

Minutes
Joint Municipal Action Committee
Friday, October 14, 2022
8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.
Remote meeting via Zoom

CALL TO ORDER

JMAC Chair Elizabeth Bonbright called the meeting to order at 8:07 a.m.

ROLL CALL - JMAC COMMITTEE

Elizabeth Bonbright, Chair, Tacoma Public Schools
Kristina Walker, Vice-Chair, City of Tacoma + Pierce Transit
Kiara Daniels, City of Tacoma + Pierce County Health Dept.
Andrea Smith, Metro Parks Tacoma
Rosie Ayala, Metro Parks Tacoma
Deanna Keller, Port of Tacoma
Korey Strozier, Tacoma Public Schools

JMAC CHIEF EXECUTIVES

Joshua Garcia, Tacoma Public Schools
Eric Johnson, Port of Tacoma
Mike Griffus, Pierce Transit
Shon Sylvia, Metro Parks Tacoma

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

Julie Demuth, Pierce County
Jacques Colon, City of Tacoma
Hunter George, Metro Parks
George Zeno, Pacific Lutheran University
Deborah Trevorrow, City of Tacoma
Tim Reid, Metro Parks
Alicia Lawver, Tacoma Public Schools
Alex Mather, Pierce Transit
Aherlow Kasjaka, Tacoma + Pierce County Health Department
Amy Scott German, Tacoma Public Schools
Bucoda Warren, City of Tacoma
Chelsea Talbert, City of Tacoma
Chrisy Vindivich, City of Tacoma
Kacee Woods, City of Tacoma
Morgan Sampson, Pierce County
Renee Meschi, Tacoma + Pierce County Health Department
Rosa McLeod, City of Tacoma
Sabrina Chmelir, Pierce County
Sandra Eliason, Metro Parks
William Bridges, Pierce County

INTRODUCTION

Chair Bonbright welcomed everyone to the meeting. She mentioned that Pierce County Council Members Ryan Mello and Marty Campbell were not able to attend today's meeting and are excited that the group will hear more about Pierce County's Equity Index.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was moved and seconded that the agenda be approved as presented; passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

It was moved and seconded that the minutes of September 9, 2022 be approved as presented; passed unanimously.

PREVIOUS MEETING RECAP / DIRECTION:

Chair Bonbright stated that a previous meeting recap is now a standing agenda item on JMAC agendas.

Free Youth Transit Pass. The Free Youth Transit Pass was adopted by Pierce Transit in September 2022 – it allows youth 18 years or younger to ride for free on any mode of transportation operated by the agency. Chair Bonbright posed a question to the group: *“how this program help you support youth?”*

Chair Elizabeth Bonbright noted that Mike Griffus was on the call if others had questions about the grant. On behalf of Tacoma Public Schools, Chair Bonbright noted that this program is a godsend, and was started as a developmental program giving all Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) high school students a free Orca pass. This new Pierce Transit policy allows more flexibility for students and their families, as sometimes their desired start time does not align with TPS bus schedule. This is especially true for students who opt to utilize TPS’s new Tacoma Flex Program, which allows students to choose if they wish to start school late or leave school early and take those flexed courses online. This is the kind of partnership that helps to improve the lives of students and families.

Vice Chair Kristina Walker gave a shout out and thanks to Metro Parks for putting bus information on all their events.

Ending Homelessness. Pierce County Director of Human Services, Heather Moss, provided detailed updates on the status of the Comprehensive Plan to End Homelessness. Chair Bonbright posed a question on *“how can your organization change the narrative to build support on collaborative support?”* Chair Bonbright noted that as requested, Heather Moss’ presentation was sent out recently to JMAC members and CEOs.

Committee Member Rosie Ayala thanked Pierce County Human Services for their thoughtful, data-driven work behind this plan. Ayala acknowledged how complex this effort will be. The work starts with small steps and includes the ways in which organizations engage with those who are homeless, the time staff works with the homeless, how the organizations frame their programs and the way in which dialogue and vernacular is framed when educating the community in the conversation. These conversations are where culture change starts.

Chair Elizabeth Bonbright indicated this is the beginning, as it is important that everyone approach it at every public level—including private sector. This makes it a community proposal, rather than a government proposal.

