



Equity

WORKING GROUP CHARTER

SPOKANE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COUNCIL | OCTOBER 2023

OVERVIEW

Spokane Regional Transportation Council and its Board of Directors value diversity, equity, inclusion, and dignity for all, and SRTC is committed to equitable delivery of all its programs and services.

In that spirit, the Equity Planning Framework was approved by the Board of Directors in December 2022. The document includes 12 key recommendations for the agency, which were roughly sorted into near-term, mid-term, and long-term groups for implementation.

One of the near-term recommendations is the establishment of an equity working group or advisory group as a continuing activity. As proposed, the Equity Working Group can help ensure that equity remains a living and evolving part of SRTC’s planning process.

This group and its work are reflected in SRTC’s 2023-2025 UPWP.

PURPOSE AND ROLE

Purpose:

An Equity Working Group is being formed with representatives from the public to provide a forum for representation at SRTC from our area’s marginalized and historically excluded communities – whose insight is crucial to our region’s success. The Equity Working Group will help ensure that equity remains a vital part of SRTC’s planning process by providing an equity lens on existing SRTC planning and outreach activities.

Role:

The Equity Working Group can provide important input related to the scope of SRTC’s outreach and engagement strategies, the effectiveness of our methods for identifying transportation projects with positive equity impacts, and potential opportunities to grow or evolve what we do as an agency to better ensure that the benefits (and burdens) of our transportation system are being fairly distributed to all residents in SRTC’s planning area.





ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

Potential Activities

The following items from SRTC's work plan may benefit from input or participation of the Equity Working Group. Though the Equity Working Group may not take on all these items within the first two years, the items are listed as possibilities.

In addition to group member onboarding, items listed in bold, blue text are anticipated near-term priorities for SRTC's work plan. Longer-term, SRTC is open to working with the Equity Working Group to produce a collaborative work plan. As members become more familiar with agency work, SRTC encourages them to have a voice in choosing the activities they focus on.

- **SRTC's Public Participation Plan (PPP) was updated in December 2021. The Equity Working Group can provide an insightful review of the updated PPP and potentially recommend changes that will expand or improve community engagement. Comments on the equity statement, methods of outreach and engagement are especially welcomed. (2024)**
 - **The Equity Working Group could also provide comments specific to the upcoming Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) outreach process to help ensure our MTP-related outreach is as equitable and effective as possible. (2024)**
 - **Provide qualitative information on vulnerable users of the transportation system as well as safety planning needs in equity areas, - for Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A). (2024)**
 - Discuss and help define **meaningful engagement** as it relates to SRTC's review of transportation projects. This would improve SRTC's ability to identify and support projects with greater community support. **(2024-2025)**
 - Review and provide input on **SRTC's project-level equity assessment and associated criteria. (2024-2025)**
 - Discuss the **Social Equity Mapping Tool** and what could make it more useful and informative for users in advance of its planned 2025 update. **(2024-2025)**
 - Provide input related to **SRTC's Needs Assessment. (2025)**
 - Discuss **SRTC's limited English proficiency (LEP) materials**, and what documents would be especially useful translated into Spanish, Russian, Vietnamese, and/or other languages. **(2025)**
 - Provide input and recommendations on updates and potential changes to SRTC's **Safe & Complete Streets Policy. (2025-2026)**
 - Refine group processes, outreach and recruitment of participants as needed. **(Continuous)**
 - Identify additional opportunities for alignment with state and federal equity programs. **(Continuous)**
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COMPOSITION AND PARTICIPATION

Composition:

Equity planning is about everybody – and the Equity Working Group should be a fundamentally inclusive space. Though the following are not requirements, they are aspirations:

- 8-12 regular members, but no upper limit on participation
- Representatives from BIPOC, Hispanic, Low Income, Disability, Urban and Rural (or small town) communities
- Gender diversity
- Youth (e.g. students) and elderly
- Though, at the outset, it may prove challenging to include non-English speakers directly, we should also aim to include voices from Spokane’s various cultural communities – such as the Ukrainian/East Slavic, Latinex, and Vietnamese communities.
- To the degree possible, we should encourage participation by people who are already plugged-in to their respective communities – such as representatives from nonprofits or individuals with experience in public service and outreach.
- From SRTC, the group should include the Title VI Coordinator and Communications and Public Relations Coordinator. (Not counted towards the number of regular members)
- On a voluntary basis, participants may be asked to review materials between meetings.
- Caucasian English-speaking voices are also welcome.

Recruiting Members and Onboarding:

- The Equity Working Group is founded without term limits. Members may stay with the group as long as they’re able to contribute.
 - If the group has significant gaps in representation and/or number of participants, SRTC will engage in outreach to recruit additional members.
 - SRTC should lay the foundation for recruitment by forging (and maintaining) relationships with key messengers. SRTC member agencies, community organizations such as The Zone, Latinos en Spokane, Spokane Slavic Association, and other community resources can be important points of contact when recruiting new participants.
 - Although the working group is fundamentally inclusive, recruitment should nonetheless be done through a participant signup sheet. The sheet should include basic information such as name, street address, gender, occupation and/or experience, and race/ethnicity. All interested participants are welcome.
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- An open house meeting for interested potential participants should be held whenever taking on new members. This would comprise of a single meeting or series of meetings to help introduce group members to SRTC staff and agency responsibilities.

MEETINGS AND TIMEFRAME

The working group will be continuous. While new members may be recruited each year, there is no end date for disbanding the working group.

The group does not require a quorum to meet and is not subject to the Open Public Meeting Act. Meetings will not be recorded, but anonymized meeting notes will be available for those who missed meetings.

More specific information as proposed:

- Initially, meetings should take place after 5 PM to minimize conflict with citizens' working schedules, but the final meeting schedule for each year should be set by group consensus based on availability. (such as a Doodle poll or similar)
- Meetings should be virtual or hybrid to ensure accessibility for all (or for as many people as possible).
- An agenda should be produced and distributed prior to each meeting. Agendas should also include the link for virtual participation and can help provide a record of group discussions from meeting to meeting.
- At the end of each meeting, time should be allocated on the agenda for open discussion and Q&A.
- A short survey or comment form could be distributed to participants after each meeting to collect feedback on how we can refine our process and ensure continuous communication.
- In addition to meeting times, additional time may be allocated as requested by group members, and the Title VI coordinator will provide availability for additional conversations.

Group members are expected to maintain positive conduct towards fellow participants and agency staff, and to discuss any disagreements respectfully. Disruptive or combative behavior is not permitted during meetings and is grounds for removal. Threats or harassment towards other group members at any time during or between meetings is grounds for removal.
