



## Board Report

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**File #:** 2020-0907, **File Type:** Informational Report

**Agenda Number:** 42.

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**EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE  
FEBRUARY 18, 2021**

**SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 2021 EQUITY AND RACE PROGRAM UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

**RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE February 2021 status report on the Equity and Race Program.

**ISSUE**

This report provides an update on Metro's Equity and Race Program.

**BACKGROUND**

Metro defines Equity as both an outcome and a process to address racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities, to ensure fair and just access - with respect to where you begin and your capacity to improve from that starting point - to opportunities, including jobs, housing, education, mobility options, and healthier communities. It is achieved when one's outcomes in life are not predetermined, in a statistical or experiential sense, on their racial, economic, or social identities. It requires community informed and needs-based provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies that reduce and ultimately prevent disparities.

Metro's Equity Platform ("Platform"), which provides a framework for advancing equity, was approved by the Metro Board of Directors ("Board") in March 2018 (Attachment A). The core objective is to increase access to opportunities including housing, jobs, healthcare, education, and other key determinants of health and thriving communities. The Platform is explicit in its focus on the vast disparities that exist in access to opportunity and is intended to help identify and implement projects or programs that reduce and ultimately eliminate those disparities. It is driven by access needs, not geographic equality, though some disparities have a geographic element. The Platform has been incorporated into Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan and must be a critical factor in our decision making. In August 2020, Metro published an Equity and Race Program Update (Attachment A) outlining the activities taken under the leadership of Metro's new Executive Officer, Equity and Race and plans to continue implementing the Metro Equity Platform Framework adopted by the Board in March 2018.

**DISCUSSION**

Updates on the Office Equity and Race's staff recruitments and program progress over the last six months are outlined below:

**A. Equity and Race Staff Recruitments**

The Office of Equity and Race (OER) received approval to hire three full time staff members. In October 2020, the OER posted recruitments for the three staff positions and conducted interviews in late November through mid-December. Offers have been made for two of the positions.

**B. Measure and Define: Applying an Equity Lens to Decision Making**

Under the Measure and Define pillar, staff has focused on developing tools and processes to help staff understand the benefits and burdens of our services, programs, and policies, how they are shaped by disparities and gaps in opportunity, and how we can make more equitable decisions. In the fall of 2020, Metro launched the Metro Budget Equity Assessment Tool (MBEAT). Staff provided the Board a summary of the development process and findings from the Mid Fiscal Year 20-21 pilot in January 2021 (Attachment B). This was the first equity assessment to be integrated into one of Metro's agencywide processes. Implementation highlighted the benefits of several new budget requests for marginalized and/or vulnerable communities, as well as potential barriers or harms to address and adjustments to improve access. It also highlighted a need for broader training to help staff think through how investments, projects, programs, and policies might cause harm or not benefit all as intended, given historic and current disparities and systemic inequities.

The mid fiscal year pilot served as a first step in building a foundation for an iterative process where Metro applies an equity lens at different points through planning, implementation, and funding decisions to ensure that Metro's process and outcomes are more equitable. The MBEAT will apply to new, expanded scope, or reduced budgetary requests. Additionally, the OER is preparing for the development of an agency-wide equity study to assess the equity of the entire budget and existing programs, services, and policies; create a baseline understanding of key disparities, challenges, successes, and opportunities; and develop strategies to address the disparities and challenges, and build upon the successes and opportunities. Lastly, staff will work to finalize an Equity Tool for project and program development, initiate pilot use, and determine the threshold for use of that tool and the Rapid Equity Assessment which the OER developed.

**C. Listen and Learn: Supporting More Equitable Community Engagement**

Under the Listen and Learn pillar, staff has focused on improving outreach and engagement efforts in target communities and supporting easier and more consistent partnership with Community Based Organizations (CBOs). The Board voted to support Proposition 16 (Prop. 16) on the November 2020 ballot, which would have legalized affirmative action. While Prop. 16 did not pass, staff developed a plan with strategies that better support the Board's desire to rectify any underutilization of people of color and women in employment, education, and contracting, within legal constraints (Attachment C). Accordingly, the OER is working with the Communication Department to develop and use voluntary demographic surveys at engagement and outreach events to establish baseline demographic information to help Metro understand how well we are engaging targeted communities and ensure

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representative feedback on our work. We are also preparing to conduct a community survey and other engagement activities on community perceptions of equity and racial justice related to Metro. We will return to the Board with updates on each action before the end of the fiscal year. Finally, to encourage and support Metro engagement with CBOs, OER is working with staff from the Communications and Planning departments and CBOs from across Los Angeles County to finalize Metro's CBO Partnership Strategy. Staff will return to the board in Spring 2021 with an update.

