

REIMAGINING POLICING, SECURITY, AND INCARCERATED LABOR PROJECT

Date: October 7, 2021
Department: Office of the COO
Meeting Date: October 26, 2021
Presenter:
Marissa Madrigal, COO
Punneh Abdolhosseini, WPES

Length: 45 Minutes
Prepared by:
Punneh Abdolhosseini, WPES
Loni Black, Communications
Reed Brodersen, DEI

ISSUE STATEMENT

This project is informed by the calls for advancing racial justice by Reimagine Oregon and other Black community leaders during this time of increased social awareness of the violence towards, and killings of Black and Brown people across the United States at the hands of police. Due to this increased social awareness, Portland's Black community, among others, are demanding a reimagining of how our society chooses to conduct public safety and approach justice. Metro is committed to our own reimagining process in line with these demands – rethinking our relationships with the carceral system and approaches to policing, security and incarcerated labor to ensure our practices live Metro's commitments to racial equity, minimize harm and advance a more just and prosperous greater Portland.

The Reimagining Policing, Security and Incarcerated Labor Project has worked over the last year to design and implement a process for this reimagining. The project team and dozens of Metro staff and leaders have engaged in shared learning and an assessment of Metro's many touch points with the criminal justice system and security.

ACTION REQUESTED

The following outcomes are intended for the presentation and discussion during the October 26 Council work session:

- Inform on process: Bring Metro Council up to speed on the Project's process and solicit input on the Project's next steps and Council engagement plan.
- Inform on Project Values: Deliver Project Values (Attachment A) and provide clarity as needed.
- Present assessment results: Deliver the Internal Assessment to Metro Council (Attachment B) and highlight key themes and touch points that speak to the current relationships Metro has with the criminal justice system and the roles we play in advancing community safety.

POLICY QUESTIONS

The following questions are central to the October 26th work session and will help inform the project's continued development and implementation:

- Do Councilors have any clarifying questions about the Project Values?

- Are there areas of the Internal Assessment that Council would like to have more information about?
- How is Metro Council thinking about Metro's role in creating safe and welcoming spaces and communities?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Advancing racial justice and belonging at Metro and across the region

This project intends to advance racial equity outcomes by practicing the project values:

- Deploying *collective care* to support BIPOC, LGBTQ+ and disabled staff and community members in experiencing physical, emotional and spiritual wellness and humanity.
- Advancing *liberation* so that people have more agency, self-determination and opportunity in their lives.
- Practicing *restoration* to reduce harm, dismantle harmful systems and support repair and healing for individuals and communities.
- Demonstrating *accountability* to past and future generations and to Black and queer communities living today.
- Promoting *prosperity* by investing in safe and welcoming spaces, as well as stable, connected and flourishing communities.
- Practicing *leadership* by leveraging Metro's role as convener, funder, partner, policy creator and regulator to advance justice across the region.

Alignment with past direction and current commitments

This project is aligned with a variety of Council-adopted plans, commitments and community feedback including:

Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity

Metro Council adopted the Strategic Plan to Advance Equity (SPAREDI) in 2016, which calls Metro into this space through the following goals:

- Goal B: Meaningfully engage communities of color. This means listening to and centering the voices of all marginalized communities and prioritizing their needs in our actions.
- Goal C: Metro hires, trains and promotes a racially diverse workforce. This means creating work places that feel welcoming and safe to Black and Indigenous staff and other staff of color.
- Goal D: Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations. This means ensuring that Black, brown, queer, trans, femme, disabled and undocumented visitors and program participants feel safe and welcome and are free from harassment and discrimination.

Reimagine Oregon

A group of Black leaders and community organizations came together in the summer of 2020 to work with elected officials across the State of Oregon to begin dismantling systemic racism in Oregon. Their demands span many topic areas

within Metro's spheres of influence, including housing and homeless services, transportation and economic development, recognizing that police violence is rooted in a web of oppressive systems, under-investment and inequitable access to resources, opportunity and stability. Metro Council has been directly engaged with these conversations and has committed to delivering on a variety of investment and policy demands.

Committee on Racial Equity

On June 18, 2020 Metro's Committee on Racial Equity (CORE) drafted and collectively signed a letter to Metro Council (Attachment C) calling on Council to advance safety and prosperity for the region's Black community by advancing the policy agendas set forth by Portland African American Leadership Forum (PAALF) and Unite Oregon. These agendas called for divestment in harmful systems, reinvestments in Black lives, and protection for BIPOC communities from violence.

Black Caucus & People of Color Employee Resource Group

In September 2021 the People of Color & Black Caucus employee resource groups (ERG) submitted a letter to Marissa Madrigal, COO titled "Demands to address systemic racism and white supremacy at Metro". These demands were based on a compilation of survey responses that the ERG received during the summer of 2021. These demands included many recommendations for making Black staff and staff of color safer and more welcome at Metro, reducing barriers for employment, and reducing Metro's interactions with and funding of law enforcement and the prison system.

BACKGROUND

Project Conception

Metro COO Marissa Madrigal chartered the Reimagining Policing, Security and Incarcerated Labor project in the summer of 2020 after the murder of George Floyd, subsequent calls for racial justice in greater Portland and across the nation, and demands from Metro partners like Reimagine Oregon, Metro's Committee on Racial Equity, and Black, Indigenous and staff of color.

Project Design

The project is led by an agency-wide committee and supported by four department action teams, from Waste Prevention and Environmental Services, Parks and Nature, Planning and Development, and the Visitor Venues and Metro Regional Center Operations. The internal-facing project works to center the voices of impacted staff and community members through research and engagement.

Project Phases

- **Shared Learning through Reimagining Policing, Security and Incarcerated Labor Learning Cohort** *(Completed)*

The learning cohort created space for participants to gain a deeper understanding of how the law enforcement and carceral systems connect with their work. More

than 40 Metro staff participated in a four part training series and continue to engage in monthly learning sessions.

- **Internal assessment of touch points** *(Completed)*
The internal assessment inventoried Metro's touch points with Police, Security and Incarcerated Labor within the Parks and Nature, Waste Prevention and Environmental Services, Venues and Planning and Development departments. This provides necessary context that will guide the development of the department and agency action plans.
- **Decision Making Framework working group** *(In Progress)*
The Decision Making Framework working group, made up of staff with personal and/or professional experiences relevant to this work, is drafting the vision and direction for the project as Metro Council and leadership makes decisions to address our touch points with police, security and incarcerated labor to bring our work more closely aligned with our values.
- **Department action plans** *(Not Started)*
With direction from the Decision Making Framework working group, Policing Committee members will develop department specific action plans that address their departments touch points and goals to address those touch points that align with agency goals.
- **Coordinate a process for project transition to implementation** *(Not Started)*
The project team is committed to a smooth transition as the work moves to the implementation phase of the actions plans. We will work to secure possible funding sources needed to implement this work.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment A: Project Values for the Reimagining Policing, Security and Incarceration Project
 - Attachment B: Internal Assessment Report for Metro's Use of Policing, Security and Incarcerated Labor
 - Attachment C: June 18, 2020 letter from Committee on Racial Equity to Metro Council
 - Attachment D: Project Design and Background
-
- Is legislation required for Council action? ☐ Yes ☒ No
 - If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☐ No