

2023

Equity Subcommittee Bylaws

SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL OFFICE

SPOKANE CITY COUNCIL OFFICE | 808 W Spokane Falls Blvd

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Introduction

The Equity Subcommittee is an official ad hoc subcommittee of the Spokane City Council's Finance and Administration Committee. It was established pursuant to City Council Resolution 2021-0098, which was adopted November 29, 2021. Under the terms of the resolution, the Equity Subcommittee was given broad discretion in conducting its affairs so long as its meetings complied with the state's Open Public Meetings Act and Public Records Act. As practical matter this means its meetings are to be open to the public, with the time, place and agenda of each meeting provided to the public in advance. All records of the committee (other than those governed by specific exceptions) are subject to public disclosure.

Within these basic limitations, these bylaws set forth how the Equity Subcommittee will operate. In other words, these bylaws are intended to foster an environment of honest and productive exchange of ideas in a way that is not unnaturally beholden to traditional rules.

Background

Equity Subcommittee Purpose

We are here as Black, Indigenous, Latinx, Pacific Islander, Native Hawaiian Islander, Asian, immigrant, refugee, able-bodied and disabled people bringing views and experiences to inform policies, budget and practices of the agencies that manage the City on behalf of the public and create an environment that is open and transparent. We are the survivors of displaced people both native to this land as well as from many places around the world who recognize our interconnectedness and inseparability to place, culture and land, and that we need to be in connection with the places we live.

We are here to advance racial equity, diversity, and inclusion and put them into action to bring the changes we want to see: Real access for all abilities, real inclusion of all people, real change.

We are here to learn the current structures that govern our systems, and to help frame and shape them into structures that authentically support all members of the diverse public.

We are here because we stand at the intersection of racial, social, cultural, economic, and environmental justice.

We are here because we bring a diverse set of skills, abilities, and experiences to the table which inform how we work and how we innovate for changes in government to better reflect the needs of ALL people, not just those with traditional access to power.

We are here to increase the strength and resilience of our communities by working together, to learn from one another, and to take what we learn and apply it to how we work with government agencies.

We are here because we care profoundly, and we want to serve to the best of our ability to benefit everyone in our regional community.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we are on the unceded land of the Spokane people. And that these lands were once the major trading center for the Spokanes as they shared this place and welcomed other area tribes through their relations, history, trade, and ceremony. We also want to acknowledge that the land holds the spirit of the place, through its knowledge, culture, and all the original peoples Since Time Immemorial.

As we take a moment to consider the impacts of colonization may we also acknowledge the strengths and resiliency of the Spokanes and their relatives. As we work together making decisions that benefit all, may we do so as one heart, one mind, and one spirit.

We are grateful to be on the shared lands of the Spokane people and ask for the support of their ancestors and all relations. We ask that you recognize these injustices that forever changed the lives of the Spokane people and all their relatives.

We agree to work together to stop all acts of continued injustices towards Native Americans and all our relatives. It is time for reconciliation. We must act upon the truths and take actions that will create restorative justice for all people.

Equity Subcommittee Vision

The purpose of the Equity Subcommittee is to identify and dismantle racial and social economic inequities in City services, programs, and decision-making processes by collaborating with City Council and administration. The goal is to disrupt the existing mechanisms to ensure that outcomes and opportunities for all people are not predictable, by race, gender identity, income, gender expression, sexual orientation, country of origin, immigration status, religion, disability, or lived experience.

Work Areas Outcomes

Desired Outcomes

The Equity Subcommittee and the City Council's Finance and Administration Committee will work together to ensure;

- There is opportunity for long-term relationship building and collaboration.
- Successful developing and implementation of the equity, anti-racism and belonging action plan.
- Framework to evaluate proposals to meet equitable outcomes
- Subcommittee members are meaningfully engaged in evaluating identified policies, programs, processes, and projects.
- The subcommittee provides clear, consensus-based recommendations and/or guidance to the department.
- City Council leadership participates in Equity Subcommittee on a regular basis to build relationships, trust, authenticity, and transparency.
- Council initiative managers and staff clearly understand how to work with the Equity Subcommittee, bring subcommittee members in at the right time for best use of their skills, and provide appropriate background information prior to work-specific conversations.

