



Parks Levy Oversight Committee (PLOC)

Year 1 Meeting #4 | May 3, 2022 | 5:30 PM – 7:30 PM

Agenda

5:30 PM	Welcome and Ice Breaker	All
5:40 PM	Racial Equity Lens	Dr. Kenya Williams
6:30 PM	Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland Listening & Learning	Melissa Arnold
6:40 PM	Communications Approach	Claire Flynn
7:10 PM	Current Financial Actuals	Claire Flynn
7:20 PM	Housekeeping	Claire Flynn

Attachments Shared with PLOC

- [PP&R Racial Equity Lens and Empowerment Tool](#)

Attending

Oversight Committee Members –

- Alescia Blakely
- Judy Bluehorse Skelton
- Maria Velez
- Paul Agrimis
- *Silas Sanderson – not in attendance, meeting materials were shared*

PP&R Staff –

- Todd Lofgren | Deputy Director
- Dr. Kenya Williams | Equity & Inclusion Manager
- Sarah Huggins | Sustainable Future Program Manager
- Melissa Arnold | Community Engagement Manager
- Claire Flynn | Levy Coordinator

Members of the Public –

- None

Administration

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PORTLANDPARKS.ORG
 Commissioner Carmen Rubio
 Director Adena Long



Racial Equity Lens

Dr. Kenya Williams began his presentation with a brief overview of the Equity and Inclusion (E&I) team at PP&R. The purpose of the E&I team is to advise bureau leadership and staff on equity practice, policy, and resource allocations that ensure a more equitable and inclusive community. This includes making recommendation about racial equity, antiracism, language access, disability, LGBTQIA2S+, immigrants and refugees, and support for all culturally and historically underserved communities. The teams' activities include, among other things, leading and implementing the Racial Equity Lens, creating internal and external partnerships for engagement, and expanding language access. In 2020, the E&I team provided support in organizing and convening 150 immigrant and refugee community leaders and organizations to gather information and support for the Parks Levy.

In 2022 and 2023, the team will continue building capacity and expanding the team. They will be developing an equity collaborative to provide more support to all Divisions, co-championing the Bureau's Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland strategic framework, reimagining the Parks for New Portlanders program, and identifying Bureau language access gaps and goals.

Dr. Williams then gave a detailed review of the background, structure, and application of the [PP&R Racial Equity Lens and Empowerment tool](#). A racial equity lens, per the City of Portland Office of Equity and Human Rights, is a critical thinking approach to undoing institutional and structural racism that evaluates burdens, benefits, and outcomes to underserved communities. PP&R began developing the Racial Equity Lens because of the need for a consistent bureau-wide approach to address inequities and a shared language and process for centering racial equity. The team developed and shared the lens from October 2020 to March 2022, researching existing lenses, developing workshops and gathering data, establishing frameworks, and creating a lessons learned report (soon to be published).

In additional to the Racial Equity Lens, the E&I team is also currently in the process of developing an updated racial equity statement. The team hosted 7 work sessions from staff and Bureau Divisions (56 workshop participants and 360 comments) to collect feedback on what a racial equity statement should look like. Dr. Williams shared the current draft statement with the PLOC and noted that Wave II of Listening & Learning, as part of the Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland strategic planning process, would collect additional feedback and continue community engagement on the draft.

The PLOC then had an opportunity for discussion and questions:

- Paul asked about a Word Cloud that was shown as an example of some of the data that was collected from staff feedback around the Racial Equity Lens and the draft Racial Equity Statement. Specifically, what was the key take aways from the data? What resonated for the team?
 - Dr. Williams shared that the key take aways were: a need for accountability and transparency, as well as community – that a lot of people and staff want to understand how racial equity work can better provide for the communities that are facing inequities.

