

BEFORE THE METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION RECREATION COMMISSION

RESOLUTION NO. 25-02

FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDEVELOPING THE PORTLAND EXPO CENTER AS A SPORTS-ORIENTED DESTINATION VENUE

WHEREAS, the Portland Expo Center (Expo) is a regional asset that attracts more than 300,000 visitors to as many as 100 public trade shows and community events annually; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council and the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) seek to derive the greatest public benefit of the 53-acre property and venue and are engaging with key stakeholders and partners, including communities and partners with historic and cultural ties to Expo, business interests, interested Tribes, and Expo clients and business stakeholders to identify future uses for the Expo Center; and

WHEREAS, the sports tourism industry nationally generated direct spending impact of \$52.2 billion and total economic impact of \$128 billion and supported 757,600 full-time and part-time jobs in 2023¹; and

WHEREAS, Oregon's Athletic, Outdoor, Team and Recreation Ecosystem supports \$29 billion annually in economic impact and is growing²; and

WHEREAS, the Metro Council and MERC, recognizing Oregon's status as an international powerhouse in the sport and outdoor industry, directed staff to take measures to align Expo's future redevelopment as a community-centric destination venue that prioritizes amateur, professional, and recreational sports; and

WHEREAS, sports and recreational uses have been a part of Expo throughout its history and offer a means of interpretation of the rich and complex history of the site; and

WHEREAS, MERC, on behalf of Expo, adopted the *Portland Expo Center Revised Booking Policies and Procedures* on November 1, 2023, which offers priority booking to sporting events; and

WHEREAS, Metro has partnered with local experts in the areas of tourism and sports tourism, sports facility operation, amateur and professional athletic teams, hospitality, economic development, healthcare and more and government partners on a market and feasibility study to examine how Expo can best pivot its operations toward a sports facility as a primary market, with other uses such as consumer, live entertainment, and community events as secondary markets; received from Hunden Partners insights into management trends for sports facilities similar to those contemplated at Expo, which indicated that, increasingly, third-party management is favored at comparable sites across the country; and explored additional revenue generating opportunities for the site; and

¹ *State of the Industry Report for 2023*, Sports ETA, 2023.

² *Oregon: The State of Sport*, Portland Business Alliance, 2022.

WHEREAS, the *Expo Future Project Feasibility Study* completed by Hunden Partners in June 2024 found the Pacific Northwest and Portland regions lacking in indoor sports facilities; and

WHEREAS, Hunden Partners' updated economic impact analysis based on the preferred sports scenario for Expo Center shows the potential to generate up to 122 sporting events and 186 event days, annual visitation of more than one million guests, 53,195 new hotel room nights annually, 217 new fulltime-equivalent jobs, and \$1 billion in new direct spending over a thirty-year period, in addition to meeting unmet local demand for additional sports facilities; and

WHEREAS, the sports facilities proposed in the *Expo Future Project Feasibility Study* could meet local needs and unaccommodated demand for indoor court and ice sports and track; could expand demand for related public and private sports facilities; could add value to the community by providing more diversity in lodging, dining, and other uses; and could provide the public with the opportunity to be more engaged in recreational and competitive sports, which can aid residents' overall mental and physical wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, the Expo Future Sports & Facilities Committee has developed a Public Use Statement that identifies the need to balance sports tourism-derived events at Expo Future with regular public use of all indoor and outdoor facilities and amenities to ensure economic and social benefits to the region; now therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission

1. Accepts the preferred sports development scenario presented by the Expo Future Sports & Facilities Committee on December 10, 2024, and supports Metro Council's direction to staff to continue to analyze and refine the scenario and provide regular updates to MERC as the project progresses.
2. Supports Metro Council's direction to staff to propose a package of short-term, interim investments and funding sources in Metro's FY25-26 budget within 90 days of adoption of this resolution for the purpose of better preparing Expo Center to attract and to host more sporting events and tournaments, preferably regional or larger, and to generate resources that allow Expo to meet needs for public use.
3. Supports Metro Council's direction to staff to bring forward the criteria for solicitation of a public-private partnership for full build out of the recommended Expo Center sports redevelopment scenario, including representation and memorialization recommendations and other required site features, by June 30, 2025, with the intent of selecting a development partner by December 2025.
4. Supports Metro Council's direction to staff to ensure that implementation of actions pursuant to sports uses at Expo is supportive of and compatible with the representation and memorialization recommendations presented to the Metro Council and MERC on December 10, 2024, and that staff endeavor to accomplish expansion of sports uses and representation/memorialization of the site's histories and cultures in a way that does not commodify or cause harm to involved partners and communities.

5. Supports Metro Council’s direction to staff, within the current venue constraints, to continue to make every effort to pursue the sports event market including offering first priority booking to sporting events as specified in the *Portland Expo Center Booking and Scheduling Policies and Procedures* adopted November 1, 2023, and to report to MERC every 180 days on progress booking sports-related events.

Passed by the Commission on January 8, 2025.

Approved as to form:

Carrie MacLaren, Metro Attorney

Karis Stoudamire-Phillips, Chair

By:

Nathan A. S. Sykes, Deputy Metro Attorney

Deidre Krys-Rusoff, Secretary-Treasurer