**D. Focus and Deliver: Agencywide Project Support**

Under the Focus and Deliver pillar, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race has continued to assist with new and on-going projects to help apply an equity lens, grapple with equity related challenges, and support targeted community engagement in this challenging virtual environment. From the Public Safety Advisory Committee to the Joint Development Policy Paper, the Adopt-A-Bike Mini Grant Program to the Fareless System Initiative and several others, she has served on steering committees, consulted on plans, helped apply rapid equity assessments, and otherwise worked to support projects as they explore how to create more inclusive project development processes and plan for equitable project outcomes. These efforts will continue and be enhanced as Metro soon expands the Office of Equity and Race and continues to train its Equity Liaisons and others to support this work.

**E. Train and Grow: A Culture of Learning**

Under the Train and Grow pillar, staff has focused on supporting a culture of learning, as we strive to build a more equitable and inclusive agency. In December 2020, Metro launched the JEDI Book Club. The book club supports staff development under Metro's Equity Platform and helps normalize conversations and expand shared understandings of key concepts related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion. While staff participation is voluntary, it serves as one way to help meet Individual Performance Plan (IPP) goal 5.7 ("Metro will build and nurture a diverse, inspired, and high-performing workforce"). Just shy of 140 people signed up to read, "So You Want to Talk about Race," by Ijeoma Oluo. The first book club event was held on January 27, 2021.

Metro will continue to provide and explore other opportunities for our staff to be trained and grow. The launch of the MBEAT has highlighted a need for a training to help staff think through how investments, projects, programs, and policies might cause harm or not benefit all as intended. Accordingly, OER continues to work with the Office of Civil Rights and Inclusion to explore the development of diversity, equity, and inclusion trainings for all staff. Additionally, the Metro Equity Liaisons continue to meet twice a month, discussing books, articles, and videos to help expand their understanding disparities and systemic inequities in the context of Metro's work. They are also helping with MBEAT implementation within each department, have introduced and encouraged the application of the Rapid Equity Assessment to their respective departments, and will help pilot the project Equity Tool.

In summary, these highlighted initiatives and actions should not be viewed as the only elements that will impact, support, or add to the implementation of the Equity Platform. The Platform will be carried out through an ongoing portfolio of agency actions.

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## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Implementation of the Equity Platform will in many cases involve shaping and adjusting the direction of current projects within existing budgets. In other cases, it will require new activities and program development. Where a proposed equity-based initiative requires stand-alone revenues, a separate budget action would be taken.

### **Impact to Budget**

There is no impact to the existing FY20-21 budget as a result of this Receive and File report.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

This recommendation supports strategic plan goals #1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 by helping Metro to target infrastructure and service investments toward those with the greatest needs and enhancing communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. Implementation of the equity framework is an explicit recommended action under the goals 1.1 and 3.3, and it supports actions under 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4.

## **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will report on milestones achieved on individual Equity Platform actions and provide overall updates on an ongoing basis, as appropriate.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

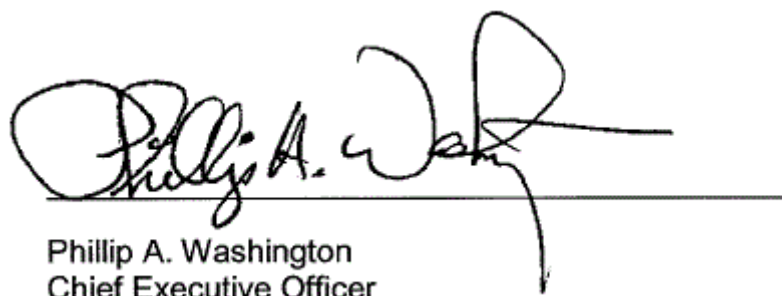
Attachment A - Equity and Race Program Update 8.20.2020

Attachment B - Mid-Year FY 20-21 Budget Equity Assessment

Attachment C - Motion 31.1 Response - Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5

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Chief Executive Officer



## Board Report

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**File #:** 2020-0514, **File Type:** Informational Report

**Agenda Number:** 40.

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### EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AUGUST 20, 2020

**SUBJECT: EQUITY AND RACE PROGRAM UPDATE**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on the Equity and Race Program.

#### **ISSUE**

This report outlines the activities taken under the leadership of Metro's new Executive Officer, Equity and Race and plans to continue implementing the Metro Equity Platform Framework adopted by the Board in March 2018.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Metro's Equity Platform ("Platform") was approved by the Metro Board of Directors ("Board") in March 2018 (Attachment A). The core objective is to increase access to opportunities including housing, jobs, healthcare, education, and other key determinants of health and thriving communities. The Platform is explicit in its focus on the vast disparities that exist in access to opportunity and is intended to help identify and implement projects or programs that reduce and ultimately eliminate those disparities. It is driven by access needs, not geographic equality, though some disparities have a geographic element.

