

Portland Plan Advisory Group – Meeting Notes
Equity Preamble and Initiative Discussion
May 6, 2011
1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 7A
8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m.

These notes provide a list of the attendees and general overview of the major discussion topics at the May 6, 2011, Portland Plan Advisory Group work session on the draft Portland Plan Equity Preamble and Equity Initiative. These notes do not provide a verbatim record of the conversation.

Attendees

Midge Purcell, with Urban League , Portland Plan Advisory Group (PPAG), and Equity Technical Action Group (TAG); Linda Nettekoven, with PPAG; Karen Gray, with Parkrose School District, Planning and Sustainability Commission, and PPAG; Lisa Bates, with Equity Technical Action Group (TAG) Co-Lead and Portland State University faculty (PSU); Roger Anthony, Equity TAG and Vision Into Action; Danielle Brooks, with Equity TAG and Office of Management and Finance; Noelle Dobson, Oregon Public Health Institute and PPAG; Alan De La Torre, with Portland Commission on Disability, PSU and PPAG; Eric Engstrom, with Bureau of Planning and Sustainability (BPS); Bob Glascock, with BPS and Equity TAG Co-Lead; Marty Stockton, with Equity TAG and BPS; Alex Howard, with BPS; Sy Adler, with PSU faculty (audience); Kyle Cruz, PSU student (audience).

Introduction

Eric Engstrom, Portland Plan Project Manager, provided a Portland Plan overview and reviewed the agenda with the attendees. One attendee requested that the group address the difference between the Portland Plan equity elements and the proposed Office of Equity. Arty Trost, facilitator, helped orient the group and set basic ground rules for the meeting.

Terms and Definitions/Language Approach

Equity Definition

The group asked the Equity TAG if the new equity definition from the Northwest Health Foundation was a substitution or an addition to the equity definition in the draft Equity Preamble. The new and existing definitions are provided below:

New Equity Definition (Northwest Health Foundation)

We have a shared fate—as individuals within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all. Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies and practices that, even if they have the appearance of fairness, may, in effect, serve to marginalize some and perpetuate disparities. Working toward equity requires an understanding of historical contexts and the active investment in social structures over time to ensure that all communities can experience their vision for success [health]

Draft Equity Preamble Definition

Equity is when everyone has access to opportunities necessary to satisfy essential needs, advance their well-being, and achieve their full potential.

Equity TAG representatives stated that the new definition is intended to be a substitution. The group discussed the benefits of a new definition that provides more direction and emphasizes the intention of an explicit equity focus. The group generally agreed with this

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approach, but a few attendees requested that a statement that describes the desired goal should also be included in the document. One recommendation was to include the Draft Equity Preamble definition at the end of the new definition.

The group discussed the option of having both short and long definitions. The group generally agreed that the following would be a good short form definition:

Short Version

We have a shared fate—as individuals within a community and communities within society. All communities need the ability to shape their own present and future. Equity is both the means to healthy communities and an end that benefits us all.

Some members of the group felt that the following phrase, “Equity requires the intentional examination of systemic policies...” could be included in the key elements to an equity agenda component of the Equity Preamble.

Poverty and Ethnicity

The group supported explicitly addressing poverty and ethnicity in the preamble.

Equity Elements in the Strategies

The group agreed that the terms used in the equity elements section of the Equity Preamble need to be repeated throughout the strategies to create a tighter relationship between the preamble and the strategies.

The group agreed that “high-impact” equity-related actions should be highlighted in the Draft Portland Plan.

Role of the Equity Preamble

The group generally agreed that the role of the Equity Preamble is to drive the strategies.

They discussed the fact that the Preamble needs include the administrative actions, partnerships and policy infrastructure needed to ensure that the City does business in a more equitable and race and ethnicity-conscious manner.

The key elements need to be further clarified so that they can provide a better framework for analyzing and assessing the strategies.

Equity Preamble

The group generally liked the approach and appreciated the intentional examination of equity issues and the focus on disparity reduction.

The group discussed broadening the objectives and actions, moving them from the Equity Initiative and adding an additional group of objectives and actions that explicitly address racial and ethnic justice and accountability concerns.

The group supported the Equity TAG’s proposed new Action 20, which states that the work will start by focusing on addressing racial and ethnic disparities, but moving on to address other disparities later.

The group discussed adding an action that would direct staff or partners to gather more data about Portland’s communities with disabilities.

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The Equity Preamble needs to say more about what the City will do differently.

Equity Initiative – Name and Purpose

The group discussed the purpose and the name of Equity Initiative. Equity TAG members brought up the fact that it was conceived as a strategy that would specifically address racial and ethnic justice issues and improve accountability and not as a strategy to address all equity issues.

