

Date: March 12, 2024
To: Environmental Quality Commission
From: Leah Feldon, Director
Subject: Agenda item J, Informational item: Strategic Planning Update
March 21-22, 2024, EQC meeting

Purpose of item DEQ will inform and update the commission on the process for developing a new strategic plan, grounded in principles of antiracism and equity. This plan is due to the Governor by June 2024.

Background In mid-2022, DEQ re-initiated a process to develop a strategic plan. This work is currently being led by a team of individuals who work across various programs within DEQ.

With the assistance of a project manager, Sue Langston, and consultant, Engage to Change, the strategic planning team is committed to rooting our strategic plan – and the process to develop it – in concepts of antiracism, anti-oppression and equity. One way to define antiracism is: A belief or practice that recognizes pervasive racism, and actively combats racial prejudice and discrimination to promote racial justice and equality. This is a significant difference from the way this work has typically been done at DEQ.

At its November 2023 meeting, the EQC heard updates focused on the process the team is taking to center the voices of those most impacted, including BIPOC staff, in the development of the plan. We believe strongly that this approach will result in the traditional benefits of strategic planning (i.e. setting agency priorities, measuring progress) while also prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion in our work, shifting the agency’s culture, and building capacity for thoughtful anti-racist community engagement.

Since the last update the team has continued to engage groups within the DEQ to inform the plan’s development, including:

- Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) staff
- BIPOC managers
- DEI Council
- DEQ Support Staff

- Veterans
- DEQ Pride
- Disability affinity group
- Vehicle Inspection Program
- A subcommittee established to develop a goal specific to tribal relations

The plan also relies on information from:

- An environmental scan previously completed by the consultancy Berry Dunn
- A Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis previously conducted by the consultancy Berry Dunn
- An Organizational Assessment conducted by the consultancy Engage to Change
- Templates and plan requirements developed by the Office of Governor Kotek
- Planning documents and materials prepared by the Environmental Justice Working Group

Key plan elements

As shared in November, Governor Kotek expects all agency strategic plans to include the following key elements:

- Vision statement
- Mission statement
- Values
- Goals and outcomes
- Strategies and actions
- Monitoring and evaluation of strategic plan

Vision Statement

A vision statement is an articulation of the future DEQ is striving to create. The team is currently seeking feedback and reactions on the following DRAFT vision statements:

1. *Clean skies, pristine waters, pollution-free communities everywhere in Oregon.*
2. *A beautiful, just, and thriving Oregon for all.*
3. *Fair and just environmental protection for all who live, work and play in Oregon.*

Mission Statement

A mission statement describes the purpose of DEQ and serves to inspire and connect its workforce around a unifying charge. The team is currently seeking feedback on the following DRAFT mission statements:

1. *We protect and nurture the environment for the health and wellbeing of all living things.*

2. *We guide sustainable and equitable environmental protection for all those who live, work and play in Oregon.*
3. *We advance environmental justice and protection for the health and wellbeing of all who call Oregon home.*
4. *We center racial equity in protecting and nurturing the environment for the health and wellbeing of all.*

Values

The team has done extensive work preparing value statements based on the process described in previous reports. Value statements are an articulation of what DEQ strives to embody, every day, in its journey to become an antiracist organization and in its protection of public health and the environment. Draft value statements include:

- **Care:** *All employees and the communities we serve feel supported, respected and included.*
- **Transparency:** *We are open and visible in how we make policies and decisions.*
- **Accountability:** *We take responsibility for the impact of our words and actions with each other and the communities we serve.*
- **Growth mindset:** *We encourage collaboration, curiosity, learning from our mistakes, trying new things and healthy questioning of dominant systems and status quo.*
- **Inclusion:** *We center the voices and stories of people who historically have been excluded or silenced.*
- **Justice:** *We prioritize communities that have suffered disproportionate harm and believe all people have a right to a healthy ecosystem and climate.*
- **Joy:** *We take pride in and are passionate about our work, knowing we are helping improve the environmental, physical and economic health of our communities and our planet.*

Goal Setting

Based on the process described in this report and at previous commission meetings, the team has identified the following themes as key issues to be considered in the strategic plan. In the coming month the team will be working to better understand and prioritize these issues for goal setting:

- *Organizational culture*
- *Environmental Justice*
- *Climate Change*
- *Community Engagement*
- *Tribal Relations*
- *Modernizing and innovating*
- *Enhancing internal and external partnerships and collaborations*
- *Workload*

EQC involvement DEQ intends to bring a draft plan to the commission for its affirmation in May 2024, followed by ongoing work to design an implementation plan.

Report prepared by the Strategic Planning Team

Translation or other formats

[Español](#) | [한국어](#) | [繁體中文](#) | [Русский](#) | [Tiếng Việt](#) | [العربية](#)
800-452-4011 | TTY: 711 | deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov

Non-discrimination statement

DEQ does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, disability, age or sex in administration of its programs or activities. Visit DEQ's [Civil Rights and Environmental Justice page](#).