

MPAC Worksheet

Agenda Item Title: State Legislative Update

Presenters: Anneliese Koehler, State and Regional Affairs Advisor

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Purpose/Objective

Provide an overview of the recently concluded 2021 Legislative Session with particular focus on areas of interest to MPAC.

Outcome

Greater clarity for MPAC members on the 2021 Legislative Session outcomes; opportunity to ask questions and have discussion.

What has changed since MPAC last considered this issue/item?

The 2021 Legislature convened on January 19 and adjourned on June 26, one day before its constitutional deadline. This session was unlike any other regular session in Oregon history as it was held in the midst of a global pandemic. To address safety concerns and curb the spread of the virus, the public was barred from the Capitol, all committee hearings were held remotely by videoconference, and floor sessions were in-person for legislators only. Meeting in these new, remote ways created unique challenges for those involved in the legislative process because communication was more difficult, especially to legislators.

Overall, much of the session was focused on COVID-19 response, wildfire response and racial justice. Additionally, the session started with concerns about budget cuts and a troubling financial forecast for the state, but ended with a significant influx of federal funds through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and a rosier outlook for anticipated state revenues. These financial gains resulted in historic levels of spending this biennium. A considerable portion of the funding was one-time and focused on addressing economic recovery, housing and homelessness, education, behavioral health, wildfire recovery and disaster preparedness, racial equity, and water systems.

At MPAC's July 28 meeting, Metro staff will share legislative highlights from transportation, housing, land use and recycling. In addition, Thorn Run has prepared a presentation on "Regional Mayors' Perspective" on the 2021 session and an overview of the major legislation that Metropolitan Mayors' Consortium engaged on that Metro staff will also present. Staff looks forward to answering MPAC members' questions about the session and specific legislation.

What packet material do you plan to include?

None