The Platform provides a framework for advancing equity. It has been incorporated into Metro's Vision 2028 Strategic Plan and must be a critical factor in our decision making. In 2019, Metro published an Equity Platform FY19 Activation Plan (Attachment B) to highlight the Platform's broad portfolio of current, planned, and conceptual initiatives, and to show the Platform's intent and the distance the agency still has to go to fully realize the Platform's potential and impact for change. In January 2020, Metro welcomed the first Executive Officer, Equity and Race to lead, coordinate, and develop implementation of efforts under the Platform.

#### **DISCUSSION**

The Equity Platform stands on four pillars - Define and Measure, Listen and Learn, Focus and Deliver, and Train and Grow. Progress over the last six months and objectives for the future under

each of the four pillars are outlined below:

**A. Define and Measure**

Under this pillar, we are tasked with defining equity, defining the target communities in need of more equitable transportation investments, determining how to measure disparities and gaps in opportunity, and understanding the benefits and burdens of our services, programs, and policies and how they are shaped by those disparities and gaps.

- 1. Equity Definition** - Since the adoption of the Equity Platform, there has been a growing need to define equity, to help orient Platform efforts, and clarify what equity is and is not in the context of the Platform. Accordingly, Metro has developed the following definition of equity. Moving forward it will be used to orient our work around equity and create project specific equitable outcomes.

“Equity is both an outcome and a process to address racial, socioeconomic, and gender disparities, to ensure fair and just access - with respect to where you begin and your capacity to improve from that starting point - to opportunities, including jobs, housing, education, mobility options, and healthier communities. It is achieved when one’s outcomes in life are not predetermined, in a statistical or experiential sense, on their racial, economic, or social identities. It requires community informed and needs-based provision, implementation, and impact of services, programs, and policies that reduce and ultimately prevent disparities.”

- 2. Defining High Need Areas** - One of the first steps Metro took under this pillar was to try to identify target communities, where strategic transportation investments can have the greatest impact in eliminating disparities. Accordingly, in September 2019, the Board approved the Equity Focused Communities (EFC), as a working definition. This definition has been used in various projects from the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to the Business Solution Center Expansion study to the TOC Implementation Plan. Other projects have created project specific definitions of high need areas, that include some EFC factors (race, income, car ownership), along with additional factors. The NextGen Bus Study and Plan’s Transit Propensity Index is a great example. Moving forward, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race will continue to work with project teams across the agency from the Better Bus Initiative to the Goods Movement Strategic Plan to the Comprehensive Pricing Study, and community members, as they work to understand disparities and needs in the context of their specific projects.

- 3. Agency-wide Equity Assessment** - While it’s important to address the equity impacts of each Metro decision, it’s also important to understand how we are performing at a macro -level, what decisions and strategies would help the agency perform better, and how to prioritize decisions and investments based on equity. To that end, over the next year the Office of Equity and Race will explore development of an agency-wide equity study, to create a baseline understanding of key disparities, challenges, successes, and opportunities, including community and employees perceptions of Metro’s performance related to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. We will then use that to inform an Equity Strategic Plan. While there are resource constraints, given the importance of this work, we will consider a phased approach.

**B. Listen and Learn**

Under this pillar Metro must improve its efforts to listen and learn from the communities that we serve, to understand how to better serve them. It pushes us to focus on the needs of those faring the worst, recognizing that opportunity doesn't trickle down, it cascades up, and if we understand how to increase access to opportunity for those faring the worse, we will be able to increase access for all. It also focuses on meaningful community engagement as opposed to outreach. To implement this pillar, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race has joined ongoing projects and engagement efforts, been appointed to lead, partner with, or develop new workgroups, and joined national and local conversations about Equity in transportation and the built environment.

