

WHAT IS GOOD GROWTH? IMPLICATIONS FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Date: 6/29/26

Department: PDR

Meeting Date: 7/30/26

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Presenter(s), (if applicable): Catherine
Ciarlo, Planning, Development & Research
Director; Dr. Mike Wilkerson,
ECONorthwest
Length: 45 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

This work session will focus on the implications of demographic changes in our state and region on housing construction, economic development, and growth management. The presentation will build on the information regarding the region's and Oregon's current economic landscape, workforce conditions, and outcome disparities as presented at the June 7, 2026 Council work session titled, "Disparities by the Numbers: Understanding Inequities in Oregon's Economy."

ACTION REQUESTED

As we enter a period of slower demographic growth (globally, nationally, statewide, and regionally), there are significant implications for how we plan for regional housing needs, compete for jobs and employment, work to reduce disparities by race/ethnicity, gender, and other identities, and fund services. This presentation will highlight likely major effects of slower growth and engage Councilors in a discussion on defining what good growth looks like in the Metro region.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The Metro Council provides direction and guidance regarding strategic planning and possible future legislative and regional policy and funding solutions.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Are there key takeaways that Council wants to see reflected in planning and research?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Topic is informational. No policy decisions are required at this time.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Not applicable.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Metro Council recognized in adopting Resolution No. 26-5570 that, "the greater Portland region is experiencing a period of significant economic transition..." with rising unemployment, slowing population growth, and declining measures of economic competitiveness. Similarly, Governor Kotek convened the Oregon Prosperity Council in

January 2026 and charged it with, “advancing recommendations to improve Oregon’s business climate, strengthen its workforce, and modernize the tools needed to support growth.” The Prosperity Council issued its final recommendations in June 2026 and recognized many of the same challenges statewide.

Staff who attended Dr. Wilkerson’s presentation to the 1803 Fund were universally interested in the opportunity to hear the full Council’s thoughts and questions on the information provided. As the state and region grapple with these barriers to economic prosperity, and as Metro faces increasing pressure to address our region’s economic challenges, this presentation invites Council to discuss whether our traditional economic development tools are appropriate for the challenges we face today. Additionally, how should we articulate the goals and values of growth management and transportation planning in a period of slowing population growth, housing production, and business investment?

BACKGROUND

This presentation was first provided to the 1803 Fund as part of a longer session on our current economic conditions in the region and the constraints this presents to common methods of addressing disparities.

ATTACHMENTS

None