

Metro

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Metro

Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024

10:30 AM

Metro Regional Center, Council
Chamber, [https://www.youtube.com/live/RI4_BMsohnA?
si=Z8gT2kKuDG10Czkl](https://www.youtube.com/live/RI4_BMsohnA?si=Z8gT2kKuDG10Czkl), <https://zoom.us/j/615079992> Webinar ID:
615 079 992 or 888-475-4499 (toll free)

Council work session

This meeting will be held electronically and in person at the Metro Regional Center Council Chamber.

You can join the meeting on your computer or other device by using this link:

https://www.youtube.com/live/RI4_BMsohnA?si=Z8gT2kKuDGI0Czkl,

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10:30 Call to Order and Roll Call

Deputy Council President Duncan Hwang called the Metro Council work session to order at 10:30am.

Present: 6 - Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Councilor Mary Nolan, Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Duncan Hwang, Ashton Simpson, and Christine Lewis

Excused: 1 - Lynn Peterson

Work Session Topics:

10:35 EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

Deputy Council President Hwang introduced Eliot Rose (he/him) to present on the topic.

Staff pulled up the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant Update Powerpoint to present to Council.

Presentation Summary:

The presenter explained how the EPA CPRG program offers Metro's agency partners 4-year planning grants to implement projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and helps fund the creation of a comprehensive regional climate action plan. He detailed the process and schedule of planning and funding, aiming to have the comprehensive plan ready by August 2025. Rose also outlined how these implantation grants overlap with other plans at the state, regional, and local level across many of their agency partners. He noted that the most significant greenhouse gas reduction opportunities are in transportation, residential

energy efficiency, and waste management, and gave a few examples of projects that intend to apply for these grants.

Council Discussion

Councilor Gonzalez asked if the TSP investment is systemwide or specific to the BRT project. Rose answered that they were still trying to figure out those details.

Councilor Simpson inquired if the composting capacity project would only serve Gresham, or also Troutdale, Fairview, and Wood Village. Rose answered that they are still coordinating with Gresham to figure out those details.

Councilor Nolan was interested in the coordination with WPES about how that might fit in with the facilities plan, and Rose confirmed WPES staff has been active in this project.

Councilor Lewis asked about how to engage cities that are not apart of the collaborative but still have climate reduction plans, like West Linn, and Rose responded that this was exactly the type of feedback they were hoping to hear from the Council during this process.

Councilor Gonzalez questioned if Climate Smart fits under the category of 'regional climate plans', noting we have many unfunded climate mandates. Rose said he does see it as a regional climate plan that is limited to the transportation sector.

Councilor Rosenthal asked if there is any potential for bi-state coordination, or if it is just limited to MSAs. Rose confirmed that there is potential for bi-state coordination, and that working with the EPA opens the door to potential multistate coalitions that could apply for these grants. Councilor Rosenthal points out modifying the NW power

grid as a major item that could be included in the scope of this program.

Councilor Lewis noted that the emphasis was mostly on transportation, and asked what opportunities for electrification and home energy programs there may be further down the line. Rose responded that the first round of grants would be focused on affordable housing because of its equity benefits, and because it is the area of building sustainability that Metro has the most oversight on. Councilor Lewis inquired as to why we were applying for \$30 million for transit but only \$5 million for housing. Rose explained that those numbers were just based on the estimates of organizations that intended to apply for the grants, and that once more of those come in the numbers may be more balanced.

Councilor Gonzalez recognized and appreciated Eliot Rose's work on this project.

Councilor Hwang noted that they are applying for funds from the EPA, but asked if there are other federal agencies that may have funding opportunities for regional plans. He also asked for elaboration on the process for the Regional Climate Plan. Rose explained that these grants require applicants to look into their eligibility for other federal funding sources and explain why they need the CPRG money specifically for their projects. He then outlined the three step process for creating the Portland Climate Action Plan: a consultant team created a standardized climate action plan based on others in the region, came up with a set of screening criteria for partners, and then shared the screening results and adapted for them. Councilor Hwang expressed that he was interested in making sure all the partners are as ambitious as possible in their Climate Action

Plans.

Councilor Rosenthal inquired about long-term goals for each sector - solid waste, transportation, housing - from our regional plan. Rose answered that it is clearer for solid waste and transportation, but more vague for housing.

Seeing no further discussion, Deputy Council President Hwang moved on to the next agenda item.

11:05 2024 Urban Growth Management Decision: Draft Regional Population, Household and Employment Forecast

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

Deputy Council President Hwang introduced Ted Reid, Principal Regional Planner at Metro, Josh Harwood, Malu Wilkinson, and Dennis Yee to present on the topic.

