

Racial Equity Commission July 2026 - Meeting Minutes

July 9, 2026

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Agenda Item #1: Housekeeping

A. WELCOME

B. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Matthews called the meeting to order at 10:00 AM. He confirmed that quorum was not met, with three of six commissioners present, and noted that no formal votes or actions could take place. Chair Matthews provided a statement condemning acts of hate and discrimination and shared information about the CA vs Hate reporting line. He also provided an overview of meeting logistics, including instructions for public comment.

C. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT AND COMMUNITY ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

D. REVIEW OF THE AGENDA

E. REMARKS FROM DISTINGUISHED GUESTS: There were no remarks from guests.

F. ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM

Three commissioners were virtually present: Commissioner Tong, Commissioner Maldonado, and Commissioner Matthews. Commissioners not in attendance were Commissioner Yolanda Richardson, Commissioner Angelica Salas and Commissioner Simboa Wright. Because fewer than a quorum was present, no formal votes or actions could be taken during this meeting.

Commissioners present:

1. Commissioner Amy Tong
2. Commissioner Gabriel Maldonado
3. Commissioner Traco Matthews

G. PUBLIC COMMENT PROCESS

No public comment on Agenda Item #1.

Agenda Item #2: Public Comment on Matters Not on the Agenda

Public Comments on Agenda Item #2:

There were three public comments on Agenda Item #2:

- Vince Leuse, Program Manager with the Prevention Institute of Oakland and member of the California Racial Equity Coalition.
- Maria Barakat, Senior Program Manager for Transformative Racial Equity at the Greenlining Institute.
- Eric Devezin of Riverside, a Doctor of Public Administration student, local county Commissioner, and advisory committee chair.

Agenda Item #3: Consent Agenda

No Action: Due to the lack of quorum, no vote was taken on the consent agenda.

No public comment on Agenda Item #3.

Agenda Item #4: Chairman's Report

Traco Matthews, Chair, Racial Equity Commission

Commission Chair Matthews provided updates regarding Commission operations and the transition from development of the Racial Equity Framework to implementation of the Framework. Chair Matthews stated that there are no updates regarding either the appointment of new Commissioners or the hiring of an Executive Director. Chair Matthews also formally recognized Commissioner Dr. Manuel Pastor for his service and contributions to the Commission and the development of the Racial Equity Framework.

Three-Day Community Engagement and Implementation Model

Adrianna Brooks, Program Manager of the Racial Equity Commission, presented a proposed implementation model for community engagement, consisting of three phases.

#1: Community Listening

Commission staff will hear directly from residents, advocates, community leaders, and local partners about priorities, barriers, and lived experience.

#2: Community Immersion

Commission staff will deepen their understanding of place, context, and community conditions through site visits, relationship-building, and direct observation.

#3: Local Practitioner Workshops

Commission staff will bring together community and government partners to identify practical next steps, technical assistance needs, and opportunities to apply the Racial Equity Framework.

No public comment on Agenda Item #4.

Agenda Item #5: Improving Shared Governance: An Analysis of Public Sector Models to Identify Strategies for Advancing Equitable Outcomes

Julio Casillas-Alfaro and Rodas Hailu, Masters in Public Policy students from the Department of Public Policy at the University of California, Los Angeles shared a summary of their capstone project, in which they studied shared governance models, allowing them to recommend strategies that improve equitable policy implementation.

Public comments on Agenda Item #5:

There were two public comments on Agenda Item #5.

- Maria Barakat, Senior Program Manager for Transformative Racial Equity at the Greenlining Institute.
- Eric Devezin of Riverside, a Doctor of Public Administration student, local county Commissioner, and advisory committee chair.

Agenda Item #6: Principles for Structural and Systemic Remediation

Stephen Menendian, Assistant Director of the Othering & Belonging Institute at the University of California, Berkeley, presented a brief on principles for structural and systemic remediation.

Public comments on Agenda Item #6:

There were two public comments on Agenda Item #6:

- Maria Barakat, Senior Program Manager for Transformative Racial Equity at the Greenlining Institute.
- Lianne Dillon, Interim Program Director with the State of Equity.

Agenda Item #7: Evaluating the Racial Equity Framework

Aparna Santhosh Stephen and Lindsay Maple of the Possibility Lab at the University of California, Berkeley presented an overview of the Commission's evaluation strategy for the California Racial Equity Framework, explaining that the project has evolved from documenting existing racial equity efforts across state agencies to developing tools and guidance that will help evaluate implementation statewide.

No public comment on Agenda Item #7.