Chelsea Talbert shared that she is now with the City of Tacoma as the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator. Talbert shared that she has been working with the Youth Action Board out of the Reach Center. The Youth Action Board is comprised of youth with lived experience with homelessness. At the county-level, there was a listening session where youth led conversation and shared what they wanted to see with changes within our homelessness. They laid out action items and how we were going to continue to engage them. They were really excited about it – Talbert indicated that she would be happy to connect folks and to be deeply engaged in the systems and policies. To learn more, please reach out to Chelsea Talbert at ctalbert@cityoftacoma.org or (253) 337-7066.

POLICY FOCUS AREA PRESENTATIONS: JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (JEDI): ANTI-RACISM POLICY

Discussion on Anti-Racism Policy – Tacoma Public Schools has adopted a new anti-racism policy to memorialize the District’s goal of perpetually identifying, challenging and changing the values, structures, and behaviors that may perpetuate systemic racism.

Chair Elizabeth Bonbright indicated that Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) passed a new policy on August 25, 2022. This new policy addresses the goal to identify potentially challenging and changing the value, structure, and behavior of systemic racism. Chair Bonbright introduced Corey Strozier, TPS School Board Director.

Corey Strozier, Tacoma Public Schools. Director Strozier introduced himself and mentioned that he has been on the TPS School Board since late 2020. Director Strozier gave thanks to Chair Bonbright. Director Strozier indicated that it is an honor to talk about how Tacoma Public Schools created Policy 1600.

How did we get to Policy 1600? Director Strozier is a part of a national fellowship of school board directors with an organization called School Board Partners. The purpose of this fellowship is to gather school board members from across the nation together and collectively re-imagine policy and conditions so that dynamic systems of high-quality schools emerge. In one of the convenings, they discussed racism. The reality is that either you are racist or not. There is no grey area or middle ground. A prompt was presented during the convening to encourage the participants to reflect on whether or not they were operating an anti-racist district. Following this national convening, TPS School Board held a retreat on March 1, 2022, where Director Strozier posed the following questions: **How do our current policies reflect our values and support our goal to be an anti-racist school community?** The initial discussion was enlightening and led to a series of TPS Study sessions on the topic.

Superintendent Josh Garcia and his team engaged with the School Board and together they developed a draft Anti-Racism Policy, which was shared with community partners, TPS staff, and the Public. Policy 1600 begins with a purpose statement then lays out a series of “we believe” statements with underlying policy declarations, followed by definitions of key terms.

This policy was built in support of every student and staff member in this school district. Director Strozier emphasized that this policy’s intent was for folks to understand that their school district stands firmly against racism. This policy also fosters a community of schools that not only welcome people from all walks of life, but encourages, recognizes, and lifts them up as well.

Chair Bonbright reiterated the process of how the policy came to light –a retreat was held, followed by two study sessions. The “we believe” statements with definitions are powerful and take the policy to a new level. Chair Bonbright thanked Director Strozier for bringing this critical issue to the forefront and recognized that the timing of this is not an accident. The work at JMAC over the last two years has helped create a space for this framework and policies that increase the access to educational opportunity for every child. This is a challenge for every member of JMAC – to augment and address anti-racism directly. Additionally, defining the language can do so. Chair Bonbright also outlined that the TPS Equity Policy Review Team community members believed it was more powerful to put “we believe” statements with the definitions following.

Vice Chair Kristina Walker thanked Director Strozier for the presentation. Vice Chair Walker asked how implementation of the new policy is working its way through the organization? At the City of Tacoma, the City Manager set up meetings with each of the Directors, so that everyone was talking about it. **Chair Bonbright** noted that the Superintendent Garcia was a party to all the Study Sessions and the retreat. **Superintendent Josh Garcia** noted that he could see his own transformation alongside the dialog with the TPS School Board on this policy throughout the process. He applied some of the concepts discussed in working with staff and with students. Director Strozier added that Superintendent Garcia immediately started conversations with his Cabinet at TPS.

