



600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Joint MERC and Council work session agenda

Tuesday, February 10, 2026

10:30 AM

Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber;
<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID:
615079992) or 253-205-0468 (toll free),

This is a Joint Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) and Council work session. This meeting will adjourn into a Council work session.

Joint MERC and Council work session

This Joint MERC and Council work session 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://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID: 615 079 992)

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

2. Joint MERC + Council Work Session Topics:

2.1 Expo Future Project Updates [26-6425](tel:26-6425)

Presenter(s): Craig Stroud (he/him), General Manager, Visitor Venues
Cindy Wallace (she/her), Executive Director, Oregon
Convention Center and Expo Center
Eric Crandall (he/him), Construction Manager, Metro Project
Management Office

Attachments: [Staff Report 1 - Historical Significance and Memorialization](#)
[Staff Report 2 - Sports Investment](#)
[Staff Report 3 - Sports Marketing](#)

3. Adjourn to Council work session

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បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការអ្នកបកប្រែភាសានៅពេលអង្គប្រជុំសាធារណៈ សូមទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខ 503-797-1700 (ម៉ោង 8 ព្រឹកដល់ម៉ោង 5 ល្ងាច ថ្ងៃធ្វើការ) ប្រាំពីរថ្ងៃ មុនថ្ងៃប្រជុំដើម្បីអាចឱ្យគេសម្រួលតាមសំណើរបស់លោកអ្នក។

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600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
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Agenda #: 2.1

File #: 26-6425

Agenda Date: 2/10/2025

Expo Future Project Updates

Craig Stroud (he/him), General Manager, Visitor Venues

Cindy Wallace (she/her), Executive Director, Oregon Convention Center and Expo Center

Eric Crandall (he/him), Construction Manager, Metro Project Management Office

EXPO FUTURE PROJECT – HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE AND MEMORIALIZATION UPDATE

Date: January 22, 2026
Department: Chief Operating Officer
Meeting Date: February 10, 2026
Prepared by: Craig Stroud

Presenters: Craig Stroud, he/him,
General Manager, Visitor Venues
Length: 15 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro Council Resolution 25-5450 and Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission (MERC) Resolution 25-01 both adopted in January 2025 advanced one of two primary objectives of the Expo Future project:

Objective 1: Metro will recognize Expo Center's Hall A as a site of national historical significance and meaningfully memorialize the site's history of forced displacement during World War II and the Vanport Floods, as well as the site's pre-colonial history and importance to Indigenous Peoples.

The Resolutions outlined the next phase of work through the following statements:

1. Recognizes the Portland Assembly Center as a site of national historic significance.
2. Accepts the *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report* presented on December 10, 2024, and directs staff to work with members of Impacted Communities to assess the feasibility of those recommendations and to develop a strategy to pursue implementation of the recommendations deemed feasible, and to report progress regularly to Metro Council.
3. Directs staff to commence a cultural resources assessment of the Expo property within 90 days of adoption of this resolution for the purpose of identifying existing and potential historic, cultural, archaeological, and architectural resources at the site.
4. Directs staff to develop cost estimates and to request funding in Metro's proposed FY25-26 budget for additional study and analysis of the Portland Assembly Center Hall A as described in the *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report* presented on December 10, 2024. The engineering study would assess Hall A's structural integrity, its capacity to stand independently, and the feasibility of serving uses other than as an exhibit hall and, where feasible, provide cost estimates for potential renovation or deconstruction. Within 180 days of availability of funding for the study, staff will commence the study and, once complete, present the study's findings.
5. Directs staff to commence community conversations within 90 days of completion of the engineering study of Hall A for the purpose of developing recommendations about potential use(s) of Hall A, or portions thereof, including use as a multi-use community/interpretive center as recommended by the *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report* presented on December 10, 2024.
6. Directs staff to develop cost estimates and request funding in Metro's proposed FY25-26 budget for development of the interpretive plan for representation and memorialization

of histories and cultures connected to the Expo site as identified in *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report* presented on December 10, 2024.

7. Directs staff to present a proposed governance structure and approach to community engagement for the development of the Expo Center interpretive plan, described in Action 6 above, within 180 days of adoption of this resolution. The approach must, at minimum, invite representatives of the urban Indigenous, Japanese American, and Vanport communities and Tribes to participate in the plan's development.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Council and MERC's continued awareness of the project and support during Phase 3.
- Insight about other information Council or MERC would like to receive before the next project update in early summer 2026.