1. **Community Based Organization (CBO) Partnership Strategy** - Responding to lessons learned from the Blue Line, First/Last Mile Plan's transformative approach to partnering with Community Based Organizations, the Communications, Planning, Vendor and Contract Management Departments have continued to prepare a new policy to guide enhanced partnerships with CBOs on several levels, including a clear process for contracting opportunities within Metro's larger public engagement efforts. The Executive Officer, Equity and Race has joined this team and Metro is exploring how her office can support this effort as it moves to implementation.
2. **Community Safety and Security** - Another outgrowth of the work on the Blue Line, First/Last Mile Plan was the formation of the Community Safety and Security Work Group (CSSWG). In early 2019, it was developed to help Metro work with community members to listen to and address neighborhood and rider concerns regarding Metro safety and security. Upon joining Metro, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race was appointed to lead the CSSWG and hosted one meeting in May 2020. In July 2020, the Metro Board directed Metro's Chief Executive Officer to establish a Transit Public Safety Advisory Committee that incorporates the existing CSSWG. As directed the Executive Officer, Equity and Race will work with the Committee, Office of Civil Rights, Executive Officer for Customer Experience, and the Office of Safety, Security, and Law Enforcement to develop a community-based approach to public safety on the transit system.
3. **WHAM Taskforce** - The WHAM Taskforce includes representatives from each of the agencies overseeing Measures W, H, A, and M and its goals are to create efficiencies across the programs, eliminate redundancies, coordinate programmatic and project planning, implement specific multi-benefit projects, and leverage W, H, A, and M funding with existing County and other funding resources. The Executive Officer, Equity and Race is the Metro representative on the task force and will coordinate across the agency to fulfill Metro's tasks under the Taskforce's strategic plan.
4. **Aging Disability Transportation Network (ADTN)** - The ADTN is a coalition of groups working with people with disabilities and older adults, formed in 2017, which emerged through advocacy efforts starting with development of the 2016-2019 Coordinated Plan. The ADTN has partnered with Metro in the development of the Board directed 2019 Aging and Disability Report and the corresponding Forum, and will continue partnering with Metro as we work to draft the next Coordinated Plan and address various recommendations from

the coalition to better support people with disabilities and older adults. The Executive Officer, Equity and Race has been appointed to lead Metro's efforts in partnering with the ADTN and will lead coordination across the agency to support related efforts to better meet the needs of people with disabilities and older adults.

5. **Equity Advisory Board** - While Metro will continue partnering with the Equity Committee of the Policy Advisory Council as a technical advisory body as we work to implement the Equity Platform, we are still exploring the development of an Equity Advisory Board. This board would include Equity thought leaders throughout LA County, California, and potentially, the Country. This would be an interdisciplinary group charged with advising the agency on specific topics and issues with equity concerns, especially those which intersect between transportation and other disciplines and opportunity areas.
6. **National and Local Conversations** - Since joining Metro, the Executive Officer of Equity and Race has been very active in local and national conversations around Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Transportation and the Built Environment. She has participated in virtual panels hosted by various industry partners from the American Public Transportation Association to Transit Center to the Rail~volution National Steering Committee. She has also participated in panels hosted by local chapters of industry associations including the American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, and American Institute of Architects. She has presented to or led conversations with local stakeholder groups from Move-LA and Investing in Place to the San Fernando and Gateway Cities Council of Governments. As implementation of the Equity Platform continues, the Office of Equity and Race will continue participating in national and local conversations to discuss best practices, learn from other experts in the field, build partnerships, and generally support and encourage efforts to advance equity in transportation and the built environment.

C. **Focus and Deliver**

This pillar charges Metro with carrying out processes supported by the Equity Platform objectives and principles, which ensure that our actions, programs, and policies lead to more equitable outcomes. It incorporates what's learned from the first two pillars to help us plan, build, invest, and operate in a manner that removes barriers and supports increased access to opportunity for all.

1. **Equity Tool** - Since January 2020, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race has explored the development of a guiding tool to help Metro consistently identify equity concerns and solutions to improve access to opportunity. While the EFC definition helps define high need communities, the Equity Tool will help support more substantive assessments of impacts on those communities by exploring and answering key questions. While still in the development phase, in its current draft form, the tool is a form with a series of questions to guide Metro in developing, implementing, and evaluating programs, plans, and other decisions. It is based on two ideas: 1) deep-rooted and pervasive racial and socioeconomic inequities exists that create disparate impacts, even when the intention is to help all, and 2) we must understand the root causes of those inequities in order to develop solutions that help those faring the worse to actually improve access to opportunity for all. It's based on



the results-based accountability framework developed by Mark Friedman, which is also the basis of the race equity tools developed by the Government Alliance on Race and Equity, in which Metro is a member. During Fiscal Year 2021, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race will work with the Equity Liaisons (see below) and the Equity Committee of the Metro Policy Advisory Council to finalize the draft tool and pilot it on at least three projects.

