



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MILESTONE CONVENING OF 'EQUITY IN INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECT'

EIP Brings together White House, USDOT and State and Local Agency Leaders with Private Sector Leaders to Expand Contracting Opportunities for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs)

Visit: EquityInInfrastructure.org

WASHINGTON, DC -- The first Advisory Council meeting of the Equity in Infrastructure Project (EIP) brought together White House, USDOT and state and local agency leaders with private and NGO sector leaders on September 22 to improve public contracting practices by creating more opportunities for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) to build generational wealth and reduce the racial wealth gap by creating more prime, joint venture and equity contracting opportunities for these firms.

The members of the EIP Advisory Council include:

- Diana Mendes (Chair), Corporate President of Mobility and Infrastructure, HNTB
- Bryan Carruthers, CEO, Anser Advisory
- Greg Kelly, President and CEO, STV
- Ingrid Merriwether, President & CEO, Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services
- April Rai, President and CEO, COMTO National
- G. Ramnujam, CEO, SOMAT
- Paul Skoutelas, President and CEO, American Public Transportation Association (APTA)

- Eve Williams, President, Dikita Enterprises
- Eboni Wimbush, President and CEO, Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC)

See full list of participants at end of release.

Through its Pledge, EIP works to secure commitments from public agencies to increase the number, size and scope of contracts going to HUBs by facilitating access and reducing barriers to compete for business.

“EIP just launched in April with five first mover agencies as our foundation. We have swiftly built a robust organization that is bringing together the public, private and NGO sectors at the highest levels to create generational wealth for Historically Underutilized Businesses, families and communities,” said Denver International Airport CEO and EIP Chair and Co-Founder Phillip A. Washington.

“Harnessing the power of the federal infrastructure bill to change procurement and create community wealth requires all hands on deck. The coalition brought together by EIP is what our nation needs to finally create true equity in infrastructure contracting,” said EIP Co-Founder and former Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Transportation John D. Porcari.

“Government can’t do it alone. The private sector can’t do it alone. But working together through EIP, there is no limit to what we can achieve for America’s historically underutilized businesses and communities,” said Diana Mendes, EIP Advisory Council Chair and HNTB Corporate President of Infrastructure and Mobility Equity. “Ultimately, our mission is to permanently change how business is done in the infrastructure space.”

“Collaboration between the public, private and NGOs sectors is essential to achieving more equitable ways to deliver the infrastructure of the future. We need everyone at the table working together to ensure more historically underutilized businesses become prime contractors, joint venture partners, or equity partners on the infrastructure we build. Erasing the historic obstacles that blocked the path to generational wealth is both the right thing to do and is good for our industry,” said EIP Advisory Council Member Greg Kelly, who is President and Chief Executive Officer of STV.

“Firms like mine are ready, willing and able to fully participate in our nation’s historic investment in infrastructure,” said Eve Williams, President, Dikita Enterprises. “All we need are for outmoded systemic and bureaucratic barriers to be eliminated, and that’s exactly what EIP’s coalition will achieve by working together across the public, private and NGO sectors.”

EIP’s First Mover Pledge signers are:

- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA) – Dorval R. Carter, Jr., President

- Denver International Airport – Phillip A. Washington, CEO
- Port of Long Beach – Mario Cordero, Executive Director
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California – Adel H. Hagekhalil, General Manager
- Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) – Leslie S. Richards, General Manager and CEO

Other early signers include:

- County and City of Denver
- City of Philadelphia

EIP members are already advancing concrete steps to meet the Pledge. CTA and SEPTA are currently creating a model for reciprocal certification of historically underutilized businesses between the two agencies. In success, it's replicated in other places and lays the groundwork for a national registry. Denver International Airport and STV, Inc. are developing an equity data dashboard that agencies can use to track progress toward equity goals.

EIP receives generous support from Social and Environmental Entrepreneurs, Social Impact Fund, HNTB, STV, Anser Advisory, The Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation and The James Irvine Foundation.

EIP defines HUBs as including firms formally designated as DBEs, Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprises (M/WBE), Small Business Enterprises (SBE), as well as any other business classification used locally in the United States intended to boost the participation of otherwise underutilized firms, which can vary by state, region, and municipality.

While EIP is acting independently, this effort seeks to advance the spirit of President Biden's Justice40 Initiative and his June 2021 executive order pledging to increase by 2026 the share of federal contracts that go to small and disadvantaged businesses, which recent Small Business Administration data shows is unacceptably low.

Starting from the baseline of their current actions and initiatives, by December 2025, Pledge signers will work to increase the number, size and percentage of HUBs growing to prime contractors, participating in joint ventures, or as equity participants.

They Pledge to:

- Increase the number, size and proportion of contracting opportunities going to HUBs;
- Increase the number, size and proportion of contracting opportunities going to HUBs as prime contractors;

- Streamline the administration of contracting with HUBs to centralize certification, improve payment time, and standardize transparent data collection;
- Increase the amount and type of appropriate financing available to HUBs aiming to meet infrastructure contracts by working with private and public partners; and
- Expand the number of signatories to this Pledge.

PARTICIPANT LIST

Honored Guests:

- White House staff
- Shelby Scates, Director of the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU), U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT)

Advisory Council:

- HNTB – Diana Mendes, Corporate President, Infrastructure and Mobility Equity and EIP Advisory Council Chair
- HNTB – Emily Gallo, Director, Infrastructure and Mobility Equity
- Airport Minority Advisory Council (AMAC) – Eboni Wimbush, President and CEO
- American Public Transportation Association (APTA) – Linda Ford, General Counsel
- COMTO National – April Rai, President and CEO
- Anser Advisory – Bryan Carruthers, CEO
- Dikita Enterprises – Eve Williams, President
- Merriwether & Williams Insurance Services (MWIS) – Ingrid Merriwether, CEO
- Somat – G. Ramanujam, CEO
- STV – Greg Kelly, President and CEO
- STV – Athena Ullah, Chief of Staff

Also Attending

- HDR – Victoria Johnson, Global Equity Director
- Jacobs – Stan Niemczak
- JP Morgan Chase – Taylor Hart, Executive Director
- Lane Construction Corporation – Charlie Kilpatrick, Vice President, Business Development and Relationship Management
- Morey Insurance – Joshua Morey, President
- Transurban – Deborah Rosenberg, CAO and Mike Discenza, CFO

The Equity in Infrastructure Project (EIP) seeks to improve public contracting practices by creating more opportunities for Historically Underutilized Businesses (HUBs) to build generational wealth and reduce the racial wealth gap by creating more prime, joint venture and equity contracting opportunities for these firms. EIP defines HUBs as

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Learn more at EquityInInfrastructure.org.

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