- Sarah shared that, at previous meetings, the PLOC saw the Decision Support Tool and how the tool piloted the use of the Racial Equity Lens in the budget process where Parks Levy resources were allocated.
 - Dr. Williams noted that the City also uses a Budget Equity Tool. However, PP&R took a different path in centering equity and accountability by incorporating the Racial Equity Lens in the bureau’s Decision Support Tool.
 - With the Decision Support Tool, originally used for the FY21-22 Fall Budget Monitoring Process, staff writing a budget proposal were asked to go through the Racial Equity Lens and fill out every step. The proposals then went through a blind review process with a rubric and reviewers who read all submissions.
- Dr. Williams also noted that the E&I team is currently wrapping up Racial Equity Lens Lessons Learned report that will detail what could have been done differently and how the tool has been used to date. He committed to sharing that report with the PLOC.

Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland Listening & Learning

Melissa Arnold, Community Engagement Manager, gave an overview of the Listening & Learning community engagement efforts being moved forward as part of the Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland strategic planning process.

In summer 2022, Wave II of Listening & Learning will occur to collect feedback on a new suite of organization statements – new Mission, Vision, Values, Racial Equity Statements, and organizational outcome categories. The goal of Wave II is to engage the community further to understand if these statements and outcomes are what community need and want from their Parks & Recreation system, and how we can bring these statements to life. This engagement is happening with staff, advisory groups, and centered community groups, and has also included more in depth "co-design" teams made up of staff and community members.

Melissa shared specific dates and events that the community engagement team is tentatively planning on attending, many of them cultural events, in order to connect with centered communities. At these events information will be shared about Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland and other bureau happenings.

- Judy noted that the Delta Native Summer Gathering Ceremony, noted on the list of outreach events, won’t be open to all of the public and will not be shared in the ways it usually is. Melissa acknowledged that change and confirmed that the outreach list is tentative in nature, particularly since some of the events are to be determined and groups are still in the event planning stages.
- Maria asked about events that also serve non-resident Portlanders such as the East Portland Arts Festival, that has many Gresham and out-of-the-city attendees. She asked how feedback from non-Portland residents might impact data or the create overlap.
 - Melissa shared that the engagement strategies at these community outreach events are more about gathering a large range of data. She also noted that the team is considering whether to have a zip code question to get a sense of areas of the City and broader metro area that PP&R is connecting with.

- Additionally, Melissa spoke to the balance between the City’s official jurisdiction and boundaries and the broader community that PP&R serves – noting that some folks that engage with parks system are not city of Portland residents. The Community Engagement team is not currently looking at attending non-Portland events; however, they are aware and are having conversations about broader geographic outreach.
- Alecia asked if Summer Lunch and Play, as well as Summer Concerts, were going to be outreach opportunities.
 - Melissa confirmed that her team is connecting with PP&R Summer Free For All staff and event organizers on opportunities. Many dates are still being finalized.
 - Alecia noted that a lot of Home Forward work with the Housing Authority is at Summer Lunch and Play events and wanted to know where and how housing-specific staff and partners could engage. Melissa confirmed that she would connect with Home Forward and Latino Network, taking into account partner organization limited capacity.
- Maria offered help or guidance around the SUN School workshop. Melissa shared that PP&R community engagement staff are working with the PP&R SUN School manager to host a SUN-specific workshop.

Workshops focused specifically on Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland will occur roughly every couple weeks beginning in early July. These workshops will be multi-dimensional and the primary goal is building relationships; there will be table discussions, dot and other tactile feedback opportunities, an opportunity for a more narrative feedback via a video booth or similar exercise. Melissa invited members of the PLOC to participate as participants or table facilitators to provide feedback on the strategic direction of the Bureau.

- Paul asked for clarification on the “multi-dimensional” aspect of the workshop.
 - Melissa clarified that the aim is have multiple kinds of engagement techniques – discussion, narrative, written, etc. and to be intentional about engaging different learning styles, cultural needs etc.
 - Additionally, noting that it’s difficult to participate at an in-person workshop from a virtual setting, the community engagement team is looking to have at least one workshop be entirely virtual, and can also expand to additional virtual workshops if there is demand.

