

Other Business

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of April 14, 2021.

Subject: Establishment and Appointment of the BIPOC Work Group

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Bylaws of the Metropolitan Council, art. III.C.

Staff Prepared/Presented: Charlie Zelle, Chair, 651-602-1390

Division/Department: Chair's office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve Chair Zelle's recommendation to create an internal advisory BIPOC Work Group and appoint the following members to serve on it: Chris Ferguson, Chair; Reva Chamblis, Lynnea Atlas-Ingebretson, Robert Lilligren, Abdirahman Muse, Chai Lee, and Francisco González.

Background

The Metropolitan Council has identified racial equity as one of the five outcomes of THRIVE MSP 2040. The Council defines equity in THRIVE MSP 2040: "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. For our region to reach its full economic potential, all of our residents must be able to access opportunity. Our region is stronger when all people live in communities that provide them access to opportunities for success, prosperity, and quality of life."

The Twin Cities metropolitan region has some of the highest racial disparities in the country. To address this, the Metropolitan Council has identified "Reducing Racial Disparities" as one of the four top strategic priorities in the plan submitted to Governor Tim Walz.

The BIPOC Work Group is intended to provide a forum for Council Members to work with Council staff on the following items:

- Prioritizing human resources initiatives including hiring, retention, and promotion of BIPOC employees (with an emphasis on leadership and management positions)
- Increasing spending with vendors and contractors from targeted groups, specifically businesses owned by members of the BIPOC community
- Providing disaggregated data to help better understand inequitable outcomes and craft policies to address racial disparities
- Developing a theory of change and business case for equity to help position the Metropolitan Council to be a competitive employer, qualified grant applicant for external funding resources, and regional leader working to reduce racial disparities
- Embedding racial equity work in the Council's culture and programs

BIPOC is a term that includes people who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color.

Rationale

The establishment of this advisory BIPOC Work Group will guide staff research, implementation, and actions related to the above issues, and help identify additional topics for exploration as they emerge. The group will help prioritize various Council Member requests of staff with regards to work to reduce racial disparities. This will be a Metropolitan Council Member-led group. This group will not make any formal decisions. The group will provide recommendations and an annual report to the Management Committee on the following item topics identified above.

Thrive Lens Analysis

This BIPOC Work Group furthers several THRIVE MSP 2040 outcomes:

- Equity: the group will help advance work to reduce racial disparities and advance racial equity work at the Council.
- Prosperity: the group will help to provide and prioritize policymaker feedback about how to ensure investments in economic vitality are targeted to groups who have historically experienced under-investment.
- Stewardship: the group will help provide and prioritize policymaker feedback about how to best responsibly leverage the region's financial resources to reduce racial disparities.

Funding

The Office of Equal Opportunity will provide primary staff support of the BIPOC Work Group as part of its regular work.

Known Support / Opposition

There is no known opposition.