

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR RID PATROL'S WORKFORCE TRANSITION PROGRAM EXPANSION

Date: April 28, 2021

Department: WPES

Meeting Date: May 11, 2021

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Length: 60 minutes (presentation and
Q&A)

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ISSUE STATEMENT

In early 2019, Metro Council requested that staff develop a "Metro Conservation Corps" concept. The concept was to provide employment opportunities for adults experiencing employment barriers based on the [Seattle Conversation Corps](#) model that provides opportunities for adults to work in a structured program to gain job skills while carrying out projects that benefit the community and environment. Staff conducted research and engaged stakeholders to develop a three-year strategic plan to implement this concept within the RID Patrol program. The draft plan is complete and available for Metro Council review.

ACTION REQUESTED

Staff seek Council input and guidance on the strategic direction for the phased approach for expanding the RID Patrol workforce transition program.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The RID Patrol workforce transition program advances the work of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan, which serves as the greater Portland area's plan for ensuring the region's garbage and recycling system protects public health and safety, safeguards the environment, and advances Metro's racial equity objectives. The program addresses the following Regional Waste Plan goals and actions:

Goal 4 Increase the diversity of the workforce in all occupations where people of color, women, and other historically marginalized communities are underrepresented.

- 4.1 Implement a workforce development and readiness program for garbage and recycling industry jobs.
- 4.2 Develop a career pathways strategy that aims to increase the diversity of workers in all solid waste occupations.
- 4.5 In partnership with community-based organizations, create workforce development programs within the reuse sector that focus people with barriers to employment.

Goal 11 Address and resolve community concerns and service issues.

- 11.4 Provide services to clean up illegal dumps on public property, prioritizing communities with the greatest need.
- 11.5 Research the root causes that contribute to illegal dumping and how they can be addressed.
- 11.6 Implement garbage and recycling collection services for people experiencing homelessness.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Does the strategic approach for the RID Patrol workforce transition program align with Metro Council priorities?
- Does Council wish to make any changes to the program elements in the plan?
- Does Council agree that staff should establish an interim deployment facility while simultaneously evaluating long term deployment center options?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

1. **Direct staff to move forward with implementation of the strategic plan.** During research of the available regional workforce programs and the development of the strategic priorities, staff centered people in its decision-making. Specifically staff identified that people impacted by incarceration at the highest rates are black, indigenous and people of color. Staff focused the workforce transition program expansion and development to provide opportunities for communities impacted by incarceration to provide opportunities for economic prosperity through living wage jobs, to improve the health communities by reducing pollution for cleaner water and public spaces, and for civic engagement to influence decisions on the program services and operations.

2. **Direct staff to evaluate additional program elements and/or make modifications to the plan.** Metro Council could direct staff to evaluate additional program services to determine how the additional services might create additional job skills and experiences to benefit program participant's prospects for long-term employment opportunities with living wages. Through phase 2, program design, staff will at a minimum conduct research and develop pathways into and from the program, and training programs relevant to the RID Patrol services and in alignment with the 2030 Regional Waste Plan goals. A benefit of including additional program services is the potential to diversify RID Patrol's services and learning opportunities for workforce transition program participants. A challenge of evaluating additional services at this time is delaying some deliverables of the workforce transition program design elements.

3. Direct staff to acquire an interim deployment center and evaluate long-term options. Metro Council may direct staff to acquire an interim deployment center that can immediately house the expanded RID staff, additional equipment and materials until the direction for a long-term facility can be established. This would require investment in a short-term leasing option to provide space for the RID Patrol program staff, crews, equipment and vehicles. The deployment center is a critical part of the program's infrastructure in providing cohesive operations in one central location and creating an inclusive program culture that is beneficial for workforce program participants and staff.

Waiting to acquire a long-term facility provides the RID Patrol program time to further assess the long-term space needs while operating in a short-term (3-5 years) option. RID staff are working with the Capital Asset Management and the Expo Center Development Opportunity Study staff to assess whether there are Metro-owned assets that can accommodate the RID Patrol operations on a short, mid or long-term basis. It appears leasing a space will likely be the short-term option to meet immediate need. Waiting two to four years to acquire a long-term facility Metro may see real estate costs increase with reduced inventory of available properties which may require RID Patrol to extend a short-term option lease and could limit the program's ability to expand operations.

