

Other Business

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of January 12, 2022

Subject: Appointments to the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC)

District(s), Member(s): All

Policy/Legal Reference: Minnesota Statute 473.127

Staff Prepared/Presented: Charlie Zelle, Chair

Division/Department: Chair's Office

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council approve the following appointments to the Equity Advisory Committee (EAC):

At-Large Openings (Appointments through January 1, 2026)

- Zabat Awed
- Melinda Lee
- Jen Owens
- Mary Ann Padua
- Breanne Rothstein
- Stephanie Shider
- Betsy Sitkoff
- Kristen Stacey

Vacant District Position (Appointment through January 1, 2024)

- District E = Patrick Tschida
- District G = Vanessa Jenkins

Background

The Equity Advisory Committee was established by the Metropolitan Council pursuant to MN Statute 473.127. The purpose of the Equity Advisory Committee is to advise the Metropolitan Council in its work to advance equity in the metropolitan region and meet the Council's equity commitments in Thrive MSP 2040. The Equity Advisory Committee is comprised of 21 members, including 4 Council Members, 8 community members from geographic districts (A-H), and 9 community members who serve at-large.

Rationale

Nine Equity Advisory Committee at-large position are up for appointment due to term expirations. In addition, district E and district G had vacancies due to members leaving their terms early.

Since October, the Council has made ongoing efforts to recruit members for all openings by reaching out to community organizations across the 7-county area. The nominating committee included Council Member Francisco Gonzalez (co-chair), Council Member Chai Lee, EAC members Leah Goldstein Moses (co-chair), and Tie Oei, and Anita L. Urvina Davis. The nominating committee hosted 15-minute virtual interviews on December 2 and December 12. The four main questions that candidates were asked to answer included:

1. Tell us about your understanding of the meaning of equity.

2. Tell us about some of your experience in advancing equity in coalition building, advocacy or neighborhood support.
3. What is your experience in speaking or advising on key efforts or plans in partnership with historically underrepresented groups or neighborhoods?
4. Share an experience where you have been part of a group, community or team that helped change something meaningful.

Following the interviews, the committee reviewed the application materials and interview notes, and made appointment recommendations for Chair Zelle's consideration. The nominating committee decided only to forward 8 candidates instead of the full 9 at-large openings. The eight candidates were recommended because of their passion for equity work, their lived experiences, their understanding of equity and experience working with historically underrepresented groups. It was decided that the Equity Advisory Committee will open up applications for the ninth spot in the near future. The Chair's final recommendations are as noted above.

If approved, the at-large appointments would serve full four-year terms until January 1, 2026, and the district E and district G appointments would serve the remainder of the original four-year term until January 1, 2024.

Thrive Lens Analysis

Appointing members to EAC is necessary to keep the committee functioning. The committee is critical to the Council's work towards advancing all regional outcomes, including equity.

Funding

N/A

Known Support / Opposition

No known opposition.