- Work towards recognizing lived experience as a valuable and provide stipends when seeking input from the community.
- City Council decisions recognize and respect contributions of the Equity Subcommittee.

Equity Subcommittee Operating Guidelines

Convening of Meetings / Communication

- In-person meetings will be held during the week at a time and place most people are available to attend.
- On occasion longer retreats will be held at mutually agreed upon times and locations.
- Virtual meetings will be held at mutually agreed upon times.
- In-person meetings will be held in accessible and inclusive spaces, most regularly at City Hall at 808 W Spokane Falls Blvd, Spokane WA 99201, unless otherwise decided by the group.
- When in-person meetings are not possible, meetings will be held virtually via accessible video/phone conference software at an appointed and agreed-upon time and frequency.
- When in-person meetings are held, a virtual option to participate will be made available for those who prefer or need to maintain social distance.
- When meetings are scheduled in-person (with virtual participation as needed) they will take place monthly and will be 1.5 hours.
- When meetings are virtual, they will take place monthly and will be 1.5 hours, with the option to log-in up to 15-minutes before the meeting starts to ensure equipment is functioning appropriately.
- The Council staff liaison (at this time the Equity Initiative Manager) will provide and the meeting materials and agenda (along with minutes of prior meeting(s)) for the upcoming meeting at least seven (7) days prior to the next meeting. These materials will be provided via email, with additional phone follow-up for those who desire or need additional accommodation.
- Twice a year, the subcommittee will meet with to focus on continuing relationship building and inter-committee and committee/council dialogue.
- Equity Subcommittee members are encouraged to meet informally (in person or virtual) with rotating members of the Equity Subcommittee, including Council members and council staff, to build connections and relationships between regular meetings. Equity Subcommittee members are encouraged (but not required) to share the results of such informal meetings with the entire Subcommittee.

Conduct of meetings

- Meetings will be facilitated by the council staff, chair, or a third-party facilitator.
- Meetings will end with a clear understanding of expectations and assignments for next steps.
- Meetings are expected to end at the appointed time.
- City Council staff support will keep a record of meeting attendees, key issues raised, and actions required.
- Comments from individual members will generally not be attributed and a verbatim record of the meeting will not be prepared.

- Twice a year, the committee will have a retreat to connect, with the focus and emphasis on continuing relationship building and within the subcommittee, council office, and community.
- Twice a year, council staff will meet one-on-one with each member to understand how to better support each member.

Subcommittee Meeting Agreements

- Through the following team norms, we strive to live up to our organizational values of Integrity, Compassion, Respect, Equity, Collaboration, and Innovation.
- **Cultivate brave space**
- **Speak your truth** (and speak truth, not about saying it right or trying to be perceived in a particular way)
- **Move up, move back**
- **Be accountable for your impact** (vs. your intention)
- **Be open and curious**
- **Notice your own defensive reactions** and attempt to use these reactions as entry points for gaining deeper self-knowledge, rather than as a rationale for closing off.*
- **Recognize how your own social positionality** (e.g., race, class, gender, sexuality, ability) informs your perspectives and reactions to your colleagues and facilitators*
- **Differentiate between safety and comfort.** Accept discomfort as necessary for social justice and racial equity growth. (Often times, we think about comfort as safety, but they're actually different things.) Understand when you or others are actually unsafe because you or they are the targets of racism and/or other forms of oppression.
- **Identify where your learning edge is and push it.** For example, whenever you think, I already know this, ask yourself, "How can I take this deeper?" Or, ask "How am I applying in practice what I already know?"
- **Accept and expect non-closure** - This agreement asks participants to "hang out in uncertainty" and not rush to quick solutions, especially in relation to racial understanding, which requires ongoing dialogue

Agenda Setting and Meeting Format

- In-person meetings will provide time to spend time with one another prior to the meeting start.
- Agenda will be co-created with chair, co-chair, council staff and council liaison.
- The agenda will hold space and identify a person to deliver a land acknowledgement.
- The agenda will consider time for people to check-in and share updates.
- The agenda will maintain time in the schedule monthly, every other month, or quarterly as determined by the committee, for learning about the City and processes of governance.
- The agenda will allow for time for people to ask clarifying questions before diving in deeply on to a topic for discussion.
- The agenda will create opportunities for small group discussions in addition to large group conversation.
- The agenda will have time for review of agreements and assignments at the end of each meeting to ensure mutual understanding of expectations prior to the next meeting.
- The agenda will provide opportunity for stretch or movement at least every 90 minutes for one to two minutes to support people's minds and bodies.