The vision for the long-term facility is to co-locate Metro Paint with RID Patrol. This vision creates an opportunity to share operational costs and resources as well as opportunities for additional workforce pathways. Moving forward with acquiring a long-term option creates stability for both programs staff and operations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends Metro Council proceed with implementation of the strategic plan and phased expansion of the RID workforce transition program. Staff recommends proceeding with a short-term deployment center while initiating the process for acquiring a long-term facility in parallel with the development of the RID and Metro Paint programs space and amenities needs for a shared site.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

How is this related to Metro's Strategic Plan or Core Mission?

The RID workforce transition plan advances Metro's Strategic Recovery Framework principals focused on racial justice and shared prosperity. The RID program focuses on advancing allocation of resources in ways that benefit communities of color and other historically marginalized communities, including eliminating barriers to services and employment. A successful RID cleanup effort will help Metro keep our promise of keeping the region clean and livable.

How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals?

Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity include two key goals for advancing economic opportunities for communities of color and hiring, training and promoting a

racially diverse workforce. The RID program focuses eliminating employment barriers for communities of color and supporting efforts to increase the diversity of the workforce in all occupations where people of color, women, and other historically marginalized communities are underrepresented; and address and resolve community concerns and service issues.

Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback

Metro initiated the development of the strategic plan in December 2019. The plan development included multiple phases of work with advisory groups, community members and Metro Council in each phase. This included engagement with:

- Regional Waste Advisory Committee (RWAC)
- RID Patrol external advisory committee
 - Teresa Gaddy, EcoTrust's Green Workforce Academy
 - Justice Rajee, Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center (POIC)
 - Shilo George, Lush Kuntux Tumtum Consulting
 - Shannon Olive, WomenFirst Transition and Referral Center
 - Alex Rhoades, Rebuilding Center and workforce program participant
- RID Patrol internal steering committee
 - Kimberlee Ables, Communications
 - Shane Abma, Office of Metro Attorney
 - Andre Bealer, Council Office
 - Holly Calhoun (previously Dorian Gualotunia), Human Resources
 - Scotty Ellis, Parks and Nature
 - Tiffany Thompson, DEI
- Community-based organizations providing workforce programs, re-entry and support services to people exiting incarceration, and program staffing partners

Stakeholder feedback about the expansion and strategic priorities has been generally supportive and suggestions for partnerships and improvements. Staff solicited input from Metro's Regional Waste Advisory Committee about the concept in the fall of 2019 and the strategic approach for the expansion in November and December 2020.

Staff has not received any comments reflecting opposition to the program or its expansion.

Financial Implications (current year and ongoing)

The Waste Prevention and Environmental Services department requested a FY21/FY22 budget modification (\$2.5M) to increase resources for the RID Patrol program in response to the significant demand in the region for cleanup services of dumped garbage. This

request expands the current model of the RID workforce transition program that serves as foundational work to advancing the department's racial equity goals to create workforce opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment. The budget modification funding supports 8.0 additional FTE, for a total of six additional contracted crew member positions, new partnerships with community based organizations, training, disposal fees, tools and equipment.

The current budget does not include funds for the program's deployment center on a short term basis. This space would accommodate expanding operations and equipment for the next 3-5 years. Funding for this space may be appropriated from the solid waste fund reserves.

Future budgets may include funding to support additional workforce transition program design elements that will be developed as part of the strategic plan implementation.

BACKGROUND

The RID Patrol program provides cleanup services throughout the greater Portland region by cleaning up dumped and abandoned waste from public lands. This includes materials improperly disposed of from commercial, residential and under-housed people living and working in the region. This program was established by Metro Council in 1993.

