

City Organization Equity Tool

I. Introduction and Purpose of Tool

The City of Portland is committed to creating and implementing policies, practices, and procedures that center equity in the services and support we provide to communities. We acknowledge our government's historic and current role in causing and perpetuating harm through systemic racism and oppression, anti-Blackness, and systems of white supremacy. The use of an equity tool is one resource we use to hold ourselves accountable to preventing future harm and creating more equitable outcomes in the proposals and decisions we make.

Advancing equity with this proposal does not happen in isolation. It occurs in a broader context of interconnected work related to the city's transition in governance. An equity focus must be applied by staff from multiple angles, across different projects. This tool consists of a set of equity questions and an analysis framework for the City Organization project. It will guide the Chief Administrative Officer and transition team in having an equity mindset to more holistically assess how the proposed new organizational structure for the city (the "proposal") will benefit and/or burden systemically oppressed communities, especially Indigenous people, Black people, immigrants and refugees, people of color, and people with disabilities.

Goals of the tool:

- Ensure the City of Portland and City Organization project values and priorities are centered in discussions about, and development of, the proposal.
- Analyze the process taken to develop the proposal to determine if there was an appropriate level of participation from stakeholder groups involved.
- Identify whether the final proposal recommendation helps to advance equity and is aligned to the priority characteristics of the City Organization project.

Limitations of the tool:

- Development of this tool did not involve new engagement of groups most negatively impacted by current city policies and practices. The rationale behind this was two-fold: we wanted to utilize existing data previously collected from impacted communities to prevent further "engagement fatigue" and undue burden on those communities; and we are bound by a short timeline, which prevents us from forming and implementing a meaningful engagement process. The proxy we used was data collected from residents and communities through these sources: Portland Charter Commission (2020-2022); citywide community surveys (2022-2023); and public comments submitted directly to the city auditor's office (2020-2023) and/or the Office of the Ombudsman's to report a complaint. (2017-2023).
- The tool will help set the stage in identifying a range of issues or priorities, however, some items will fall outside the scope and timeline of the City Organization proposal and reside with other leadership entities to make decisions on. When possible, items that fall outside the scope of the project it will be noted in the narrative analysis section.

II. Equity Questions

Responses to the question 1-4 are addressed in the “Recommended Changes to the City of Portland’s Organizational Structure: Background and Summary Report” accompanying the City Council resolution on organizational change: <https://www.portland.gov/council-clerk/records>.

1. What are the equitable outcomes desired for the proposal?
 - a. In what ways will the proposal benefit systemically oppressed groups, especially Indigenous people, Black people, immigrants and refugees, people of color, and people with disabilities?
 - b. In what ways will the proposal negatively impact systemically oppressed groups, especially Indigenous people, Black people, immigrants and refugees, people of color, and people with disabilities? If negative impact is anticipated, is there a plan in place to mitigate or minimize the impact?
2. Who is the final decision maker of the proposal? What efforts were made in the process to include perspectives of different stakeholder groups?
3. Have we developed a plan to track progress, outcomes, and opportunities for improvements to the proposal?
4. Have we considered each of the City’s Core Values and how they are included in this process and desired outcomes of the proposal?

III. Proposal Alignment to Priority Characteristics for City Government

To guide our work for this proposal, we used the following characteristics desired in Portland’s new form of government as identified from the City’s core values¹, employee survey and manager survey responses², and community feedback summarized in the Community Outcomes report³.

These characteristics are listed below and categorized in four groups:

- Anti-racist / Equitable
- Accessible / Transparent
- Collaborative / Coordinated / Communication / Responsive
- Accountable / Fiscally Responsible

The following table summarizes the transition team’s review of the final organizational structure proposal submitted to City Council. It describes different aspects of the proposal that are aligned to the priority characteristics and notes other considerations that pose potential limitations.