2. **Rapid Equity Assessment** - Early on during the COVID-19 Crisis, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race recognized the need to center our emergency and fast response decisions on equity. Subsequently, she was appointed as a member of the COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce (Taskforce), and by the second meeting the Taskforce established an equity subcommittee which the Executive Officer, Equity and Race would lead. The committee agreed that they needed a tool to help assess all recommendations that would come from the Taskforce. Initially they explored the draft Equity Tool but determined they needed something simpler for the fast-paced nature of the taskforce process. The Executive Officer, Equity and Race drafted the Rapid Equity Assessment (Attachment C) and worked with the Equity Subcommittee to pilot and fine-tune it. The Rapid Equity Assessment tool has been applied to all Taskforce recommendations and used to help prioritize decisions. In an effort to expand its use, the tool was presented to the Metro Senior Leadership Team. Over the next fiscal year, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race will work with the Equity Liaisons to build capacity to use the Rapid Equity Assessment Tool across the agency, with a goal of eventually requiring use of an equity tool for most Metro decisions.
  
3. **Agency-wide Project Support** - Since the establishment of the Equity Platform, Metro has worked to incorporate its principles into various projects and programs, including some that are at or near completion, such as NextGen, the Understanding How Women Travel Report, and the Long Range Transportation Plan, to name a few. Over the last six months, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race has assisted with new and on-going projects to do the same. From the COVID-19 Recovery Taskforce to the 710 South Project, the Comprehensive Pricing Study to Transit Oriented Communities Implementation Plan and several others, she has worked in roles that range from occasional consulting to regular workgroup membership, to support projects as they explore how to create more inclusive project development processes and plan for equitable project outcomes. These efforts will continue into FY21 and be supplemented as Metro expands Office of Equity and Race and trains its Equity Liaisons and others to support this work.

#### **D. Train and Grow**

This pillar focuses on Metro as an organization and recognizes that successful implementation of the Equity Platform requires commitment, education and training, and prioritization of the Platform's principles across Metro at all levels and in all departments. This pillar will be implemented by efforts of the Office of Equity and Race as well as the Department of Civil Rights and Inclusion in partnership with the Department of Human Capital and Development and other Departments, as applicable.

1. **Agency-wide Education and Conversations** - The Executive Officer, Equity and Race joined Metro in late January, just before the COVID-19 pandemic reached Los Angeles

County and a few months before the civil unrest sparked by the deaths of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor began. Between the public health crisis' disproportionate impact on Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities, the rise in COVID-19 related racist attacks on people of Asian descent, and the spotlighting of historic and present systemic racism and anti-blackness in America, the need and desire to have conversations and develop actions to create a more equitable and inclusive society at Metro have only amplified.

To meet that need and implement this pillar, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race has met with various units and sometimes departments to present on the Equity Platform and discuss how Metro can advance equity through our work. She has also joined the Metro Chief Executive Officer and Chief Civil Rights Officer to facilitate an employee town hall to discuss the civil unrest. She has presented to SLT to introduce the Rapid Equity Assessment and explore eventually requiring an equity section in all board reports.

Metro will work to build the internal infrastructure to support a future required equity section in all board reports, that provides a substantive analysis of a decision's equity impacts. The Executive Officer, Equity and Race will continue meeting with staff across the agency and explore the development of a racial equity training for all staff. In the more immediate, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race is working to launch a voluntary Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Book Club for employees who want to educate and empower themselves to be JEDI advocates.

- 2. Equity Liaisons** - In June 2020, the Executive Officer, Equity and Race established the Equity Liaisons Working Group, which includes one to two staff from each Metro department. The Liaisons were nominated by their respective SLT member and are leaders in their departments, with interest in helping Metro advance equity and a desire to learn and grow. The goal of the Equity Liaison Working Group is to build an internal team of equity fluent leaders to help support implementation of the Equity Platform. The Equity Liaison work plan includes, but is not limited to, learning key concepts related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion; being trained to use, help test, and strengthen the application of equity tools; advising on Equity Platform implementation efforts; and helping to identify opportunities and challenges to addressing equity within each department and the agency as a whole. The Equity Liaisons meet regularly and will continue through FY21 and beyond.

In summary, these highlighted initiatives should not be viewed as the only elements that will impact, support, or add to the implementation of the Equity Platform. The Platform will be carried out through an ongoing portfolio of agency actions.

## **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

Implementation of the Equity Platform will in many cases involve shaping and adjusting the direction of current projects within existing budgets. In other cases, it will require new activities and program development. Metro will need to build the staff infrastructure and provide sufficient resources to support all Equity Platform implementation activities. Where a proposed equity-based initiative requires stand-alone revenues, a separate budget action would be taken.

### **Impact to Budget**

There is no impact to the existing extended FY19-20 budget as a result of this Receive and File

report.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

This recommendation supports strategic plan goals #1.1, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4 by helping Metro to target infrastructure and service investments toward those with the greatest needs and enhancing communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity. Implementation of the equity framework is an explicit recommended action under the goals 1.1 and 3.3, and it supports actions under 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4.

