

MINUTES OF THE METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

Wednesday, June 28, 2006
Metro Council Chamber

Councilors Present: David Bragdon (Council President), Susan McLain, Rod Park, Robert Liberty, Rex Burkholder, Brian Newman, Carl Hosticka (on speakerphone)

Councilors Absent:

Council President Bragdon convened the Metro Council Work Session Meeting at 2:03 p.m. He indicated he was ready to move into a more specific phase of the work, with deadlines.

I. DEBRIEF FROM REGIONAL FORUM

- **LESSONS LEARNED**
- **NEXT STEPS**

Robin McArthur, Planning, said last Friday's forum had 272 citizen participants and 32 staff. One objective was to reach a larger stakeholder group than the mayors and chairs. The focus was on implementation. They tried to get people into the Council mindset of having to face the tough choices. Finally, what combination of tools did we want to use? There were many audiences and ways to address them. She felt there was clarity that this audience was a touchpoint for certain stakeholders. Council and staff had a united front in terms of no-growth not being an option.

II. BEGIN DISCUSSION NEW LOOK SCENARIOS/THEMES

- **WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE WANT TO ANSWER**
- **WHAT APPROACH SHOULD WE TAKE**
- **NEXT STEPS**

Ms. McArthur distributed a New Look publication on Coming to Grips with Growth (a copy is included in the meeting record). She reviewed the strategy elements, based on Councilor Hosticka's proposal: 1. Planned urban reserves; 2. Protection/preservation outside of urban reserves; 3. High/low forecasts with variable years; 4. Performance-based urban growth boundary (UGB) expansion decisions; and 5. Explicit neighbor city growth expectations.

Councilor Liberty noted that there could be development growth without population growth, and vice versa. He emphasized that nationally, half the growth was due to growth in consumption—such as bigger houses—not population growth. Metro's strategy was to reduce the impacts of growth, not to eliminate growth. Councilor McLain agreed, adding that we needed to make sure that we did it well. Council President Bragdon was champing at the bit to get down to brass tacks. He was grateful that the Council was all together for the first time in a while.

Councilor Hosticka had been thinking a lot about where to go from here. He felt things did all fit together. He thought the general idea was to look at the elements of the strategy for how to work through the next few decades. It was about managing growth, not just looking at the edges, and about how to get through an uncertain world. He wanted to be creative and flexible in the tools that we used, such as retrofitting the suburbs. The general idea was to develop the package of responses to growth, including planned communities and urban reserves, concept planning, agriculture preserves and natural protected resources around the region.

Council President Bragdon asked about putting dates with the concepts. Councilor Hosticka was amenable. Councilor Park said the date that came to his mind was the urban reserves and trying to have that done by the end of 2009. It would not necessarily involve a UGB expansion. There would have been two legislative sessions by then, as well as some information from the Big Look and the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). There might be a ballot measure on transportation in the fall of 2008. He didn't think we could do anything earlier than 2009. Councilor Newman did not want to debate a specific date. His concern was how long we could sustain public engagement without arriving at a conclusion. Obviously, the work would never really end, but from January 2006 to December 2009 seemed like a long time. Could we get a conceptual-level understanding, this year, of where we wanted to go? He would like to see things happen a bit more quickly. There was a risk of public burnout or disinterest.

Councilor McLain emphasized that many of the areas were parallel and integrated, and there would be interactions. The last time urban reserves were looked at, it took five years. It was an incredible amount of work that could not be rushed. There was a balance between public engagement and staff having time to do the work. Regarding last Friday's forum, she did not feel 300 people was a very big sample. The outreach would be ongoing as the product was refined.

Councilor Burkholder did not have any dates in mind. He did not want to fixate on the UGB process and overlook the key issues. The material from the RTP had been informative. There were some real-world facts out there that the UGB process had ignored—such as, could this stuff actually be built? He mentioned energy needs and the unsustainability of current patterns. He wanted to look at trends that we were trying to adapt to; it wasn't just numbers of people, it was how much it was going to cost to provide services to them. Fiscal tools would require public input. He thought the RTP methodology was useful in examining the strategies. UGB planning was not fiscally viable.

Councilor Hosticka said there was agreement that we wanted to build livable communities in the face of serious challenges.

Councilor Liberty said, when we did this, we should get together and say, this is where we're headed. The quality of participation went up when people saw that focus. He supported the five elements. He was aware that we faced some external deadlines that were non-negotiable (such as those involving federal funds). Regarding neighboring cities, he felt a lot of cities wanted to have a conversation with us. We were ready to put the pieces together, and do it this year.

Council President Bragdon, as chair, agreed that the intent was to marshal our position and move things forward. His personal reaction to the elements was good. He supported the general direction. A few questions needed to be fleshed out. What would be used to measure the performance-based UGB expansion decisions? It needed to be based on urban performance and related to the Centers agenda. On the neighbor city growth, there would have to be some institutional means of enforcing an agreement; the existing inter-governmental agreements (IGAs) would not be sufficient. On timing, he noted that all the elements would involve some changes to state law, such as the ag designations—this would probably not happen until the 2008 proposed legislature, and it wouldn't be until 2009 that the Big Look group and the legislature would be giving us anything helpful. Councilor Newman thought we needed to a vision that we embraced ourselves, well before 2009.

Councilor Park understood the concern about moving forward. He hoped we wouldn't spend the next four years looking at the edges. Politically, there would be a lot of discussions taking place. We would have to look at annexation policies. If we couldn't get one that made sense, if cities wouldn't do planning, then who would do it? If we announced it upfront, people could relax. He compared it to the sub-regional rule request. In order to figure out the sub-regions, we needed to figure out the regions. We were going through a similar process now.