¹ City of Portland Core Values: <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bhr/81500>

² Employee Engagement Report, August 2023: <https://www.portland.gov/transition/government/documents/august-2023-employee-engagement-report/download>

³ Community Outcomes report, July 2023: <https://www.portland.gov/transition/documents/city-org-community-outcomes-report/download>

Review of Final Proposal to Council

		Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				
No.	Item	Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
1	Citywide function of advancing equity in the city administrator’s office, with a new equity officer position reporting directly to the city administrator and the Office of Equity and Human Rights reporting to the equity officer.	X		X	X	<p>The function and entities responsible for advancing citywide equity work has positional authority in the organization structure.</p> <p>Employee survey responses: Most employee responses related to equity focused on the lack of authority the Office of Equity and Human Rights has to implement citywide policies, confusion about the different policies each bureau implements, and inconsistent application of policies that do exist. Many felt they did not understand what it meant to apply equity to their work or who oversaw helping them meet City values. In addition, several comments referred to communication challenges with communities related to equity.</p> <p>Elevating equity functions to the city administrator’s office may address many of these concerns. In addition, it may provide new opportunities for an equity officer and the Office of Equity to have increased contact and partnership with employees and communities to guide and advise on the city’s goals and values in the delivery of equitable services.</p> <p>Manager survey responses: Equity standards, practices, and policies are needed citywide for consistency and alignment. Equity functions and positions should be elevated to the executive level, while also maintaining equity subject matter experts embedded in bureaus and programs.</p>

No.	Item	Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
		Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	
2	Parks & Recreation Bureau is under a Parks & Recreation service area together with the Portland Children's Levy.					<p>In review of several city structures across the nation, having a parks and recreation department in its own area (and not combined with other infrastructure bureaus) is shown to be the most common practice. Coordination across service areas will be common in the future structure, facilitated by the DCAs as well as by bureau leaders and members themselves.</p> <p>Limitation: Positioning parks and children's levy in a separate service area may pose additional challenges to alignment of citywide longer-term policy and planning efforts across infrastructure bureaus and programs. Survey responses from employees and the community outcome report indicate the need for more alignment and collaboration across infrastructure bureaus at the city and more simplified processes.</p>
3	New Portland Solutions department created in the city administrator's office that reports to an assistant city administrator and is situated together with Neighborhood Coalitions and Districts.		X	X		<p>Establishing this program and placing it together under the shared management of the assistant city administrator together with Neighborhood Coalitions and Districts will allow for rapid response and coordination opportunities on urgent and emerging issues in response to needs of residents and communities.</p> <p>From Community Outcomes report: This may align with the desired outcome for hygiene issues in neighborhoods to be addressed quickly, as well as the desire for city departments to be aligned on solutions and have the authority to work with partners to solve issues that have livability impacts on communities.</p>

No.	Item	Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
		Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	
4	Community Relations departments is situated in the city administrator's office to foster increased alignment on policies and practices of how the city communicates and engages with communities.		X	X		<p>The location of this department will bring together programs and staff who engage communities and help establish shared standards for how the city partners with communities, including public advisory communities and neighborhood groups. Having programs co-located in the same department will provide a single place where communities and community members can go to engage and work together with the city.</p> <p>Manager survey responses: There were comments about the need to develop clear, citywide policies, practices, and guidance in the areas of working with public advisory bodies and communication guidelines. This will improve the city's ability to function effectively and promote greater transparency with communities.</p>
5	Additionally, the functions of Government Relations, Council Relations, and Communications are in the city administrator's office.		X	X	X	<p>Functions are appropriately located to ensure clear delineation of shared and distinct roles and authority of the city administrator, mayor, and city council in the new mayor-council form of government. The city administrator's office will house the city's functions of developing and building government to government relationships, including with sovereign tribal nations, and managing and coordinating council relations and communications.</p> <p>Employee survey responses: There were many comments about the challenges of needing to be responsive directly to council requests and directions and a desire to have more consistency and less politics in their roles.</p>

No.	Item	Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
		Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	
6	Under the assistant city administrator, manager positions will be created to oversee each area (Council Operations, Communications, Community Relations Office of Government Relations, and Portland Solutions).	X		X	X	<p>The assistant city administrator will work closely with the city administrator to oversee important externally focused functions focused on providing services to Portland communities. Having manager positions oversee the scope of work and supervise team members in each of these areas will support more effective coordination, communication, and implementation across these areas that are distinct and highly interconnected.</p> <p>Employee survey responses: A huge number of employee responses related to the siloed nature of the city’s current structure and challenges this presents in stay coordinated and deliver services to community. Many employees express a desire to have citywide strategies and goals and be able to work with colleagues in other departments without the challenges of conflicting budgets, policies, and directions. Providing a management level of leadership on the key functions of under the assistant city administrator may support increased coordination of functions and alignment of guidelines and practices across these areas.</p> <p>From Community Outcomes report: This may align with the desired outcome for greater coordination that includes clear and consistent communication and coordinated projects and policies. It may also align with one of the community outcomes reports’ desired outcomes for the city have both standardized practices for services <u>and</u> ability to remain flexible to adapt in meeting communities’ needs.</p>