### **NEXT STEPS**

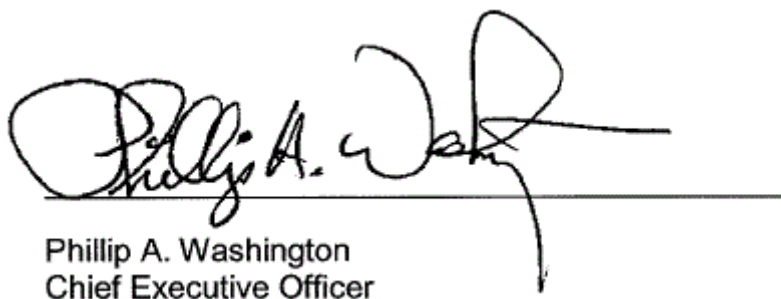
Staff will report on milestones achieved on individual Equity Platform actions and provide overall updates on an ongoing basis, as appropriate.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment A - Metro Equity Platform Report
- Attachment B - Equity Platform FY19 Activation Plan
- Attachment C - Rapid Equity Assessment Tool

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## Board Report

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**File #:** 2020-0817, **File Type:** Informational Report

**Agenda Number:** 10.

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### FINANCE, BUDGET AND AUDIT COMMITTEE JANUARY 20, 2021

**SUBJECT: MID-YEAR FY 20-21 BUDGET EQUITY ASSESSMENT**

**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE**

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE status report on Mid-Year FY 20-21 Budget Equity Assessment.

#### **ISSUE**

During the Executive Management Committee meeting on September 17, 2020, Director Garcetti requested a full analysis on current expenditures using the Equity Assessment Tool for our mid-year budget report. He further requested that the Equity Assessment Tool be used to evaluate each annual budget moving forward and that the Executive Officer, Equity and Race develop a racial and social economic equity action plan.

#### **BACKGROUND**

Metro believes that access to opportunity should be at the center of decision-making around public investments and services. This is especially true for transportation, which is an essential lever to enabling that access. Vast disparities among neighborhoods and individuals in Los Angeles County limit this access, making opportunity harder to reach for some, whether it is jobs, housing, education, health care, safe environments or other essential tenets of thriving, vibrant communities. Transportation infrastructure, programs, and service investments must be targeted toward those with the greatest mobility needs first, in order to improve access to opportunity for all. Equity means that Metro's service delivery, project delivery, policymaking, and distribution of resources account for the different histories, challenges, and needs of communities across Los Angeles County; it is what we are striving towards.

#### **DISCUSSION**

##### **Considerations**

After a review of best practices and lessons learned from jurisdictions including the cities of Portland, Oregon, Denver, Colorado, San Antonio, Texas, and the County of Santa Clara, California, staff identified the need to create a specific equity tool for application in the Metro budget process. The

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tool would be used to review new, expanded scope, or reduced budgetary requests and departmental budgets. A separate agency-wide equity assessment will be conducted to assess the entire Metro budget and investments, help identify key disparities and gaps in opportunity, and drive the development of an equity strategic action plan.

Accordingly, staff created the Metro Budget Equity Assessment Tool (MBEAT) (Attachment “A”). The MBEAT is a set of questions to guide Metro staff in considering racial and social equity explicitly in its budgetary decisions. The MBEAT has two parts. Part one applies to budgetary changes, including new, expanded scope, or reduced budgetary requests, and assesses each for positive and negative impacts on historically marginalized groups and other facing inequities. Part two applies to the department’s entire budget and looks holistically at how the budget supports community engagement and inclusion; targeted efforts to reduce disparities and create a diverse and inclusive workforce; funding gaps that limit equity opportunities; and data collection and tracking to measure equity impacts. Each part will be reviewed for approval by the Offices of Equity and Race and Management and Budget through the budget process.

Part one of the tool was piloted through the FY20-21 mid-year budget process.

### MBEAT Process

The MBEAT process has challenged Metro staff to apply an equity lens and more explicitly explain how budgetary decisions might specifically benefit or potentially harm or negatively impact marginalized communities. To launch the MBEAT process, staff from the offices of Equity and Race and Management and Budget met with key staff from the departments who submitted mid-year budget requests to explain the MBEAT questions and apply it to sample budget requests. Each department was then charged with completing an assessment for each new, expanded scope, or reduced budgetary request. Going into the Annual budget process, staff will incorporate a broader MBEAT training session into the Metro Budget Training for staff. Staff will also enhance the online version of the tool to collect and track the large number of anticipated budgetary requests and ensure integration with the Metro budget process.