Agenda Item #8: Update on an Office of Racial Equity

Manpreet Dhillon Brar, PhD, Senior Researcher and Anna Kimura, PhD, Senior Research Associate, presented a research brief exploring options for establishing a permanent California Office of Racial Equity to sustain the Commission's work beyond its scheduled sunset in 2030.

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The presenters explained that the brief builds on previous policy memoranda and stakeholder input and outlines the potential functions of an Office of Racial Equity, including serving as a centralized coordinating entity, providing technical assistance, connecting agencies to share best practices, and promoting accountability through the use of equity indicators. They also discussed several pathways for establishing the office, such as executive action, legislation, ballot measures, or government reorganization, while recommending a phased approach beginning with an executive order followed by legislation to ensure long-term stability.

Public Comments on Agenda Item #8

There was one public comment on Agenda Item #8:

- Maria Barakat, Senior Program Manager for Transformative Racial Equity at the Greenlining Institute.

Agenda Item #9: Evaluation Committee Discussion

Commissioner Tong reported on the Evaluation Committee's ongoing work to support implementation of the California Racial Equity Framework, emphasizing that evaluation should function as a learning and improvement process rather than solely a compliance or reporting requirement. Building upon the earlier presentation from the UC Berkeley Possibility Lab, Commissioner Tong stated that the committee's focus is to develop practical evaluation strategies that help agencies determine whether implementation of the framework is producing measurable improvements in racial equity outcomes. She highlighted the importance of identifying best practices, implementation tools, barriers to success, and community feedback throughout the evaluation process, while also encouraging transparent reporting mechanisms that allow both government entities and the public to monitor progress over time.

No public comment on Agenda Item #9.

Agenda Item #10: Implementation & Technical Assistance Committee

Commissioner Tong presented an update on the Implementation and Technical Assistance Committee, emphasizing that technical assistance will be essential to helping state agencies effectively implement the California Racial Equity Framework. She explained that while the framework establishes a statewide vision, agencies will require practical guidance, accessible resources, and real-world examples to translate the framework into day-to-day operations.

Commissioner Tong also highlighted recent outreach conducted by the California Department of Human Resources, noting that participants demonstrated increased understanding of the framework and confidence in applying its principles after receiving training. While the results were encouraging, she observed that agencies

would benefit from additional implementation examples, peer learning opportunities, and simplified guidance by way of plain language.

No public comment on Agenda Item #10.

Agenda Item #11: Data Committee Discussion

On behalf of the Data Committee, Commission staff member Dylun Turner-Keener facilitated a discussion regarding the role of data in supporting implementation of the California Racial Equity Framework and informing future community engagement efforts. She introduced discussion questions related to emerging data tools, technologies, and approaches that could improve equitable decision-making in areas such as housing, health equity, and sexual orientation and gender identity data collection.

No public comment on Agenda Item #11.

Agenda Item #12: Budget Equity Committee Discussion

Commissioner Maldonado provided an update on the Budget Equity Committee's priorities, noting that the committee's work has been shaped by recommendations from community partners and members of the Racial Equity Coalition. He outlined three primary initiatives under development: a Community Input Index to strengthen public participation in the state budgeting process, an Equity Index Tool to evaluate budget investments through an equity lens, and a publicly accessible, interactive budget dashboard designed to present state spending in clear, user-friendly language.

Commissioner Maldonado emphasized that the dashboard should prioritize leveraging modern technology to improve transparency and help Californians better understand how public funds are allocated and invested in their communities.

No public comment on Agenda Item #12.

Agenda Item #13: Community Engagement Committee Discussion

Commission staff member Dylun Turner-Keener presented an update on the Commission's evolving community engagement strategy, explaining that future engagement sessions will transition from broad listening sessions to more issue-specific discussions that directly support implementation of the California Racial Equity Framework. She described a revised three-day engagement model that incorporates local data, community feedback, technical assistance, and action planning to better connect community priorities with state agencies and available resources.

Planned engagement sessions include Klamath, where discussions will focus on housing, tribal land stewardship, and infrastructure needs; Bishop, where affordable housing and rent burden will be explored; and San Diego, where engagement will center on LGBTQIA+ health equity and community services.

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No public comment on Agenda Item #13.

Next Steps for Staff Action

Staff will:

- Create custom toolkits for each North Star agency with illustrative examples for the Department of Finance, connecting with the meeting's presenters to assist in creating these examples **(Agenda Item #7)**
- Initiate the Data Committee Discussion during an upcoming Commission meeting in which all Commissioners will be present and able to contribute **(Agenda Item #11)**
- Follow up with Chair Matthews on visiting Bishop with staff **(Agenda Item #13)**

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned by common consent at 1:19 PM.