



SEATTLE CITY COUNCIL | DISTRICT 1

COUNCILMEMBER LISA HERBOLD

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Seattle Council Confirmation Questions and Responses**

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Racial Equity Toolkit (RET) process

1. How do you plan to support the ongoing RET process given your unique position of being able to influence it, and the risk of undue political influence from the Mayor's Office?

In the time that remains in the RET process, I anticipate continuing to support the process as I have been -- from a distance. This distance is intentional and important to the integrity of the process. It is important that any participation on my part not influence the process or outcomes. Additionally, I believe that the work I started when I first assumed the role of Interim Director, of engaging staff in a strategic planning process, will contribute to the RET process. We have finalized our Values, Vision and Mission and are now in a process of aligning our body of work with them. I believe this process and information flowing from it will be helpful information for the RET team as they assess the best structure, leadership and positioning of SOCR. By the same token, the RET's thorough community engagement and RET team analysis will be essential to the strategic planning process over the coming year.

In the coming months, the RET team will engage in a process to analyze their findings and make recommendations. I think the best way to ensure the integrity of the process is to have full transparency at every step including review and discussion of the final report and its findings.

2. How do you plan to support the office after the RET report has been submitted to Council, and if Council moves forward in implementing major changes to SOCR?

I will provide opportunities and space for all staff to engage in conversation about the RET report and any subsequent changes. My role will be to assist in preparing the office for any possible changes or any transition that is required. Without knowing exactly what the

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changes may entail, my goal will be to support a smooth transition and provide stability to the staff and office operations during that process. This includes of course, any transition of leadership including my own, if that is an outcome of implementation of the recommendations.

3. In what ways have you been supporting both the RET process and SOCR staff since you have become interim director?

When I first became interim director, I heard from staff that the period immediately preceding my appointment, had been challenging in a variety of ways. High on the list of reasons was the relationship between SOCR and the prior administration. This led to a high level of distrust and concern about SOCR's relationship with the new mayor and my willingness and ability to protect the office from undue political influence. My focus during the first year as interim director has been on providing stability to office operations; transparency in how I manage the organization; building trusting relationships with staff; and working to secure the resources the department needs to fulfill its mission and statutory responsibilities.

As noted in the previous answer, given my position and its potential to influence the RET process, I have remained distanced from the day-to-day process. Initially however, to ramp up for our office's role in the RET, I participated in the hiring process for the RET Strategic Advisor and helped the staff develop a process to recruit the RET team. Once those were in place, I removed myself from the RET team selection process and have remained at arm's length from the RET ever since. To date, my support of the RET process has been centered on providing support for the Strategic Advisor assigned to coordinate the RET process and allowing flexibility for SOCR staff to participate in RET engagement sessions

4. How do you adapt to major change when it occurs?

I have a high level of comfort with ambiguity and change. In some ways, my appointment as Interim Director has been, in effect, an assignment of "change manager". The RET process had been determined and codified by ordinance. I was asked to lead the department during a period of transition. When change occurs, I assess the situation and the potential impacts of change, and work to make the transition a positive and productive one. In the case of the RET and the potential changes that it may bring, it will be important to undertake an engagement process involving internal and external stakeholders. This will be necessary whether any proposed changes are drastic or very limited, as there are many people whose lives and livelihoods are impacted by our office. The RET community engagement process has had the dual purpose of both gathering input from impacted communities and providing many more people with information about SOCR's mission and operations. It will be important to continue to engage with them as changes are implemented and to continue to nurture these relationships.

On doing anti-racist work in a racist institution

1. As a leader of anti-racist and social justice work in an institution, more than positional and institutional power are needed – power must also come from community support. What are your relationships with the anti-racist organizing community in Seattle? To whom are you accountable?

I am accountable to those people and communities historically and currently impacted by structural and institutional racism and other oppressions that are the City's legacy and its responsibility to undo. The concept of community is used often but not consistently. I don't believe that we can always separate City employees from community, as they are often members of impacted communities themselves. Internally, I am accountable to all City employees, centering those most impacted by inequitable practices and policies.

