

Memo



Metro

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Date: Thursday 30, 2023
To: Public Engagement Review Committee members
From: Gloria Pinzon Marin, Principal Public Affairs Specialist
Subject: Request for feedback on preliminary draft of Guiding Principles for Meaningful Public Engagement

Dear PERC members,

Metro seeks your input and guidance on a draft list of guiding principles for meaningful public engagement for decision-making. These guiding principles will inform the future update of the Public Engagement Guide. Your input is essential and valued in this process.

Below is the proposed process:

April

- PERC reviews and gives feedback on first draft.
- Metro Council provides guidance on first draft.
- Staff updates draft based on feedback received.

May

- PERC reviews updated guiding principles, votes for approval.
- PERC provides initial input on the update to the Public Engagement Guide.

May/June

- Metro Council reviews and adopts guiding principles for meaningful public engagement.
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What do we mean by guiding principles?

A guiding principle is an idea that influences behavior and decisions. Guiding principles for meaningful public engagement will guide decisions about community involvement during the planning and implementation of Metro Council decision-making processes for policies, programs, or investments.

About the update

The proposed guiding principles were adapted from two documents and informed by engagement staff at Metro:

- 1) *COVID 19 Community Engagement Policy*, adopted in 2020
- 2) *Public Engagement Guide*, adopted in 2013

These guiding principles for meaningful public engagement create a foundation to sustain an equitable and democratic culture of collaboration and accountability at Metro. They guide public engagement plans, implementation and follow-through related to Metro Council decision-making for policies, programs, and investments.

The updated Guiding Principles will:

- provide a path for updating Metro's Public Engagement Guide
- reflect best practices for meaningful public engagement and foster community participation in government decision-making.

- support Metro Council in making decisions that are well informed, sustainable and address the needs and priorities of the diverse communities in the greater Portland region.
- Support the advancement of goals in Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity:
 - Goal A: Metro convenes and supports regional partners to advance racial equity.
 - Goal B: Metro meaningfully engages communities of color.
 - Goal D: Metro creates safe and welcoming services, programs and destinations.
 - Goal E: Metro's resource allocation advances racial equity.

	Guiding Principles DRAFT V1	Expected benefits
1	Prioritize public engagement. Adequately resource public engagement activities and communications to reach a broad base of community members, groups and businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secures sufficient staff, time, and funds to adequately conduct meaningful public engagement with diverse stakeholders. • Provides ongoing training on best practices for staff. • Recognizes that meaningful public engagement leads to a better future for everyone in the region.
2	Transparency. Metro states the purpose for public engagement, its potential to impact decision-making, and reports back to community about how their input was used or not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respects people’s time by making sure their input can have impact or influence. • Clarifies expectations for participants and the public. • Clarifies if there are any limitations to Metro’s ability to implement community or stakeholder priorities. • Build trust with community members.
3	Equity and inclusion. Metro applies equity tools to identify engagement priorities, resource allocation priorities, priority audiences, geographic reach, and potential impacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of power-mapping tool to identify key audiences. • Use of Equity Framework Tool during project planning identify the potential impact of an engagement process or policy decision on people, the environment, or local businesses. • Spectrum of public participation
4	Repair and accountability. Decision-making processes support communities that have been excluded, underserved or harmed including Black Americans, Native and Indigenous people, Asian Americans, Pacific Islanders, immigrants, and people of color to reclaim and use their power in regional decision-making recognizing that they have	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges that systemic racism has harmed and excluded many communities. • Recognizes that people of color, through their lived experience, hold significant knowledge and skills to help solve the complex problems that exist in the region. • Recognizes that prioritizing Black, Indigenous, and people of color and other

	been highly impacted and excluded through systemic racism.	excluded or underserved communities will lead to a better future for everyone
5	Informed decision-making. Foster a democratic decision-making culture that seeks input from and addresses the needs of those most impacted and excluded by government decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decision-making is informed by involvement from communities that are highly impacted. • Well informed policies, programs and investments reduce harm and ensure vulnerable populations benefit and prosper. • Moves Metro away from exclusionary power structures
6	Relationship-based engagement. Use an inclusive, people-first relationship-based engagement approach that honors, respects and reflects community member’s lived experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expands Metro’s capacity to learn about different ways of relationship building across the communities we serve, (moves away from operating in a homogenous culture dominated by exclusive power structures) • Reduces negative impacts on people before, during and after engagement activities. • Fosters trusting and sustainable relationships between Metro and the communities we serve. • Increases public participation across Metro projects and programs.
7	Adaptive communication. Communications should be ongoing, accessible, informative, relevant and reflective of the rich diversity of the communities in the greater Portland region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledges the demographic and cultural diversity that exists in greater Portland and uses that knowledge to normalize inclusive communication practices. • Reduces barriers of communication through active use of tools like language translation and interpretation, audio or visual tools. • Meets people where they are; communicates in a way and in a place that is comfortable for them. • Communication materials are compatible with the use of screen readers and other tools used to access written information by people with vision impairments.
8	Accessibility. Ensure in-person and virtual meetings are inclusive and accessible to people living with disabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inclusive of community members of unique cognitive or physical abilities. • Reduces or eliminates systemic exclusion of people living with disabilities. • Moves Metro towards being more inclusive and creating welcoming places and programs.

9	<p>Partnerships and co-creation. Work with community-based organizations, groups or community members to co-create engagement activities within their respective communities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourages collaboration and fosters power-sharing with communities. • Reduce and prevent harm to communities during engagement process. • People see themselves represented in the work Metro does.
10	<p>Intergovernmental collaboration. Coordinate and collaborate with local government partners and Tribal Governments to address regional issues.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moves Metro towards building repair with Tribal Government partners. • Encourages collaboration with regional partners. • Leads to more effective solutions to regional issues. • Is inclusive of jurisdictional partners.
11	<p>Adaptive project timelines. Timelines for developing proposed policies, plans or projects allow for meaningful engagement with the most impacted communities early and throughout the project timelines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes are responsive to community needs and new information learned through engagement. • Extending or creating buffers in timelines increases public trust when used to make well-informed decisions. • Makes more space for engaging with people who have unique needs to accessing information such as people with cognitive or physical disabilities, people living with low incomes and community members.
12	<p>Process evaluation and improvement. Projects build in time for evaluation of engagement practices during and after engagement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing evaluation allows Metro staff to adapt their approach along the way. • Evaluation aids self-reflection and process improvements. • Community members contribute to the evaluation process and improve future engagement processes.
13	<p>Mindful project planning. Protect people from and address harm that occurs during the engagement process and the outcomes of the project, policy or investment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces negative impacts on people before, during and after engagement activities. • Fosters trusting and sustainable relationships between Metro and the communities we serve.