While there are some logistical details to address, the MBEAT process shows promise in setting a foundation for applying an equity lens to decision making. It will help capture details on potential impacts for marginalized communities, provide an opportunity to address identified potential harms or negative impacts, and highlight areas for an agencywide equity assessment to further assess. The MBEAT is the first equity assessment integrated into one of Metro’s agencywide processes. It will eventually become part of an iterative process where Metro applies an equity lens at different points through planning, implementation, and funding decisions to ensure that Metro’s process and outcomes are more equitable.

### MBEAT Results: FY21 Mid-Year

The MBEAT was applied to 25 new or expanded scope budget requests from various departments including the Office of the CEO (Customer Experience), Operations, and Safety Security and Law Enforcement. The MBEAT assessments highlight how many of the requests will help improve access to opportunities for some of our most marginalized and/or vulnerable communities. Most of Metro’s

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current riders are people of color, low-income, and/or essential riders. There are a range of requests that will improve the customer experience for them and all riders, including funding for the Bus Speed and Reliability program and a GPS based system that will improve rail service reliability. There is also a new Rescue Ride program which would improve mobility options for bus riders who have experienced pass-ups or canceled runs. This is particularly important for riders with few alternative options to transit, who often experience more detrimental impacts when transit is not available when they need it.

Additionally, there are requests that will allow Metro to test new programs to help connect people experiencing homelessness to housing and services, including funding for a temporary shelter program and participation in the flexible dispatch pilot program in the City of Los Angeles. There are also a series of requests that will support Metro as we enhance transparency in policing and begin to reimagine public safety to ensure that every customer and operator feels safe on our system. This includes funding for body cameras and the public safety advisory committee.

Several programs or projects funded by the requests are in the development or planning phase, and program staff noted that use of the tool was helpful in thinking through how to ensure benefit for those with the greatest needs from the start. There were also funding requests for programs or projects that aim to benefit all, for which staff has not identified a potential harm or negative impact, including the Tunnel and Intrusion Program and CCTV Video Analytics. Staff will continue to measure outcomes and monitor for any disparate impacts that emerge or are unveiled.

Overall, application of the MBEAT highlighted budgetary requests with a wide range of benefits for marginalized and/or vulnerable communities, helped staff identify potential barriers or harms to address, and helped staff consider adjustments to improve access and reduce potential barriers or harms. It also highlighted a need for broader training to not only answer MBEAT questions, but to help staff think through how investment, projects, programs, and policies might cause harm or not benefit all as intended, given historic and current disparities and systemic inequities. The midyear pilot served as a first step in building a foundation for a process that will improve with the use of data analysis and targeted community engagement to help detect and invest in a way that reduces disparities.

### **FINANCIAL IMPACT**

There is no specific financial impact to the mid-year FY20-21 budget as a result of development and applications of the Metro Budget Equity Assessment Tool.

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS**

This recommendation supports strategic plan goals #1.1, 3.3, and 5.7 by helping Metro to target programmatic, infrastructure, and service investments toward those with the greatest needs and enhancing communities and lives through mobility and access to opportunity.

### **NEXT STEPS**

For the second part of the pilot, the full MBEAT will be integrated into the FY22 annual budget process which launched in November 2020. Once the FY22 budget process is complete, staff will

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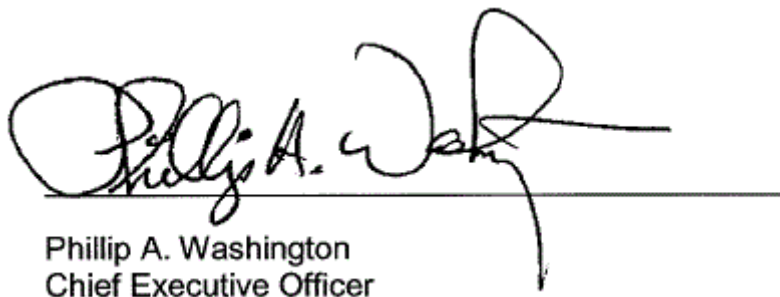
refine the MBEAT and its review process as necessary, enhance the MBEAT training process, and take the necessary steps to fully integrate the MBEAT into the Metro budget process before the development of the FY23 budget.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A - Metro Budget Equity Assessment Tool

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Phillip A. Washington  
Chief Executive Officer



# Motion 31.1 Response: ACA 5

*Executive Management Committee*



**Metro**



# Background

## Assembly Constitutional Amendment 5

- Proposition 209 (1996)
- Impact at Metro:
  - Contracting
  - Employment
  - Education (Community Engagement)
- Proposition 16 (2020)
  - November 3, 2020 Election

# Contracting

Consider new initiatives to inform advancement of equity and inclusion:

- Adjustment to certification size and Personal Networth thresholds for M/WBE and SBE programs
- Increase contract dollar threshold(s) for SB Prime
- Development of Local Business Enterprise incentive program
- Enhancement of capacity building initiatives

**Assessment Timeline: December 2020 – March 2021**

**Staff recommendation to Board – April 2021**

## Disparity Study Update

- Last Study completed in 2017
- Receive and filed on February 15, 2018
- Study will inform upcoming FF21 – FFY23 Overall DBE Goal
- New 5-year Study update planned in FY22 (Contract Award)
- Courts point to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights position that disparity studies using data that is more than five years old is considered stale.