The area where that I look forward to working on is in building and strengthening my own relationships with the anti-racist organizing community in Seattle. Some of those relationships were part of, but not the major focus for me in, my role with the City of Seattle's Youth Violence Prevention Initiative. My first year at SOCR has been internally focused. I am committed to working on these relationships moving forward. I am incredibly fortunate to count on many staff who are committed anti-racist organizers with deep roots in the community and relationships with the anti-racist organizing community. I seek their guidance and support in building and strengthening my own relationships. They have been immeasurably helpful to me since I came on board, in holding me accountable and working with me and our SOCR team to bring our work into alignment with anti-racist principles.

2. Part of social justice work is centering communities most impacted by the policies of the institution. How will you respond if the communities most impacted by a policy proposed by the Mayor or any other elected official strongly object to that policy because of the negative impacts it will have on those communities?

I would raise that objection with the Mayor or other elected official to make sure that they consider the opposing views. If needed, I would continue to elevate the community's position throughout the policy-making or decision-making process. Because I believe that the strongest advocates for a community's interests are those community members themselves, I would work to bring their voices directly to the decision-making tables.

The most impacted communities are made up of diverse perspectives. It will be important to ensure that there is open communication so that the wealth of their lived experience and knowledge are brought to bear. To do so, often means advocating for a racial equity analysis or RET so that potential unintended negative consequences can be assessed before

the policy is implemented. As an office, in numerous instances, we have pressed for a racial equity analysis, and will continue to do so.

3. Though the City as a whole is committed to Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI), SOCR has a unique role in that your mission specifically names anti-racism: “To end structural racism and discrimination through accountable community relationships and anti-racist organizing, policy development and civil rights enforcement.” Part of anti-racism is the ability to disrupt inequitable decision making and question the power of the status quo, including challenging those who hold power. Given this mission, as well as the placement of the Race and Social Justice Initiative within your office:
 - a. How do you plan to handle situations in which the commissions you advise or your staff make recommendations (either internally or externally facing) that are in line with anti-racism and RSJI but not necessarily positions that elected officials across City government (the Mayor, Councilmembers, and judges) want to move forward on?

With respect to commissions, I will continue to reaffirm their independent voice. Commissions are a critical bridge to the communities they represent and the causes they advocate. Because of their independence and voluntary nature, it can't be expected or required that they align their positions with any of the three branches of government. SOCR's staff liaisons also counsel commissions on different strategies to advance their positions or requests; this might entail helping commissioners to understand the roles of different individuals/offices within the different branches of government and the timeframes to consider for them to be most effective.

With respect to staff, when we have recommendations or positions that are in line with anti-racism and RSJI, but not aligned with the Mayor or other elected officials, we will have to assess what is the best strategy to move our position forward. The Mayor and I have discussed and agreed that it is important for SOCR to be able to hold positions that may not be in alignment with hers. When those situations arise, I will share that disagreement with her and/or her designees so they understand the reasoning behind our position.

There are decisions to be made on a daily basis, some big, some small, that have the potential to align with anti-racist principles and RSJI. Each situation will have any number of factors to consider, including who stands to benefit and who will bear the burden of a position. All of this must be taken into consideration in determining how to address each situation as it arises.

- b. Are there ways that you can use your position to assist, for instance, a Commission to move forward towards accomplishing an objective even in a circumstance when the Mayor or Council's decision is not aligned with the Commission objective at that particular moment in time?

My leadership style is based on building relationships. What I have found to be effective to advance a position to which there is opposition or lack of alignment, is to meet with people in person, one-on-one, or in small groups, to fully explore what is at the root of their opposition. If a Commission were to seek my support in moving forward towards accomplishing an objective that is not aligned with the Mayor or Council, my position as SOCR director could be helpful in securing for the Commission the audience needed to present their plan or position. I also have the ability to advocate for Commissions in one-on-one conversations with Mayor's Office staff and/or Councilmembers.

