

## POLICY

### Equity Policy

OEO 1-1

**Category:** Office of Equal Opportunity

**Business Unit Responsible:** RA: Office of Equal Opportunity

**Policy Owner:** Director, Office of Equal Opportunity

**Policy Contact:** Lila Eltawely, Enterprise Equity Senior Manager

**Synopsis:** The policy institutionalizes the Council's existing and future Equity efforts. Council will integrate Equity into its planning, operations, and investments in external and internal efforts.

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## POLICY

To the extent authorized or permitted by law, the Metropolitan Council will conduct its own operations and use its assets and authorities to equitably serve the needs of the metropolitan area<sup>1</sup>.

To help achieve Equity, the Council will:

- Evaluate its operations, planning, and investments through an Equity Lens
- Identify and mitigate disproportionately adverse effects of the Council's work
- Engage a full cross-section of community members in decision-making
- Provide just and fair access to opportunities and services that support regional diversity
- Coordinate the network of infrastructure development to benefit all residents in the metropolitan area

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## PURPOSE OF POLICY

This policy supports the Council's statutory charge to guide the orderly and economical development of the metropolitan area<sup>2</sup>, by:

- Advancing the Council's long-range plans
- Instilling Equity in the Council's own operations and leading by example in the region
- Advancing the mission of the Council's [Public Engagement Plan](#), which establishes principles and processes for public engagement that allows community members and stakeholders to be actively involved in the Council's decision-making processes
- Adhering and promoting the equity-related federal, state, and local laws, regulations, and statutes
- Working collaboratively with the Council's [Equity Advisory Committee](#)

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<sup>1</sup> Minn. Stat. § 473.121, Subd. 2, Currently defined as "seven-county area"; sourced from Thrive MSP 2040.

<sup>2</sup> Minn. Stat. § 473.145

- Assessing the outcomes of policies, plans and investments to eliminate disparities and achieve just and fair access to opportunities for everyone in the region
- Working with federal, state, and regional partners and local governments to advance Equity in the metropolitan area

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## BACKGROUND AND REASONS FOR POLICY

The Council has statutory authority to develop regional policy for the orderly and economical development of the metropolitan area. In the coming decades, the metropolitan area will become more racially and ethnically diverse, with 39 percent of all residents being indigenous or people of color by 2040<sup>3</sup>. Today, however, the metropolitan area has some of the largest economic racial and ethnic disparities of any large metropolitan area in the nation. These disparities include, but are not limited to, homeownership rates, household income, rental opportunities, educational attainment, and poverty levels. These economic disparities hinder the economical development and future prosperity of the metropolitan area. To address this threat to regional prosperity, the Council will use an Equity Lens to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments to mitigate the place-based dimension of disparities by race, ethnicity, income, and ability. This will require the Council to develop and implement strategies, tools, practices, and mechanisms for accountability to advance Equity in Council operations, planning, and investments.

The Council is committed to advancing Equity for all state and federally defined protected classes: race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, familial status, disability, public assistance status, age, sexual orientation (which includes gender identity), genetic information, and local human rights commission activity.

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## IMPLEMENTATION & ACCOUNTABILITY

All Council divisions are responsible for carrying out this policy. Each Council division is accountable for using an Equity Lens to evaluate operations, planning, and investments in managing internal and external efforts to promote Equity. Division leaders are responsible for enforcing and implementing this policy.

The Office of Equal Opportunity is responsible for coordinating Council-wide Equity initiatives. It will provide technical assistance to, and collaborate with, Council divisions as they craft strategies for advancing Equity.

The Council will establish an Equity Framework to guide the Council and the metropolitan area on Equity.

An annual review of this policy will be conducted by the Office of Equal Opportunity and provided to the Council and the Equity Advisory Committee.

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## DEFINITIONS

**Equity:** Equity connects all residents to opportunity and creates viable housing, transportation and recreation options for people of all races, ethnicities, incomes, and abilities so that all communities share the opportunities and challenges of growth and change. Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential.

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<sup>3</sup> Data sourced from MetroStats, June 2017; additional data available on Council Forecasts Webpage,

**Equity Framework:** Equity Framework is a strategic action plan for the Council's Equity work, which will include the development and implementation of an Equity Lens.

**Equity Lens:** Equity Lens is a recognition of the lasting impact of discriminatory actions and current institutional practices disproportionately affecting people by race, ethnicity, income, and ability. An Equity Lens is often a method used to guide projects, programs, and procedures to help ensure staff are actively pursuing ways to eliminate disparities and advance Equity in decision-making.

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## RESOURCES

### Statutory Resources

- [Minn. Stat. § 473.121, Subd. 2](#) - Definitions
- [Minn. Stat. § 473.145](#) – Development Guide

### Other Resources

- [Thrive MSP 2040](#)
- [Public Engagement Plan](#)
- [Equity Advisory Committee](#)

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## HISTORY

### Version 2 – Template Update

10/12/2020 - Updated content into new template.

### Version 1 – Approval Date (Business Item 264-2018)

10/24/2018

### Last Reviewed Date

10/24/2018

### Next Content Review Date

06/01/2022

### Former Reference #

1-8

### Version

2