

EXCERPTS FROM PORTLAND METRO STRATEGIC PLAN

JULY 2016

Introduction

Why racial equity?

Metro works to improve the quality of life for the Portland metropolitan region's 1.5 million residents by providing land use and transportation planning; entertainment, educational and convention-related venues; parks, natural areas, cemeteries and outdoor recreation facilities; and recycling and garbage services.

Like most of the nation, the Portland region's communities are becoming more diverse. It is projected that by the year 2045, communities of color will be the majority.

Our current and future diversity will help develop and maintain sustainable economic growth if we proactively address the issue of equity. Research shows that regions that attain more economic growth are those with greater racial inclusion and smaller racial income gaps¹. Unfortunately, most communities of color in the Portland metropolitan region currently experience the worst economic and social outcomes of any demographic group, due to a long history of exclusionary and discriminatory policies.

To prepare for a healthy and prosperous future, Metro, other jurisdictions, community organizations and the business and philanthropic communities are taking a long, hard look at equity. Advancing racial equity will allow Metro to more effectively serve all communities. It's not only the right thing to do; it's the smart way to improve our present and plan for our future.

A focus on racial equity supports all

The Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, referred to hereafter as the "Strategic Plan", is the culmination of Metro's efforts to articulate how the agency intends to advance equity in its crucial work in the Portland metropolitan region.

Metro will concentrate on eliminating the disparities that people of color experience, especially in those areas related to Metro's policies, programs, services and destinations. People of color share similar barriers with other historically marginalized groups such as people with low income, people with disabilities, LGBTQ communities, women, older adults and young people. But people of color tend to experience those barriers more deeply due to the pervasive and systemic nature of racism. **By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color, we will effectively also identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups.** The result will be that all people in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland region will experience better outcomes.

This strategic direction allows Metro the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of disadvantaged communities while having a positive impact on the Portland region's overall quality of life.

The Strategic Plan focuses on removing barriers and improving equitable outcomes for people of color. At the same time, Metro's Diversity Action Plan, approved by the Metro Council in 2012, will continue to remove barriers for those with low income, people with disabilities, LGBTQ communities, women, older adults and young people.

The Diversity Action Plan and this Strategic Plan, both facilitated by Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Program, will continue to coordinate efforts, create synergies and eliminate duplication to meet the agency's obligation to effectively serve all communities in the region.

From Appendix C

Transportation

1. Metro has the opportunity to use the regional flexible funds to focus on transportation equity criteria. However, not all communities have focused on equity, so this should not be the only criterion for awarding funding.
2. Use TriMet's equity index for funding investments. Measure transportation investments and measure outcomes for communities of color over time.
3. Metro and communities need to focus on "last mile" solutions. Light rail only provides service to a small percentage of the population. Public transit is hard to provide in lower density, suburban communities, however, there is a large need for transportation solutions in these "transit deserts".

Create more supportive advisory committee structures to increase community involvement

Policy to provide compensation, food and transportation to committee members to break down participation barriers.