RID Patrol provided cleanup services with two incarcerated crews until 2017. To meet increasing demands for services, RID Patrol added a third crew in 2017. This crew, consisting of one Metro staff person and two contracted crew members from community-based organizations, was the beginning of the RID Patrol workforce transition program.

The adoption of the 2030 Regional Waste Plan established new direction for the region for addressing the impacts of materials – from production to disposal – while developing goals and actions that address the legacies of racial discrimination. A key component of this is dismantling systems that perpetually exclude communities of color from obtaining family wage jobs with good benefits. This requires efforts to advance equitable workforce outcomes such as diversifying the solid waste sector, and minimizing the wage disparities for communities of color, building programs that provide lower barriers for communities disproportionately impacted by incarceration. The Regional Waste Plan identifies specific goals and actions within Shared Prosperity to advance these outcomes.

As a priority of both Metro Council and the Regional Waste Plan, staff developed strategic direction for expanding the RID Patrol program. The strategic direction was informed by existing policy guidance, internally- developed best practices for how to deliver support services to communities impacted by the incarceration system, an internal steering committee made up of representatives from Metro departments, an external advisory committee comprised of representatives from community-based organizations in greater

Portland that provide work transition services, and Metro's internal management and leadership.

The vision of Metro's RID Patrol workforce transition program expansion is to provide employment opportunities to individuals with systemic barriers to employment in the solid waste sector with a focus on individuals who are disproportionately impacted by and suffer from higher rates of incarceration: Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC).

The current model of the RID Patrol workforce transition program is one crew consisting of one Metro staff person leading the work of two contracted crew members. Program partners, Constructing Hope and POIC, provide staffing and support services for the RID Patrol crew members. Crew members work on RID Patrol for one to three years gaining job experience and skills. Metro provides training on operational needs and health and safety protocols, use of ropes and climbing equipment, and knowledge about the solid waste management and disposal requirements. The small size of the program allows Metro to provide an individualized experience with the two crew members by working with them on their personal and professional goals. Past program participants moved onto jobs in the trades, at local transfer stations, and at Metro's household hazardous waste and paint facilities.

The vision and strategic approach is to expand the current workforce transition program to include robust support services as an integral program element. This approach will also support equitable pathways to long-term employment with priority given to garbage and recycling industry opportunities, as well as civic leadership opportunities for individuals impacted by incarceration. This strategic approach provides a phase to develop programing, metrics, outcomes, and pathways into and out of the program.

The RID Patrol program expansion is on an accelerated timeline, six crews operating by August 2021, in order to meet demand for services. This accelerated expansion is a parallel process with the long-term strategic approach to expand and further develop RID Patrol's workforce transition program.

With the accelerated program expansion, RID Patrol is in immediate need for a facility that can function as the deployment center. This space would accommodate expanding operations and equipment for the next 3-5 years.

Currently, the RID Patrol program does not have a designated space that can accommodate the current or expanded operations, staff and equipment. RID Patrol crews have utilized St. Johns Landfill space while the planning and support staff were located at the Metro Regional Center. St. Johns Landfill is not easily accessible by public transit requiring staff and program participants to have a car which creates an employment barrier. A deployment center that is easily accessible by public transit and can accommodate the RID Patrol operations and staff would allow the program to create an inclusive culture, cohesive

operations, opportunities for morning huddles and safety briefings, and a welcoming space for staff and program participants.

The long-term vision for the deployment center is to find a location that suits the needs of both RID Patrol and Metro Paint operations and staff that is centrally located and accessible by public transit. Collocating these program provides an opportunity to share operating costs and resources but most importantly create a space where staff and program participants can thrive and feel they are valued members of the Metro family. RID Patrol staff envision a space that not only supports Metro but community as well.

ATTACHMENTS

- RID Patrol workforce transition strategic plan
- RID Patrol Landscape Assessment: Workforce Development and Transition Services for Black, Indigenous and Other People of Color Impacted by Incarceration
- RID Patrol program best practices
- RID Patrol program infographic
- Community Cleanup Expansion Options Memo

For work session:

- Is legislation required for Council action? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- What other materials are you presenting today? A PowerPoint presentation