- The meeting space will reflect accessibility needs of participants, including but not limited to the limitation of perfumes and scents, specific lighting needs, chairs without arms to accommodate different body types and sizes, as well as space for those using mobility devices.
- Participants logging in virtually to in-person meetings will be placed on a screen/computer at the table near the meeting liaison or facilitator with a speaker to amplify their voice as they participate in the meeting real time.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Equity Subcommittee is an advisory group to Finance and Administrations Committee

Equity subcommittee members agree to:

- Provide specific community expertise, including identifying emerging local issues.
- Review materials provided and comment promptly when assigned to do so.
- Attend all meetings possible and prepare appropriately.
- Complete all necessary assignments prior to each meeting.
- Relay information to their communities after each meeting and gather information/feedback from their community members as practicable before each meeting.
- Articulate and reflect the interests that the committee members bring to the table.
- Maintain a focus on solutions that benefit the people and environment of the region.
- Discuss, ask questions, and give reflection, feedback and guidance to City Council on department work regarding policies, programs, processes, and projects brought to the subcommittee.
- Continue to learn how City Council operates to then share with community.
- In sharing your expertise with City Council, be an independent and honest voice.

City Council, staff and council leaders agree to:

- Timely equip members with the information needed to support their role on the Equity Subcommittee, when such information is available to staff.
- Provide the Equity Subcommittee members the opportunity to collaborate, co-create and inform on council work to support the advancement of racial equity, using among other tools a recognized engagement spectrum .
- Ensure that council members and staff are embedded at Equity Subcommittee meetings to listen, ask questions and connect, to ensure ongoing trust, relationship building and transparency.
- Invite Equity Subcommittee members to participate in other subcommittees and projects facilitated by City Council policy staff (i.e.. SAS, HAS, etc.)
- Come to the Equity Subcommittee at the onset of the planning process and in advance of each decision point, allowing them to interact directly with decision makers rather than later as a review body.
- Keep the Equity Subcommittee informed quarterly of progress and how their guidance has supported department work.
- Provide an updated timeline of work projects related to policy, processes, programs and projects for the Equity Subcommittee to identify where they best want to focus their current efforts.

- Provide technical expertise and break down concepts into everyday language for conversation.
- Manage logistics for meetings; including food and any special accommodations.
- Explain the reasons if deviations are taken from Equity Subcommittee recommendations and provide insight on how to make improvements in the future for recommendations.

Chair and Vice Chair Responsibilities

The subcommittee will elect a chair and vice chair. The term of the chair is for one year. The term of the vice chair is for two years, with the expectation that the second year of the term they will serve as the chair. Candidates for the role will be self-nominated, the candidate with majority of the votes will be appointed to that role.

Roles:

The Chair will help facilitate meetings, co-create agenda with city council staff and council member liaison. The Chair will assist council staff and council member liaison with resolving conflicts amongst the group.

Vice-chair will co-create agenda with city council staff and council member liaison.

Council Member Liaison is annually appointed by the City Council. Works with assigned council staff, chair, and co-chair to create the agenda. Will also support resolving group conflicts. Council member liaison in partnership with chair or designated subcommittee member will present recommendations to council. Council member liaison will keep Equity Subcommittee members updated on recommendations at the monthly meeting.

