



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting minutes

Meeting: CORE Meeting
Date: Thursday, May 20, 2021
Time: 5:30 pm – 7:30 pm
Place: Zoom

Attendees

Co-Chairs: Tristan Penn, Martine Coblentz

CORE Members: Dele Oyemaja, Saara Hirsi, Patricia Kepler, Nura Elmagbari, Mahmood Jawad, Anthony Deloney, Nabin Dhimal, Rebecca Descombes, Jamila Dozier, Maria Magallon

MERC Commissioners: Dañel Malán,

Metro Councilors: Metro Councilor Nolan, Metro Councilor Lewis

Metro staff: Raahi Reddy, Sebrina Owens-Wilson, Melissa Palavecino, Tiffany Thompson, Nathan Sykes, Marissa Madrigal, Val Galstad

Absent: Daniela Ortiz, Laura John, Quincy Brown

Welcome and Overview of the day

Melissa gave technology overview.

Martine opening statement and introductions.

- Committee voted in favor of Tristan and Rebecca as co-Chairs

Public Comment

No public comment

Committee Business and Updates

- June meeting will focus on Racial Equity training. Shared tools. Specifically why we lead with race in our plan for the region.
 - Nura said difficult to bring up inspiration. Especially with what is happening is with Israel and Ghaza. CORE is about human rights and dignity are respected and uplifted. What can CORE be doing to lift the voices of not just the people we serve? And ensure that our government respects the lives of human beings.
 - Appreciate what you are raising. What is happening in India is impacting me and my family as well. Lived contradictions that we experience when we are trying to focus in one area and having so limited impact in others.

- Is there something that Metro can contribute to say we don't want our money used to kill people
- Martin thank Nura for her contribution. I appreciate you uplifting your voice and bringing forward what is happening in our world
- Councilor Nolan – Acknowledgement of pain that Nura is feeling. We are living in a world that doesn't compute with what we want or believe or deserve. Daunting to change world level. Continue CORE work, effects of our own policies and investments. Encourages our observations about our inconsistencies. Applaud your strength by calling this out. Effort in Seattle and other cities, that effort burbles up. I want to be with you.
- Danel Malan – Maybe this should be an agenda item? Isn't it CORE to state where we stand that indirectly affect the families here in Portland? It is a direct impact on some families. We have put out letters before about racial issues. We could consider a racial issue like this.
- Mahmood – Most people don't see the immediacy of this issue. We are in our comfortable homes right now. Brothers and sisters have to swap children right now in Palestine. I carry the scars of war on my hands and the definition of American interference on my body. I want you all to feel it. It is not that difficult. No child in Ghaza or the West Bank has to die before their 4th or 5th birthday. If Metro cannot push its influence behind it. Then why am I a part of Metro? Why if the people we elect or choose to represent us are not people who care about us and our countries back home. Accountability.
- Tristan – Thank you Nura. Coming up for me. We meet once a month. With everything that comes up, our world does not work in a once a month cycle or schedule. World continue to happen. Martine and I have tried to push in the last year, locally, globally and nationally. We felt a need to create some sort of system to bring these things up in real time. I feel a sense of guilt or not fulfilling the role of being a co-chair at once a month. And being respectful of you alls time. We don't need a communication in the future – we need a system now. I want to hold space for folks that represent marginalized communities locally and globally. Bylaws and agenda is a white dominant structure. As folks of color, we meet how we want to meet. We can create channels that feel more organic and bring up topics in a timely manner.
- Councilor Lewis – This is why we have updates or new business on the agenda. Our world is so broken. Some of it is in backyards or half a world away, most of it traces back to Americans with a lot of money and power. Money is a driver of these travesties. Thank you Nura and other who have spoken so powerfully. We shouldn't be looking away. Work to do at Metro, we are limited in our authority but we do spend money. The state knows who we are. Our investment portfolios

matter too. We can bring something forward about how we do investments at Metro. Get a briefing or have this conversation at Council.