Council Member Kiara Daniels acknowledged that this is one of three major organizations that is exploring anti-racism and what that means at the board level. Council Member Daniels commented that she can see gaps in the policies at the City of Tacoma. She noted that she is excited to see how the organization can deliver on outcomes regarding this policy. **Chair Bonbright** commented that the TPS Board was purposeful in aligning this work with the TPS Strategic Plan, so that there are overlays to integrate into the strategic goals. This is what the Strategic Design Team is working on. However, it is important for School Board Directors to hold themselves accountable at the board level.

Mike Griffus, Pierce Transit CEO commented that he is checking to see whether or not Pierce Transit has an anti-racism policy that covers some of the areas the TPS Board touched on.

POLICY FOCUS AREA PRESENTATIONS: JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION (JEDI): EQUITY INDEX & EQUITY NOTE

Equity Index & Equity Note – Pierce County is developing a countywide Equity Index and an analytical tool called an Equity Note that integrates equity considerations in decisions, including policies, practices, programs and budgets.

Julie Demuth, Asst. Director of Budget & Performance, Pierce County. Assistant Director Julie Demuth provided background, on Resolution No. R2021-108s passed by the Pierce County Council that requests the Executive to develop a countywide equity index and present it to the Pierce County Equity Review Committee. In addition, she

described the new “equity note” to put an equity lens on the framework for legislation. The Pierce County Equity Work Group was utilized to develop recommendations for the Equity Index and Equity Note. The Equity Work Group was comprised of the following Pierce County Departments: Economic Development; Finance and Performance Management; Information Technology; Human Services; Long-Range Planning; Parks and Recreation; and Sustainable Resources.

What is the Equity Index? Demuth stated that the Equity Index is a collaboration with the City of Tacoma. Demuth introduced the Equity Index as a mapping tool that uses data and statistical analysis to identify geographic areas of higher opportunity and areas of lower opportunity across the county. When people are thinking of equity, they are thinking of variation of equity across demographic groups, specifically, racial groups. The Equity index focuses on the variations across geography. The idea being that physical, psychological health and quality of life have direct long-term outcomes are derived of where you grow up, live and access to opportunity.

The Tacoma and Pierce County Equity Index was built off the Kirwan Institute Mapping Methodology, which uses indicators of well-being to calculate an index. Those data points are then mapped down to a census point data to show areas of high and low opportunities. This can help access where there are service gaps to prioritize services to design or redesign programs. It also helps with allocation of resources.

In 2020, Pierce County partnered with the City of Tacoma, the Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department, and Pierce Transit. Pierce County expanded Tacoma’s Equity Index. There weren’t any changes. In 2022, they began to review its indicators with stakeholders and recommended revisions – the County did the same.

Work Group Process. In the interest of promoting partnership and continuity, the best path forward was to expand Tacoma’s Equity Index tool so that Pierce County can have one index across the county. In addition, other jurisdictions and agencies would be able to use it as well. The Work Group also outlined five guidelines:

- 1) indicator aligns with Pierce County’s strategic plan and priorities;
- 2) indicator supports the Equity Index’s key definitions;
- 3) indicator is measured at a level sufficient to identify differences across geographical areas;
- 4) indicator is relevant across areas of Pierce County (urban, rural); and
- 5) frequency of available data updates to demonstrate change over time.

The Work Group also outlined definitions for the Equity Index: equity, accessibility, livability, economy, education, and environmental health. Additionally, there were additional data layers recommended, such as, adding or removing indicators (table listed on presentation).

Equity Review Committee Feedback. The recommendations were brought forward to the Pierce County Equity Review Committee for feedback. The feedback included: to involve public input in determining data indicators, incorporate indicators and performance measures from the Executive Strategic Plan into the Equity Index, and to include demographics such as race, ethnicity and gender included in the Equity Index. Demuth indicated Pierce County is working with City of Tacoma and their vendor to add these demographics as a data layer.

What is the Equity Note? An Equity Note is a tool that explicitly integrates equity considered in decisions, including policies, practices, programs, and budget. This helps advance racial equities and eliminates racial inequities, engages community in the decision-making processes, identifies who will benefit or be burdened by unintended consequences, and develops mechanisms for ongoing evaluation of impacts.