# Employment

- FTA requires that Metro's workforce is representative of the local community.
- Metro uses the Census EEO tabulation tables to determine availability of the five surrounding counties as the benchmark.
- To achieve goals, OCR currently reviews:
  - Job descriptions;
  - Posting period;
  - Recruitment plans (internal vs. external, sources, etc.);
  - Interview panel to ensure diversity;
  - Qualified applicant pool diversity; and
  - Concurs in the hiring and promotion process
- Prop 16 will allow Metro to be more flexible and consider race, gender or ethnicity in employment decisions whether or not there is underutilization based on labor market availability.
- If Prop 16 does not pass, OCR will continue to make effort to ensure Metro's demographic mix is the same as the local community per labor market availability.

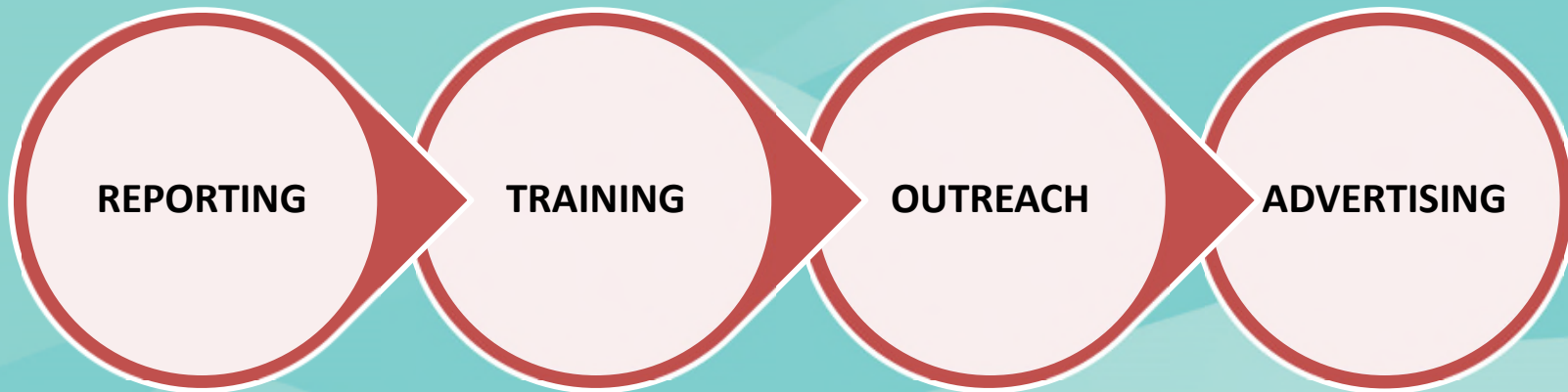


**Metro**

# Employment

## Public Employment Practices

To improve the agencies racial and gender disparities, Human Capital & Development and the Office of Civil Rights and Inclusion are prepared to expand the following:



# Education (Community Engagement)

Two areas of focus:

- **Ease of Access** - Improve access to Metro policymakers, programs, projects, and initiatives by removing barriers to participation for all stakeholders.
  - Fully Implement the Community Based-Organization (CBO) Partnering Strategy
  - Promote and Advertise Oral Translation Services
  - Provide Childcare/Children's Activities at Metro Meetings and Events
- **Targeted Outreach and Engagement** - Metro can ensure more inclusive and representative engagement and outreach by targeting key stakeholders
  - Conduct surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions about community perceptions of equity and race at Metro
  - Establish baseline demographic information for targeted communities.

# Education (Community Engagement)

## Implementation Timeline

January 2020 – April 2021

- Finalize CBO-Strategy
- Research and analysis of childcare options
- Review of language resources
- Development of voluntary demographic surveys
- Develop surveys, and identify and schedule focus groups/listening sessions

May 2021 – June 2021

- Begin implementation of CBO Strategy
- Develop partnerships with key CBO's to implement community perceptions survey and engagement
- Initiate distribution and collection of voluntary demographic surveys

July 2021 – September 2021

- Complete first phase implementation of CBO Strategy
- Establish and review baseline demographic information
- Deploy surveys, focus groups, and listening sessions



**Metro**

Thank you