- c. Conversely, how will you address a situation in which elected officials want to move forward with proposals that have not been analyzed with a racially equitable lens or that the commissions or your office agree are not racially equitable?

I will present our objections to how things are being implemented and advocate for a racial equity analysis or RET. If this is not successful, we ourselves can also raise concerns of impacted communities, reflecting what we have heard from them and building on the relationships SOCR staff have with impacted communities.

Another strategy is to collaborate with other departments whose work may also be impacted by the proposal. Sometimes, the power of hearing multiple perspectives can be more effective in getting a message across.

- d. Do you see differences in the role you can play depending on which set of elected officials are making decisions, i.e. the elected official to whom you directly report (the Mayor) vs. the Council vs. elected judges?

In each case, my role is one of exerting my personal influence through relationships and dialogue as I don't have positional influence with any of the electeds. In each case, in addition to relying on my personal integrity and reputation, I would provide information that can help in decision making. I would also look to community for their leadership and input in order to exert influence and advocate effectively. The support can come from both internal City community and external communities impacted by the decisions of elected officials. The strength of that community support directly impacts the influence the director wields within the institution.

4. How do you plan to lead the office in doing anti-racist work ending structural racism when the office is housed within a racist institution, is charged with administering racist laws that we at the municipal level cannot necessarily change, and is subject to racist contracting and other policies developed and entrenched without a race centered lens?

The tension exists, and will continue to exist, between SOCR's mission to end structural and institutional racism and the work of the City that continues to produce racially disproportionate outcomes. That doesn't mean that we don't continue to do the work, endeavor to be effective, and struggle with the dichotomy. It means that staff and leadership will experience internal conflict and ambivalence. It means that SOCR needs a compassionate anti-racist organizational culture in which to work and support each other. I am trying to develop that organizational culture even as I learn more about how to be an anti-racist leader myself.

5. In the 2018 budget process, the Council approved a reclassification of RSJI positions and associated budget adds that were causing pay and structural inequity within SOCR. It is unlikely that these classifications are the only source of inequity in SOCR or the other offices and departments throughout the City. How will you address such internal staff inequities moving forward?

My initial focus is internal because it is within my direct purview to act upon. The reclassification of the RSJI positions is not the only area in which I am taking action to address historical pay and structure inequity within SOCR. In the short term, I am working with my management team and SDHR to find solutions within our current resources.

At the Citywide level, there are differences in pay and job classifications from one department to another. It is important to identify and resolve these discrepancies and I am committed to working with SDHR and other departments to do so. The issue of inequity of pay and job classifications is endemic across the institution and requires a system-wide assessment. As advocates for equity within the City, we will continue to raise this issue and ask that it be addressed in the comprehensive manner it merits.

I will continue to explore other venues to continue to raise this concern. This is an issue that could potentially be explored in the Good Government Subcabinet, taken up with the new SDHR Director, and/or brought into discussions with the Anti-Harassment IDT, among possible avenues for action.

6. As you know, some of the nuances of doing anti-racism work include intentionally not centering whiteness and being aware and battling anti-blackness, in both white communities and within communities of color. How do you plan to address this issue both with your staff, with City staff more widely, and when you see it in the communities you serve?

At SOCR, we work to disrupt white-centering and anti-blackness in our work and interactions. We are fortunate to have anti-racist organizers who are skilled in recognizing and calling out these issues in real time. Identifying when we have centered whiteness has been helpful in restarting hiring processes as well as looking at how we run meetings and what we are prioritizing at any given time. This is an ongoing process of learning and practice. It has been helpful for staff to hold me and each other accountable when we find ourselves centering whiteness. So, at the staff level, we will continue to support each other's learning and work to hold ourselves and each other accountable. My role as a leader in this space requires that I am humble enough to recognize when I center whiteness and work to become more aware and mindful. It also means creating the trust and space for staff to feel comfortable raising these concerns about our office, management, and/or other instances when centering whiteness or anti-blackness is impacting our work.

