

FUTURE VISION PROJECT UPDATE

Date: March 30, 2026
Department: Planning, Development & Research
Meeting date: April 16, 2026

Prepared by: Jess Zdeb
Presenters: Malu Wilkinson (Metro), Jess Zdeb (Metro), Laura Combs (Metro)
Length: 20 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro is updating the region's Future Vision, a 50-year vision whose purpose is to guide development of plans, policies and investments throughout the region. It is anticipated that the updated Vision will come before Council for consideration in Spring 2027. The Vision will be developed and recommended by the Future Vision Commission, whom Council appointed last year.

This work session will provide an update on project work so far, focusing on the current round of public engagement, the Future Vision Youth Committee, and upcoming foresight awareness training for Metro Council.

ACTION REQUESTED

There is no specific action requested of Metro Council on this update item.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Per Council direction, the Future Vision is intended to be a north star for Metro, jurisdictional partners and others' plans, policies and investments in the region. Updating the Future Vision will lead to implementation actions including policy outcomes related to a future update of Metro's Regional Framework Plan, including the 2040 Growth Concept.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Note that the team will revisit the engagement strategy periodically throughout the project to adjust as needed to meet goals for hearing from a broad range of the region's stakeholders and the public. This work will be completed within the resources allocated to the project in the FY26 and anticipated FY27 budgets.

1. Do the described activities and communications strategies for the current public engagement window align with Council expectations?
2. Is there any framing Council would like staff to share with Institute for the Future staff in advance of the June 16 foresight awareness training?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Regional values engagement

This round of engagement seeks to identify a core set of regional values that residents of greater Portland want to inform the future. These will serve as the foundation of the vision, ensuring that the interests of our region's people are reflected in the vision.

The key tool for seeking input on values is a [low-barrier online survey](#) that is available in English, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Vietnamese. This survey opened on March 12 and will be available until at least May 15. Metro is promoting the survey through numerous means including:

- Metro social media channels, newsletters and publications (e.g., Our Big Backyard)
- Metro staff promotion: holding and visiting department all-staff meetings; Metro Together
- Paid online and social media advertising
- Government partner promotion (e.g., TriMet's *Rider Insider* newsletter, Wilsonville's "Boones Ferry Messenger" paper)
- Non-government partner promotion (e.g., Metro staff attend Intertwine Alliance event, community-based organizations include link in newsletters)
- Physical collateral in public spaces (e.g., flyers, bookmarks and postcards in public libraries)

Staff have also developed a [conversation kit](#) that provides an opportunity for open, thoughtful dialogue about what we value, what we hope for and what we want to pass on to future generations. This kit is designed to spark conversations – stories, aspirations and shared priorities – that will shape a bold, inclusive, and actionable 50-year vision rooted in the values of people who live and work in greater Portland. People can hold conversations and send their results back to Metro.

Staff and/or Council members are also presenting at County coordinating committees, Portland City Council, and have offered presentations to various other government and non-government groups around the region. Members of the Future Vision Commission are also circulating the engagement materials to their networks, and some are holding their own conversation kit gatherings with specific groups (e.g., Reed students, Future Generations Collaborative).

Future Vision Youth Committee

The Future Vision Youth Committee (FVYC) is a key component of Metro's strategy to ensure that the Future Vision has a strong youth voice. Metro solicited applications from youth ages 16-24 around the region for this body through broad advertising with community organization partners, schools, and Metro's social media; 75 applications were received.

Twenty-one youth accepted positions on the FVYC and by the time of this work session will have met twice as a group, and subset of members will have attended the April 9 Future Vision Commission meeting. The group has multiple members from all Metro Council districts and is diverse in lived, educational and professional experience.

This group is facilitated in partnership with two local nonprofits, NextUp and Blueprint Foundation. The group will meet approximately monthly for a year, mirroring the meetings of the Future Vision Commission and, in some cases, joining the Commission meetings. By convening this group, Metro's intent is that:

- Youth priorities, ideas and needs are clearly represented in the Future Vision,
- Youth are empowered to advocate for themselves and their community, and
- Youth members increase participation of their communities in the project.

One key role of the FVYC will be to guide development of a Youth Summit that will be held this summer. This will be a major event or event series bringing together the region's youth to learn about futures research and reflect together on what they want to see in this region in 50 years.

Foresight awareness training

[Institute for the Future](#) (IFTF), the longest continually running futures research and education organization and a member of the Future Vision consultant team, delivered a foresight awareness training to the Future Vision Commission at their January meeting. This insight into futures thinking is critical for the group as they develop a 50-year vision. Metro Council will consider the vision for adoption next year, and Metro as an agency will develop implementation actions based on the vision. Thus, it is also critical for Council and Metro senior leadership to be oriented to futures thinking.

IFTF staff will present a two-hour foresight awareness training as part of the June 16 Council work session, also to be attended by the Senior Leadership Team staff. The content will be largely the same as the Commission's training, but staff are seeking Council input regarding whether any specific framing or themes should be shared with trainers in advance.

BACKGROUND

In 2025, Metro Council provided direction to staff on the scope of the Future Vision update project through several work sessions and the adoption of Resolution 25-5490 which appointed the Future Vision Commission and identified the group's charge. That charge included direction for the Commission to review, thoughtfully consider and incorporate community values into the Future Vision. The Commission will be provided with results of several engagement phases which it will use to guide Vision development.

Metro Council also generally agreed upon the following engagement principles to guide Future Vision work. These principles shape the strategies and tactics the project team is using to engage the region.

Center on relationship building

Establishing new and existing relationships with agency and community partners, youth, and the arts, culture, and creative community must be a priority, as this is a visioning effort with generational impacts. These connections should be cultivated thoughtfully, with a focus on building strong foundations that support implementation of the vision, sustained growth, and lasting impact.

Community-driven approach

This is a vision of and for the region's communities. The visioning process and outcomes will be reflective of the region's diversity and shared values with intentional efforts made to include voices that are often excluded and marginalized. The stories, cultures, and lived experiences of residents should be treated as valuable forms of expertise. The process will be transparent about how community input shapes decisions

Rethink how we communicate and engage

Move beyond traditional written language-based communication and traditional forms of engagement. Use diverse communication mediums through visuals and art to effectively convey values, pathways, and the vision to a broad audience. The barrier to entry for understanding the vision should be low, ensuring it's accessible to all, while the values and goals must remain dynamic, authentic, and unafraid to challenge boundaries. Acknowledge the precarious and politically charged nature of the current moment, and the challenge of envisioning the next 50 years amid urgent, pressing issues facing communities today.

Building on past work

It is important to recognize and celebrate past efforts, using them as a foundation for future work. The strategy should be rooted in previous initiatives, aligning with the policies and recommendations of earlier visions to guide future implementation.

ATTACHMENTS

None