

Minutes of the

MEETING OF THE EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, September 19, 2017

Committee Members Present: Co-Chair; Edward Reynoso, David Ketroser, Ruthie Johnson, Jennifer Munt, Metric Giles, Sindy Morales Garcia, Tie Oei, Kim Carpenter, Shirley Cain

Committee Members Excused: Co-Chair; Acooa Ellis, Kadra Abdi, Rebecca Stratton, Leslie Redmond, Nelima Sitati Munene, Leon Rodrigues, Ishmael Israel

Committee Members Absent: Harry Melander

A quorum not being present, Co-Chair Ed Reynoso started the meeting at 6:10 pm, proceeding to the public invitation and subsequent business items.

Council Staff Present: Wanda Kirkpatrick, C Terrence Anderson, Yolanda Burckhardt, Michelle Fure

PUBLIC INVITATION

Greg Copeland, Saint Paul resident and School Board candidate, discussed several concerns to the Equity Advisory Committee:

- Greg participated in the pilot Transit Accessibility Program (TAP); he is concerned because the new regional fare change guidelines do not allow customers to register for TAP prior to October 1, the effective date of the fare change.
- The School Board is considering earlier school start times; however, the Board asserts they do not have enough buses to meet demand. Greg told the committee that Saint Paul doesn't offer students bus passes like they do in Minneapolis; he considers this an equity issue.
- Greg would like to see the Volkswagen Settlement money used to buy additional buses. Greg said the East Side of Saint Paul needs more routes and higher frequency.

REGIONAL FARE CHANGE REPORT BACK

Co-Chair Reynoso debriefed the Metropolitan Council's decision on the Regional Fare Change. Input from the committee was important and influenced the decisions of the Council. The EAC recommended no increase on local routes and a 25-cent increase on express routes; however, the Council voted to approve a 25-cent increase across the board. In consensus with the committee's recommendations, the Council adopted:

- Expansion of the Transit Accessibility Program (TAP)
- Elimination bonus on Go-To Card purchase bonuses to pay for TAP
- Expansion of MetroPass partnerships with community organizations

The TAP was championed by the EAC Council Members because the EAC supported the program as a way to mitigate disparate impacts of the fare increase. All the recommendations that came out of the Equity Advisory Committee were valuable and will influence Council Member's conversations moving forward.

Members of the committee had the following questions and comments:

1. Will the Council be increasing fares again in the future? How do we assure that the Transit Accessibility Program (TAP) meets the need of all customers who cannot afford the increase?

Co-Chair Reynoso is hopeful that Metro Transit will not have to raise fares in the future, but securing dedicated funding for transit is necessary. Even after fare increase, the Metropolitan Council will still have a structural deficit next year.

Council Member Munt said staff used the data collected from the pilot Transit Accessibility Program (TAP) to identify need and demand. Staff will continue to monitor need, particularly as the economy fluctuates. Staff reported that the money allocated for TAP should meet the need.

2. There is a need for the Council to develop more data regarding impacts of decisions on people of color in the Region.

Acting Equity Manager, C Terrence Anderson, noted that a Title VI analysis is conducted before decisions such as increasing regional fares are made; however, oftentimes we are not in the practice of examining the realized impact after the fare change is implemented. Committee member Johnson suggested bringing back staff to talk about investigating outcomes of the regional fare change.

RACIAL EQUITY WORK PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

C Terrence Anderson, Acting Equity Manager, presented on the draft Racial Equity Work Plan Implementation and Management Plan. The Metropolitan Council has now officially adopted the plan internally and the Office of Equal Opportunity will be rolling out the Racial Equity Work Plan to Council Staff. C Terrence spoke to the principles guiding the implementation, and walked through the structure and stages of the Racial Equity Work Plan Implementation.

