

RESPONSE TO THE 22/23 BUDGET NOTE AMENDMENT FOR A COORDINATED, REGIONAL CLIMATE STRATEGY

Date: June 27, 2023

Department: COO, CAM, Parks & Nature,
Council Office

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Director

Length: 25 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

In a FY22/23 budget note Council directed the Chief Operating Officer to create a framework to envision, develop, implement and coordinate a regional climate justice and resilience strategy. In the first phase of this work, a cross-departmental Climate Justice and Resilience Task Force identified shared values and principles, drafted a multi-year workplan, outlined a climate justice and resilience framework, and assessed resources needed to implement the workplan.

Developing a coordinated regional climate justice and resilience strategy will require continued cross-departmental as well as interjurisdictional collaboration. Staff anticipate that existing resources are sufficient to begin this process in FY 2023-24, but that a more in-depth strategy to integrate a climate justice and resilience framework into Metro's decision-making, policies, and operations will require additional resources to advance this work with urgency.

While the task force focused on how to coordinate climate justice and resilience across Metro departments, there is a timely opportunity for Metro to also pivot into a coordinating role in the region through administration of an Environmental Protection Agency Climate Pollution Reduction Grant. As the lead agency, Metro will be responsible for two key deliverables in the next few years: a Priority Climate Action Plan and a Comprehensive Climate Action Plan, developed in partnership with other jurisdictions across a 7-county region. Staff expect these action plans will serve as building blocks in the creation of a larger, more comprehensive, and holistic regional climate justice and resilience program, strategy, and workplan at Metro.

ACTION REQUESTED

Provide input and direction on a draft workplan to develop and implement a coordinated, regional climate justice and resilience strategy that aligns with Metro's commitment to addressing climate change.

Based on feedback from the Climate Task Force, staff propose a workplan (Attachment E) comprised of five phases, spanning 2023 through 2025. The first phase, convening the Climate Justice and Resilience Task Force, is complete. In future phases, staff propose to create an agency-wide understanding of climate justice and resilience principles, advance internal actions to promote climate justice and resilience, and identify community-supported measurable outcomes.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Council has indicated its desire to invest in a coordinated, regional strategy to address climate change in several guiding policies.

Metro's Six Desired Outcomes assert that Metro should focus on minimizing contributions to climate change and serve as a regional leader on climate change. The outcomes also specifically consider the importance of clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems for future generations.

Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion provides the foundation for a robust regional climate justice plan through goal-setting, evaluation targets and consideration of engagement with diverse communities.

Metro's 2021 Strategic Framework presents an overarching set of priorities to guide the region in a post-pandemic world. Developed by the Chief Operating Officer with Council direction, the framework identifies three key principles: racial justice, climate justice and resilience, and shared prosperity.

The 2022 *Climate Justice and Resilience Strategy* budget note sponsored by Councilor Gonzalez and co-sponsored by Councilor Hwang directed staff to create a Climate Task Force. The results of that task force inform the proposed work plan and framework outline up for discussion.

In alignment with these guiding policies, a coordinated regional climate justice and resilience strategy will achieve the following policy outcomes:

- **Define climate justice and resilience** for Metro staff and our community
- Identify ways in which Metro can **lead on climate justice and resilience**
- **Integrate climate justice and resilience values and principles into Metro's decision-making**, policies, and operations
- Ensure that Metro's **workforce initiatives align with climate justice and resilience goals**
- Develop metrics to **track progress and outcomes** in advancing climate justice and resilience
- **Specify the resources**, capacity, and tools departments need to achieve these outcomes

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Do the task force vision, values and principles (Attachment A) reflect Council's vision for a coordinated, regional climate justice and resilience strategy?
- Does the draft framework outline (Attachment D) workplan (Attachment E) meet Council's expectations for timely climate action with equitable community benefit?
- Are there additional considerations for developing a coordinated, regional climate program at Metro that should be reflected in the draft workplan or framework outline?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Advancing this work will require additional investment and could include the following:

- Engage external technical experts to recommend internal climate justice, climate mitigation, climate resilience, and carbon sequestration strategies for implementation across Metro departments and programs.
- Develop a coordinated, regional climate justice and resilience strategy with additional staff capacity that could be supported, in part, by EPA grant funds.
- Fully integrate an internal climate justice and resilience strategy and program within Metro and to support regional climate and resilience coordination.

Staff look forward to Council's feedback on which of these items are the highest priorities and where these investments are most needed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends Council advance all three policy options over the next 2-5 years to develop a coordinated, regional climate justice and resilience strategy.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Investing in a climate justice and resilience strategy would advance Council priorities to address climate change and would amplify existing climate action across Metro programs and operations. For a summary of existing climate action at Metro, see Attachment C.

The **Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (SPAREDI)** currently does not mention climate justice or resilience, even though climate change impacts communities of color first and worst by increasing vulnerabilities and inequities. In future SPAREDI updates, weaving a climate justice and resilience lens needs throughout will make this guiding document more comprehensively aligned with other Metro priorities.

EPA's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant will initially contribute \$1 million to develop a Priority Climate Action Plan and Comprehensive Climate Action Plan for the region. These deliverables will support the development of a coordinated, regional climate justice and

resilience strategy. Grant administration may also require additional staff capacity funded through a climate justice and resilience initiative at Metro.

The **2018 Affordable Housing Bonds and 2019 Parks and Natural Areas Bond** each present opportunities for future, targeted investments to advance and amplify climate justice and resilience outcomes.

As Metro analyzes **green workforce opportunities** within Metro and the region, climate justice and resilience jobs can play a foundational role. This work helps identify what those jobs could be, where they should be positioned, and what impacts they can have within the agency and within the region.

How is this related to Metro’s Strategic Framework or Core Mission?

