

Management Committee

Meeting date: October 10, 2018

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of October 24, 2018

Subject: Equity Policy

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minn. Statute Section 473.145; 473.121, Subd. 2

Staff Prepared/Presented: Cyrenthia Jordan, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, 651-602-1085

Division/Department: Regional Administration/Office of Equal Opportunity

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council adopts the Equity Policy.

Background

State law charges the Metropolitan Council with developing regional policy for the orderly and economical development of the metropolitan area. Current economic disparities hinder the economical development and future prosperity of the metropolitan area. To address this threat to regional prosperity, the Metropolitan Council will use Equity as a lens to evaluate its operations, planning, and investments to mitigate the place-based dimension of disparities by race, ethnicity, income, and ability. This work requires the Metropolitan Council as an organization to develop and implement strategies, tools, practices, and mechanisms for accountability to advance Equity in Council operations, planning, and investments.

Rationale

The policy institutionalizes the Council's existing and future Equity efforts.

Thrive Lens Analysis

The policy advances the Council's Thrive 2040 desired outcome of Equity. Through the implementation of this policy, the Council will integrate Equity into its planning, operations, and investments in external and internal efforts.

Funding

Not applicable.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition to the creation of this policy. The Equity Advisory Committee was engaged in the drafting of the policy.

EQUITY POLICY

Section/Number: 1-2	Total Pages: 3
Dept. Responsible: Office of Equal Opportunity	Effective Date:
Special Note:	Last Revision Date:
	Last Review Date:
	Revision No.

I. 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 area¹.

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

II. Purpose of policy

This policy supports the Council’s statutory charge to guide the orderly and economical development of the metropolitan area², 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
- 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

¹ Minn. Stat. § 473.121, Subd. 2

² Minn. Stat. § 473.145



III. 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 2040³. 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.

IV. 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.

V. Definition of Terms

- **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 change⁴. Equity is the just and fair inclusion into a society in which all can participate, prosper, and reach their full potential⁵.

³ Data sourced from [MetroStats, June 2017](#); additional data available on [Council Forecasts Webpage](#).

⁴ Definition sourced from [Thrive MSP 2040](#), pg. 38.

⁵ Definition sourced from [PolicyLink](#).

- **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** 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.

Revision/Review Tracking

Date	Revision No.	Review Only – No changes