Members of the committee had the following questions and comments:

1. How many Native Americans work at the Council? Will you be working on recruitment, promotion and retention?

I do not have the numbers of Native American employees off the top of my head, but I can get that information out to you this week. Yes, recruitment, promotion and retention are large components of this plan; that is why the Office of Equal Opportunity is collaborating with Human Resources.

2. Will this work be imbedded into the policy and practices of the Metropolitan Council?

Yes, ultimately that is how the Office of Equal Opportunity would measure success of this plan. The goal of the work is that it becomes part of the structure, culture, practices and policies of the Metropolitan Council beyond the current administration at the State or Federal level.

3. Will all your engagement work be in English, or will it be multilingual? Will it be in plain language?

The Metropolitan Council will provide the information in various formats and languages. Michelle Fure talked about the Council's public engagement process regarding translation when working with external community groups.

4. Co-Chair Reynoso asked C Terrence to come back with a report on plan implementation in early summer 2018.

5. Is there an opportunity to engage the EAC members in the implementation of the plan outside of this meeting? Perhaps in the form of presentations?

The Office of Equal Opportunity is open to ideas with regard to how the EAC will participate in the implementation of the plan. C Terrence will speak with staff and get back to EAC members on clear ways EAC members could be helpful.

EQUITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE HOUSEKEEPING

Co-Chair Reynoso initiated a conversation regarding several housekeeping items. Co-Chair Ellis will be resigning as Chair at the end of her term. In addition, several committee members have discussed adjusting the frequency of regular EAC meetings to bi-weekly. Discussion ensued regarding the above items:

- Equity Advisory Co-Chair Position
 - Co-Chair Reynoso commended Co-Chair Ellis for her great work and leadership in the past year and half on the Equity Advisory Committee. The Co-Chair position was a one-year commitment, and Co-Chair Ellis has graciously led beyond her established term. The new Co-Chair of the EAC will be appointed by the Chair of the Metropolitan Council. Please email Co-Chair Reynoso, C Terrence, and the Chair of the Metropolitan Council to volunteer or make a recommendation.
- Adjusting frequency of Equity Advisory Committee Meetings
 - Co-Chair Reynoso brought up the conversation from the past few meetings regarding the frustration that the EAC does not have enough input concerning important Council decisions. Meeting bi-weekly would allow for more decision-making.
 - Committee member Ketrosor suggested a 2-hour monthly meeting, and holding another 1-2-hour meeting per month, depending on the amount of work the EAC is assigned.
 - Committee member Giles suggested that the EAC meet every 3 weeks.
 - Committee member Cain commented that twice a month is too much of a commitment.
 - It may become more evident how much time the EAC needs to accomplish its tasks once the 2018 work plan is determined.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN YOUR AREA

Co-Chair Reynoso spoke about Council Member outreach and engagement in their Council districts. Co-Chair Reynoso desires for Committee members to be connected to various constituents in their geographic districts. Co-chair Reynoso invited EAC members to join Council Members and Commissioners in county/city/district tours so that more people are aware of who they are and the role of the EAC.

- C Terrence Anderson, Acting Equity Manager, remarked that he has heard from committee members that there are conversations that EAC members want to come before the committee because they are important to their communities. C Terrence asked committee members to email him items of interest for the 2018 Equity Advisory Committee work plan so that the committee can begin scheduling.
 - Committee member Carpenter brought up an issue, water quality, that is important to her on the northside of Minneapolis. Committee member Carpenter posed a question: how are we bringing people of color into these conversations and increasing the diversity within these career fields?
 - Committee member Munene, though absent, provided a letter that the northwest suburbs are grappling with issues of housing equity. She desires for the EAC to have more opportunity to talk about comprehensive plans, affordable housing, and developing tools and strategies to address issues of displacement and gentrification.

REPORTS

A. Committee Members

B. Co-Chairs

C. Announcements

Next meeting: Oct 17, 2017

Co-Chair Reynoso will not be present

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.

Yolanda Burckhardt

Recording Secretary