

Photo by Paul Sableman, 2018 <https://bit.ly/3oIVAzV>

Equity Advisory Committee

2021 Annual Report
Presented on February 16,
2022



- Community members advocated for the creation of an Equity Advisory Committee after seeing that the **Met Council's practices were creating inequities**
- In 2014, Thrive 2040 was adopted. It noted that disparities threaten the future vitality of our region (p. 7) and **centered equity** as one of five outcomes (p. 38), saying equity would be used as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning and investments (p. 41)
- The Equity Advisory Committee was established in October, 2015

Our charge is to give advice that advances equity.

The Committee shall advise the Council regarding the development of policy and appropriate processes for assessing and monitoring the Council's performance against such policies in the Council's efforts to advance equity in the region. As requested by the Council the Committee shall provide advice regarding various policy issues, and the Committee may also identify additional policy topics for the Council's consideration to address.

Who serves on the Equity Advisory Committee?

- Committee members serve by appointment.
- We are composed of 21 voting members:
 - Four council members*
 - Eight geographic members, each representing two Council districts
 - Nine at-large members

*We will come back to this later in the presentation

SCREENSHOT INSERTED AFTER 2/15 meeting

Our members are...

Name	Seat
Francisco Gonzalez	Co-Chair Council Member - Transportation
Chai Lee	Council Member-Community Development
Phillip Sterner*	Council Member -Environment
Vacant	Council Member- Management
Michael Luseni	Precinct A
Tie Oei	Precinct B
Nicholas Jenkins	Precinct C
Anita L. Urvina Davis	Precinct D
Patrick Tschida	Precinct E
Edward McDonald	Precinct F
Andrea Jenkins	Precinct G

Name	Seat
Leah Goldstein Moses	Precinct H/Co-chair
Zabat Awed	At-Large
Melinda Lee	At-Large
Jen Owens	At-Large
Mary Ann Padua	At-Large
Breanne Rothstein	At-Large
Stephanie Shider	At-Large
Betsy Sitkoff	At-Large
Kristen Stacey	At-Large
Vacant	At-Large

What did the EAC work on in 2021?

Focus area	Priorities	2021 outcomes
Affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hold regional convenings on affordable housing• Housing plan update	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informed special funding opportunity• Gave advice about LHIA pilot project with a formal memo highlighting our equity analysis and recommendations



What did the EAC work on in 2021?

Focus area	Priorities	2021 outcomes
Public transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Transportation policy decision making•Transportation tracking systems•Build a relationship with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB)•Work more directly with Metro Transit on equity related goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Provided feedback on Statewide transportation plan update at MnDOT•Developed relationship with equity manager•Provided input for defining “equity” in the context of transportation•Gave input on BLRT community engagement plans•Contributed to transit safety planning

What did the EAC work on in 2021?

Focus area	Priorities	2021 outcomes
Council operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Review Council D&I Strategy•Review DBE and MCUB programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">•Reviewed Council's Affirmative Action plan•Reviewed Council's contracting and employment data and its planned dashboard•Informed Council's ideas for using special allocation to improve contracting•Advised Council to audit its administrative functions•Began planning for event to build relationships between businesses and purchasing managers

Photo by Chad Davis, 2019 <https://bit.ly/3gJ86L7>

What did the EAC work on in 2021?

Focus area

Priorities

2021 outcomes

One Metro partnerships

- Update on Council partnerships
- Support Equity initiatives

- Met the BIPOC committee and learned how our work intersects
- Met the Council’s Equity Change Teams
- Heard presentations from many departments

In 2022, we are...

- Onboarding many new members
- Focusing on the same priority areas: Affordable housing, public transportation, Council operations, and partnerships
- Adding a lens of how these priorities and the Met Council's work intersect with other areas affecting communities inequitably:
 - Physical and mental health
 - Access to employment, health care, recreation, civic participation/voting, and other essentials
 - Policing, surveillance and safety
 - Education and youth programs

The Council puts up many barriers to our work.

- Staff assume that EACs need a lot of background information in order to give advice. They give long presentations/talk at us rather than spending our time in dialogue or listening.
- When EAC's input is requested, we don't hear how/whether our input was used.
- When EAC has raised significant issues, staff and Council responded in a defensive and dismissive way rather than incorporating our feedback, and seeks reasons to ignore our input.
- There is no good path to having influence at the Met Council; we have lack of engagement by Council members (where, despite our Bylaws, only two participate) and staff (where we have gone through multiple staff changes in the last year and often hear that staff can't act or make decisions)

To value and benefit from the EAC, the Council will:

- **Expand the Equity Advisory Committee's influence:**
 - A direct, simple pathway to guide Council Member's policy decisions (i.e., monthly report, regular recommendations) and providing evidence that guidance is being used
 - Fully participating as intended – with a full contingent of Council Members serving on and attending the EAC
 - Approve Regional Administrator to staff the EAC

To value and benefit from the EAC, the Council will:

- **Implement the recommendations** that have already emerged from the EAC:
 - Develop an equity analysis to accompany all proposals and recommendations brought before the Council
 - Finance and conduct an independent (external) audit covering the last five (5) years of the council's administrative application of federal and state equal opportunity provisions in its Procurement, Affirmative Action, and Civil/Human Rights Act

To value and benefit from the EAC, the Council will:

- **Provide the resources needed** for the EAC to function well:
 - Approve the EAC to hire a staff person to coordinate its activities and be accountable to the EAC
 - Approve paying EAC members a per diem. Often, EAC members are the only ones in a meeting not paid to be there.
 - Approve the composition of EAC to be intentionally representative of the diversity in the region.
 - Train staff to facilitate discussion and listen for understanding to avoid the defensiveness/being talked at that we often experience.