**Minutes**

**Joint Municipal Action Committee**

Friday, May 12, 2023

8:00 a.m. – 9:30 a.m.

Hybrid Meeting: in-person option (Tacoma Municipal Building, Conf. Rm. 248) and

virtual attendance option via Zoom

**CALL TO ORDER**

JMAC Chair Kristina Walker called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

**ROLL CALL – JMAC COMMITTEE**

Andrea Smith, Metro Parks Tacoma

Kiara Daniels, City of Tacoma

Kristina Walker, JMAC Chair, City of Tacoma + Pierce Transit

Marty Campbell, Pierce County

Rosie Ayala, Metro Parks Tacoma

Ryan Mello, Pierce County Council

**JMAC CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

Anthony Chen, Director of Health, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Josh Garcia, Superintendent, Tacoma Public Schools

Shon Sylvia, Executive Director, Metro Parks Tacoma

**GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE**

Alex Mather, Pierce Transit

Alicia Lawver, Tacoma Public Schools

Amy Cruver, Pierce County

Anita Gallagher, Consultant

Brittany Carbullido, Pierce Transit

Christina Caan, City of Tacoma

Chrisy Vindivich, City of Tacoma

Colleen Meiners, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Deborah Trevorrow, City of Tacoma

Hunter George, Metro Parks Tacoma

Jacques Colon, City of Tacoma

Jeff Robinson, City of Tacoma

Juan Beltran-Gonzalez, Senator Patty Murray’s Office

Matthew Mauer, Port of Tacoma

Melanie Harding, City of Tacoma

Nichole Weber

Renee Meschi, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

Rosa McLeod, City of Tacoma

Ryan Wheaton, Pierce Transit

Sabrina Chmelir, Pierce County

Sandra Eliason, Metro Parks Tacoma

Sonja Hallum, City of Tacoma

Tim Reid, Metro Parks Tacoma

William Bridges, Pierce County

**INTRODUCTION**

Chair Walker welcomed everyone to the quarterly meeting.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

Chair Walker read the City of Tacoma’s tribal land acknowledgment.

**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 April 14, 2023, be approved as presented; passed unanimously.

**PREVIOUS MEETING RECAP / DIRECTION**

At the April meeting, **Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent Josh Garcia** challenged JMAC members to collaborate with Tacoma Public Schools to provide safe spaces for teens to gather this summer called Whole Child Safe Zones. The zones would provide free evening programming at up to 10 different locations in the city. The estimated overall cost is $1 million. **CEOs and elected members were asked how their organization can support this urgent need.**

* **Ryan Mello, Pierce County,** reported that the Pierce County Council has allotted $500k in their supplemental budget for youth recreational activities using the framework provided by Tacoma Public Schools. The equity index is being used to help guide the investment. Of the $500k, $125k will be used to support the Imagine Justice Project, which includes a violence prevention plan.
* **Kiara Daniels, City of Tacoma,** let the group know that her and other Tacoma elected officials have drafted a resolution to put $200k towards this effort. Funds will also be set aside for the community safety plan. **Melanie Harding, City of Tacoma,** also noted that they’ve coordinated with Superintendent Garcia to make sure that funding gets to the right hands. **Chair Walker** offered to share the resolution language with other JMAC members.
* **Josh Garcia, Tacoma Public Schools,** said that he appreciates the money that has been allocated so far. He would like to see a fair geographic balance of locations, ensure that programming is offered from 5pm-10pm, and support up to 100 youth per site. He noted that GreenTrike will implement standards across locations. They will also coordinate with special programs that specialize in late-night services.
* **Rosie Ayala, Metro Parks Tacoma,** applauded the group’s efforts to rally around this cause but cautioned that budget sustainability will be a challenge going forward. She asked for ideas on how JMAC can engage state representatives to commit funding towards this effort.
* **Anthony Chen, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department,** reported that they’ve brought on a new Community Engagement Specialist to support this type of work by focusing on violence issues. The health department is also planning $2.4M in other investments related to substance use prevention, behavioral health, family support partnerships, and mental health first aide. These will be spread across Pierce County schools.
* **Josh Garcia, Tacoma Public Schools,** reiterated that this is a big effort, but is worthwhile as evidenced by an event at Steward Elementary last Friday where 300 youth showed up.

**Jacques Colon, City of Tacoma,** gave an overview of the City’s ongoing work to develop a Community Safety Plan at the April JMAC meeting. **CEOs and elected members were asked for their thoughts on the direction and implementation of this work.**

* **Chair Walker** asked for feedback on this for the city and **Jacques** further noted that his team is open to ideas on how to best engage community groups.
* **Josh Garcia** suggested that this might be another area for a legislative ask. A data warehouse on this topic would help keep JMAC members informed so they can advocate for state assistance.

