



Breckenridge Social Equity Advisory Commission

September 16, 2024, 7:30am

Breckenridge Town Hall
Council Chambers
150 Ski Hill Road
Breckenridge, CO

*Striving for racial and social equity for all by removing barriers and
facilitating opportunities to thrive*

I. Call to Order

Chair Jordan Burns called the meeting to order at 7:33am.

Roll Call

Present: Laurie Moroco, Isaura Cirillo, Carol Saade, Tahja Grier.

Virtual: Jordan Burns, June Walters, Ujala Vatas

Absent: Silvia Vicuna, Jotwan Daniels

Discussion/Approval of Agenda

Motion to Approve: Chair Burns, Seconded: Commissioner Grier

Discussion/Approval of the Minutes

Motion to Approve: Council Member Saade, Seconded: Commissioner Grier

II. Staff Summary

i. Update Trail Signage Survey

Flor Cruz shared that the Open Space and Trails Division is working on updating trail signage in Breckenridge, emphasizing the importance of making the signage system inclusive and representative of the community's needs. Cruz also mentioned that there is a public survey (available in both English and Spanish) and she asked the Commission to share it widely. Although the survey targets people who have used the trails, feedback from those who haven't is also welcome, especially if they explain why they haven't used the trails. Cruz also stressed the need for broad participation to ensure the changes meet community needs.

Council Member Carol Saade asked if staff knew how many responses have been received. Deputy Town Manager Scott Reid stated that the number was significant during the first week

but has slowed down. Reid also mentioned that having more responses from Spanish speakers would be very helpful. Council Member Saade also asked about social media sharing specifically the Facebook Latinos page. Cruz noted that the survey was shared on social media, including the Facebook Latinos group, and sent to local partner. Additionally, she shared that there is a plan to make it available at the Welcome Center to encourage more participation.

Commissioner Moroco expressed her disappointment and shock after seeing numerous negative comments about the bilingual trail signage news article on social media. Reid stated that it might have been an article about the White River National Forest efforts to transition to multilingual signage. Commissioner Cirillo shared that in her personal experience those who have negative comments or reviews are not always the majority but the ones who are most likely to speak up. Cruz also shared that the Open Space and Trails division is working with their vendor to ensure signage is inclusive and useful for all users to ensure they understand and can navigate the trails.

ii. Meeting Community Members Where They Are

Flor Cruz shared that the Town's Community Engagement Division has ordered promotional items to distribute across many community events. Cruz shared the design and items with the Commissioners. Staff hopes this community engagement initiative will begin the work towards building connections that can lead to relationships and eventually trust.

Council Member Carol Saade agreed that this was a great idea and asked for the Commission's input on the "I heart Breck" design. Commissioner Grier suggested a design that stated "I am Breck" or "We are Breck" to emphasize a sense of belonging. Commissioner Moroco agreed and stated that "I love Breck" felt commercial or generic to her. Commissioner Grier added that it would be good to have a message that foregrounds the feeling of inclusivity. Chair Burns also suggested moving the Town's logo to the bottom of the design or finding another way to incorporate it. Burns also stated that anyone who would wear the merchandise should feel like they are part of the community and the backbone of Breckenridge. Commissioner Vatas also recommended moving the heart below the statement.

Flor Cruz mentioned that the items had already been ordered but agreed that this initiative and work is continuous leaving room for future work where their design ideas could be implemented. Chair Burns also suggested a Spanish version of "I heart Breck". Deputy Town Manager Scott Reid clarified that the items mentioned were already ordered and are primarily for branding Breckenridge, not specifically for social equity efforts. He also mentioned that the items would be handed out as swag at various events. However, he encouraged continuing to brainstorm ideas and supported the idea of making improvements and adjustments over time.

iii. Celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month – Sept 15 – Oct 15

Flor Cruz reminded the Commission about Hispanic Heritage Month and the Latin American cuisine class at CMC in Breckenridge on September 23rd, from 6 to 10 PM. The class, with 12 free spots, will be open to the public starting Monday, as the event couldn't be promoted before September 15th, when Hispanic Heritage Month began. Cruz also shared that staff plans to continue sharing posts and educational content, including the distinctions between Latino, Hispanic, and Latinx.