STATUS UPDATE

1. Metro Council recognizes Portland Assembly Center as a site of national historic significance – completed with Metro Council Resolution 25-5450.
2. Assess the feasibility of the recommendations in the *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report* - Four Metro staff with expertise in enterprise operations; non-profit partnership; diversity, equity, and inclusion; legal; and other areas have been identified to complete an initial feasibility assessment of the recommendations. Once this initial assessment is completed, impacted communities will be engaged through the governance structure that is under development, see update 7 below.
3. Conduct a cultural resources assessment – completed: Willamette Cultural Resources Associates, Ltd completed a research-only assessment to identify known and potential archaeological and historic resources. The assessment has been shared with appropriate parties.
4. Conduct an engineering study of Hall A's integrity, reuse capacity - Akana engineering has completed its geotechnical assessment of the foundation and underlying soil conditions of Hall A. The study indicates that the existing foundations are located within the near surface dredge fill and are not adequate to withstand a seismic event. The engineers report stated that a deep foundation system will be required to either retrofit the existing or a replacement structure. We are continuing with the engineering assessment of the hall's structural foundations, framing, and exterior envelope. This information will be valuable as the project moves into future planning and impacted community discussions.
5. Engage community in conversations about Hall A's engineering study – to be started once Hall A's engineering study is completed.
6. Interpretive plan development – this action is dependent upon the feasibility of recommendations in the *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report*, which is underway. In addition, the engineering study for Hall A and its potential use as a multi-use community/interpretive center will inform development of the interpretive plan. Work on this plan will commence after those efforts are completed.
7. Develop governance and engagement for development of interpretive plan - Metro contracted with Kearns & West, a collaboration and strategic communications firm, to

support Metro in developing a governance structure to guide the creation of an interpretive plan for historical representation and memorialization. This includes ensuring community involvement is meaningful and appropriately scaled to technical, cultural, and financial considerations. The intent is for Kearns & West to continue developing an overall engagement plan and communications approach while the governance structure is finalized. Relatedly, the Expo Future project team has met several times with Metro's Government Affairs and Policy Development (GAPD) team in the past six months to structure an approach to Tribal consultation for the project. A newly hired employee in GAPD is expected to support those actions with the timing of this effort to be determined.

In addition to the progress noted above, Metro successfully negotiated a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Interstate Bridge Replacement Program, Washington Department of Transportation, and Oregon Department of Transportation for the potential siting of a Light Rail Transit Overnight Facility at Expo. The MOU identifies Expo Future project future conditions as well as overnight facility potential developments and defines how the parties will coordinate to support positive outcomes for both efforts. The possible location is south of the main Expo campus in an existing overflow gravel parking and storage lot. Impacts to the Expo Future vision are minor and manageable.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Metro Council directed staff to find the highest and best public use of the Portland Expo Center and to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. In February 2023, Council and the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) unanimously approved six objectives for the Expo Future project. Phase 2 of the project focused on two key objectives: meaningful memorialization of the site's history and culture, and pivoting Expo to a sports-centric venue. Community-developed visions for both objectives were presented to a joint meeting of MERC and Council on December 10, 2024. In January 2025, MERC and Council both adopted resolutions to accept the vision and to direct staff to continue working to achieve these objectives in Phase 3 of the project.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Does Council or MERC have feedback or guidance for the project?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR TO CONSIDER

Policy options are not being proposed with the update. As always, Council and MERC input on the project is warmly welcomed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

In January 2025, Council and MERC directed staff to proceed with activities that support meaningful representation and memorialization of the histories and cultures associated with the Expo site and to pivot Expo to a sports-centric venue. These activities will support Metro's goal of ensuring long-term financial sustainability of the Portland Expo Center.

Racial Equity

Expo Future Phase 3 activities advance the following goals of Metro's *Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*:

- A, convening and supporting regional partners to advance racial equity
- B, meaningfully engaging communities of color
- D, creating safe and welcoming services, programs, and destinations

If or as the project evolves to include construction, business development, and job creation, it also has the potential to meet Goals C and E of the plan:

- C, a racially diverse workforce, and
- E, resource allocation that advances racial equity

Climate Action

Sustainability is one of the Guiding Principles of the Expo Future Project. The recommendations of the Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee support climate action goals through the following proposed activities:

- Analyzing Hall A to determine the potential for reuse/renovation of the structure and for reuse of the building's materials if reuse of the structure is deemed infeasible
- Installation of more landscaping and restored green space at the site
- Following Metro's Sustainable Building Practices as the project moves forward

BACKGROUND

Metro owns the Portland Expo Center (Expo) site, a well-positioned, 53-acre employment and exhibition site at the economic center of greater Portland. Under the current business model, the long-term prospects of Expo are challenging due to the large-scale capital needs of Halls A, B, and C and the ongoing routine maintenance of the newer buildings and campus infrastructure. Pre-pandemic, Expo generated approximately \$50M in annual economic impact through 100+ public trade shows and community events that attracted. Post-pandemic, Expo attendance has declined; in 2024, annual attendance figures are approximately 260,000 visitors to over 90 public trade shows and community events.

