

Thurston Regional Planning Council

DIVERSITY STATEMENT

October 2020

Thurston Regional Planning Council (TRPC) is a public agency governed by a council comprised of elected and appointed officials from jurisdictions and organizations in the Thurston region. The agency – as well as the council – are both often referred to as “TRPC.” To distinguish between the two, this document uses the term “Agency” when referring to the organization, and the term “Council” when referring to the elected and appointed members of TRPC.

The Council is committed to creating an environment that values and respects individual differences. For the purpose of this statement, the Council broadly defines diversity to include differences based on age, income, race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, religious background or preference, and ability. The Council also recognizes that individual perspectives, situations, and abilities such as communication style, parental status, military service, educational background, job classification, life experience, physical capabilities, and other variables influence and enrich every agency project and program. The Council oversees an Agency commitment to cultural competency: the integration and transformation of knowledge about individuals and groups of people into specific standards, policies, practices, and attitudes used in appropriate cultural settings to enhance the quality and equity of services.

PURPOSE

The Council formally recognizes the value of diversity as it relates to the work of Council members, Transportation Policy Board, other committees, and staff. The Council believes that considering and valuing diverse perspectives enhances the effectiveness of the Agency by improving communication, problem solving, and decision-making.

The purpose of this statement is to maximize the Council's ability to respond to the needs of an increasingly diverse region.

This statement is meant to complement, not replace, Agency policies that reflect State and Federal laws regarding wage and hours, civil rights, health and safety, and unemployment/workers compensation, and programmatic guidelines such as those relating to Environmental Justice and the Americans With Disabilities Act.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

The Council promotes an atmosphere that recognizes and respects diversity both in the agency and in the region. The Agency commits to the following objectives and action items:

Objective: To promote awareness and understanding of diversity and its value to the agency, members, and staff.

Actions:

- Disseminate this statement to all member representatives and staff to ensure an agency-wide understanding of the Council's commitment to diversity.
- In all Agency operations and activities, look for ways that diversity can serve the goals of the Council.
- Foster awareness and sensitivity about diversity and its value through education and training opportunities and information dissemination.
- Encourage and promote cultural competency, emphasizing the idea of effectively operating in different cultural contexts.

- Institute a cultural self-assessment process to monitor implementation of this statement. The process will include, but not be limited to the following initiatives:
 - In the Agency’s annual review of policies and procedures, evaluate the effectiveness of implementation of this diversity statement. Identify any new opportunities that support and/or enhance the Agency’s diversity initiative.
 - Include diversity in program and project review to monitor integration into day- to-day operations of the Agency.
 - Monitor documents/resources/products developed by the Agency to ensure that they are accessible and reflect the diversity of the region in a useful and meaningful manner.

Objective: To promote awareness and understanding of diversity and its value to the region.

Actions:

- Use multiple means of distributing information, including posting on the agency website.
- Disseminate the diversity statement and as requested, make it available in multiple languages and formats.
- Maintain a current profile of the region’s demographic diversity.
- Continue to find new and effective ways to encourage our increasingly diverse community to engage in public process and planning efforts.
- Ensure that project schedules, meeting dates and times, and other input opportunities foster diverse participation.
- Participate, when appropriate, in community organizations, networks, and events that promote the value of diversity.
- Act as an example in the region and community for inclusiveness and full participation.