Portland Advisory Group – Equity Preamble and Initiative Discussion Meeting Notes April 15, 2011, 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. 1900 SW 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 4A

#### Attendees

PPAG Members: Lisa Bates (Equity TAG), Amalia Alarcon Morris (Equity TAG), Veronica Reinard, John Gibbon, Jillian Detweiler Mayor's Office Staff: Lisa Libby Facilitator: Arty Trost

BPS Staff: Joe Zehnder, Deborah Stein, Marty Stockton (Equity TAG), Bob Glascock (Equity TAG), Mark Walhood and Alexandra Howard

## **Overall Comments:**

- Planning and Sustainability Commission was very supportive of the Equity Preamble and Initiative at their briefing on April 12<sup>th</sup>. No major concerns were raised about the overall concept, but there was discussion about how to communicate the intended focus on addressing racial and ethnic disparities, and concern about incorporating the disability community into the effort. There appeared to be consensus that the Equity TAG's intended focus on racial and ethnic disparities should be made more explicit in the way the Initiative is communicated to the public.
- Data about the disabled community is harder to find or non-existent the local level, especially in comparison to data that is available regarding race and ethnicity. One key challenge moving forward is to set up a system of data collection for future analysis.
- There is a happy alignment between ideas in the Equity Preamble and Initiative and pursuing a public transit (Tri-Met) service policy that emphasizes the best returns on improved transit frequency. Areas with high numbers of low-income and minority populations are often the most effective places to boost transit service in terms of increased ridership.
- Final materials should be clear about the distinctions between the Portland Plan Equity work and the developing program and priorities of the Equity Office. Also, language spelling out potential impacts to other groups (low-income, LGBTQ, etc.) should be explicit. Or, be clear why race and ethnicity are being elevated, and when/how we proceed on to other groups such as disabled, LGBTQ, etc.
- Decision needs to be made on what to call the Initiative (Equity vs. Racial and Ethnic Justice and Accountability).
  - On one hand, there is concern about having a race-specific versus race-conscious strategy, because of potential regulatory problems (FHA, ADA rules, etc.), because it takes time to do consciousness-raising to build support, and it's important to pinpoint where geographically this disparities are expressed. Policy makers need data to support these types of decisions, and there is little comparable data available for other minority communities such as those with disabilities and LGBTQ persons.
  - On the other hand, the Equity TAG and other supporting documents (CCC report, Making the Invisible Visible, etc.) encourage a clear and explicit focus on racial and ethnic disparities as the critical focus. A key challenge is to express how reducing disparities for these groups as a priority will benefit the entire population, and not racial/ethnic minority communities. Also, there has been considerable qualitative information on this issue brought forward to the City (stories, reports, anecdotal information), and that work/information should be respected.
  - This issue requires further exploration and discussion, but there was a consensus that the written materials should be clearer with the 'punchline' of where the Initiative is heading what the specific tools and outcomes are likely to be (e.g. not just 'track and record' data). The decision-making process needs to be transparent.
- Equity considerations need to be clearer in ALL the strategies. For example, the first page of each strategy should have some discussion of equity impacts, and/or individual actions in each strategy that improve equitable outcomes could be identified.
  - These considerations include: closing the gap, participation, equitable public spending, internal accountability, and partnerships.
- The Preamble and Initiative need to be more clear and distinct from each other, with stronger and clearer language. Also, it needs to be decided whether or not these documents are intended to provide "marching orders" for the Equity Office.
- Some geographic neighborhood groups may already have the impression that pursuing an Equity Initiative means that they will
  not be getting additional resources or infrastructure investments, because of a perception of greater need in other parts of town.

April 15, 2011, 10:30 a.m. to Noon 1900 SW 4th Avenue. Room 4A

## **Attendees**

PPAG Members: John Branam, Kristin Watkins and John Gibbons
Mayor's Office Staff: Lisa Libby and Reese Lord
Facilitator: Arty Trost

BPS Staff: Joe Zehnder, Deborah Stein, Mark Walhood and Alexandra Howard

#### **Overall Comments:**

- Reframe the strategy to better address the quality of early childhood education and post-secondary certificate or degree attainment. The strategy clearly addresses access to post-secondary education, but it does not address the importance of completing training, apprenticeship and/or degree programs. The strategy needs to be about access and attainment. Access plus attainment equals equity, excellence and opportunity. We need to create a culture of higher expectations for degree/credential attainment.
- Emphasize why it is important for the city, even though it is not an educational service provider, to be involved in education.

  Better educational outcomes drive not just economic success, but a cascade of personal, health, and livability benefits as well.
- Provide definitions for terms such as, graduate, prosperity and degree attainment.
- Plan for 21st century learning, not just 21st century buildings—think about what students may need in the generations to come in terms of learning environments.
- Find greater alignment between the SUN schools program and needs of K-12, higher ed, and workforce needs.
- Re-frame some objectives/actions to focus on the people versus institutions. We're doing this for the learners and outcomes, not the institutions.
- John Branam provided detailed comments on the strategy language and formatting as well.

## Responses to Staff's Questions

# City Role

- 1. Convincing citizens that the City has a role in supporting education going forward. Show the clear link between education, prosperity, and a healthy, vibrant community.
- 2. Funding benchmarking
- 3. Coordinating bodies that have a focus on education
- 4. Creating a culture of expectation with respect to degree and credential attainment and make this a city priority.
- 5. Growing the role of the PDC to include efforts that link business development and education.
- 6. Working with major employers in the city to develop in-school career and technical training opportunities.
- 7. Partnering with media outlets, (such as Clear Channel billboard, TriMet bus wrapping ) to advertise and promote education
- 8. Looking on the margins—see where there are gaps in service, such as from birth to kindergarten or out-of-school time, and focus efforts and investments in those areas. Get behind school bonds.
- 9. Support quality childcare to enable college students to graduate. (Can BDS enable siting for child care centers?)

#### Community Role

- 1. Engage neighborhood associations, PTA.s, etc. as liaison points and education them about the importance of quality education.
- 2. Make better use of social media to expand outreach
- 3. Work with local business associations to expand training and education and involve them in local schools
- 4. Expand the use of school sites and include community activities on school grounds

## Youth Inclusion

- 1. Pose questions where youth can actually engage.
- 2. Involve the Youth Commission and Youth Planning as a vehicle to bring youth on board.
- 3. Create youth-adult partnerships.

## Partner Roles

1. Building a strategy to engage the media early. Strategy should be one of trying to create a "critical friend". *Partner roles also addressed under the "City Roles" section*