial sorting phase but would come up in further refinement when relating indicators to the desired regional outcomes. For example, sidewalks may work as an indicator for the outcomes of vibrant communities or reliable and safe transportation. Philip Wu and Julia Meier expressed that health should be elevated to be its own bucket category.

Ben Duncan asked the group to weigh in on the difference between an indicator and a measure when talking about health. For example, health is used to measure other social determinants like housing. Philip Wu replied that health can be viewed like that but it can get a bit muddy as not all health indicators are social determinants but some are part of the process. Rey España noted that the Baseline Workgroup should be intentional and direct in reflecting on indicators throughout the process.

Carl Talton agreed that health is a really critical piece and that health language can be difficult to resonate with but is still critical. Health outcomes need to be considered broader than a public health agency. Judi Martin agreed with including healthy outcomes and behavioral health indicators at an elevated level not yet presented by the Baseline Workgroup. Philip Wu commented that health is really what it's all about and that public planning has its roots in public health. Scott Robinson commented that Metro is more in place to affect longer-term elements that can influence health.

Pietro Ferrari confirmed that the desired regional outcomes are already set, so they are already part of the indicator selection criteria. Philip Wu suggested that alignment with Metro and the desired regional outcomes should come after the selection of indicators. Carl Talton agreed with Philip Wu's recommendation that it is better to work through indicators first for their value and then tweak later on to align with the desired regional outcomes and balance with Metro's jurisdiction.

Julia Meier asked if the desired regional outcomes could get reframed. Scott Robinson briefly reviewed the process of having the desired regional outcomes signed off by partner jurisdictions and that the outcomes relate to Metro's primary change to manage the region's growth. Originally, the equity outcome was primarily addressing geographical equity across the region but the advisory committee's recommendations will expand the lens of equity beyond that. Metro can successfully work toward the desired regional outcomes as partners through limited tools in Metro's jurisdiction like the urban growth boundary, transportation investments and transit-oriented development. Rey España confirmed with Scott Robinson that like the desired regional outcomes, there will be significant regional engagement with partners on the indicators.

Pam Phan asked the group for feedback on the handout examples associated with economic disparities: income, poverty, jobs, cost of living adjusted for transportation, etc.). Betty Dominguez responded positively commenting that they point to providing opportunities for housing, health, education and jobs.

Ben Duncan inquired about the language difference between the Baseline Workgroup's inclusion on informal notes and the advisory committee's exclusion of using the term communities of color. Carl Talton shared similar sentiments of why communities of color was chosen and that the Baseline Workgroup should think more in terms of the region's many changing demographics that require response. Betty Dominguez echoed that there is obligation to all communities, like communities of color or of poverty, etc.

Ben Duncan asked how the Baseline Workgroup was assessing Metro's capacity, resources and staff. Metro's Data Resource Center participates in the workgroup and is able to provide data for the workgroup on staff and budgets.

Additional comments or questions about the Baseline Workgroup can be directed to Pietro Ferrari throughout the process. Representatives from the Baseline Workgroup will be in attendance for further reporting and feedback at the Feb. 26 advisory committee meeting.

Academic observations on draft definition

Presentation

After working with him at a recent Metro training, Pietro Ferrari invited Dr. Larry Wallack to share helpful observations about trends and communication strategies related to framing draft definition of equity. Larry Wallack presented a high-level overview of communications framing and values focusing on how what we say is different than what people hear.

Elephant and driver metaphor illustrates how most communication is directed toward the driver side of the mind but the elephant side of the mind will actually go where it wants to. Data is necessary in communication but not sufficient. Context is huge and important to getting to the intuitive, emotional side of the mind.

It may be helpful to think of equity as a cue and consider what it means to you and others and how that differs. Recommend to intentionally use metaphors and other cues around equity so others respond as you want them to.

Larry Wallack presented Frank Gilliam's research on framing race. While acknowledging the Coalition of Communities of Color's success in leading with race, in general, leading with race activates individual-level resistance before you can get your structure-level message across. It is valuable to balance bi-conceptual notions like individual success as a primary frame and addressing structural racism in the process.

Larry Wallack summarized his presentation with 10 lessons and reiterating that there is no blank slate starting point in communication.

Discussion

Carl Talton asked Larry Wallack to comment on communicating healthy communities with background that although healthy communities rose unanimously to the top 10 issues for communities on the Community Investment Initiative (CII) survey it was dropped off in later process because it was not specifically in the CII's purview. Larry Wallack responded that healthy communities may be an empty concept for people and more concrete terms may be necessary. For example, if Portland is the best place to have a baby, what does that specifically look like? Is that indicated by healthy birth weights or what else? Start with what does a healthy community look like and then ask what it will take to get there.

Julia Meier commented that it was a helpful reminder to talk about contribution instead of deficit and asked for recommended resources on that kind of solutions-first approach. Larry Wallack recommended Northwestern's Dr. McKnight's work and example of strengths assessment versus a needs assessment. Betty Dominguez commented that strengths and value to the community still does not change someone's needs and it's good to consider both sides of the coin and not just swap one for the other. Larry Wallack also recommended pursuing a bi-conceptual frame and really work to engage folks in the middle who are more likely to engage positively. Ben Duncan noted that it was beneficial to claim some visibility for race and not try to hide it under communication framing while still taking into account your audience.

Equity definition work session

Peggy Morell explained the process behind the draft definition presented to the committee for consideration, taking into account previous committee comments. Betty Dominguez was surprised to see housing left out, noting the high importance of housing for all income bands and relation to a stable job environment. Betty Dominguez strongly urged the committee to include housing in the definition. Carl Talton shared how housing came to be left off the CII definition as it was not in scope of the structural disparities the CII was addressing. Betty Dominguez recalled a similar conversation with East Metro Economic Alliance commenting that equitable, available and affordable housing is more than economics; housing is healthcare and essential to many of the other objectives the committee has discussed.

Ben Duncan inquired what reading level the draft definition was. The reading level is unknown but could be tested. Philip Wu and Ben Duncan expressed basic support and said the draft definition resonated well. Rey España said more time for reflection would be helpful. Ben Duncan, Judi Martin and Julia Meier concurred that “structure inequities” could be used instead of the term “disparities.”

Next steps

Electronic feedback and approval process by advisory committee for draft definition will conclude Friday, Feb. 7. If approved, the draft definition will be submitted to Martha Bennett, Metro COO who will then submit a draft definition to Metro Council on Feb. 18 and to MPAC on Feb. 26.

Next meeting

The next advisory committee meeting is **Wednesday, Feb. 26, 3 to 5 p.m.**

Attachments

1. Step 1 Work plan Timeline
2. Baseline Workgroup update handout
3. PowerPoint notes from Larry Wallack