In April, **Chelsea Talbert, City of Tacoma,** listed more than a dozen ways that City government is using the equity index to inform decision making. Examples included capital facilities development, CPR training, neighborhood planning, grant distribution, and policy development. **CEOs and elected members were asked to share how their organization is using the index and if they have been inspired to think of new ways to use it.**

* **Ryan Wheaton, Pierce Transit,** explained how the agency uses the index to enhance transit planning by highlighting areas that may need additional service based on factors such as car ownership and income levels. The index was also used during COVID when the agency was forced to reduce service on several routes. Ryan noted that the Pierce Transit Board of Commissioners will see the equity-focused transit planning framework in the coming months.
* **Ryan Mello, Pierce County,** stated that the Pierce County Council uses the equity index to make funding decisions, most recently to decide how to make investments this summer around youth development. He further reported that the County Council is now including an equity note in every piece of legislation that’s considered, including legislation on law enforcement oversight and housing policy.
* **Melanie Harding, City of Tacoma,** noted that historic preservation month is underway, and that team is looking at how to use the equity index in their work. The city’s public works department also uses the index when applying for grants.
* **Anthony Chen, Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department,** reported that the health department has been at the table since the index’s creation. Health department staff use the index for grant development and to help decide where to invest resources. He sees more alignment with the county’s index but finds Tacoma’s helpful as well.
* **Andrea Smith, Metro Parks Tacoma,** uses the index to evaluate locations for facility needs, including the placement of new public parks. She also noted that program managers use the equity data to plan recreation activities and to brainstorm where to expand services. Park maintenance is also now being looked at through an equity lens.
* **Chair Walker** highlighted the opportunity for sharing across organizations when it comes to using the equity index.

**LANGUAGE ACCESS PLANS**

**Renee Meschi, Tacoma Pierce County Health Department,** presented on opportunities to reach constituents through expanded language access. She pointed out that 15.3% of Pierce County residents speak another language at home, compared to 13% in Tacoma.

Renee used Tacoma Creates as a case study to illuminate the need for language access:

* Tacoma Creates sought feedback through online ballots on how the city should spend funds and create programming.
* Different landing pages in various languages were used on the website and cultural ambassadors shared links to the ballot with their online networks.
* Over 5,000 ballots were cast in different languages. 1,500 ballots were cast in Vietnamese alone.
* As a result of the ballots, a series of multicultural events were planned at the Eastside Community Center. The events were well attended and very successful, showing that when the community is asked what they want (in their language), we see a big response.

Speaking broadly, Renee noted that language access is a civil right. Failure to provide meaningful language access is considered discrimination.

The Equity Action Collaborative (EAC) is assisting its member organizations in evaluating language access by focusing on the following foundations: multilingual outreach, budgeting for language access, cultural ambassador contracts, trainings, self-assessments & recommendations, professional services, and bringing bilingual employees onboard. Renee reported that leads from each agency in the EAC will form a cohort and receive training.

Renee ended presentation by noting the importance of collaboration in doing this work.

JMAC members made comments and asked questions.

* **Chair Walker** stated that she took a language access training in the past and found it very helpful. **Renee** let the group know that the Language Access 101 and 102 trainings are open to everyone.
* **Vice Chair Mello** thanked Renee and her team for their work. He asked if it is possible to include nonprofits in language access efforts. Renee stated that the laws surrounding language access primarily relate to state and local agencies, but the solutions often involve nonprofits. She offered to meet with nonprofit representatives to identify areas for collaboration.
* **Dr. Chen** highlighted the importance of language access in healthcare by sharing a personal experience of interacting with a patient in Mandarin and how it led to discovering a potential medical issue. He also thanked Renee for her work.
* **Chair Walker** stated that it can be challenging to embed this work within organizations and ensure language access at the street-level in small projects. Renee offered that cultural ambassadors are usually happy to get involved, even in small projects, when it aligns with their passions.

**RETIREMENT RECOGNITION – DR. ANTHONY L-T CHEN**

**Chair Walker** thanked Dr. Chen for his leadership at JMAC and for the collaborative culture at the health department.

**Vice Chair Mello** also thanked Dr. Chen for his leadership and stated that he appreciated Dr. Chen’s focus on the environmental and social determinants of health.

**Jacques Colon, City of Tacoma,** stated that he came to Tacoma as Dr. Chen’s Health Equity Coordinator. He appreciated Dr. Chen’s influence on the narrative around public health and how it relates to various aspects of city and county work.

**Hunter George, Metro Parks,** noted that Dr. Chen has changed how people think about public health. For example, many now understand that systemic racism represents a public health emergency. Hunter expressed his appreciation to Dr. Chen for this work.

In the meeting chat, **Kiara Daniels** and **Josh Garcia** boththanked Dr. Chen for his work.

**Dr. Chen** remarked that his accomplishments have been primarily tied to partnerships. He thanked JMAC members on this front. He plans to spend time with his family after his retirement but may return to the public sphere in the future.

**Melanie Harding, City of Tacoma,** thanked Dr. Chen for his online presence and noted that it has helped influence discourse in the community. She hoped that he will stay active online.

**STAFF WORKGROUP UPDATE**

**Hunter George, Metro Parks,** reported thatAnita Gallagher has been brought on under contract with Metro Parks to assist with JMAC coordination. Upcoming agenda topics will include the City’s decarbonization plan, youth employment pipeline, imagine justice project work, supplemental safety program, behavioral health crisis response, security models, safe streets, homelessness, and the black home initiative. The JMAC team is working on identifying the best time to discuss these topics.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

There were no general comments.

**NEXT MEETING**

The next regular meeting is Friday, June 9, 2023, 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Walker adjourned the meeting at 9:30 am.

\**Minutes taken by Pierce Transit*