Membership

Per Council resolution 2021-0098, the Equity Subcommittee must have at least five (5) members, each appointed by the City Council. Membership of the Subcommittee shall consist of those persons appointed by the City Council from time to time as well as the Council Liaison and the Council's Equity Initiative Manager and Applications to the subcommittee will be hosted on the Equity Subcommittee Webpage. Interested person(s) will be invited to attend the scheduled Equity Subcommittee meeting to gauge the applicant's interest. At the following meeting the subcommittee members will determine whether to recommend to City Council to appoint the applicant to the Equity Subcommittee.

A member's position on the workgroup may be declared vacant if the member:

- Resigns from the workgroup in writing or expresses the intent to resign at a regular meeting of the Subcommittee
- Fails to attend more than two consecutive meetings without prior notice
- A member is removed after a determination by the Chair and Council Member Liaison that the member's participation is disruptive to the subcommittee's work.

Work Groups

Equity Subcommittee members may decide they would like to focus on a particular area of interest or council has requested feedback. In these cases, workgroups may be formed for this purpose. These workgroups will meet at different times from the regular monthly meetings, and on a date and place agreed upon by those in the workgroups.

- The number of members participating in a workgroup may not equal or exceed a quorum of the Subcommittee.
- So long as the members present at a meeting of a workgroup does not equal or exceed a quorum of the Subcommittee, the meeting will not be subject to Open Public Meetings Act.
- Whenever practical, the result of the workgroup will be presented at monthly Equity Subcommittee meeting, along with any proposed next step.
- Work groups may invite other community members to assist in research and refine proposals.

Decisions and Recommendations Actions of the Subcommittee

The Equity Subcommittee is an advisory body to the City Council. As such, and because by council resolution its meetings are subject to the Open Public Meetings Act, it is necessary to define the voting methods and quorum requirements of the Subcommittee.

Quorum

- A “quorum” of the Subcommittee shall consist of at least fifty percent (50%) of the members of the Subcommittee, including the Council Liaison and Council Initiative Manager

Voting

- Any recommendation, decision or proposal of the Subcommittee is to be approved by consensus of those members of the Subcommittee (including the Council Liaison and Council Initiative Manager) who are present (in person or by virtual means) at the time of the vote regarding such recommendation, decision, or proposal. Members will strive to reach agreement by consensus at a level that indicates that the large majority of the members present are willing to “live with” the proposed action.
- At the end of a dialogue period, members will indicate their preference for a recommendation, decision, or proposal with a show of “thumbs up” (good to go), “thumbs to the middle” (can live with it) or “thumbs down” (do not approve of proceeding.)
- If there are members of the committee in the “thumbs down” position, the Chair will continue the dialogue to further assess and understand assess those points in contention, and possibly revise the recommendation, decision, or proposal before a final tally of the vote of the committee.
- If a consensus cannot be reached on a particular issue, the committee acknowledges that the Council Liaison shall have final authority to determine how to proceed, including, but not limited to, allowing the matter to be resolved by simple majority vote of those members present (in person and virtually).

Criteria for Department Work to be Brought to the Committee

**Please check with ES staff manager to if confirmation of this unlikelihood is required.*



For the 2023 - 2024 period, within the framework of implementation, projects brought to the Equity Subcommittee should be considered if they have the potential to affect:

- Advancing racial equity and belonging
- Advance an Equitable Budget Process
- Economic impact in communities (via contracting, hiring, recruitment, grant-making, paid partnership, or via impacts to economic justice)
- Health Equity
- Environmental justice
- Disability justice and inclusion
- Advancing successful outcomes for communities
- Project should be early enough in development that the committee has capacity for impact rather than a “rubber stamp”.
- Initiative managers, with a solid understanding of their roles and responsibilities (see roles and responsibilities section) may submit proposed work to the committee through the City Council subcommittee liaison.
- The committee will then have an opportunity to assess work they would like to take on 2023 - 2024.
- The committee will determine the portfolio of work to take on with consideration to timeline and potential for impact.

Conflict Resolution

When an issue arises that cannot be easily resolved, the Equity Subcommittee committee agrees to:

- Remember that relationships, trust, and transparency are central to moving the dial forward on racial equity.
- Determine if the issue should be resolved within or outside of the subcommittee meeting and participate however is appropriate.
- Ensure the appropriate decision makers are at the table to resolve the issue.