

**Grand River Voices
Stakeholder Advisory Board (SAB) Meeting
July 21, 2022
WMCAT Conference Room (5-7pm)
Meeting Minutes**

Attendees (live): Attah Obande, Eric Haslinger, Lynee Wells, Stacy Stout, Synia Gant-Jordon, Elaine Isley, Tiawanna Ezell, Jessica Ledesma, Julieta Tablante-Blanco, plus support staffing by Adnoris Torres (GRI), Andy Guy (DGRI)

Attendees (video): Angelica Velasquez, Teresa Branson, Julio Cano plus support staffing by Daniel Tellalian (Angel City Advisors), Cynthia Guzman and Leah Hubbard (Estolano Advisors), and Ciarra Adkins (City of GR OEE)

Not Attending: Jason Quigno, Keli Christopher, Emily Aleman-McAlpine, Candy Isabel (Khamai Strategies)

Meeting Discussion & Actions

1. The meeting was called to order, and introductions were made by all present.
2. Ground rules for meeting protocol and behavior were agreed upon.
3. Estolano Advisors reviewed the purpose and form of Equity Framework Documents. The Board looked at sample Goal/Strategy/Action language from the Los Angeles County Sustainability Plan, as well as sample Arts & Culture Strategies from Washington DC's 11th Street Bridge Park's Equitable Development Plan
4. Board reviewed and amended contributions to the Vision and Values brainstorm exercise, as conducted during the last meeting and continued as homework between meetings on Jamboard. Vision included:
 - a. Diversity of users and beneficiaries across individuals and community organizations, with an emphasis on support for BIPOC businesses and contractors;
 - b. Inclusion in decisionmaking, as well as physical spaces and public events;
 - c. Accessibility, both physical and socioeconomic;
 - d. Sustainability and economic justice;
 - e. Respect for natural resources, sustainable energy, and clean air
 - f. Elevation of the Water and the River (the in-channel aquatic environment)
 - g. Elevation of natural beauty/aesthetic over built environment
 - h. Equitable, affordable corridor development (housing and commercial spaces)
 - i. Economic and Racial Justice
5. Stated Values included: Abundance, Accountability, Affordability, Attentive, Belonging, Courage & Leadership, Curiosity, Empathy, Empowerment, Healing, Honoring History, Humility, Innovation & Learning, Multicultural, Multilingual, Perseverance, Representation, Respect,

Responsibility, Sustainability, Transparency. It was noted that not all Value words are best expressed in English.

6. Board reviewed and advised on current community engagement as well as made suggestions for future additional engagement, including:
 - a. Connecting to non-English, non-Spanish language groups. Board members agreed to help form in-language focus groups;
 - b. Attention on Who is Being contacted and What are they being asked. Additional detail on outreach processes will be shared to the Board;
 - c. Suggestion of more high-reach awareness building (billboard, television, newspaper advertising)

7. Board discussed specific strategies, interests/needs for the river based on their backgrounds and communities. Suggestions included:
 - a. How do residents get into the river safely? City ordinance prohibits river swimming, so a need to establish access and educate people. Can this be a quicker win alongside built projects and systems change work?
 - b. Build a river culture. Reinforce (engage, celebrate, remind) the river work already done to date and what the future holds.
 - c. For events on the river, include mass-transit to help bring critical mass of new visitors. Make sure a multicultural vibe.
 - d. Accessibility should include wayfinding signage, so people know how to interact with the river. Signage need not only be in English.
 - e. Do not whitewash everything. Please be more thoughtful and inclusive in naming river spaces.
 - f. Build and strengthen the pipeline of small and BIPOC contractors for the river build. Look into appropriate certifications, insurance reqs, capital needs. This should happen before the bidding process.
 - g. Proactively address structural obstacles underlying the lack of diverse contracting in GR. Build in diversity goals. Create pipeline programs now so diverse firms and workers can capture opportunities.
 - h. In river marketing and external-facing pieces, put more people of color in the photos. People must see themselves.
 - i. Increase education about the river in multiple formats – it needs to be free, it needs to be both passive and experiential. We are building for the next generation.
 - j. Educating and inspiring youth is essential. What about videos or short films about the river or scenes on the river – play them in schools, or as PSA previews before movies. Help youth to visualize the future of the river with them in it.
 - k. The West Michigan community has strong partnerships in place relating to environmental stewardship. Better engage them alongside this effort in this river equity.

The meeting was adjourned with a next meeting set for August 18th.