Knowing how much self-reflection this work requires at a personal and officewide level, puts the Citywide work in perspective. At the City staff level, these concepts are introduced in RSJI trainings through both content and methodology. The RSJI team works to support Change Teams and employees in their efforts to raise these issues in their departments. As a department director, I will also work to bring these issues to the RSJI Directors Forum and as a peer learner.

In the communities we serve, as in other spaces, it's important to name anti-blackness and centering whiteness when it is occurring or as a debrief of a process or meeting. Because our culture is white-normative, this is a practice that requires awareness, continuous attention and a willingness to raise the issue.

7. What role will you take to advocate that the creation of the proposed new regional entity to address homelessness involves people with lived experiences in its creation and results in a mission that strives to address regional, systemic issues of inequity related to race, gender, sexual orientation, age, and abilities?

From what I understand, the process to develop the recommendations and proposed actions of the new regional entity included, and elevated, the voices and perspectives of those most impacted by homelessness including people of color, LGBTQ folks, youth and people living with disabilities. The planning process and recommendations laid a foundation for a regional entity that centers those perspectives and includes people with lived experience of homelessness. The critical next steps will be to ensure that this

commitment is sustained as the entity is established and its structure and funding are determined. Housing access and equity are aligned with SOCR's values and mission. As such we will seek to contribute to the process to develop the new regional entity and bring our experience and expertise to the table.

In a recent example, SOCR held the responsibility of convening the Reentry Workgroup. In this effort, people with lived experience of incarceration were integral to the Reentry Workgroup deliberations and recommendation-making process. We know that considerations of budget, scheduling, services, stipends and more must be taken into account in order to tap the expertise of people with lived experience. We look forward to playing a role and hope to share lessons learned from this approach with the new regional entity.

8. How do you determine what information is most relevant when you are receiving information from multiple sources? How do you balance the importance of lived experiences with data in those instances when each points to a different conclusion?

It's important to assess each source of information carefully. Data and research can be very helpful and informative in making decisions, but they can often lead to conflicting conclusions. "Who conducted the study, where, with whom and when?" are important questions to consider when assessing the validity and value of the data and the conclusions. In my experience, research and quantitative data can sometimes lag behind lived experience of the people involved in the issue being studied. For that reason, it is always critical to take into account current realities of the lived experiences of those who will be impacted by decisions we make.

In a project I helped launch and lead, Rainier Beach: A Beautiful Safe Place for Youth, we worked with researchers and more than 100 community members to analyze data – both quantitative and qualitative, to develop non-arrest solutions to youth crime. We emphasized the importance of bringing community members' own "data" of lived experience to the process. From the onset of the project, all were clear that the crime data we had was incomplete without the qualitative data from, and active leadership of, those who live, work and engage in the area. The effort is owned by the local community and continues to drive positive neighborhood outcomes. This would not have been possible if we relied on official crime data alone.

General

1. What do you see as the greatest challenges for SOCR as an office, and for each division of the office (enforcement, policy, RSJI)?

- **As an office:** Sustaining an independent voice, as discussed above, is a structural challenge for an office whose mission is to eliminate structural and institutional racism but which exists within the institution itself. Reporting to a branch of the government - whichever branch that may be – requires accountability to a power structure that is producing inequitable outcomes.
- **Enforcement:** Pay inequities between SOCR investigators and investigators in other departments, have made it challenging to retain staff. This has resulted in staff turnover and extended investigations as cases are transferred from one investigator to another. Over the last several years, new laws have been passed which may be contributing to the increase in cases for OCR. Past efforts have been aimed at anticipating these increases -- OCR received three additional staff for its enforcement budget in the 2017 budget to help manage the impact of these new laws as well as to support its employment and testing program. One of these positions was an investigator. OCR is closely monitoring its caseload to track the impact of these new laws on our ability to deliver high quality customer service.

Currently, the waitlist numbers indicate that we don't have sufficient capacity to keep pace of current complaints. Even the number of complaints we receive is with only minimal outreach and education about civil rights protections. If we were to expand our outreach efforts so that more people became aware of their rights, it is likely that the gap between demand and capacity would increase. Another challenge for the Enforcement team is exploring how to advance equity while constrained by laws aimed at ensuring equality.

