



AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

DATE OF MEETING: April 21, 2021

ITEM TITLE: COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

PREPARED BY: Collina Beard, Director of Business Services;
Chairperson, LTD Diversity Council

DIRECTOR: Aurora Jackson, General Manager

ACTION REQUESTED: Discussion and Adoption

PURPOSE: To provide information to the Board for the purpose of adopting a Commitment to Racial Equity

ROLE OF THE BOARD: The Board's role in this instance is to adopt

BOARD DIRECTIVE ALIGNMENT: Lane Transit District ("LTD" or "the District") and the LTD Board of Directors are committed to providing and maintaining a work environment that is free from discrimination, harassment, workplace bullying, and retaliation. The District demonstrates its commitment to diversity in the way it provides services and through its employment practices, by: ensuring that all LTD services, programs, and activities are sensitive to and responsive to cultural differences; demonstrating a commitment to workplace diversity through recruitment, hiring, and promotions; and maintaining a respectful environment free from all forms of harassment, hostility, and violence.

COMMUNICATION: NA

DATES PRESENTED TO THE PUBLIC: January 20, 2021 Department Reports

HISTORY: In addition to a global pandemic and unprecedented economic upheaval, 2020 was a year full of record violence and discrimination against historically underserved and marginalized communities:

- 1) According to the Human Rights Campaign, 2020 brought the highest number of reported deaths of transgender and gender non-conforming people in the United States, most of whom were poor or otherwise Black or Latinx.
- 2) According to the Pew Research Center survey, three in 10 Asian Americans (31%) reported having experienced racial slurs or racist jokes since the beginning of the pandemic. Stop AAPI Hate reported that there were nearly 3800 incidents of violence, harassment and other hate crimes committed against Asian Americans last year.
- 3) The tragic and successive deaths of Ahmaud Arbery (February 2020), Breonna Taylor (March 2020), and George Floyd (May 2020), served as a flashpoint for black, indigenous and other people of color (BIPOC), as well as further exposed systemic racism and other inequities in our society.

In June 2020, LTD's General Manager, Aurora Jackson, created a forum to candidly discuss with the District's employees the raging social unrest (protests and riots), economic uncertainties and disproportionate effects of the global pandemic upon historically underserved and marginalized communities. During this forum, Ms. Jackson further reiterated her commitment to support and create a diverse and inclusive working environment within LTD and very clearly expressed that the District would not tolerate inequity, discrimination, bias or racism in any of its forms. Since that time, the District's Diversity Council ("the Council") has diligently worked to lay a foundation that institutionalizes diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) as a key strategic priority for LTD.

In its' January Milestone Update, the Council outlined that its next steps include hosting Courageous Conversations with internal staff, as well as a desire to participate in the pilot of the American Public Transportation Association's ("APTA") Commitment and Recognition Program on Racial Equity. On March 17, the Council hosted the first of a

series of book clubs to begin discussion of “*White Fragility: Why It’s so Hard for White People to Talk about Racism*” by Dr. Robin DiAngelo. This first discussion laid the foundation for exploring the issue of systemic and structural racism in the United States, its direct impacts on minoritized communities and its indirect impacts on society as a whole. Also in March, LTD was tentatively accepted as a participant in APTA’s pilot of the Commitment and Recognition Program on Racial Equity.

The first requirement for participation in the pilot program is Board adoption of a Commitment to Racial Equity, with leadership from the General Manager and adequate resourcing, as well as inclusion in strategic plans/goals. To that end we have

- 1) **Leadership from the General Manager.** The General Manager has empowered the Diversity Council to establish a “Race First” framework around internal discussions concerning diversity, equity and inclusion (“DEI”) and to apply an equity lens in the review and revision of internal policies and procedures.
- 2) **Adequate Resourcing.** A DEI Program Manager has been programmed at half year into LTD’s Proposed Budget for FY 21-22. Funding supporting the District’s DEI efforts have been programmed into the Human Resources annual Materials & Services budget since the adoption of the Diversity Policy in 2007.
- 3) **Inclusion in Strategic Plans/Goals.** Diversity has been identified as one of LTD’s Values in the Strategic Business Plan.