- Martine – a year ago we wrote a statement. Wondering if we as CORE want to come together and write a statement and ask our Metro Councilors to make a statement in support of our Arab communities I the region.
 - Councilor Nolan – we can take that message back to the Council.
 - Next time meeting as co-chairs come up with a proposal about how communication might change
 - Councilor Nolan – Process of approving Metro’s budget – working with DEI team to be built from the start with racial equity as a goal. And that means changing the ways that we do business.
- Saara – Thank you Nura and Mahmood. I would appreciate a letter to show our voice has been heard.
- Anthony – Acknowledge Nura and Mahmood. In the midst of that pain, you still called out what is happening in Portland in the Black community. I showed up in this space weird because we have things on our minds and hearts. I didn’t think this was a space I could bring this up. I have three boys and it hurts my heart. This was his second teammate that has been murdered in 12 months. I am wanting my son to get on a plane and go back to school because I am scared for my children.

Council Update

Metro Councilor Nolan

Councilor Nolan – Framework is the important conversation to have.

Approve Minutes

Minutes were not discussed.

Metro Strategic Framework

Presenter: Marissa Madrigal, Metro COO

- Martine – I appreciate the idea of a framework as a thread throughout an organization to be based off of same principals or values. How will this look in real life? Ex. From Multnomah County that had an Equity Lens Tool and they didn’t use it. A decision making tool, how do they implement this in reality?
 - This is why I shy away from a giant strategic plan. A big complex organization is made up of a lot of people who make small decisions every day. If the plan is too big or full of jargon. The framework is deceptively simple but it is hard to keep promises. Even not a technical expert but you know you must use those things. Ex from beginning of pandemic – completely new environment and had to shift overnight – immediate value

was safety. And as plans came up we picked the safest without the perfect being the enemy of the good. Which option gives the most out of guiding principles and that is the one that you pick. It has to be a very active process.

- Martine – When departments are going in front of Metro Council for recommendations and decisions, will it be presented through the lens of this framework? Where are the checks and balances?
 - We are building as we go. Drafted the framework the departments used the framework to move their operations and programs in the direction of these guiding principles. Over time there will be a more robust system but right now it is organic and in the moment.
 - Councilor Lewis – We get an hour with each department. It is not enough time but it is enough time to ask one or two questions. We have “build back better” as this tagline. We are going to ask questions about the tradeoffs you have made to land with what you are proposing. Often not used to talking about the tradeoffs they have made and how it will serve populations better. Next process with our amendments and notes across the agency. We have let venues go their own way from relying just on what we see and hear in the main building. We are pulling them back in.
 - Councilor Nolan – Echo a bit of introduction, fundamentally this kind of work involves changing the way we think about the decisions and services and activities we do. I have always understood change to have an inherent component of loss even when it is a positive change. Things are different. As simple as have lost who you sit next to at work or to have individual control. Getting in the practice is an important step. I believe and trust that early steps, when it isn’t just leadership asking the question “Is this the best way we can improve access to venues or the results of transportation decisions on people of color or disabled people. We won’t have to ask the question because the folks making the proposal have already asked it and those folks are bringing it forward to change what was in the past. I’m impatient. Hat off to those who work on embedding practices. I am impatient, if it takes too long, we are producing and tolerating results that are not where our values are. Another comment is that Metro work is mostly done with human resources. Every human being doesn’t get it right on the first approach. When we encourage them to stretch and they don’t hit the mark being flexible. Marissa is creating that environment to make mistakes and come back and change it again.
- Danel Malan – Metro does own some building and they bring a lot of people and tourism and jobs. As an arts program, we have lost our seasons and the restaurants and their issues. Milagro has been closed for over a year with no patio outside for plays in the rain. When you think about a big place like p5 that costs so much money to maintain – that money could go elsewhere but don’t forget about the local artists, the benefits to the schools, etc. It is about what it houses and the people that are able to use it. Art is a huge part of who we are.

