



## **METRO COUNCIL RETREAT**

Meeting Minutes

July 30, 2015

Jade/APANO Multicultural Space, 8114 SE Division, Portland, OR

Councilors Present: Council President Tom Hughes and Councilors Shirley Craddick, Kathryn Harrington, Carlotta Collette, Bob Stacey, Sam Chase and Craig Dirksen

Councilors Excused: None

Staff Present: Martha Bennett, Kathleen Brennan-Hunter, Beth Cohen, Tim Collier, Amy Croover, Colin Deverell, Alexandra Eldridge, Scotty Ellis, Elissa Gertler, Megan Gibb, Nyla Moore, Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chíu, Nellie Papsdorf, Ramona Perrault, Cassie Salinas, Andy Shaw, Paul Slyman, Patty Unfred, Becca Uherbelau, and Nikolai Ursin.

Council President Hughes noted a quorum was present and called the council retreat to order at 12:37p.m.

### **1. WELCOME**

Council President Hughes welcomed the group to the retreat by providing an overview of equity as a guiding principle at Metro. He gave a brief description of Metro's desired outcomes and how they aimed to improve the region. President Hughes then mentioned a presentation at the July 23 Metro Council meeting by Urban League President and CEO Nkenge Harmon-Johnson, noting how it helped shape the structure of the Equity Strategy and Action Plan.

Council President Hughes explained how important Metro Council leadership is in helping achieve equitable outcomes for all of the region's communities. He gave a brief history of the collaboration between Metro and its partners that led to the creation of the JADE/APANO Multicultural Space and explained how it exemplified equity initiatives throughout the region.

### **2. COMMUNITY WELCOME**

Council President Hughes then introduced APANO Board Chair Gauri Rajbaidya to explain what equity means in the Jade District of East Portland. Mr. Rajbaidya welcomed the Councilors to the space and thanked Metro for sharing the space with APANO. Mr. Rajbaidya gave a description of the space as well as the neighborhood, noting that the surrounding community has needs that have yet to be met. Mr. Rajbaidya explained that when engaging with local communities, APANO hears repeatedly about the following needs: housing affordability, involuntary displacement prevention, inclusionary economic development, safer streets, updated station areas, more crosswalks, more green spaces, and improved sidewalks, roadways, and transit. Mr. Rajbaidya explained that shared spaces like the JADE/APANO Multicultural Space were the first step in part of what needs to be a larger effort to make sure the region's diverse communities are given the support they need to succeed.

**3. EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) CASE STUDY**

Ms. Elissa Gertler, Planning and Development director, and Ms. Megan Gibb, Planning staff, presented the Metro-owned space. They provided a brief history of the space and discussed why Metro decided to purchase it, noting its critical location on SE 82nd and Division as well as the opportunity it provided to address issues surrounding displacement, high-capacity transit, and affordable housing. Ms. Gibb explained that Metro intended to develop affordable housing at the location after plans were developed, using the space in the meantime to support community-based organizations such as APANO. Ms. Gibb shared some examples of ideas for the future affordable housing space and what it would like, and gave a list of qualifications the space would have to meet.

**4. EQUITY STRATEGY UPDATE**

Ms. Patty Unfred, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion program director, provided a brief history of Metro's Equity Strategy. She explained how equity became a part of Metro's six desired outcomes in 2010 in an effort to combine the numerous equity-related programs and projects happening within the agency to focus their energies and improve their effectiveness. Ms. Unfred explained that the Equity Strategy Advisory Committee (ESAC) was formed in 2013 and developed a working definition of equity for the agency. They also worked with the Equity Baseline Working Group to produce the Equity Strategy Framework Report that helped shape Metro's equity work moving forward. Ms. Unfred then introduced Mr. Phil Wu, an ESAC member to give an overview of the report. He noted that the major role of the group was to review existing conditions, information, and policies in order to develop a list of recommendations to present to Metro Chief Operating Officer Martha Bennett. This set the groundwork for the next stage of equity work.

Mr. Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chú, Equity Strategy program manager, then presented the equity timeline and discussed the role of the Metro Council in the project. He explained that the Metro Council liaisons Councilors Chase, Collette, and Craddick worked with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) staff to ensure that the Council remained involved in the development of the strategy. In addition, the DEI team would present drafts of their work to the Council throughout the development process in order to receive their feedback. Mr. Ocaña-Chú noted that staff was currently completing the first stage of the timeline (stakeholder engagement and research) and explained that the Council Retreat would hopefully result in giving staff the direction to move forward to the next stage (first draft writing and engagement) or rework the plan. He added that the second draft of the Equity Strategy and Action Plan would go before the Metro Council in January 2016 for feedback before being shared for public comment.