Staff pulled up the 2024 Urban Growth Management Decision: Regional Population, Household and Employment Forecast Powerpoint to present to Council.

Presentation summary:

The presenters explained that every 6 years a forecast is done by Metro on expected demographic and economic trends in order to plan for the future of the Urban Growth Boundary. The forecast asserted a range of possible outcomes, with the middle of that range being the most likely outcome. The forecast showed that the birthrate has been declining in recent years, and is predicted to stabilize around 1.5 births per woman, which is below the replacement rate. Mortality rates, on the other hand, have been going up steadily, and are predicted to go up even faster, largely due to the aging Baby Boomer generation. However, life expectancies are rising and are expected to continue rising. In addition, net migration is projected to

continue to be positive, about 15,000 migrants per year, largely due to quality of life and affordability. Presenters noted that diversity is also expected to continue to increase. Overall, net population is expected to grow, but at a slower rate than in previous decades.

Councilor Simpson asked if factors like political asylum and abortion healthcare access are accounted for in these projections, and Josh Harwood responded that those factors are not expected to be significant enough to have much impact on the overall numbers.

Councilor Rosenthal raised a question about the sensitivity of the fertility rate, if it were to change by .1% how much of a difference that would make on the net population changes, and Dennis Yee responded that it is likely a less significant variable than migration in its effects on the total population growth.

Councilor Nolan was concerned with how wide the difference is between the upper and lower ends of the projection range, and Harwood and Yee explained that the likelihood of those estimates decreases the further they are from the middle estimate.

Presenters moved on to the employment forecast, showing how the business cycle changes the employment/population ratio, but that it also tends to hover around 0.5 and they predict it will continue to hover around that ratio. They also predicted employment growth by sector, highlighting construction, retail/trade, service sectors, and education/healthcare as the faster growing sectors. They described how manufacturing is expected to plateau, noting that manufacturing is declining nationally, and we will probably see a similar pattern in the Portland metro area,

but we will fare better than the rest of the country because of our timber and tech industries.

Councilor Hwang asked if they were accounting for automation in these projections, and Harwood responded that they have but our industries are protected a bit from that because those industries conduct their research and development here as well, which is less at risk of automation.

The presenters wrapped up, noting that next time they will be going over capacity and the housing needs analysis with the Council.

Council Discussion

Councilor Lewis was interested in which demographics are opting to live within or without the UGB, and Yee responded that he would be detailing the capture rate in his next forecast presentation to them.

Councilor Rosenthal asked about the effects of an earthquake on the population forecast, and Yee responded that he has not seen significant effects of earthquakes on population changes in other situations. Harwood, on the other hand, pointed out that a natural disaster like Hurricane Katrina did have a major effect on the population in New Orleans.

Councilor Nolan brought up the 2008 housing collapse as the type of incident more likely to have a significant effect on population outcomes in the region.

Seeing no further discussion, Deputy Council President Hwang moved on to the next agenda item.

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

Deputy Council President Hwang introduced Eryn Kehe, Urban Policy & Development Manager, Metro, Serah Breakstone, 2040 Grants Manager, Metro, Malu Wilkinson, Deputy Director, Planning Development and Research, Metro, to present on the topic.

Staff pulled up the 2040 Planning & Development Grants-Administrative Rules Updates Powerpoint to present to Council.

Presenters detailed the refinements that they have implemented on this program to help make sure it worked better for their partners and stakeholders. The refinements include improvements in: responsiveness to local government partners, effectiveness at producing outcomes that align with Metro's values and goals, and flexibility/efficiency in administrative operations. They plan to implement these refinements through amendments to Administrative Rules, and a code amendment. They would also like to expand opportunities to access these grants by allocating funds to the Placemaking Grant Program, allow tribes to receive grants directly, and allow unincorporated areas to receive grants for incorporation/annexation planning. To improve ease of use, they would like to simplify grant categories, have clear and focused criteria, and rolling cycles with quarterly awards. To provide more support for grantees, they proposed to allow 20% of grants to be used for local government staff time, allow CET funds to pay for Metro direct project support, and better tracking of Metro staff time spent on project support.

Council Discussion

Councilor Lewis gave two enthusiastic thumbs up, and applauded presenters for their ideas to improve this

program. She asked when the amount of community placemaking funds available will be known for each cycle, and if that will match up with the budget. Malu Wilkinson responded that they are starting with \$250,000 of extra funding for placemaking.

Councilor Hwang asked if that budget change will effect the selection process for those grantees. Wilkinson responded that that process will not change.