Commissioner Cirillo suggested a Hispanic Heritage Month event for future years and shared her experiences while at university where she hosted similar events that included folk dancing from

Colombia and Mexican Mariachi bands. Cirillo also shared that Dillon Valley had a car parade that celebrated Mexican Independence Day. She also mentioned that many Latin American countries celebrate their independence during the month of September. She also stated that the event didn't have to be big but could be something significant. Cirillo also shared an experience from more than 20 years ago when Mexican folk dancers from Veracruz danced at the River Walk Center.

Flor Cruz suggested that the Celebrate Diversity subcommittee consider this feedback. Cruz emphasized the need to plan well in advance due to the significant amount of work involved when planning an event. She also shared that during the previous subcommittee meeting, the group discussed supporting local organizations who had events with similar visions. Cruz shared that Breck Create is hosting a Dia de Los Muertos celebration for Hispanic Heritage Month. Council Member Saade also added that Breck Create invites performers and has music during their celebrations.

Council Member Saade informed the Commission about a previous conversation during a subcommittee meeting where the group discussed being mindful of the number of events that the Commission hosts per month. She also stated that the subcommittee did a great job this year with partnering with organizations who already offered similar events or services like CMC with the culinary class and Breck Film with a potential movie night. Council Member Saade suggested that in the future the Commission consider partnering with other organizations that are already doing similar work and keep the door open for individual events.

Flor Cruz echoed Council Member Saade's statement and stated she was open to the idea of celebrating with individual events while still highlighting the importance of planning in advance and being mindful of the workload. Cruz suggested focusing on doing fewer but more meaningful and impactful events, rather than trying to handle multiple things at once. She also provided an update on a potential movie night.

III. Presenter

i. Bill Gilmore and Milena Quiros – Summit School District

Milena Quiros thanked the group for their work and time and clarified that Dia de los Muertos and Hispanic Heritage Month are different celebrations. She noted that Dia de los Muertos is a Mexican tradition that doesn't represent all Latino cultures, though some people still join in for the celebration. Milena also reminded the Commission that Independence Day for various Latin American countries, which occurs in September, is entirely different from Día de los Muertos. Quiros also expressed appreciation for the Commission's efforts.

Bill Gilmore, the Director of Postsecondary Readiness for Summit School District explained the Pathways project. Summit School District aims to ensure students have meaningful learning experiences across all subjects and career-focused education that can be used in their future careers. Gilmore, Quiros, and their team analyzed local labor market data to identify industry sectors that provide living wages and high-demand careers, settling on seven pathways: skilled trades, business/marketing/entrepreneurship, computer science, engineering/advanced manufacturing, health sciences, natural resources/outdoor leadership, and education/human services. Gilmore stated that the program spans across all courses from kindergarten through graduation, allowing students to focus on specific pathways as they advance. Gilmore emphasized the importance of including the Hispanic and minority communities, which make up

40% and 45% of the student body respectively, in the design process to ensure the pathways meet their needs.

Milena Quiros, a member of the Equity Department for Summit School District, emphasized the importance of partnering with different committees and organizations. She also highlighted the importance of ensuring that all students, especially those from Spanish-speaking communities, have access to the opportunities being created and participate in the development of such opportunities. Quiros asked the Commission for help reaching and involving Spanish-speaking individuals who might connect with these pathways.

Bill Gilmore explained that certain programs, such as skilled trades, construction, welding, and health sciences were doing well, but noted that areas like business and entrepreneurship still need development. As the school district works to improve existing programs and create new ones, they aim to involve a wide range of voices and local expertise. Gilmore also shared that they are hosting a Pathways Kickoff event at Summit High School, inviting community and industry members to learn about the pathways, provide feedback, and help identify the skills and knowledge needed for each pathway to shape future learning experiences for students.