Why should Pierce County use an Equity Note? To bring racial equity to the forefront of the decision-making process. An equity note will operationalize equity across governmental functions. Encourages data-driven decision making and ensures allocation of resources uses and equity-lens.

Work Group Process. The Pierce County Equity Work Group reviewed tools from government agencies’ toolkits on racial equity. Then the Equity Note was drafted. This draft was applied to a variety of past legislation to understand the effectiveness. The feedback was collected from Work Group members, and numerous revisions were tested with the work group.

Equity Review Committee Feedback. The feedback received from the Equity Review Committee consisted of requiring community engagement as part of the analysis – Pierce County adopted this feedback but does not require the community engagement and instead strongly encourages engagement; specifying the requirement of equity not analysis, requiring narrative explanations to supplement checked boxes; including the effect of tribes as part of the analysis.

Next steps. For the Equity Index, Demuth explained the vendor will incorporate recommendations in October. The testing and validation will be conducted in November, then the feedback will be provided to the vendor. Once the vendor completes the final edits to the Equity Index in December, Pierce County will develop resources and training material for department staff. This will be written documentation guides, FAQs, live trainings, and one-on-one coaching.

For the Equity Note, Demuth explained that there will be a webform – an online form that departments are able to complete. There will be an Equity Note step where proposals are listed. There will be a lot of technical support and assistance needed to help make this successful. The budget tool will bring an equity focus to the County’s budgeting process in May 2023.

Joshua Garcia, Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent. Superintendent Garcia commented that for TPS, it’s not looking at the deficits, it’s helpful to get a more wholistic image of what is happening outside of schools and how to start to address support inside of the schools. It is powerful to move forward with the data. TPS is doing a case study with the index indicators – who are the lead agencies to deal with an indicator such as “environment” or “livability” to start to articulate and align that.

Chair Bonbright thanked both Superintendent Garcia and Demuth.

Council Member Kristina Walker. Vice Chair Walker thanked the presenter and remarked on how JMAC can move this forward noting that the anti-racist policy can work alongside the index.

WORKGROUP UPDATES -- Hunter George, Metro Parks Tacoma

Hunter George commented about the following JMAC work groups:

- Government Affairs workgroup
 - The next meeting will discuss Government Affairs Agendas. The November meeting will be moved to November 18, due to Veteran’s Day.
- Upcoming JMAC Quarterly Meeting with CEOs
 - The Quarterly Meeting with CEOs will be on December 9th in-person at the STAR Center. All members of the elected bodies associated with JMAC are invited to attend.
 - Mr. George noted that if this will be a quorum for an agency, they will need to post a public meeting, the STAR center will be able to accommodate the public.
- JMAC Communications
 - There will be an updated JMAC webpage in November.

Vice Chair Walker thanked Pierce Transit staff for suggesting that JMAC think about the new money from federal government in coordination.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Bonbright called for public comment. No comments were provided.

GENERAL COMMENTS BY JMAC

President Andrea Smith, Metro Parks noted that this weekend is the Annual Tacoma Studio Art Tour. More details can be found on the City of Tacoma Arts website. Over 30 artists will share their space. There will be a stop at Slavonian Hall in memory of Smith’s Father, Bill Colby. Additionally, Metro Parks has a ballot initiative to raise the

rate to \$0.75/\$100,000. For 2022, there will be \$1Million spent on security. This will help get back to 100% post-COVID public emergency. Smith encourages to tell friends about this ballot initiative.

Hunter George, Metro Parks added that one of the things funded by this levy is a park ranger program for public safety measures.

Aherlow Kasjaka, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department introduced themselves to the group.

Renee Meschi, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department commented that their organization is hoping to build a network of ambassadors to build and distribute information about all agencies. Ukrainian is becoming a popular language; Meschi is trying to put together a library of all languages for all information. Please reach out to Meschi for more information.

NEXT MEETING

The next regular meeting is Friday, November 18, 2022, 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Special Notes. Please mark your calendars:

- The last Quarterly meeting of the year with CEOs has been moved to December 9, 2022 (instead of November).

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Bonbright adjourned the meeting at 9:38 a.m.

**Minutes taken by Pierce County Council*