

Metro

*600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov*



Metro

Minutes

Tuesday, July 11, 2017

8:30 AM

AGENDA REVISED 7/07/17

Oregon Convention Center, VIP Suite B

Council retreat

1. Introduction, Background, and Purpose of the Day

Council President Tom Hughes called the Metro Council retreat to order at 8:48 a.m. Chief Operating Officer Martha Bennett provided a brief overview of the agenda and explained that the primary purpose of the retreat was to discuss future potential work plans for the Metro Council.

Present: 7 - Council President Tom Hughes, Councilor Sam Chase, Councilor Carlotta Collette, Councilor Shirley Craddick, Councilor Craig Dirksen, Councilor Kathryn Harrington, and Councilor Bob Stacey

2. Public Opinion Research

Ms. Bennett introduced Mr. Jim Middaugh, Communications Director, and Ms. Becca Uherbelau, Metro staff, to provide an overview of public opinion research related to this topic. Mr. Middaugh emphasized that bond results and surveys consistently demonstrated that the Parks and Nature program was one of Metro's core strengths. He noted that the program had been strongly supported since the 1990s and added that when asked about their priorities, people outlined parks as second only to education and jobs. Mr. Middaugh shared a high-level overview of Parks and Nature opinion research and data that highlighted the strong support for parks programs. Mr. Middaugh and Ms. Uherbelau then shared plans for future outreach, including working with a firm to help with polling. They noted that they were choosing a firm to help with the process that had expertise in public ballot measures but also public engagement, in order to help ensure that the entire greater Portland region was represented. Councilor Craddick requested a map that demonstrated levels of support by geographical area. Mr. Middaugh noted that deviations across the three counties were diminishing over time.

3. 2006 Natural Areas Background and Results

Ms. Bennett introduced Ms. Heather Nelson Kent and Mr. Brian Kennedy, Metro staff, to provide a high-level overview of Metro's natural areas bonds and their results. Ms. Nelson Kent shared a list of Metro's Parks and Nature capital bond program investments from 1995 to 2017, highlighting the significant investments that resulted from the two bond measures. She noted that the Metro Council had directed more than \$20 million to capital construction at its regional sites and more than \$90 million to large investments in local parks, natural areas, and trails. Ms. Nelson Kent provided a summary of the two bond measures and explained that in each case Metro had worked diligently to ensure that the bond measure program reflected the communities' needs. Councilors discussed the target areas identified in the two bond measures and how to best poll regional residents to determine their needs. Councilor Harrington asked about regional sites that had master plans but that had not yet identified full funding. Mr. Brian Kennedy then shared projections of the Natural Areas program fund balance. He explained that staff expected the bond to be fully spent and capital projects completed in fiscal year 2020. He provided an overview of the general obligation bond measures for Metro's natural areas and the Oregon Zoo, including regional taxes over the next ten years. Mr. Middaugh explained that if Metro was to put another bond to the voters, there was significant advantage to not going over the current rate. Councilor Chase asked how a future zoo bond measure might affect the projections. Councilor Harrington noted the capital improvement needs of the Portland Expo Center. Councilor Craddick asked if the projections included the potential for a recession and Mr. Kennedy confirmed that a conservative estimate was used for assessed value.

4. Elections Calendar and Options

Ms. Bennett provided a draft calendar outlining the upcoming Metro Council elections through November 2020, focused on the various benefits and challenges of future dates for another bond measure. Ms. Bennett shared her thoughts on a few potential timeframes and asked the Councilors to consider the different options. Councilors recommended keeping in mind local operating levy campaigns and other Metro programs such as the Solid Waste Roadmap.

5. Council Discussion of Calendar

The Council then discussed the draft calendar. Councilor Dirksen expressed the importance of identifying why an additional bond was needed. Councilors discussed existing needs, such as capital costs and long-term maintenance funding. Councilor Craddick asked about a long-term plan for Metro's parks and nature program. Councilor Chase proposed using future bond measures to better support Metro's equity goals and initiatives. Councilor President Hughes spoke to the need for additional parks and natural areas in urban cores and other central areas. Councilor Harrington detailed what information would be helpful for such a discussion, including data and modeling. Ms. Bennett noted that by operating from a position of strength such as the parks program, there was an opportunity to build coalitions that would support multiple initiatives. Councilor Stacey spoke to the importance of being ambitious in regards to engagement. Councilors discussed best practices, such as housing measures that incorporated open spaces and/or land use. Councilors also discussed how to use Metro's core strengths to further its housing and transportation goals and other interrelated issues.

6. Council Direction to Staff

Council expressed support for a draft work plan to further consider potential future bond measures.

7. Next Steps

Ms. Bennett debriefed the day's discussion and thanked the Council for their direction. She noted that staff would aim to develop a draft work plan based on the councilors' comments in September.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business, Council President Hughes adjourned the Metro Council retreat at 11:12 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nellie Papsdorf, Legislative and Engagement Coordinator