

Metro Council President's Work Group on Future SHS Implementation

June 16, 2025 | Minutes

Metro Regional Center Council Chamber & Zoom

Excused Members: Councilor Ashton Simpson, Alex Phan, Dr. Andy Mendenhall, Elizabeth Mazzara-Myer, Mayor Joe Buck

The meeting convened at 4:07 p.m.

4:00 p.m. Welcome and Introductions

Commissioner Ben West thanked everyone for their participation. He reminded the room of the goal of developing a shared framework and priorities, serving the unique communities and diverse populations across the region. West acknowledged that there is great work happening in all three counties and expressed support for a governance model that is focused on outcomes, transparent, and accessible to the public. He noted that these conversations are the start of an ongoing effort, not a conclusion of their work.

4:10 p.m. Status of Work Group Priorities

Metro staff Val Galstad provided an update on the two key bodies of work initiated by the work group: a deep SHS system evaluation and development of a regional vision framework with KPIs to guide implementation. Galstad explained that the evaluation would proceed in three phases from August 2025 until February 2026: scoping, engagement & analysis, and report development; the project will be supported by Technical Assistance Collaborative.

Galstad encouraged the group to provide feedback through the staff survey to help inform the Metro Council's decision-making.

Andrew Rowe inquired about the regional data system and how data and trends are being measured.

Galstad responded that Metro staff Yesenia Delgado and her team are gathering data and building out the system.

Commissioner Shannon Singleton stated that Multnomah County is not waiting for the TAC assessment and has started the reform process through amending the county budget. She highlighted an improvement in sharing the inflow and outflow data on homelessness.

Commissioner Jerry Willey asked about the scope of the evaluation and encouraged staff to think about the final report before developing the scope.

Galstad replied that this is an important opportunity, so they are taking time to work with experts and noted that staff appreciate the feedback.

Mayor Tim Rosener added that cities and agencies tangential to the problem should be included in the scope.

4:30 p.m. Governance Review

Metro Council President Peterson reminded the group that they are trying to achieve system reform through governance, and emphasized the lack of regionalized, consistent data. President Peterson shared the updated reform proposal, including the roles of independent evaluations, a Technical Advisory Committee and a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC), the Metro Council, County partners, and Cities.

President Peterson walked through example processes for a Regional Action Plan and the evaluation, and highlighted compliance as a necessary conversation topic while drafting the new structure.

4:50 p.m. Group Discussion

Drawbridge facilitators invited work group members to share questions and comments.

Mercedes Elizalde asked how long the process is expected to take.

President Peterson stated that changing funding criteria could take a year of negotiation, but contracting issues can be prioritized at the Metro level and move more quickly.

Rachael Duke inquired about who is giving recommendations and who is responsible for integrating state resources.

President Peterson emphasized there is no independent review and oversight comes at the state and federal level. Peterson supported state involvement with the policy advisory committee but noted that she was advised not to create a regional agenda for state or federal changes.

Commissioner Singleton asked for more detail about how the proposed structure pertains to housing production and the relationship between the committees, independent review, and the housing needs analysis. Singleton requested that Metro staff inform work group members of new developments for feedback as they arise.

Mayor Beaty raised concerns about Metro being responsible for both selecting the independent review panel and assessing non-compliance. Beaty requested a demonstration that the process will not be complicated and emphasized that actions at the federal level are going to impact the work and funding.

Mayor Wilson expressed that the funding is a significant bucket of capital and should have a material benefit to the community. Wilson remarked that cities do not have agency, and Metro needs to act as an arbiter to determine the corrective action on behalf of supportive housing services when the outcomes are lacking.

Melissa Earlbaum asked if the chair of the Technical Advisory Committee would have seat on the Policy Advisory Committee and who would participate on the independent review panel.

President Peterson responded that the chair would not be part of the PAC and information would be communicated between the two committees by Metro staff. People and experts knowledgeable in the field, but not necessarily from the region, are candidates for the review panel.

Andrew Rowe wondered about the consequences that will come from accountability through the oversight of Metro as it relates to funding.

Mayor Rosener emphasized that details of the planning process must be distributed and shared that the mayors are willing to participate if there is a noticeable result.

Commissioner Singleton remarked that local experts are not excluded in any area other than homelessness and should be engaged in these efforts.

President Peterson responded that this would only be true for the independent review panel and local experts would be included in other conversations.

Commissioner Singleton added that a reallocation of funds and resources is necessary for improvement in Multnomah County due to the higher level of need in comparison to the other counties.

Commissioner Brim-Edwards emphasized the focus on rare, brief, and non-recurring and the need for a corrective action plan that leads to housing production. Brim-Edwards noted that the measure of success is reducing homelessness and voters will not be onboard if nothing improves.

President Peterson stated that Metro is responsible for coordinating conversation but not managing work of cities and counties on production.

Mayor Rosener remarked that cities do not have the ability to build new housing beyond streamlining the process and noted that risk factors for entering homelessness also require attention.

Sahaan McKelvey emphasized that the decision-making body (PAC) needs to have a regional focus and comprise regional stakeholders and experts, whereas the TAC should involve the jurisdictional partners, to maximize regional impact.

Council President Peterson concurred with McKelvey's remarks and reiterated the necessity of regional standards.

Drawbridge facilitators summarized the overall themes from the discussion: more clarity on the role and structure of committees, focus on outcomes, channels for accountability, and addressing the whole system. Facilitators then offered members the opportunity to share final reflections and takeaways from the work group overall.

McKelvey remarked on the number of areas where there was agreement but expressed that there should be more conversation around points of disagreement.

Commissioner Singleton mentioned relationship-building and opportunities for future partnership as a highlight of the work group.

Councilor Lewis shared appreciation for the progress toward creating a functional system.

Mayor Beaty raised concerns that the work is trending down a path of bureaucracy and shared her perspective as an elected that adding more levels of government will not solve the problem.

Rachael Duke expressed appreciation for the consideration given toward the people affected and involved and encouraged the work group members to continue centering people.

Andrew Rowe remarked on the complexity of the issue being addressed and expressed disappointment in the lack of guidance pulled from best practices in other regions around the country.

Commissioner Brim-Edwards shared appreciation for the group effort and emphasized the need for results; instead of focusing on getting voters to approve the ballot measure, the work should prioritize making progress in demonstrating that there will be a noticeable difference in results.

5:55 p.m. Adjourn

Commissioner West encouraged a new sense of urgency and noted that more accountability is needed for voters to approve a ballot measure. Commissioner West thanked the regional leadership and staff supporting the ongoing work.

Council President Peterson shared her appreciation for staff and announced Metro's proposed timeline for the ballot measure and reform ordinances.

The meeting concluded at 6:05 p.m.