- **Policy:** A structural challenge for the Policy team has also been referenced above – the challenge of holding positions or wanting to advocate for positions that are different from or more expansive than those of the Mayor's Office. An additional, related challenge is developing a close collaborative, consultative relationship with the Mayor's policy team and the Mayor's office with each new administration. This requires building critical institutional relationships – oftentimes from scratch – while working on on-going policy issues and responding to new ones.
- **RSJI:** Among the challenges for the RSJI team are:
 - Holding the tension between leading anti-racist work and being part of a racist institution. As noted above, this is a challenge for the whole office, however, the

RSJI team are on the frontlines of advancing the anti-racist work throughout departments and are confronted with both the pushback and the disappointment of employees on a daily basis.

- Managing expectations of employees, especially employees of color and those with longstanding commitment to RSJI. There are deeply held expectations of what RSJI will be able to deliver in terms of ensuring that race and social justice are drivers of policy, practice and workplace culture. We are far from where we'd like to be, so the team is under stress at all times.
- Meeting the demand for training and technical assistance is related to the previous challenge but is one of capacity. The team is currently under-capacity to deliver all of the trainings and technical assistance to departments that are requested and/or required. With the increased demands posed by the recommendations from the Anti-Harassment IDT, the discrepancy between capacity and demand will increase.

2. What are your goals for the office while you lead it?

- **Strategic Planning:** Align SOCR's work to our mission, vision and values. The initial work to reach staff consensus on SOCR's mission, vision and values was accomplished over the course of last year. In order to achieve cohesion and unity as an office, the next step is to examine our bodies of work and ensure that they are aligned with mission and are consistent with a path toward our vision. This will also entail taking into account the feedback that comes with the RET report.
- **Staff Support and Professional Development:** Establish pay equity both internally and as compared to other departments. Support and develop staff so that they have opportunities for personal and professional growth and feel positively challenged and valued.
- **Resource Development:** Secure sufficient resources to adequately support our work. This is obviously a challenge given budget constraints however, I was successful in securing non-City resources by getting approval as a host site for a 2-year Post-doc Fellow who will help support our RSJI research and documentation efforts. I am hopeful that there will be other opportunities to increase our resources in creative ways.
- **Internal Operations:** Sustain stability of office functions and staffing, with continued attention to self-care and healing.

3. Does SOCR have the necessary authority to ensure accountability for the requirement that departments do four racial equity toolkits a year? Does SOCR have the authority to make alterations to the RET process, as necessary, to ensure the RET can be effective in

achieving accountability? What other steps do you believe SOCR could and other departments should take to increase their transparency and accountability?

Department RETs: SOCR does not have authority to require accountability for departments to conduct four RETs per year. The Mayor has included this as a requirement for executive departments. We are working with the Mayor's office to develop a stronger accountability system.

Alterations to the RET Process: SOCR holds the RET process and indeed, was in the process of updating the toolkit a few years ago. Insufficient staff capacity caused this project to be set aside but we consider it within our purview to do so when possible. Building in accountability as noted above, is not within SOCR's scope. For executive departments, this would be the purview of the Mayor and we are working with her to develop that such a process.

Transparency and Accountability: We are working to reinstate ROSA (RSJI Outcomes, Strategies and Actions), a database where RSJI workplans are entered and a public facing platform displaying the plans. This should go a long way in establishing transparency and accountability for departments. This is an external-facing platform where departments' equity workplans and updates are posted. The site has been down for several years and we are working with IT to reestablish it.

Moving forward, we are exploring how to implement a longtime vision for a Racial Equity Lab that would exist on a more flexible, user-friendly platform such as Sharepoint.

4. One of the common frustrations that has surfaced in feedback from City employees and community members is the lack of accountability that City institutions have to communities most impacted by the decisions made and policy developed by those institutions. How will you be accountable to these communities, especially when they disagree with those decisions or policies?