Councilor Gonzalez expressed support for increase in planning capacity through project support. He asked about the planning process for large unincorporated urban areas, citing Aloha being left behind. He also expressed tension over the increase in funds for placemaking grants when there are high needs in housing and jobs. Eryn Kehe explained that this program allows unincorporated areas to figure out what their possibilities and options were in incorporation. Wilkinson responded that the placemaking grants are small enough that they are not really taking away money from other areas, but rather bringing in community groups to that process.

Councilor Rosenthal was curious about the idea of 20% of funds going to local government staff time and how that would work with cities of a certain size that may have sufficient funding already for that. Wilkinson explained that that amendment would simply allow grantees to choose to use the funds for that.

Councilor Hwang asked if the allocation for Metro staff time would impact the admin rate on CET funds. Wilkinson explained that the 5% admin cap covered the administration of the program, but not the technical support for implementation of the grants.

Seeing no further discussion, Deputy Council President Hwang moved on to the next agenda item.

12:20 Update on the Natural Areas Work Plan to Fund Real Property Purchases by a Public Partner through the Bond Acquisition Programs of the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

Deputy Council President Hwang introduced Jon Blasher, Parks & Nature Director, Metro, Shannon Leary, Real Estate Manager, Metro, to present on the topic.

Staff pulled up the Update on the Natural Areas Work Plan to Fund Real Property Purchases by a Public Partner through the Bond Acquisition Programs of the 2019 Parks and Nature Bond Measure to present to Council.

Presenters gave a recap of Metro's role in regional land and trail acquisition and discussed the challenges and opportunities in the process for partnership transactions with local park providers. They explained that Metro requires additional Council authority in order to contribute funds to transactions led by public partners, and described a couple examples. Presenters asked to adopt an amendment to delegate this authority to the COO in order to better use staff resources, work with partners more efficiently, and gain the desired outcomes of the bond measure.

Council Discussion

Councilor Nolan asked for clarification on the examples provided as to why they are designated as Tier 1 properties but they are not recommended as investment priorities for Metro. Jon Blasher explained that they do recommend the properties, they just do not recommend leading the transaction, but that the local provider should lead the transaction.

Councilor Gonzalez expressed support for the plan.

Councilor Lewis stated support as well, but was unsure on the problem with requiring Council approval, offering for the Parks department to have more time with the Council if that is what they need.

Deputy Council President Hwang asked about how they plan to message this change so that local jurisdictions do not see it as backdoor for Metro funds for their park projects. Blasher responded that they would make sure to consider that as they figure out their messaging plans going forward.

Councilor Rosenthal inquired about how many of these types of examples come up throughout the years. Shannon Leary responded that they are quite common, so having partners lead negotiations instead of Metro would be significant for freeing up Metro time to work on other things.

COO Marissa Madrigal provided additional context for this issue, pointing out that these changes would accelerate Metro's progress and spend the bond funding most efficiently.

Deputy Council President Hwang expressed support for these changes, stating that he would rather not require executive sessions for management of small parcels of land.

Councilor Nolan supported Councilor Lewis's idea to expedite getting the Parks Department issues on the Council schedule rather than shifting that power to the COO.

Councilor Rosenthal expressed worry that the Council would

lose some knowledge of important projects if they are bypassed, but that he is open to further discussion. Blasher explained that the deals that would go through the COO would still be available as memos before they are approved by the COO.

Deputy Council President Duncan Hwang told presenters that the Council would like more time to think about and work on this issue.

Seeing no further discussion, Deputy Council President Hwang moved on to the next agenda item.

12:25 Chief Operating Officer Communication

Marissa Madrigal provided an update on the following events or items:

- Update on Expo Futures: continuing to refine community engagement plan with consultants.
- Subcommittee of the Historical Significance Memorialization Committee is planning a spring storytelling event to provide history of the Expo site.
- Sports and Facilities Committee working on statement on community and public access to Expo Futures for recommended uses.
- Deputy COO Andrew Scott launched the Expo Future Funding Taskforce.

12:30 Councilor Communication

Councilors provided updates on the following meetings and events:

- Councilor Rosenthal announced that the county just opened a safe rest village in Aloha, noting that it is another step forward.
- Councilor Lewis mentioned that the Supportive Housing Services oversight body met to work through the redline on their draft of their Annual Report, and

wanted to make sure that the report would meet the needs of all the counties.

She also encouraged others to stop by Parallax gallery show of art made of found material from the Metro Transfer Station.

In addition, Lewis pointed out that the legislative update notes showed that every bill that Metro cares about is still alive.

12:35 Adjourn

Seeing no further business, Deputy Council President Duncan Hwang adjourned the Metro Council work session at 1:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Sam Hart