CCRPC Equity Advisory Committee Meeting

Wednesday, April 26th, 5:00-6:30pm | Via Zoom

Participants: Jasim Mudafar**,** Omar Derzi, Ahmed Mohamed, Mike O'Brien, Lydia Diamond, Ragab Mohamed, Faried Munarsyah, Zoraya Hightower, Rachel Batterson, Bruce Wilson (EAC Members); Mona Tolba (Translator & Participant); Malana Rogers Bursen (The Creative Discourse Group); Anne Nelson Stoner, Eleni Churchill (CCRPC Staff)

1. **Welcome, Updates and Announcements**

Anne Nelson welcomed participants, (re)introduced Malana from The Creative Discourse Group and explained she has been working with her on exploring participatory budgeting. As an icebreaker, Malana asked everyone to share the last full album they listened to.

2. **Overview of Last Meeting**

Anne Nelson provided a brief reminder of what was discussed during the last meeting and shared the following links in the chat.

Progress Report:
https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1vQJ91EQ7KPNxL76tQVeX3D1o59IZHRcKADfbuNUUBjE/edit?usp=sharing

Network Map: https://miro.com/app/board/uXjVMcs3sFc=/?share_link_id=307269717364

Federal Transportation Funds to Build Civic Infrastructure Project Description:
https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EZXzsXvogn-f69wnKRZ1zZP6ZUTIwha1jSKm5drcmAY/edit?usp=sharing

3. **Moment for Reflection**

Anne Nelson shared that she has received some feedback that the workgroups outside of regular meetings is too much, so we are going to put that work on hold for the time being, focusing in on this funding project. In the future, as we start to pick that work up, we will bring it to monthly meetings rather than additional meetings. She expressed the challenge of wanting to involve the EAC in as much as possible, while also needing to respect members' time and lives outside of this work. Rachel mentioned we could always break out in groups during our monthly meetings for the workgroup work. Anne Nelson asked if there were any additional thoughts or feedback around this. Ahmed said thank you for opening the conversation up.

4. **Overview of Federal Transportation Funds to Build Civic Infrastructure**

Anne Nelson started presenting a slideshow and provided an overview of the Federal Transportation Funding project to build civic infrastructure. She shared the project title and defined civic infrastructure and community engagement. She shared some details of the project: the amount is $100,000, the funds are from the Federal Highway Administration and would become available at the beginning of our fiscal year in July. They are for community groups, organizations, and businesses that represent marginalized communities in Chittenden County for the purpose of building capacity for greater representation from

these communities in CCRPC transportation planning projects and beyond. Anne Nelson walked through the parameters for the funding.

Eleni clarified that not all the $100,000 needs to be used in a year. The unused funds would carry over to the next year. We could start with a smaller amount if wanted. Mike asked if these funds are in our UPWP (annual work plan) and whether the projects need to be pre-identified. Eleni explained that yes, the $100k is in the UPWP, and no, the specific projects do not need to be pre-identified in the UPWP. Mike suggested that the Executive Committee should approve the specific projects. Eleni confirmed this is possible. Mike also asked about the "transportation and beyond" phrase in the project title, asking whether we are including land use projects. Anne Nelson explained that since the funds are coming from The Federal Highways Administration, they have an explicit goal to increase public participation in transportation-specific projects, but the civic infrastructure would end up benefitting participation across all planning projects. Faried in the chat asked whether transportation includes the transportation of all people, goods, and food. Anne Nelson responded, yes, all transportation-related projects. Eleni provided some explanation around all the various types of projects CCRPC is involved in: energy, water quality, brownfield remediation, housing, etc.

5. **Overview of Participatory Budgeting**

Anne Nelson shared her screen and shared the first four minutes of [a YouTube video](#) explaining participatory budgeting. Mona asked how these funds would sustain into the future, sharing we cannot give funds out for only one year. Mike responded that we commonly stop projects when funding runs out. Eleni explained that we receive these funds each year, so the program could sustain and grow into the future. We would just need to decide what it would look like. Bruce suggested we partner with other cities and organizations that are setting aside funds for this purpose (Burlington's REIB office gives out similar funds; Vermont Community Foundation might have funds for civic infrastructure). Mike shared that Municipalities do pay dues to CCRPC, so maybe some of those dues could go to this project. Eleni clarified that 80% of the $100k comes from the FHWA, 10% comes from CCRPC, and 10% from Municipal dues. So, they are already contributing. Ragab asked whether we would need project ideas before we can access the funds, or whether we get the funds before we have project ideas? He also shared that he is confused why we are having a hard time deciding what to do with $100k when it is not much money. Anne Nelson responded we do not need specific project ideas in order to access the funds and explained that CCRPC manages a lot of funds that go to different planning projects. Spending these funds on civic infrastructure is a new idea, which is why this might feel confusing. Ragab shared it is important we go out and let the community know who we are and what we are doing. Bruce emphasized the funds should go to economically challenged, people of color, BIPOC, and other marginalized groups. Lydia shared in the chat she likes the participatory budgeting idea and has an idea for a project in Winooski.

Mike shared that there seems to be a lot of confusion, and it would be helpful to have a clearer sense of what these funds can be spent on. Ahmed shared the idea of developing project ideas and putting out a mobile poll to the community to vote on which projects should get the funding. We could use the Miro Network Map we worked on last meeting to develop project ideas. Rachel shared that she partially agrees with that idea, but also thinks it's important to involve the community in the development of the project ideas. Malana clarified that we have two different decisions to make. What projects will be funded and who decides what projects will be funded? The second question could be answered with Participatory Budgeting or a more limited engagement process depending on capacity.

Conversation was cut short due to time, but Anne Nelson shared appreciation for walking through this confusing process together and that she would send a follow up email with a meeting summary and plan to bring some more details and guidelines to our May in person gathering.