While SOCR or I may not have the power to change the decisions or policies of other City institutions, we can continue to provide information, and raise the concerns, frustrations and disagreements of the communities most impacted by them. We also provide technical assistance, coaching and support to departments in conducting Racial Equity Toolkit analyses. Sometimes we are successful in altering those decisions. Nonetheless, it is our role to ensure that the concerns are raised. As an office, we must nurture and sustain accountable community relationships so that we understand and can raise issues with integrity and respect.

5. Given that SOCR leads gender equity for the City, what have you been doing and what will you do to create an inclusive culture in which employees or other people that come to the office who are gender non-conforming or are transgender feel liberated to be their authentic selves?

I will continue to support SOCR's Gender Justice Project to advance gender equity and will endeavor to increase resources for the work currently underway. This body of work, led by one Gender Justice Policy Analyst with periodic temporary support, has been widely acknowledged as exceptionally helpful. Departments have requested this training and technical assistance. Last year, with funding SOCR received, we developed a training module on gender and gender identity. We would like to pilot it this summer if we are able to secure the needed resources to implement the training.

My support of the Gender Justice Project will also include raising up the gender justice work such as the City's *Guidance on Gender Identity in the Workplace* and technical assistance to departments including our own. It is essential that our own OCR staff be well trained and versed in gender justice as we are all on the frontlines of interaction with the public and/or supporting executive and non-executive departments as they tackle race and social justice.

6. Are there other barriers that we should be aware of that impact SOCR's ability to advocate for an equitable city?

The questions in this document indicate a strong understanding of the challenges facing SOCR: insufficient resources, inequitable pay scales relative to other City departments, the tension between undertaking anti-racist work in a racist institution, and the potential for undue influence from electeds.

An additional challenge for our office is the changing body of work that has sometimes been the result of legislative action. While the office attempts to prioritize and plan, this is difficult when assignments that do not necessarily align with SOCR priorities are assigned to our office sometimes with – sometimes without - funding for attendant staff.

The reach of RSJI is wide and deep through Change Teams and Core Team alumni. A barrier to tapping into this resource is the need for departmental acknowledgment of, and leadership support for, the work these individuals and groups undertake to advance equity. Official acknowledgment of these efforts and "employee resource groups" (similar to affinity groups), allowing them to be included in compensated time during the workday, would be a sea change in RSJI capacity Citywide.

7. How can you commit to, not only engagement with and accountability to community, but also that you will seek the guidance of community?

I plan to seek out the guidance of community partners and take into account their shared concerns and interest in the future of SOCR. One way to do this is through the many staff relationships in community that keep our office in communication and relationship with them. In addition to building and strengthening my own relationships in community, I would also like to explore the idea of directly engaging informal community advisors. I think this would be a good way for me to ensure regular two-way communication so that I am regularly accountable to community and also have the opportunity to seek feedback and input.

8. Would you consider shifting the administrative tasks held by the commission staff liaisons to another administrative position in order to allow the commission staff liaisons to provide more policy assistance to the commissions?

Yes, that would be ideal. I would welcome the ability to do just that however, SOCR has only 1.5 administrative positions officewide who already have responsibility for some commission tasks along with a full scope of additional responsibilities. We are continuing to explore how we can better serve the commissions as we recognize that we are not able to provide them with sufficient support in our current configuration and staffing.

9. How will you be proactive in proposing policy towards the objective of making Seattle a welcoming city, rather than being an organization that is oriented to proposing policy in reaction to a problem arising?

I believe our work, over the coming year, to create a strategic plan that aligns our priorities with our Values, Vision and Mission and takes into account the feedback we receive from the SOCR RET, is a critical step in becoming a proactive agent for change in the City. Currently, the office not only responds to problems arising, but also to requests for support, partnership, and participation in many issues and initiatives across City departments. It is necessary to establish our priorities and strategies so that decisions to respond and react are measured against the yardstick of a Strategic Plan. This will assist us in becoming more centered and less susceptible to being pulled into important but not mission-aligned endeavors.