Melissa noted that she would share the workshop dates with Claire to send along to the PLOC and encouraged PLOC to reach out with any questions.

Communications Approach

Claire Flynn shared the current ways in which PP&R has been communicating information about the Parks Levy. PP&R has used existing communication opportunities and program materials to highlight how the Parks Levy has supported those programs and services. The [Parks Levy webpage](#) and [Parks Levy Oversight Committee webpage](#) have also both been kept up to date – including an [informational one-pager](#) that details the Parks Levy.

Claire then gave an overview of the central communication methods that will be used to communicate progress of the Parks Levy – the PP&R Parks Levy Annual Report and the accompanying Parks Levy Oversight Committee (PLOC) Annual Report.

- The PP&R Parks Levy Annual Report is produced by the Bureau to give an overview of how Parks Levy funds were spent in the fiscal year and indicate progress towards the 15 Parks Levy commitments. Key messages will include the ramp-up period of the Parks Levy and how year one has planted the seeds for success in future years, a summary of major accomplishments, and thanking voters for their passage of the Parks Levy. A shorter executive summary and letter from the Director and Commissioner will be available as an abbreviated version of the report. The report will be finalized following the close of the fiscal year and collection of FY21-22 data.
- The PLOC report will be a response and review of the PP&R Parks Levy Annual Report. The report will include three general areas of review and advice: expenditures, commitments to voters, and transparency and communication. One of the key responsibilities of the PLOC – per the committee’s Charter and the Parks Levy resolution language – is to report annually to City Council regarding program process and alignment with Parks Levy goals. PP&R will work with the PLOC to find a time to present the annual report to City Council and to celebrate PLOC members’ service.

Both reports will be available via the Portland.gov website for language accessibility. For physical copies of the report, PP&R will focus translation efforts on translating the executive summary and PLOC report into English and the four additional most common languages in Portland – Spanish, Vietnamese, Chinese, and Russian. Key points and messages from the annual report will be included in other PP&R materials that are translated into additional languages.

The PLOC was asked to share any thoughts, feedback, or comments on the communications approach:

- Paul noted that the rollout to community will be important in speaking convincingly about transparency and appreciates the opportunity to participate in the upcoming Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland engagement. Particularly, because there is so much connection between Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland and the Parks Levy, Paul shared that it would be helpful to receive updates about that community engagement.
- Claire shared that there is parallel between the Parks Replacement Bond Oversight Committee and the PLOC and noted that she could send the Bond Oversight Committee annual report as an example of how a response and review report could be formatted.
- Maria emphasized that many advisory bodies and PP&R are participating in larger community events and workshops – and that could be an opportunity to share and have Parks Levy materials available. Melissa verified that PP&R could have handouts/materials available to community about the Parks Levy and advisory body opportunities at Listening & Learning events.

Current Financial Actuals

Claire gave an overview and reminder of the blended funding model to support levy-eligible costs, utilizing General Fund first and retaining underspending in the Parks Levy fund to maximize the Bureau's ability to deliver increased park operational services to deliver on commitments to voters. The final percentage of Parks Levy funding and actual amount can only be determined when the total year-end spend and program revenue are finalized. Any savings or underspending, even in non-levy-related areas, acts to reduce the amount of levy resource required, since more General Fund is available to cover more of the levy-eligible services.

- Paul asked how soon actuals would be reported on after the fiscal year ending on June 30. Claire shared that PP&R would be able to synthesize numbers from the fiscal year in the month following the close, by the end of July – and the full analysis would be included in the Parks Levy annual report that the PLOC will see in late summer.

