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Agenda Item **No. 5(e)**
Meeting of December 15, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO: Community Investment and Infrastructure Commissioners

FROM: Sally Oerth, Interim Executive Director

SUBJECT: Workshop on the OCII Racial Equity Action Plan: Initial Update on Status of Implementation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In solidarity with Departments of the City and County of San Francisco (City), the Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII) is in the process of adopting a Racial Equity Action Plan establishing institutional and structural changes to achieve racial equity.¹ This memorandum presents a summary of work done to date.

BACKGROUND

The process of developing a Racial Equity Action Plan is overseen by the Office of Racial Equity (ORE), which is tasked by the Racial Equity Ordinance to create a Racial Equity Framework² to guide each Department in creating its Action Plan. In July 2020, ORE published a draft Racial Equity Framework Phase 1, which included a Template for Action Plans (Phase 1). Both documents acknowledge that ORE's and the City Departments' work on the Actions Plans will be slowed by COVID-19 responses, but nevertheless encourage Departments to move forward with Action Planning.

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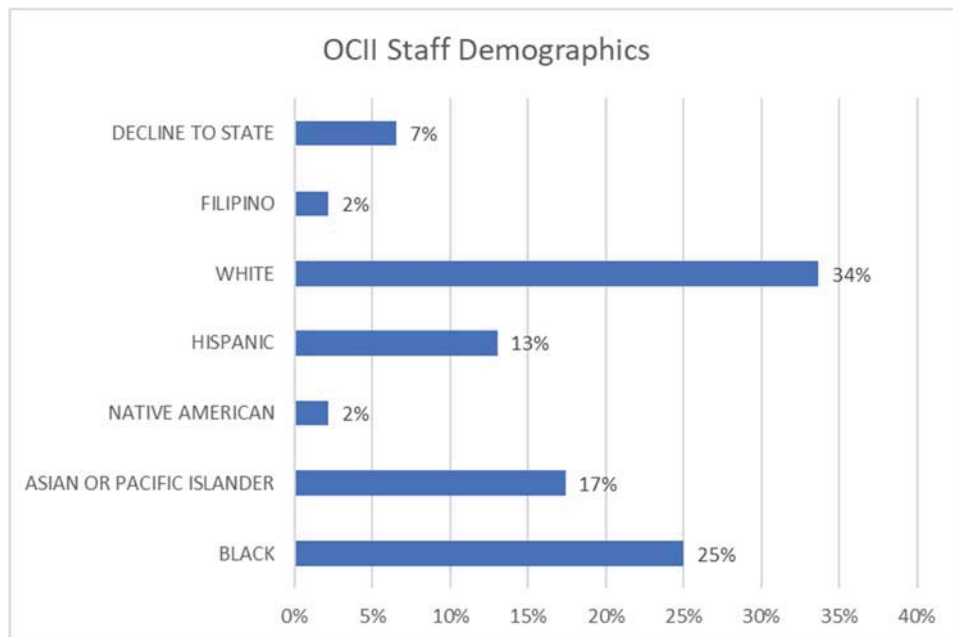
¹ OCII is not a City Department and is therefore technically not subject to applicable City legislation on Racial Equity Action Plans (Board Ordinance 188-19), regardless OCII is fully committed to achieve, the goals of the Racial Equity Ordinance.

² A guidance document for City Departments on addressing implicit and explicit bias, addressing individual, institutional, and structural Racism, and advocating for more inclusive policies and practices that reduce Racial Disparities and promote Racial Equity.

DISCUSSION

The first steps of ORE's Template for Action Plans (Phase 1) are to (1) Identify a Racial Equity Lead; (2) establish a departmental background concerning its contribution to racial inequity; (3) assess workforce demographic data; and (4) undertake a department assessment and employee survey concerning racial equity.

1. Racial Equity Lead. OCII's Racial Equity Lead is Monica Davis Stean, Human Resources and Administrative Services Manager. She is assisted by OCII Racial Equity Team members Maria Pecot, George Bridges and Aaron Foxworthy. All team members have completed one year of training through the Local and Regional Governmental Alliance on Race and Equity, which focused on facilitating the use of systemic analysis to improve equitable outcomes of governmental institutions, which will assist the team in creating OCII's Racial Equity Action Plan.
2. Departmental History Historically, redevelopment agencies have created and reinforced racial inequity through their policies and practices. OCII is no different. Through its past use of eminent domain and focusing blight analyses on neighborhoods of color, many communities of color have suffered through displacement and outmigration. The drop in the African American population in San Francisco is one statistic that can be directly tied to past redevelopment policy and practices. OCII is committed to understanding how we can be a part of rectifying the impact of this history through a rigorous analysis of past policy, its impact on the current communities we serve, and how to examine and address the disparate impact and unintended consequences of our work.
3. Workforce Demographic Data. The City Controller and Department of Human Resources prepared a comprehensive workforce demographic survey for City Departments in early 2020, but this did not include OCII (as a non-City Department). Thus, OCII has undertaken to prepare its own assessment of workforce demographics by analyzing and applying conclusions and recommendations of the City's report to its own data. OCII's preliminary demographic breakdown based on employment application self-identification is as follows:



4. Department Assessment and Employee Survey. OCII's Racial Equity Team, headed by Ms. Pecot, has developed and distributed an anonymous questionnaire that will assess OCII staff experiences concerning:

- Feelings of safety or othering at OCII;
- Interpersonal or institutional racism in OCII;
- Access to training concerning identification, treatment and elimination of racism and/or racially disparate outcomes at OCII;
- Access to professional training opportunities and development
- Access to advancement and promotional opportunities

Results of this survey will be collected over the next 30 days, presented to the Executive Director and reviewed by the Racial Equity Team as it develops implementation measures addressing shortfalls in the above-listed areas, in accordance with ORE's Template for Action Plans (Phase I), in the following general categories:

HIRING AND RECRUITMENT

- Identify, Attract, Invest in and Retain a Diverse Agency Workforce. Racial homogeneity within hiring and recruiting networks reproduce historical inequities in access to family-sustaining, living wage jobs. Therefore, cultivating an inclusive workforce requires intentional efforts in and with diverse, underrepresented and underserved communities.

RETENTION AND PROMOTION

- Retaining a strong workforce means supporting our employees holistically to ensure that they are affirmed, in and out of the office. A competitive salary, inclusive benefits and opportunities for advancement ensure that our workforce can sustain themselves, their family, and communities. A clear and intentional path to promotion addresses barriers to upward mobility that systemically face underrepresented employees. As public agencies historically have limited upward mobility given the long-tenure of its staff, it is incumbent on Leadership to create opportunities for continued learning, training and upskilling.

DISCIPLINE AND SEPARATION

- Managerial practices that surround employee evaluation, monitoring, warning, suspensions, and termination must be applied equally. Employees of color, especially Black and Latinx employees, receive extra scrutiny from supervisors leading to worse performance reviews, missed promotion opportunities, and, oftentimes, termination. Educating supervisors and management on implicit bias and its impact on performance reviews is vital to addressing racial inequities in discipline and separation.

DIVERSE AND EQUITABLE LEADERSHIP

- An Equitable Workplace Starts with Diverse Leadership. Fostering an organizational culture of inclusion and belonging means seeing oneself in every aspect of the workplace. Even the community will benefit because a diverse leadership will be better connected with the community, thus being able to create far more robust and innovative ways to support them.

MOBILITY AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- An organization's success directly tied to the development of its staff. By intentionally investing in the specific professional development of each staff, the department can uplift an employee's journey to developing new skills rather than scrutinizing for a lack of skills. In essence, professional development through mentorship, training, and workshops create an internal pipeline retaining employees to one day fulfill leadership positions.

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE OF INCLUSION AND BELONGING

- Employees must feel welcomed and included at every stage of their employment. Racial homogeneity is not only found in hiring and recruiting, it permeates throughout organizational culture, policies, and procedures. Departments must actively work to create a culture of inclusion and commit to ongoing assessment to uncover gaps in policies and procedures that create a culture of othering. Changes in organizational culture starts and continues with the needs of the employee. These needs are discovered by fostering intentional relationships with underrepresented employees, specifically women, trans employees, Black employees, indigenous employees, employees of color, and employees living with disabilities.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

- An Equitable Workforce Starts with Equitable Decision Making. For many departments, an equitable and diverse leadership does not stop with senior leadership positions. Decisions are also being made in boards and commissions. In partnership with OCII Commission and Oversight Board, the Agency will ensure actions and budget decisions made be assessed through a racial equity lens.

Once developed, these measures will be collated into a single Plan document, with timeline for collecting data on progress on these measures.

NEXT STEPS

The Agency's next steps are to distribute and analyze findings of the Racial Equity Survey and complete the Phase 1 Racial Equity Plan by December 31, 2020 and submit to ORE. ORE will provide feedback and score OCII" Racial Equity Plan in January and February 2021.

(Originated by Monica Davis Stean, Human Resources and Administrative Services Manager)

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Interim Executive Director