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October 2020

Making Moves



Dear Friends:

The path to racial equity is not necessarily linear, and in many instances, we do not have a tried and true roadmap to follow. But, we are not starting from scratch. Throughout American history, Black, Indigenous, people of color, and immigrants have led the struggle for equity and social justice. From voting rights to civil rights to LGBTQ rights, BIPOC and immigrant communities have fought for generations to strengthen our nation and perfect our democracy. As we work to create a more equitable, anti-racist Port, we are building upon and honoring the immeasurable sacrifice and contributions of those communities and those who came before us.

Institutionalizing Racial Equity

On October 13, with the leadership of Commissioner Sam Cho, the Port of Seattle Commission passed a [Racial Bias and Equity Motion](#) to promote racial equity and end structural racism in the Port's workplace and operations. Ultimately, the Port's vision is to become an organization that mirrors — throughout its breadth of operations and services and within its leadership hierarchy — the diversity of the community, instills principles of equity in its culture, and ensures a fair and intentional distribution of opportunities to expand economic development and quality of life for all. To be successful, we must be fiercely committed and focused, knowing that this work will take time, patience, and perseverance. The commitment to racial equity must live beyond the current Commission, our current leadership, and our current staff. The Racial Bias and Equity Motion is critical to institutionalizing equity, so that our efforts to advance racial equity are not lost, but instead become part of the fabric of the Port.

Elements of the Motion

There are five components of the [Racial Bias and Equity Motion](#) — all of which are intended to build on and reaffirm our existing efforts while elevating the need for greater transparency, public accountability, and ensuring Commission engagement and oversight.

1. **Continued support of the efforts of the Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion** to convene Port employees and offer learnings to deepen our analysis of anti-Black racism
2. **Require racial equity and unconscious bias training** for Commissioners, the Executive Director, the Executive Leadership Team, supervisors, managers, and employees
3. **Establish an internal Change Team** with representatives from each division and department within the Port to assess the current state of equity, diversity, and inclusion for all teams.
4. **Assess policies and issues** that have been identified by Port employees as the most challenging barriers to fairly accessing resources and opportunities at the Port
5. **Create a Community Advisory Board** to ensure the Port is accountable to the public in the integration of equity principles into the Port's work



Port of Seattle's Change Team

We recently created and launched the Port's first **Change Team**! A [Change Team](#) is a proven strategy for successful organizational transformation. Our Change Team is a cohort of roughly 110 employees representing all divisions, lines of business, and leadership levels of the Port. The group's mission is to engage every aspect of the Port in using an equity framework in their daily work and decisions.

For the next several months, the members of the Change Team are receiving intensive EDI trainings to develop the skills and tools needed to be racial equity leaders within the Port. At the beginning of 2021, the Change Team — as prescribed in the Racial Bias and Equity Motion — will conduct an equity assessment of every division of the Port. The assessment will be completed by October 31, 2021. Then Change Team members will work within their respective departments and teams to identify department-specific equity goals, and they

will use the assessment as a baseline for this work. We will provide an update on the progress towards these equity goals on an annual basis.

We know that good intentions alone do not create change. We must act and make deliberate decisions to transform into the organization we aspire to be. We are making moves!

With Gratitude,



Bookda Gheisar

Senior Director, Office of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

Centering Equity and Taking Action

- The Port Commission voted to [adopt new, community-sourced names](#) for **six Port-owned parks and shoreline habitat areas** along the Duwamish River. The names reflect the cultural, historical and environmental significance of each site. To commemorate the new names, the Port has released [The Power of Our Stories](#), a video art piece featuring storytellers from the Suquamish, Duwamish, and Muckleshoot tribal communities. The announcement today was the culmination of months of work. The [Incredible Parks Want Incredible Names](#) project, designed in partnership with the Seattle Parks Foundation, solicited nominations from the communities for names that better reflect the cultural, social and environmental significance of each site. More than 4,000 people sent messages urging selection of indigenous place names and Lushootseed words for local wildlife and natural features. Participating in the Commission meeting were Warren KingGeorge, Muckleshoot Tribe; Sharon Leishman, Duwamish Alive Coalition; and Jolene Hass and Cecile Hansen of the Duwamish Tribe.
- Referring to people in the way and manner they choose is basic human dignity. This includes the **pronouns that we use for each other**. Many Port employees share their pronouns in their email signature and/or incorporate this into introductions at meetings. Making this a common practice — as normal as sharing our name — is one way that we are creating a culture of belonging and inclusion at the Port. In light of [International Pronouns Day](#), a Pathfinder at SEA shares a story of her conversation with a passenger about the [importance of pronouns](#).
- On Monday, October 12, many in our region and country celebrated **Indigenous People's Day**, celebrating and honor the culture, contributions, and histories of Native and Indigenous communities. The Port's Tonisha Simmons (Senior Administrative Assistant and member of the Port's Native American Committee) shares what [Indigenous People's Day](#) means to her.

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Commission Ryan Calkins
Sam Cho

10/30/2020

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