To show an estimate of Levy spending for FY21-22 quarters one through three, PP&R used the high estimate percentage that was originally budgeted between General Fund and levy. PP&R expects the levy spending for FY21-22 to be significantly less than originally budgeted and the quarters 1-3 would be less than the estimated actuals shared with the PLOC in the presentation. This is because, FY21-22 is year 1 of a 5-year levy, and this year has really been to plant the seeds and set up organization growth. The ramp-up aspect of Year 1 has significantly impacted Parks Levy spending this year. The Parks Levy is allowing for an increase in staff and helping facilitate adding workspace to support an expanding workforce – these efforts are ongoing. The underspending so far this year is a result of limited programming and services during the pandemic, continued workforce challenges in recruiting for open positions, and generous budgeting to ensure that hiring managers did not slow down hiring because of perceived budget constraints.

Claire noted that the final blend percentage and values of levy spending will be shared at the next PLOC meeting, as part of the Annual Report process.

PLOC members were invited to share questions, comments, and feedback:

- Judy shared that, previously, the PP&R budget was always contracting and now the Parks Levy is allowing for and expanded workforce and workspace. She asked what the plan is for continued financing past the Parks Levy and if PP&R be able to sustain a long-term work force.
 - Sarah Huggins, Sustainable Future Program Manager, noted that a conversation was initiated in 2019 with Commissioner Fish and City Council, to look at the services that PP&R provides and budget constraints. At that time, PP&R heard that City Council wanted PP&R to explore funding to maintain and increase services. PP&R continues to work towards that goal, part of which is looking for successor resource to the Parks Levy to continue to provide operations at the levels that are supported by the Parks levy today.
 - Additionally, one of the biggest funding needs is the \$500 million capital maintenance gap. PP&R is working to bring the funding up to meet the Bureau's needs in a sustained way.

- Judy emphasized that climate change is, and will continue to, impact the cost of maintenance – which will further increase funding needs.
 - Melissa noted that deferred maintenance starts to impact the work that PP&R can do. For example, the Crystal Spring Garden and the cost of a salmon-safe environment and how to maintain it.
 - Judy shared that there are innovative cooperative agreements going on, such as with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to look at ecology in the urban center – and encouraged PP&R to engage with them.
 - Judy also emphasized that it will be key to have PP&R staff members who can work with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Army Corps of Engineers as climate issues transcend jurisdictional boundaries.
 - Melissa highlighted that the Healthy Parks, Healthy Portland work can dial in on the outcomes that PP&R contributes to and bring additional focus to PP&R’s impact on climate resilience.
- Paul emphasized that PP&R will have to ask for funding again since the Parks Levy is only for 5 years. PP&R will need to help people reframe idea of parks – to see parks as essential to the health of the ecosystem.
 - Sarah shared that the PLOC can help show that PP&R can deliver on commitments to voters, and continue to establish trust in how PP&R manages funds.
- Judy reiterated that the impacts of climate change and nature will make the case for the need for continued investment in climate resilient ecosystems, parks, and plants – and shared that PP&R staff member Eric Rosewall’s expertise will be helpful in cataloging what plants are thriving or not surviving. She encouraged PP&R and the public to be open to change and be prepared that landscapes won’t look like historic parks.
- Sarah highlighted that the PLOC’s interest in the topics of climate resilience and ecological sustainable practices will be a presentation topic at future meetings.

Housekeeping

Claire reminded PLOC members of their next meeting scheduled for Monday, September 12. To promote transparency and accessibility, Claire noted that she’ll host the meetings in-person and members have the option to attend in-person or via Zoom for meetings moving forward. Additional details about the in-person option will be solidified closer to the September 12 meeting.

Claire also reiterated the timeline and upcoming process for the PLOC annual report and noted that PLOC members are invited to present their own report to City Council.

Claire gave an overview of an annual PLOC meeting schedule – with September and January meetings tied directly to the annual report and budget process. PLOC members confirmed that they were okay with the current balance between topical presentations and levy-specific information.

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[Yêu Cầu Dịch Vụ Biên Dịch Hoặc Thông Dịch Liên Quan Đến PP&R](#)

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अनुवादनतथाव्याख्या (Nepali)

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Chiaku me Awewen Kapas (Chuukese)

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