Council Member Saade asked if the school district was starting to shape each pathway. Gilmore confirmed that they had some ideas on what each pathway would look like but are soliciting different perspectives and experiences to ensure the courses are design in a way that will accelerate student success. Gilmore explained that each high school course in a career pathway should have four components: concurrent enrollment with a higher education partner (like CMC), industry certifications to validate technical skills, academic credit (e.g., math credit for construction courses or science credit for health sciences), and a robust work-based learning system. This system would allow students to intern with industry partners, gaining real-world experience and aid in determining if a career is a good fit before making high-stakes decisions. He also emphasized the importance of tailoring this approach to the needs of Summit County and its communities.

Commissioner Grier asked if any research had been done on the demographics—such as gender and race—within the career pathways, questioning why certain pathways predominantly attract specific groups. She suggested exploring the reasons behind these trends and using that information to engage students, explaining the demographic makeup of a field and encouraging them to become pioneers or break traditional molds in those areas. Gilmore stated that there is research that suggests that students begin to formulate specific views on what certain fields should look like during their middle school years which is why they want to ensure students in elementary schools and middle school have exposure and inclusive learning environments with diverse classrooms.

Milena Quiros added that there is also research around income and highlighted how important it is for minority students to have access to such information. Gilmore explained that the program also takes into consideration career growth and helps students build a path from entry level positions towards upward mobility. Commissioner Grier also suggested having different pathways models which would open students to many possibilities.

Chair Burns suggested that Milena and Bill join events where parents can begin to hear about the program outside of the schools. Milena Quiros thanked Burns for his suggestion and stated

that she would appreciate a partnership to reach community members where they already gather. Commissioner Vatas asked if the program was similar to CTE (career and technical education) to which Gilmore answered that it was the backbone of the pathways at the middle school and high school levels.

Commissioner Cirillo asked if this program could be extended to adults and parents who have careers from other countries and need to understand the pathway to validate their education. Cirillo shared her experiences as a dentist from Mexico who had to go through the validation process which took her 10 years to complete to be able to practice in the United States. She also mentioned that the pathway was very challenging and encountered many educators who didn't know how to guide her. Milena Quiros agreed with Commissioner Cirillo and stated that they are working very closely with CMC who might be able to serve that population and continue to educate immigrants on the education systems in the United States. Quiros also added that serving this population was an equity issue because families are being financially impacted by not having access to education.

Commissioner Cirillo also stated that students should be exposed to many different career options regardless of ethnic backgrounds and should be exposed to real life examples or inspiring stories. Milena Quiros appreciated the comment and emphasized that the goal of the seven career pathways is to avoid stigmatization and open opportunities for all students, regardless of appearance or background. Quiros highlighted the importance of not limiting students to certain careers based on stereotypes. The speaker notes that with over 40% of the school district population being people of color, inclusivity is a key focus. The pathways are intended to be open to every student, allowing them to pursue fields without stigma or limitations.

Flor Cruz shared a personal experience about the challenges of not seeing people who look like her in leadership or certain career paths, which can create a sense of not belonging. This feeling is especially common for first-generation students, who may lack guidance on navigating career options, financial planning, and higher education from an early age. Cruz highlighted the importance of having conversations with minority students about different career pathways, including practical aspects like income and cost of living. These discussions are crucial because they may not happen at home, and without them, students may struggle to navigate the professional world and feel like they don't belong in leadership or certain career paths.

Milena Quiros highlighted the school district's efforts to open doors for students who may not receive guidance at home, ensuring they have those important conversations in school, such as with counselors or teachers. She also stated that they are partnering with Colorado Mountain College (CMC) to help students and families, especially students of color, complete FAFSA and CASFA applications, which are crucial for their future. Quiros emphasized the importance of community voices, particularly from former students who have overcome systemic barriers, to inform the district's approach. She stressed that the system could make it harder for immigrants and people of color to succeed.

ii. Community Stories – Hispanic Heritage Month

Commissioner Cirillo shared her personal story of coming to the U.S. from Mexico with her identical twin sister in 1998 to work and pay for her dental education. She recalls the powerful moment of seeing the Statue of Liberty from the airplane window, like a scene from a movie.

Cirillo worked various jobs, such as in restaurants and housekeeping, before returning to Mexico to finish dental school. Meanwhile, their sister stayed in the U.S., married, and started a family business. Cirillo later married and faced challenges getting her dental license validated in the U.S., but eventually succeeded. She expressed gratitude for the support and sense of belonging she has experienced in the Summit County community. As a member of the Social Equity Advisory Commission, she feels lucky to give back to the community.