This work directly advances the climate justice and resilience principle identified in the Strategic Framework.

How does this advance Metro’s racial equity goals?

Climate justice recognizes the disproportionate impacts of climate change on communities of color and low-income communities. The Climate Task Force identified the need to integrate a climate justice and resilience lens within Metro’s racial equity framework.

How does this advance Metro’s climate action goals?

A climate justice and resiliency strategy will help Metro better coordinate and advance climate action across departments and position the agency to serve as a regional leader.

Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback

Residents, community groups, and jurisdictional partners have frequently expressed to Metro Council their desires for more climate action in Metro’s programs and services, particularly transportation and parks.

Staff from Verde and the Coalition of Communities of Color attended the Climate Justice and Resilience Task Force Visioning Workshop in March 2023. The discussions highlighted ways Metro can advance climate justice and resilience in the region, such as engaging and elevating community voices to advance community-based solutions and employing the expertise of organizations already leading on climate justice in our communities.

In public opinion research conducted on Metro’s behalf in spring 2023, 53% of regional residents say that climate change is an extremely serious or very serious concern for the region. Metro intends to conduct further focus groups and/or surveys to better understand public concerns and priorities regarding climate change later this year.

Anticipated Effects

A climate justice and resilience strategy at Metro will provide consistent guidance on how to approach internal and regional climate justice and resilience efforts by developing a framework for decision-making and investments. In the short-term, a combination of expert consultation and additional staff capacity will also support successful administration of the EPA grant.

Financial Implications

Pending Council direction to proceed, staff intends to incorporate Council feedback into a budget request for additional staff capacity to support this program in Fall 2023.

BACKGROUND

Nineteen staff participated in the Climate Justice and Resilience Task Force. The task force attended meetings over six months, including a half-day visioning workshop, to:

- Create a shared understanding and analysis of climate justice and resilience (Attachment A: Working Definitions)
- Create an outline of a climate justice and resilience framework needed at Metro to advance climate justice and resilience (Attachment C: Framework Outline)
- Determine how to operationalize Metro’s commitments to climate justice and resilience
- Specify the resources, capacity, and tools departments need to achieve these outcomes

Climate Justice and Resilience Task Force Sponsors and Members

Name	Department	Task Force Role
Marissa Madrigal	COO – DEI	Executive Sponsor
Councilor Gonzalez	Council	Council Sponsor
Councilor Hwang	Council	Council Co-Sponsor
Jenna Garmon	CAM – Sustainability	Member and Planning Team
<i>Raahi Reddy</i>	<i>COO – DEI</i>	<i>Co-Chair and Planning Team</i>
Victor Sin	Council Office	Co-Chair and Planning Team
Mychal Tetteh	Parks and Nature	Co-Chair and Planning Team
Anne Buzzini	Council Office	Interim Co-Chair and Planning Team
Sarah Allison	CAM – Sustainability	Planning Team
Dana Visse	CAM – Sustainability	Planning Team
Anthony Vendetti	CAM – Emergency Planning	Member
<i>Reed Broderon</i>	<i>COO – DEI</i>	<i>Member</i>
Sebrina Owens-Wilson	COO – DEI	Member
Craig Beebe	GAPD	Member
Anneliese Koehler	GAPD	Member
Valeria McWilliams	Housing	Member
Diego Gioseffi	Parks and Nature	Member
Lori Hennings	Parks and Nature	Member

Kim Ellis	Planning and Development	Member
Eryn Kehe	Planning and Development	Member
Shervin Hess	Oregon Zoo	Member
Courtney Patterson	WPES	Member

The task force identified the following values to guide its approach:

- Racial, environmental, and climate justice
- Community safety and resiliency from environmental hazards
- A livable climate for all
- An economy based on non-polluting technologies

The task force also identified these principles to guide a workplan and framework:

- Recognize the disproportionate impact of climate change on Black, Indigenous, and other people of color, as well as people with lower incomes, and prioritize actions accordingly
- Increase community capacity to respond to climate stresses and disruptions
- Build knowledge about the intersection of equity and climate within Metro and with partners
- Establish a practice of policy-making that rewards actions that move the region toward an equitable, regenerative, and renewable energy-based economy

The task force envisions the Portland region becoming a leader in reducing greenhouse gas emissions while improving livability. They want to see the Portland region tackle the impacts of climate change through principles of justice, collaboration, and equity -- while creating new opportunity and stability for those who bear the greatest burdens of climate change. They envision a Portland region with clean water, clean air, and abundant nature for generations to come.

At the regional level, task force members want Metro to use its role as a regional convenor to work with partners and community to create policy, programs and investments that strengthen the community's ability to anticipate, prepare for, mitigate, adapt to, and recover from disturbances caused by natural and human created climate hazards.

The task force prioritized ensuring low-income communities and communities of color have a voice in co-creating strategies and implementing solutions to build capacity, livability, well-being, and equitable community benefits.

At the staff level, task force members want Metro employees to see themselves as champions and contributors in the region's effort to create resilience and climate justice with confidence and skill in applying a climate justice and resilience lens to work programs across Metro.

Moving forward, the task force asks Metro to develop a climate justice and resilience program based on the following:

- **Strategy** –develop an agency wide climate and resilience strategy
- **Coordination** –coordinate efforts across the agency
- **Investment** –commit to outcomes and priorities with identified funding/resources

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Draft vision, values, and principles
- Attachment B: Climate justice and resilience working definitions
- Attachment C: Summary of climate work across Metro
- Attachment D: Climate justice and resilience framework outline
- Attachment E: Draft workplan

[For work session:]

- Is legislation required for Council action? **No**
- If yes, is draft legislation attached?
- What other materials are you presenting today?
 - PowerPoint presentation