The site is the largest exhibition space in Oregon, boasting 333,000 square feet of existing building area and over a million square feet of paved parking. Halls A, B, and C have been in operation for more than 100 years. Halls D and E are 23 and 27 years old, respectively. Expo is adjacent to other popular sports assets such as Portland International Raceway and Delta Park, a multi-field outdoor sports complex owned by the City of Portland that hosts various youth and adult sports tournaments throughout the year.

Metro recognizes the site's pre-colonial history and importance to Indigenous Peoples. The land upon which Expo sits was previously part of a dynamic and complex network of wetlands and river channels supporting Tribes and Indigenous Peoples and their ways of life since time immemorial. In addition, given Expo's hundred-year operational history, many communities and partners in the greater Portland region have developed unique and important historical and cultural ties to the venue and surrounding area.

Specifically, the nearby Vanport Flood and World War II incarceration at the Portland Assembly Center have had lasting impacts on Black, Indigenous and Japanese American communities. Metro recognizes the past events and injustices that took place on or near the Expo property. Expo staff works with Vanport Mosaic and the Japanese American Museum of Oregon to ensure these occurrences are never forgotten.

Since 2003, Metro has been working to determine the highest and best use of the Expo Center site and to develop a plan for its financial sustainability. From 2020 to present, Metro has engaged with communities with historic and cultural ties to the site (such as the Black, urban Indigenous, and Japanese American communities), Tribes, business stakeholders, and other key partners to identify vision for the site. One outcome of this stakeholder and partner engagement was the development of the project Guiding Principles, which MERC and Metro Council adopted by resolution in spring of 2022.

In January 2025, after a multi-year, community-involved assessment of opportunities to improve the long-term financial sustainability of the Portland Expo Center, the Metro Council and the MERC directed staff to focus on two overarching project objectives:

Objective 1: Metro will recognize Expo Center's Hall A as a site of national historical significance and meaningfully memorialize the site's history of forced displacement during World War II and the Vanport Floods, as well as the site's pre-colonial history and importance to Indigenous Peoples.

Objective 2: Leveraging Oregon's status as an international powerhouse in the sport and outdoor industry, Metro will pivot Expo's future redevelopment as a community-centric destination venue that prioritizes amateur, professional, and recreational sports.

ATTACHMENTS

None

EXPO FUTURE PROJECT: PRESENTATION OF INTERIM SPORTS INVESTMENTS

Date: January 22, 2026
Department: Chief Operating Officer
Meeting Date: February 10, 2026
Prepared by: Craig Stroud, Cindy Wallace

Presenters:
Craig Stroud, he/him, General Manager,
Visitor Venues
Cindy Wallace, she/her, Executive Director,
OCC+Expo
Eric Crandall, he/him, Construction Manager,
Metro Project Management Office
Length: 60 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro Council Resolution 25-5451 and Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission (MERC) Resolution 25-02 both adopted in January 2025, advanced one of two key objectives of the Expo Future project:

Objective 2: Leveraging Oregon's status as an international powerhouse in the sport and outdoor industry, Metro will pivot Expo's future redevelopment as a community-centric destination venue that prioritizes amateur, professional, and recreational sports.

Among other directives, the resolutions included the following action:

Directs staff to propose a package of short-term, interim investments and funding sources in Metro's FY25-26 budget within 90 days of adoption of this resolution for the purpose of better preparing Expo Center to attract and to host more sporting events and tournaments, preferably regional or larger, and to generate resources that allow Expo to meet needs for public use.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff will present Council and MERC with the interim investment options and cost estimates for limited, expanded, and full implementation of sports improvements to Halls D & E, the two modern halls at Expo. The presentation will include market and financial forecasts to inform decision-making.

