

Draft Director's Report and Recommendation

Equitable Development Initiative Advisory Board

September 8, 2020

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

The proposal is a legislative action to amend Section 3.14 of the Seattle Municipal Code to add sections establishing a permanent advisory board for the Equitable Development Initiative (EDI) administered by the Office of Planning and Community Development (OPCD) in coordination with other City departments.

The purpose of the EDI Advisory Board is to provide guidance to the City on the implementation of the EDI and to ensure that the program furthers the City's Race and Social Justice Initiative (RSJI) goals. The board implements the accountability goals of the Equitable Development Implementation Plan and develops funding criteria and creates recommendations for the allocation of the EDI Fund.

BACKGROUND AND PROPOSAL

Background

The EDI was created in 2015. As part of its inception, Council adopted the [Equitable Development Implementation Plan](#), which outlined the core goals and strategies. Part of the Implementation Plan included a framework for stewardship of the initiative (page 51-54). That section specifically states that "... in order to successfully eliminate institutional racism and achieve racial equity, it is imperative to incorporate the expertise of those communities who have borne the burden of racial inequalities."

In early 2017, OPCD established an Interim Advisory Board to provide guidance on the structure of the EDI, particularly around the procedures for implementing the financial strategies outlined in the Implementation Plan including the distribution of EDI funds.

At the end of 2017, Council adopted Ordinance 125473, which required OPCD "to submit a resolution by July 1, 2018 to formally create a community advisory board to advise on the implementation of the Equitable Development Initiative" to realize the goals of the stewardship plan.

At the request of the Interim Advisory Board, OPCD extended the process of the board creation to ensure that the proposed structure adequately meets the needs of impacted communities. The proposed legislation creates a permanent board structure that follows the intent of the Implementation Plan and centers the needs of community members impacted by institutional

racism.

Based on conversations with the Interim Advisory Board and advice from Law, it became clear that a resolution would not be sufficient to meet the core community objectives for the permanent body. Instead, in order to sufficiently formalize the desired structure, OPCD has developed an ordinance as the vehicle for creating the permanent Advisory Board.

Proposal

Membership

The legislation would create a Board consisting of 13 members, 8 appointed by the Mayor and 5 appointed by the Board. All appointments will require confirmation from the City Council, consistent with City practice for other Boards and Commissions.

OPCD staff has worked with Law to address potential legal barriers to the board appointment process. The legislation requires the Board to adopt bylaws that provide transparency and accountability in the selection process, and to ensure that the needs of impacted communities are represented. The Mayoral appointments and Council review serve as important checks and balances within the Board.

Both Law and the Interim Advisory Board have recommended that the exact processes for selecting the board-appointed seats be kept flexible to allow the EDI to develop best practices that would be useful for increasing representation on other City Boards and Commissions, since significant barriers to participation continue to exist.

The legislation also provides guidance on membership criteria. The criteria are intended to ensure representation from the communities most impacted by displacement as well as acknowledging the multiple identities and perspectives that are critical to a successfully functioning advisory body.

Compensation

The legislation also presents a recommendation for including a compensation structure for participation. Community stakeholders have been consistent and nearly unanimous in identifying the lack of compensation as a barrier to participating in City processes. Options explored include flexible language around the compensation rates versus a more fixed method of compensation. The proposed language represents a balanced approach between these options, and meets the needs of community members. In addition, OPCD staff has coordinated with CBO to ensure that the language in the Ordinance is not likely to interfere with any policy recommendations created by CBO in response to Council SLI CBO-3-A-2 to study board and commission compensation citywide.

RECOMMENDATION

OPCD recommends approval of the proposed legislation to create a permanent structure for the EDI Advisory Board. The recommended language furthers the City's RSJI goals, codifies racial equity best practices, and completes the task outlined by Ordinance 125473.