Ms. Cassie Salinas, DEI project manager, then gave an overview of community feedback and key themes that were provided to help shape the development of the Equity Strategy and Action Plan. Long-term equity strategies highlighted included:

- Serve as a regional convener on affordable housing policies and share best practices with local cities and counties
- Serve as a regional convener to improve workforce pipeline to cultivate new Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, and Emerging Small Businesses (MWESBs)
- Develop innovative and inclusive funding strategies for affordable multi-generational housing (e.g. Bridge Meadows/NAYA)
- Develop quality and low-income housing policies to address lack of rental properties (e.g. rent control)
- Provide access to multigenerational affordable housing and transportation choices

- Create an “equity index” to guide transportation program and investment decisions (e.g. similar to TriMet’s)
- Establish regional network of transportation, park, and housing providers
- Develop incentives for local cities and countries to design fair and affordable housing
- Serve as a regional convener to improve regional commitment to fair housing enforcement
- Establish a regional network of park providers and community partners
- Establish baseline goals for development of new parks and natural areas (e.g. all people living ½ mile from a park of accessible nature area)

Action items highlighted included:

- Strengthen education and leadership programs for communities of color to serve on advisory boards
- Change criteria for awarding contracts to ensure small firms have similar opportunities to be awarded contracts (e.g. years of experience)
- Diversify Metro staff to reflect changing demographics in the region
- Transportation planning should consider working families’ schedules and location of jobs (e.g. getting to jobs during the weekend, after 5p.m., night or swing shifts, jobs located in industrial areas)

## 5. **BUILDING THE EQUITY STRATEGY**

COO Martha Bennett then facilitated a discussion with the Metro Council concerning desired outcomes in the four core areas of Metro: parks and nature, visitor venues, solid waste, and planning (split into transportation and housing for the purpose of the activity).

She explained Action Plan items as being items that can be achieved within five years and Equity Strategy items as those that would take longer to complete.

She asked the Council to write desired outcomes for each of Metro’s four core areas on sticky notes, to be reviewed as a group and discussed.

Councilors expressed their ideas on paper and placed them alongside their respective areas. Ms. Bennett then read aloud the desired outcomes shared. Outcomes included:

Parks and nature:

- A park within a half-mile of residents
- No more nature deserts
- Everyone has access to a park or natural area that is safe, convenient, and affordable
- Youth access to parks, including transportation accessibility

Visitor venues:

- Affordable access, not a once in a lifetime opportunity
- Venues as avenues to express and share the region’s cultural diversity
- Art that reflects the region
- Range of events for all interests
- Workforce diversity

Solid waste:

- Actively involved in composting

- Promoting positive and cost effective means of impacting the environment when disposing of solid waste

Planning – transportation:

- Safe, affordable, accessible, and attractive options for all
  - Options for the entire region
  - Commutes of 45 minutes or less
  - Availability, access, and convenience for all
  - An assistance program similar to SNAP for transit
- Planning – housing:
    - Affordable housing with services and amenities such as transportation to develop complete communities
    - Disbursement of affordable housing not in the form of apartment buildings
    - Rental regulation/rent control
    - Affordable housing spread throughout the region
    - Study land use impacts on displacement
    - Jobs near where people live

## **6. CENTERING ON RACIAL EQUITY**

Mr. Scotty Ellis, Equity Strategy Program Analyst, provided a brief explanation of the benefits associated with centering on racial equity. He explained that centering on racial equity will ensure the broadest impact on all communities. He noted that communities of color experience the poorest outcomes and strongest disparities, so it is important to focus on minimizing these gaps to benefit the entire region. Mr. Ellis noted that a number of jurisdictions and organizations have decided to center on racial equity including: City of Minneapolis, City of Madison, City of Dubuque, City of Portland, City of Seattle, Boston Public Health Commission, and United Way of the Columbia-Willamette. Mr. Ellis then introduced Ms. Rebekah Strong, Chief of Operations and Equity at United Way of the Columbia-Willamette, to provide an overview of her organization's experience centering on racial equity.

Ms. Rebekah Strong explained to the Council why United Way chose to focus on a racial equity strategy. She noted that data shows communities of color are experience gross disparities in their outcomes. With fifty percent of the region's children starting kindergarten this year children of color, it is imperative for the region to minimize these disparities in order for it to succeed. Ms. Strong pointed out that it is in the region's economic interest to fix these issues; losing out on the opportunities provided by a half of the region's youth would lead to significant losses in the near future. Ms. Strong shared her experience working on equity with a racial lens and described some of the pros and cons of that choice. She noted that people frequently challenge the racial focus, but emphasized that the strategy did yield strong results. Ms. Strong recommended including community members in the process to take advantage of their feedback and understanding. She noted that the best way to proceed with such a strategy was to utilize the experience of underrepresented communities. Ms. Strong also recommended emphasizing the economic benefits of a racial focus when discussing the strategy, noting the breadth of opportunities a more equitable region could provide.

Councilors expressed support for equity work and thanked Ms. Strong for her presentation.

7. **NEXT STEPS**

COO Martha Bennett asked Councilors for their feedback moving forward with the strategy and Councilors provided staff with the direction to move forward with the Equity Strategy focusing on racial equity. Ms. Bennett recommended postponing the discussion of the benefits and risks of centering on racial equity to an additional work session due to time restraints and thanked everyone for participating in the retreat.

8. **ADJOURN**

With no further discussion, Council President Hughes adjourned the Council retreat at 4:30 p.m.

Prepared by,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Nellie Papsdorf".

Nellie Papsdorf, Council Policy Assistant

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF JULY 30, 2015**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Doc. Date</b>	<b>Document Description</b>	<b>Doc. Number</b>
1.0	Handout	07/30/2015	Detailed agenda	073015c-01
6.0	Letter	07/27/2015	ESAC on Centering Racial Equity	073015c-02
4.0	Handout	07/27/2015	Key Themes to Advance Equity in the Region	073015c-03
N/A	Handout	N/A	JADE Night Market Invitation	073015c-04
N/A	Handout	N/A	East Portland Action Plan Invites	073015c-05