Staff is seeking Council and MERC direction to the following:

- Direction on which of the investment options presented better equip Expo to attract and host sporting events in Halls D & E.
- Insight about other information Council or MERC would like to receive to support decision making and direction on interim investments.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The goal for Expo's future redevelopment is to be a community-centric destination venue that prioritizes amateur, professional, and recreational sports. Expo Future Phase 2 reviewed four sports scenarios that resulted from a market study. The preferred scenario identified basketball and volleyball based on their forecast event counts and attendance. The flat floors needed for basketball and volleyball provide flexibility for other sports uses, such as pickleball, wrestling, and

cheer/dance. Within the Sports & Facilities Committee's Public Use Statement, an emphasis is placed on the importance of striking a balance in creating a regionally significant sports competition and tournament venue and ensuring local community members have reliable venue access.

There are several important considerations to weigh as part of the equipment selection for this project, including:

- Legacy Clients - Do the sport equipment and infrastructure investments accommodate or preclude the future use of Halls D & E for Expo's traditional tradeshow and consumer event activities.
- Community Benefit – Staff will recommend equipment and sports improvements that support community benefit. In some cases, the investment that best supports community use is more expensive than mobile solutions. For example, permanently installed basketball hoops to the hall roof structures has the significant advantage of reduced time and labor to turn the halls from basketball to other uses. This higher initial investment is valuable to support community use and reduce on-going operational costs.
- Tournaments/Economic Impact – It is expected that the court spaces will be available for weekend tournaments. This use provides the greatest economic impact on Expo's operations and the region through the attraction of out-of-town families and athletes who generate impact through local hotel stays, restaurant visits, and other spending. Facility scheduling and use will follow the *Portland Expo Center Booking and Scheduling Policies and Procedures*, which also provides direction on scheduling legacy clients.

Most of the equipment and sports improvements needed to make Halls D & E sport ready for basketball and volleyball have permanent or temporary solutions. For example, there are "rubberized" court floor options with a 10+ year expected use life that are permanently installed and that can accommodate the impacts associated with most of Expo's legacy client activities. Hardwood court flooring is much less flexible and would require either removal or protective coverings to support legacy client activities. Other variables include cleaning and maintenance requirements, warranty, the time required to set and strike equipment, repairability, storage needs, and client/user preferences. The project team assessed these options with the intent to provide recommendations that balance the considerations.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

N/A

POLICY OPTIONS FOR TO CONSIDER

N/A

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff will present Council and MERC with the investment options and cost estimates for limited, expanded, and full improvements to Expo Halls D & E. The presentation will include market and financial forecasts to inform decision-making. Staff considered future business development, legacy client use, community benefit, and tournament use (economic impact) when determining recommendations.

The FY25-26 adopted budget provided \$2 million for this project. That amount was not expected to cover a full improvement solution needed for the complete interim sports pivot. To accommodate legacy client use, community benefit, tournaments and future business development while keeping operational and labor expenses down, staff recommend Council and MERC affirm the full turn-key

solution that incorporates permanent sport flooring, installed basketball hoops, mobile volleyball nets, enhanced lighting and mobile scoreboards.

Of the \$2 million made available in the FY25-26 budget, an estimated \$1.25-1.4 million will remain for construction and equipment purchases after accounting for design, consulting, permitting, and other necessary project costs. Given that the full turn-key improvements cost more than the currently available funds, Metro staff will work to identify funding sources and/or financing options through loans or other means for Council and MERC consideration and direction in the future.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

In January 2025, Council and MERC directed staff to proceed with activities that support meaningful representation and memorialization of the histories and cultures associated with the Expo site and to pivot Expo to a sports-centric venue. These activities will support Metro's goal of ensuring long-term financial sustainability of the Portland Expo Center.

Racial Equity

Expo Future Phase 3 activities advance the following goals of Metro's *Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*:

- A, convening and supporting regional partners to advance racial equity
- B, meaningfully engaging communities of color
- D, creating safe and welcoming services, programs, and destinations

As the project evolves to include construction, business development, and job creation, it also has the potential to meet Goals C and E of the plan:

- C, a racially diverse workforce
- E, resource allocation that advances racial equity

Climate Action

Sustainability is one of the Guiding Principles of the Expo Future Project. Phase 3 project recommendations of the Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization and Sports & Facilities committees support climate action goals through the following proposed activities:

- Analyzing Halls A, B, and C to determine the potential for reuse/renovation of the structures and for reuse of the buildings' materials if reuse of the structure is deemed not to be feasible
- Designing the proposed new court sports facility to secondarily accommodate large-scale exhibitions, thereby extending its functional capacity
- Installation of more landscaping and green restored space at the site
- Following Metro's Sustainable Building Practices if or as the project moves to design and construction

BACKGROUND

The Metro FY2025-26 adopted budget included \$2 million from the Metro General Fund to prepare Expo Center to attract and host more sporting events and tournaments, including improvements such as sports flooring, basketball hoops, volleyball nets, court net curtain dividers, and other related sports improvements. This \$2 million was not expected to fully cover the improvements and equipment needed for the complete interim sports pivot. Rather, the investment provided funding to contract with the necessary experts to inform options and decision-making for an interim sports investment.

