



Regional Equity Strategy Initial Work Plan

Scope of Work | March 2021

Project Summary

PSRC will develop a Regional Equity Strategy to improve outcomes for marginalized communities and how the agency operates internally. The Strategy will include a suite of tools and resources co-created with a committee of members that represent the perspective of those most impacted by PSRC's policies and plans. PSRC will use this strategy to work with its communities and stakeholders to identify existing inequities across the region and recommend targeted strategies to improve the region's capacity to grow in an equitable manner, recognizing the unique needs of marginalized groups.¹ PSRC will lead with race, which has proven to be an effective method for not only increasing equitable outcomes for people of color but developing a framework, tools, and resources that can remove barriers for other marginalized groups.

Background

The Regional Equity Strategy will seek to address issues identified during various interviews through the following four key component categories: A) capacity building, B) data and research, C) community engagement, and D) best practices.

- Key Issue: PSRC should work to develop a deeper understanding of racial and social equity.
 - *A) Capacity building.*
 - **GARE Learning Cohort.** The Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE) is an organization that works with government agencies across the country to achieve racial equity and advance opportunities for all. PSRC staff will continue to work with GARE to build capacity to analyze and address policies, practices, and procedures in a way that reduces disparities experienced by people of color and allows PSRC to fulfill its VISION statement of providing an exceptional quality of life and opportunity for all (Start date: Q3 2019).
 - **Equity Related Learning Opportunities.** PSRC will provide learning opportunities for staff and board members to develop a deeper understanding of racial and social equity and its role in the agency's work. This will equip staff and board members with the tools to develop a plan for clearly, thoroughly, and consistently addressing equity (Start date: Q4 2019).

¹ This is commonly referred to as targeted universalism. Rather than seeking to establish policies and practices where everyone is treated the same, targeted universalism establishes universal goals while considering how different groups have faced, and continue to face, different barriers.

- Key Issue: Equitable outcomes are important and data highlights areas of concern and progress.
 - *B) Data and research.*
 - **Equity Analyses Supporting Regional Planning.** These documents explore how race, income, and other factors intersect to affect residents’ access to opportunity in the region and how growth may impact vulnerable populations in the future. Building on these documents will provide a more nuanced understanding of the story behind both the Opportunity and Displacement Risk Maps. Analyses have and will be prepared for agency work program products, including the VISION 2050 Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS), the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (Start date: Q3 2019).
 - **Opportunity and Displacement Risk Mapping.** These mapping tools help users identify relative access to resources and risk of displacement, respectively. Expanding on these tools will provide jurisdictions with insights on where policies have led to increased opportunity for vulnerable populations and where they should target future efforts to improve educational, health, or other outcomes (Start date: Q1 2020).
 - **Equity Dashboard.** This public-facing dashboard will allow PSRC members to track progress on relevant equity related goals and adjust policies to reduce disparities when necessary. It will also allow communities to hold PSRC accountable as the agency attempts to create a region where race no longer predicts life outcomes and people have improved choices in where they live, how they travel, and where they recreate (Start date: Q1 2021).
 - **Existing Conditions Report.** This report will provide an overview of existing disparities in the region on topics related to transportation, housing, economics, etc. Having an accurate understanding of the region’s existing conditions will help inform member jurisdictions about current gaps and where strategies should be implemented to address these issues. It will essentially serve as the “starting point” to move toward the region’s vision of providing an exceptional quality of life and opportunity for all (Start date: Q2 2021).

- Key Issue: Authentic engagement with marginalized communities is imperative to developing a more holistic understanding of problems and solutions.
 - *C) Community engagement.*
 - **Equity Advisory Committee.** PSRC will develop a structure and operating procedures for an Equity Advisory Committee. This committee will help provide feedback on and help implement the Regional Equity Strategy. PSRC will explore funding options to resource members as well as identify which communities and

demographics should be represented through broad outreach (Start date: Q1 2021).

- **Support Anti-displacement Organizations.** These organizations develop locally appropriate and community-driven solutions for displacement. PSRC will work to identify these groups and connect them to member jurisdictions to help support this work (Start date: Q2 2021).
 - **Inclusive Engagement for Regional Planning.** PSRC will center racial equity in a wide array of innovative strategies to engage residents that have historically been underrepresented in PSRC planning efforts. This process will help leverage the insights of communities most impacted by PSRC's policies and plans, which will help cultivate a more holistic understanding of barriers and potential solutions. When appropriate, the strategies will seek to move beyond simply informing community members to consulting, involving, and collaborating with them (Start date: Q1 2021).
- Key Issue: Mitigation strategies, case studies, and resources are necessary to inform jurisdictions on how to ensure marginalized groups do not suffer from undue burdens and enjoy the benefits associated with increased growth.
 - *D) Best practices.*
 - **Equity Impact Tool.** This tool will explicitly incorporate equity into the decision-making process. It will be used to forecast and prevent unintended, harmful consequences on marginalized groups. It will help reduce inequities by encouraging community engagement to address potential blind spots, identifying strategies to mitigate unintended consequences, and developing a structure to hold agencies accountable by evaluating the impact of their plans, policies, and actions on marginalized groups (Start date: Q2 2021).
 - **Equity Toolkit.** This toolkit will support jurisdictions in developing equity related strategies such as residential, commercial, and cultural anti-displacement plans that may result from planning, public investments, private redevelopment, and market pressure. This toolkit will include a range of strategies that are relevant to PSRC members' local context, the circumstances under which tools should be explored, and the regulatory incentive for using them (Start date: Q2 2021).

Process and Timeline

The work plan was finalized in March 2021. Initial phases of the strategy will be finalized in 2022. This work will be ongoing.