Milena Quiros shared her personal story and perspective as a Hispanic immigrant originally from Costa Rica. She arrived over 26 years ago with plans to move to Canada but decided to stay in Colorado due to family ties. Initially, she didn't experience inequities until she became a parent to a Black child. This opened her eyes to the struggles of being a person of color, especially when her child faced challenges in school because of his appearance.

Quiros shared her involvement in the community, highlighting her work with school committees, non-profits, and other organizations. She emphasized the importance of equitable treatment for all, regardless of race or background, and described how her accent and cultural differences have made it difficult to be understood and accepted in many leadership roles. Despite these challenges, she remains committed to advocacy and community work, particularly in supporting immigrant families and ensuring her children have the same opportunities as others.

Quiros stressed the importance of inclusion, representation in languages, and empathy toward immigrants, each with unique struggles. The speaker also noted that while she has a strong support system, navigating systems in the U.S. as an immigrant is difficult, especially when facing bias based on appearance or language. Her primary goal is to ensure her children, and all immigrant children succeed and feel a sense of belonging in their community.

Commissioner Cirillo emphasized the need for greater understanding about immigrants' motivations for coming to the U.S. She highlighted that immigrants seek a better life for themselves and their families through hard work, not to engage in criminal activities or take jobs from others. Cirillo addressed the common misconception that immigrants are a threat, stressing that they are simply striving for a better future, just like anyone else. Council Member Saade thanked Commissioner Isaura Cirillo and Milena Quiros for sharing their stories and capturing the spirit that many community members experience.

IV. Social Equity Discussion

I. November Native American Heritage Month

Flor Cruz asked the group to think about November Native American Heritage Month so that the subcommittee and staff can begin to plan. Commissioner Walters shared that Tribal Council elections take place in October. She also recommended the Commission ask Ernest House for contact information and guidance on how to begin building relationships with Tribal Elders and Tribal Council members while visiting the museum in Montrose.

II. Equity Training

Flor Cruz asked the Commission to consider training vendors and topics for an equity training before the end of the year. Cruz suggested using Martina Sharp Grier or the Equity Project as vendors. She also asked if the Town's internal DEI committee could attend. The Commissioners agreed to email Flor vendor preferences so that she could contact the vendor. Commissioner

Grier asked if the county's EDI committee could attend. Cruz stated that she would refer to the Commission and Town Leadership to approve.

III. Subcommittee Updates

Council Member Saade suggested a more efficient approach for subcommittee updates. Instead of going over all details, she proposed allowing subcommittee members to highlight key points and those not on the subcommittee to ask questions.

Celebrate Diversity / Community Outreach & Engagement /Community Education & Influence

Civic Engagement

Council Member Saade and Flor Cruz shared that the Civic Engagement approved a second grant for Ride On Inc, an organization that focuses on increasing diversity in the snowboarding community. Cruz stated that the organization was requesting \$1,200 for soft goods and gear for underrepresented communities in Summit County. Commissioner Grier agreed with the approval and requested monthly updates on grants to stay connected and informed on applications.

Immigration Rights and Advocacy

Flor Cruz provided an update on the "I am Summit" video filming. She stated that there was a good turnout, and that the subcommittee discussed a plan for promotional strategies. She also mentioned that during their meeting, Mountain Dreamers provided valuable recommendations to hiring Spanish speaking staff at the Rec Center. Cruz emphasized the importance of having Spanish speaking staff and suggested that the Commission should prioritize this issue moving forward.

V. Upcoming Council Items

Deputy Town Manager Reid asked the Commission if they had any questions on the upcoming council items from the agenda packet. Commissioner Grier asked about the Boards and Commission training that was postponed. Deputy Town Manager shared that the Town would have a new attorney in November and staff should have information after that.

VI. Upcoming Agenda Topics

VII. Other Matters

VIII. Public Comment (Non-Agenda Items)

There was no public comment.

Chair Burns adjourned the meeting at 9:03am. Commissioner Grier seconded.