- Marissa - Art brings joy to our communities and joy is a right. Think about cost and benefit differently. We only think about it in financial pieces instead. We are a government and we are a part of society and be aware of our impact on people. When we shift costs to save money, who is bearing that cost. Who is paying for that? If it is people that we care about and trying to center, then that doesn't make sense. We need to think holistically about those things. We are a part of an ecosystem and we have to understand how we are all connected and impact one another.
- Raahi Reddy – For CORE members, one of the areas that the framework brings light to is the intersections of racial and climate justice. It is something that Metro touches on but not the intersection. What ways can this framework that links those two – feedback or ideas where Metro can have intention or area of focus?
 - Danel Malan – look to nonprofit examples for how they engage with communities of color and with different languages. Amplify those relationships and model
 - Friends of Trees receives Nature and Neighborhood Grants. Friends of Tree came today and asked for help because City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services will no longer be funding them.
 - Anthony Deloney - Environmental justice has always felt like a luxury. People of color are affected first and most. It is not communicated that way. If you don't call out what is specific to Black and Brown people, that is white people stuff and it is dismissed. Ex working in AmeriCorps and learned more in 3 months than my whole life. I was educated on those specific examples. If the line is not drawn out specifically then it is second. Education for Black and Brown people that makes it relevant if you are not specific about it then it will not be included in how we work.
 - Marissa Madrigal – Environmentalism has been about luxury. Who has time or money to learn about what is recyclable. Or buy the more expensive things that will last longer. I don't have the answers but thank you for saying that.
 - Patricia Kepler – Agreement. It is a similar issue for people with disabilities where there life is the city and accessible public transportation. Folks can't even get out to Blue Lake Park when there is no bus. It is hard to focus on environmental issues when those basic needs are not met.
- Marissa Madrigal – We will return with updates and information about how it is going or what challenges there might be.

Bylaws conversation will happen at an upcoming meeting.

Nura Elmagbari – It takes a village to take care of its own people and to fight for those next door. When you push back and you fight against people with power and money and those who want to keep that, they push back 1000 times harder. Pushing back is hurtful to your safety, your future, and your children's' futures. Nothing will stop me from fighting for every human life and the dignity of every human being. It makes me better and stronger to know that you are behind me. Please let me know

who, where and how I can talk to about this? I am looking for a hero, which is why Ironman in the chat. Finding that strength. So much of what you said Marissa is what Metro stands for, we have to stand behind those words and fight for those words. If we stick together, if we don't let folks bully or harass us, we will win. I am ready to follow but if you are not ready to lead, I will do that. We need to do more. I am ready to be guided. Thank you to everyone.

Martine – How do we fight the good fight as CORE. What comes up for you? What does better look like for us?

Nura – We can't be scared. It starts within each of us. It starts with your neighbor. I have dear friends from every faith background you can imagine. I gave a Mothers' Day Talk at a church. What can we do to show solidarity – a scarf, a march, etc. It is very simple, are you willing to take a bullet for me? Until you are ready to put your life on the line to protect me as I am for you. You must value my life as much as I value yours. Conversations start in places like this and it spreads out to our communities. It has to start in our own homes we have to fight for human lives. We can sure as heck control the money we send to other countries for building up and protect people not to kill or to not to oppress people.

Raahi – I have a suggestion. There are many times that we have had our council share our feelings with our federal delegation – support for communities, immigrant issues. International issues are out of our Metro arena. Connections could be made for our international communities and the Federal delegation.

Mahmood Jawad – Thank you Nura for sharing. Thank you all for responding with love and care and kindness. One important aspect is education. Many people don't understand the struggle of the Palestinian struggle and the so called right of the Israeli people to that land. That lack of and mis-education is a driver for confusion and the support of the wrong side One thing that Metro can do, is possibly link within that statement publications from the side of the oppressed and not the oppressor. Send through to 5 people and then 5 more. That is how we must begin. That is how oppression is ended. Reaching out to neighbors, friends, people you disagree with. Educate yourself and others. If I can or someone else can inform you more, please let us know.

Martine – How do we ensure CORE is uplifting the voices of people who have been continuously pushed to the margins? How do we take our own lived experiences and connections to local, internationally and nationally – how do we take what we are building here and address oppression and the wrongs that are happening. Between now and the next meeting, something in terms of structure of the committee recognizing a once a month commitment without more burden but still allows us to be responsive to the things that are happening and elevate what is happening to Metro Council and all of Metro.

Martine Adjourned the meeting.

Adjourn