To advance this work, Metro established a project team consisting of OCC + Expo sales, facilities, and events staff plus representatives from Sport Oregon, Travel Portland, Columbia Empire Volleyball Association (CEVA), and Hoop Source. These experts were engaged to provide strategic input on improvement options, venue operations, and to share their deep experience hosting volleyball and basketball tournaments and the requisite investments to make Expo sport ready for future tournaments.

Metro contracted with Scott Edwards Architecture (SEA), an architecture firm to support programming and design options for a full investment of equipment and improvements for Expo Halls D & E. The project team requested that the designs and improvements provide limited, expanded, and full build-out options for Halls D & E given uncertainty around total costs and available funding. In addition, Metro engaged Hunden Partners to support market and financial analyses associated with the options. Hunden Partners was a primary consultant for Expo Future Phase 2 deliverables. Representatives from Expo, Sport Oregon, Travel Portland, CEVA, and Hoop Source all provided financial, event count, event attendance, and hotel night data to inform forecasts for growth potential.

SEA equipment and improvement options were cost estimated by DCW Cost Estimating, a third-party estimating firm. The team provided project cost estimates to Hunden Partners for use in their financial analyses.

ATTACHMENTS

None

EXPO FUTURE PROJECT: SPORTS MARKETING UPDATE

Date: January 22, 2026
Department: Chief Operating Officer
Meeting Date: February 10, 2026
Prepared by: Craig Stroud, Cindy Wallace

Presenters: Cindy Wallace, she/her, Executive
Director, Oregon Convention Center +
Portland Expo Center
Length: 15 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro Council Resolution 25-5451 and Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission (MERC) Resolution 25-02 both adopted in January 2025, advanced one of two key objectives of the Expo Future project:

Objective 2: Leveraging Oregon's status as an international powerhouse in the sport and outdoor industry, Metro will pivot Expo's future redevelopment as a community-centric destination venue that prioritizes amateur, professional, and recreational sports.

The Resolutions outlined the next phase of work through the following statements:

1. Accepting the Expo Sports & Facilities Committee's preferred sports development scenario presented on December 10, 2024; and
2. Directing staff to pursue key actions in support of implementing the preferred sports redevelopment scenario:
 - a. continue to analyze and refine the scenario and provide regular project updates to MERC and Metro Council;
 - b. propose a package of short-term investments in Halls D & E in Metro's FY25-26 budget to better equip Expo to attract and host sporting events;
 - c. develop criteria for solicitation of a public-private partnership for full build-out of the preferred Expo Center sports redevelopment scenario, including representation and memorialization recommendations and other required site features, with the intent of selecting a development partner by December 2025; and
 - d. continue to make every effort to pursue the sports event market per the Portland Expo Center Booking and Scheduling Policies and Procedures.
3. Expresses MERC's support of Metro Council's intent and direction to staff to ensure that actions in pursuit of the preferred sports scenario at Expo are compatible with the *Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization Committee Recommendations Report* and do not commodify or cause harm to involved partners and communities.

ACTION REQUESTED

- Council and MERC's continued awareness of the actions taken to advance the sports pivot of the Expo Center through sales and marketing efforts. These efforts align and support interim sports equipment and infrastructure investments that staff will present at the February 10, 2026, joint Metro Council and MERC meeting.

- Insight about other information Council or MERC would like to receive before the next project update in early summer 2026.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Metro Council directed staff to find the highest and best public use of the Portland Expo Center and to ensure its long-term financial sustainability. In February 2023, Council and the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) unanimously approved six objectives for the Expo Future project. Phase 2 of the project focused on two key objectives: meaningful memorialization of the site's history and culture, and pivoting Expo to a sports-centric venue. Community-developed visions for both objectives were presented to a joint meeting of MERC and Council on December 10, 2024. In January 2025, MERC and Council both adopted resolutions to accept the vision and to direct staff to continue working to achieve these objectives in Phase 3 of the project.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Does Council or MERC have feedback or guidance for the sales and marketing efforts supporting Expo Center's pivot to a sports-centric venue?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Policy options are not being proposed with the update. As always, Council and MERC input on the project is warmly welcomed.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

In January 2025, Council and MERC directed staff to proceed with activities that support meaningful representation and memorialization of the histories and cultures associated with the Expo site and to pivot Expo to a sports-centric venue. These activities will support Metro's goal of ensuring long-term financial sustainability of the Portland Expo Center.