Alan prefers an inclusive framework (an initiative to reduce disparities or advance equity broadly) that recognizes initial work to address documented disparities for racial/ethnic communities and data needs for disabilities. He does not dispute R/E needs, but wants Portland Plan to advance disabilities needs as part of the equity focus in PP strategies.

The group discussed the disconnect between the name of the initiative and its intention and the confusion that arose from this disconnect.

Other names discussed included the following: Racial and Ethnic Justice and Accountability; Disparity Reduction; and Accountability to Reduce Disparities.

Office of Equity/Relationship to Portland Plan

Equity TAG members stated that the equity actions could live in the proposed Office of Equity or they could be implemented in other bureaus. The Equity TAG may sort out central functions for City operations from other functions that may be initiated by individual City bureaus. The focus right now is ensuring that the content is developed; who and how it will be implemented can be identified in the coming months.

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Education Strategy Discussion

May 6, 2011

1900 SW 4th Avenue, Room 7A

10:30 a.m. to Noon

Attendees

Joyce Harris, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory; Karen Gray, Parkrose School District and Planning and Sustainability Commissioner; Inger McDowell, Urban League; Roger Anthony, Community Member of the Equity Technical Action Group (TAG); Linda Nettekoven, Southeast Neighborhoods and Portland Plan Advisory Group; Danielle Brooks, Office of Management and Finance, Title VI Coordinator (attended first part); Lisa Bates, Equity TAG Co-Lead and PSU faculty; Eric Engstrom, Deborah Stein, Mark Walhood and Alex Howard, BPS; and Arty Trost (facilitator)

Introduction

1. Eric Engstrom provided a brief overview of the current Portland Plan process.
2. Karen Gray reviewed the major themes discussed during the Planning and Sustainability Discussion of the Education Strategy on April 26: the connected strategy outlined in Cradle to Career; the role of the Schools Uniting Neighborhoods (SUN) program; the role of schools in communities, particularly in East Portland; and workforce development.
3. In response to the questions on the agenda, the group discussed the need to more clearly state the strategy goals and the need to discuss the city's role in implementing the strategy.

Implementation/City Role in Education

1. Deborah Stein mentioned that during the previous PPAG discussion of the Education strategy the attendees stated that the City needs to elevate its role as a convener and supporter of education issues in the city. The group generally agreed with this sentiment.
2. The group discussed whether they thought districts would be comfortable with the city making operational and instructional recommendations. A general conclusion was that it could be acceptable to have some actions that are outside of City jurisdiction, so long as there is an implementing body.
3. Karen Gray discussed the role of the Cradle to Career initiative and the fact that the City participates in the Local Public Safety Coordinating Committee (LPSCC), as does Parkrose and the potential for improving coordination and reducing duplicative efforts.

Actions/Issues to Address

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1. *Restorative Justice*: Parkrose School District runs a pilot program with Resolutions Northwest that is aimed at introducing restorative ideas and processes into the disciplinary toolboxes of administrators. The overall goal is to alter the outcomes of disciplinary referrals that would have otherwise ended in suspension, expulsion or a referral to the Department of Community Justice.
2. *Discipline Rate Disparities*: Address the disparity among discipline rates. Joyce Harris discussed the fact that there are discussions at the federal level about looking at discipline disparities as civil rights violations.
3. *Culturally Competent Instruction*: There was some discussion over whether this is in an internal school district responsibility. The group seemed to agree that, at minimum, culturally competent instruction requirements/goals in city-supported and sponsored out-of-school time activities should be added. Culturally competent instruction was also discussed as a way to address discipline disparities.
4. *Safe Schools/School Safety/Anti-Bullying*: The group thought this was an important issue to address and something that was not included in the strategy so far.
5. *Access*: The group discussed equipment and instructional access, as well as physical access. The fact that schools are mandated, and penalized if they do not comply, with physical access requirements, was brought up.
6. *Early Childhood Education*: The group discussed the need to support more early childhood education. Many students do not come to school prepared to learn and some kindergartners begin school with significant disadvantages.
7. *Joint Use Agreements*: Add a statement about joint use agreements and be specific about the neighborhood role.
8. *Neighborhood School Connections*: Increase the emphasis on the relationship between neighborhoods and schools.
9. *21st Century...*: This section could be called “21st Century Learning and Facilities,” or “21st Century Community Centers.”

Revisions to Proposed Actions

1. Combine actions 5 and 6. As they are currently written, one sounds like a policy direction and the other a potential action.
2. Combine actions 9 and 10. See the comment on actions 5 and 6.