No.	Item	Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
		Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	
						Limitation: The additional layer of administration positions creates cost and may be seen as “top-heavy”; explaining the purpose and value of the new positions, and interconnections between roles, requires very clear communication with employees and the public.
7	Six services areas, with bureaus and programs grouped under the leadership of deputy city administrators based on shared missions and/or program scopes.			X	X	<p>The proposed organizational structure supports clear and consistent communication and coordination across bureaus and broader service areas.</p> <p>Employee survey responses: There is general agreement that service areas should be aligned on mission and program scope.</p> <p>From Community Outcomes report: This may align with the desired outcome for greater coordination that includes clear and consistent communication and coordinated projects and policies. It may also align with the desired outcome for greater accessibility to government services which means it is easier to find a point of contact for service-related questions.</p>
8	Executive leadership team established comprised of the city administrator, assistant city administrator, equity officer, and deputy city administrators, who will be responsible for horizontal and vertical coordination of functions across the whole organization.	X		X		The leadership team will oversee city operations and coordinate across bureaus and service areas to improve delivery of internal and external services; implement citywide priorities; and build a shared culture across the organization. The team will be instrumental in elevating the city’s core function and priority of equity and building accountable and coordinated systems citywide.

		Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				
No.	Item	Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
						<p>Research shows local governments that operate with a city administrator often form assistant and deputy roles to support the city administrator from a span of control perspective as well as to allow for different areas and levels of focus and expertise. This leadership team will have the explicit charge of working across service areas to look at the whole city, standardizing practices and approaches where appropriate, elevating and empowering functions and teams for utilization citywide, and otherwise working horizontally across the organization, reducing silos, and working together to address our community’s most pressing problems.</p> <p>Employee survey responses: A huge number of employee responses related to the siloed nature of the current structure and the challenges it presents in staying coordinated and delivering services to community. Many employees expressed a desire to have citywide strategies and goals and be able to work with colleagues in other departments without the challenges of conflicting budgets, policies, and priorities preventing them from doing their job. Providing a level of executive leadership that would be responsible for coordination internal across service areas and bureaus will likely increase strategic alignment of priorities.</p> <p>From Community Outcomes report: This may align with the desired outcome for greater coordination that includes unified budgets, coordinated infrastructure projects, and standardization of goals, plans, resolutions, and policies that</p>

No.	Item	Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
		Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	
						<p>have city-wide impacts. It may also align with the desired outcome that standardized practices are applied to public services while service areas are allowed flexibility to specialize and meet community needs.</p> <p>Limitation: The additional layer of administration positions creates cost and may be seen as “top-heavy”; explaining the purpose and value of the new positions, and interconnections between roles, requires very clear communication with employees and the public.</p>
9	A deputy city administrator leads and coordinates all financial and budgeting standards and processes citywide.	X	X	X	X	<p>A deputy senior level financial officer may support more unified and coordinated development of and progress on budget goals, expenditures, outcomes; increase transparency.</p> <p>Employee survey responses: Many employee responses focused on the siloed nature of the budget and budget process created inequities amongst bureaus and programs that prevented them from achieving equity goals and delivering transparent services to community. This position may address many of these concerns and increase transparency and equity.</p> <p>From Community Outcomes report: This is supportive of the desired outcome for budgets to be unified and for resources to be distributed based on how they support shared goals and values.</p>

No.	Item	Alignment to Priority Characteristics:				Narrative Explain additional merits, call out limitations or challenges; identify items out of scope.
		Anti-racist, Equitable	Accessible, Transparent	Collaborative, Coordinated, Communication, Responsive	Accountable, Fiscally Responsible	
10	Arts programming is in the Community & Economic Development service area together with Spectator Venues and Films and Events programs.		X	X		<p>Arts is placed in the same service area with other programs (venues, film and events, businesses, and economic opportunity) that have some shared mission, work, and opportunities for better alignment and creative innovation and partnerships.</p> <p>From Community Outcomes report: This may align with the desired outcome for greater coordination and standardization of city programs, including goals, plans, resolutions, policies with city-wide impacts.</p> <p>Manager survey responses: The Arts program has existing areas of synergies with venues, films and events, and Prosper Portland, including community-based outreach, programming, and resources.</p>