CONSIDERATIONS: APTA’s Board of Directors approved its Racial Equity Action Plan earlier this month. Adoption of a commitment to racial equity by the LTD Board of Directors is vital to participation in the pilot program. APTA seeks to launch the pilot program this summer in preparation for a full launch in the first quarter of 2022.

ALTERNATIVES:

- Deny adoption of a commitment to racial equity
- Delay adoption of a commitment to racial equity

NEXT STEPS: Upon adoption of this commitment, Staff would move forward with conducting a workplace climate survey on the perceived employee and stakeholder experience of existing policies, practices, and procedures *from the perspective of equity and inclusion*. The results from the survey will be utilized to inform the District’s DEI Strategic Action Plan, as well as to design the District’s DEI training programs.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION:

- 1) Link to the Government Alliance on Race & Equity’s “Why Lead With Race?”: <https://www.racialequityalliance.org/about/our-approach/race/>
- 2) Link to Harvard Business Review’s “Moving Beyond Diversity Toward Racial Equity”: <https://hbr.org/2020/06/moving-beyond-diversity-toward-racial-equity>
- 3) Link to the APTA Racial Equity Action Plan: <https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/APTA-racial-equity-action-plan-FINAL.pdf>
- 4) Resolution No. 2021-04-21-019

PROPOSED MOTION: I move adoption of LTD Resolution No. 2021-04-21-019:

It is hereby resolved that the LTD Board of Directors adopts the commitment to racial equity as presented [amended].



RESOLUTION NO. 2021-04-21-019

ADOPTION OF A COMMITMENT TO RACIAL EQUITY

WHEREAS, the Lane Transit District's Board of Directors acknowledges that race is a social construct with no scientific basis¹ and long-standing institutional and structural bias have resulted in racial inequities that impact individual and population health, as well as other social, economic and educational outcomes; and

WHEREAS, the Lane Transit District's Board of Directors acknowledges that the policies, planning, funding, and design of the United States' transportation industry has played a significant role in creating and reinforcing social and economic inequities for marginalized communities through "misguided investments and missed opportunities for federal transportation policies..."²; and

WHEREAS, the Lane Transit District's Board of Directors is committed to continuing to: use racial equity, social and mobility justice tools to assess new policies, procedures and projects; partner with racial equity education organizations; review hiring practices with a racial equity lens; and include community voices, especially those within underserved communities, in the District's planning process as our commitment to undoing institutional and structural racism.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the LTD Board of Directors passes a Resolution as follows:

1. That the Lane Transit District's Board of Directors affirms its commitment to racial equity and mobility justice by directing the General Manager to
 - a. Ensure that all LTD services, programs, and activities are sensitive to and responsive to cultural differences; demonstrating a commitment to workplace diversity through recruitment, hiring, and promotions; and maintaining a respectful environment free from all forms of harassment, hostility, and violence.
 - b. Keep racial equity and mobility justice as a top priority in the budget development process.
 - c. Prioritize anti-racism in the evaluation of new policies and programs, as well as the sustained and comprehensive transformation of existing services.
 - d. Offer the necessary training, technical support and resources to employees to develop practices, policies and programs that support racial and mobility justice and equity.
 - e. Measure, recognize and annually report the District's progress on racial equity and mobility justice.

ADOPTED BY THE LANE TRANSIT DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON THIS 21st DAY OF APRIL, 2021.

Caitlin Vargas

[Caitlin Vargas \(May 4, 2021 16:00 PDT\)](#)

Board President, Caitlin Vargas

¹ García JJ, Sharif MZ. Black Lives Matter: A Commentary on Race and Racism. AmJ Public Health. 2015;105: e27–e30. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2015.302706

² U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Pete Buttigieg, during his Town Hall Address on February 23, 2020.