Racial Equity

Expo Future Phase 3 activities advance the following goals of Metro's *Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*:

- A, convening and supporting regional partners to advance racial equity
- B, meaningfully engaging communities of color
- D, creating safe and welcoming services, programs, and destinations

If or as the project evolves to include construction, business development, and job creation, it also has the potential to meet Goals C and E of the plan:

- C, a racially diverse workforce
- E, resource allocation that advances racial equity

Climate Action

Sustainability is one of the Guiding Principles of the Expo Future Project. Phase 3 project recommendations of the Expo Future Historical Significance & Memorialization and Sports & Facilities committees support climate action goals through the following proposed activities:

- Analyzing Halls A, B, and C to determine the potential for reuse/renovation of the structures and for reuse of the buildings' materials if reuse of the structure is deemed infeasible
- Designing the proposed new court sports facility to secondarily accommodate large-scale exhibitions, thereby extending the center's functional capacity
- Installation of more landscaping and restored green space at the site
- Following Metro's Sustainable Building Practices as the project moves to design and construction

BACKGROUND

Metro owns the Portland Expo Center ("Expo") site, a well-positioned, 53-acre employment and exhibition site at the economic center of greater Portland. Under the current business model, the long-term prospects of Expo are challenging due to the large-scale capital needs of Halls A, B, and C and the ongoing routine maintenance of the newer buildings and campus infrastructure. Pre-pandemic, Expo generated approximately \$50M in annual economic impact through 100+ public trade shows and community events that attracted. Post-pandemic, Expo attendance has declined; in 2024, annual attendance figures are approximately 260,000 visitors to over 90 public trade shows and community events annually.

The site is the largest exhibition space in Oregon, boasting 333,000 square feet of existing building area and over a million square feet of paved parking. Halls A, B, and C have been in operation for more than 100 years. Halls D and E are 23 and 27 years old, respectively. Expo is adjacent to other popular sports assets such as Portland International Raceway and Delta Park, a multi-field outdoor sports complex owned by the City of Portland that hosts various youth and adult sports tournaments throughout the year.

Metro recognizes the site's pre-colonial history and importance to Indigenous Peoples. The land upon which Expo sits was previously part of a dynamic and complex network of wetlands and river channels supporting Tribes and Indigenous Peoples and their ways of life since time immemorial. In addition, given Expo's hundred-year operational history, many communities and partners in the greater Portland region have developed unique and important historical and cultural ties to the venue and surrounding area.

Specifically, the nearby Vanport Flood and World War II incarceration at the Portland Assembly Center have had lasting impacts on Black, Indigenous and Japanese American communities. Metro recognizes the past events and injustices that took place on or near the Expo property. Expo staff works with Vanport Mosaic and the Japanese American Museum of Oregon to ensure these occurrences are never forgotten.

Since 2003, Metro has been working to determine the highest and best use of the Expo Center site and to develop a plan for its financial sustainability. From 2020 to present, Metro has engaged with communities with historic and cultural ties to the site (such as the Black, urban Indigenous, and Japanese American communities), Tribes, business stakeholders, and other key partners to identify vision for the site. One outcome of this stakeholder and partner engagement was the development of the project Guiding Principles, which MERC and Metro Council adopted by resolution in spring of 2022.

In January 2025, after a multi-year, community-involved assessment of opportunities to improve the long-term financial sustainability of the Portland Expo Center, the Metro Council and the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) directed staff to focus on two overarching project objectives:

Objective 1: Metro will recognize Expo Center's Hall A as a site of national historical significance and meaningfully memorialize the site's history of forced displacement during World War II and the Vanport Floods, as well as the site's pre-colonial history and importance to Indigenous Peoples.

Objective 2: Leveraging Oregon's status as an international powerhouse in the sport and outdoor industry, Metro will pivot Expo's future redevelopment as a community-centric destination venue that prioritizes amateur, professional, and recreational sports.

ATTACHMENTS

None