Councilor Newman said that, in the next couple of years, we needed to be clear on our preferred vision, with a realistic phased implementation of how to make that happen over many years. He did not want to wait until 2009—what if the future legislatures didn't do anything? Council President Bragdon emphasized that we were ready to proceed with the vision and would not wait for the legislature.

Councilor Liberty commented that the strategy elements were mostly about growth. We needed to make Centers and corridors as interesting as the UGB. He would hope, in a couple years, to have an investment plan for the region, including schools, streets, sewers, and parks. Between now and then, some of the things would involve data collection, to show the difference in the level of investment. It was going to be a lot of work. The RTP was a model—it wasn't about the street, it was about the vision. Regarding strategy, a lot of our work was too keyed to legal and administrative requirements. That made it hard for people to follow what we were doing. What would be fair and clear and interesting and stimulating for people?

Council President Bragdon spoke about a combined capital improvement plan. He admired Mike Gleason's comments from Friday. Was it time to re-examine the traditional financing mechanisms? The reliance on federal funds was outdated. That was what paid for growth in the past. But federal government was not building for 90 cents on the dollar anymore. In Oregon, suburban governments were no longer able to extend services, or even to legally annex areas. The mechanism for funding growth was broken. We needed to come up with new financial mechanisms that would not only replace them but produce spatial outcomes that were the ones that we wanted for this century, based on redevelopment and Centers and implementation of 2040. This required shifting of the current posture, with regard to the UGB—from the mindset of, "We hope growth will occur in centers, and if it doesn't we'll expand the UGB," to the mindset of "We will attract growth in centers as much as possible, then we'll think about the UGB."

Councilor Burkholder said there was a third choice, which was, if we didn't change the fiscal mechanisms, there wouldn't be growth in Centers or at the edge either—it would be chaos. We needed to make it clear that it wasn't just a choice between two different visions; we were trying to avoid the chaos. Councilor Park liked it. It added the missing element of assuming that the old paradigm existed; people purchased property under the old paradigm and were finding out it was no longer valid. Doing the pre-planning gave us a dollar figure for comparison—we could expand the Greenfield area for "X" dollars, or we could dedicate the same amount of money into redevelopment. Right now, there was an assumption that somehow it would be cheaper to do the Greenfield; the reality was that was no longer the case, but we didn't have a comparative analysis to show the new costs.

Councilor McLain said they were assuming a constrained fiscal element. She agreed, that was an improvement, but even when we had a constrained fiscal plan, or an RTP with fiscal criteria, there would still be people who would say, Group X would pick up the costs. If we were going to use the fiscally constrained model from the RTP—it took ten years to get to that point. We would

need to be just as disciplined if we wanted to use the RTP criteria. Councilor Liberty was amazed at how bad some of the transportation projects were, that were actually taken seriously.

Council President Bragdon wanted to focus on the how and the who. The big picture would require closer coordination amongst the financial dealings of the jurisdictions. Councilor Hosticka was wary of hanging our arguments on finances; the counter-argument would be, we'll just go find more money. It was important to talk about the world that people would actually be living in.

Council debated the role of financing and how to measure performance. Councilor McLain said we didn't want to be bean counters. What were we buying? We didn't want to lose sight of what we were buying. Focus on the vision, not the beans. Councilor Burkholder thought the key issue was that Metro Council could make all the plans in the world, but the implementation occurred at the local level. Keep the focus on outcomes—reinvestment in Centers. We would have to look at zoning. We couldn't just make the rules; we would need to provide the tools.

Councilor Liberty noted the large amount of time that was spent on public hearings during the expansion decisions—what if that same thing happened around each Center? It would be valuable, it would be saying we cared about what was happening in the Centers. We should really get specific and involve people in the problem-solving. The Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) had been more open and receptive to thinking about the big issues than was expected—they should take on some of the concerns. Councilor McLain said that was a lot of work to do; she wanted to acknowledge some successes. 10-15 years ago, we had to fight Hillsboro tooth and nail to rebuild their downtown. Where can we build on our successes?

Council President Bragdon said local will was important and needed to be supported by changes in the market. He did not feel MPAC had been as engaged as they needed to be. They were engaged on things that were threatening to individual members but had fallen short as a place where visionary discussion took place. Should we push on them more? Supplement them with another group, with different chemistry? He was underwhelmed with MPAC's current work. Councilor Liberty thought that MPAC had a high level of agreement on underlying principles. Maybe they just needed to have more exciting meetings. Councilor McLain had three observations on MPAC over the years: 1) the chair can make a huge difference; 2) people would respond to changes in legal documents; we haven't had much of this; 3) a lot of the people were on the same committees, getting the same information at different times, this could become boring to them. If you wanted them to pay attention, let them really do some policy work.

Councilor Burkholder commented that this was an opportunity for education and looking at choices. He was having trouble translating from the philosophy to the implementation. He liked the scenario-based approach. He reported on a software tool he saw in Vancouver, where people could put in their own data. It was helpful in seeing the interplay of factors. People could see how changes in different factors would affect the outcomes. Council President Bragdon said the scenarios could be paths to the strategies. He preferred not to have an open-ended academic exercise. We needed to continue to push the scenarios and alternatives.

Councilor Park agreed with Councilor McLain that MPAC depended on who was chair, but we also needed to provide them with direction. He felt more use could be made of MPAC. Who did we have to involve? Regarding a possible 2008 ballot measure on transportation, the public would be involved at the highest level.

Council President Bragdon summarized the what and the how. Mostly Council was fairly clear on this. They wanted a unified capital plan, making a fiscal case for our model of growth to replace the dysfunctional old model. Councilor Burkholder wanted to be sure the concept of energy was integrated, such as in the example of retrofitting suburbs. Councilor Liberty would not support urban reserves without preservation/protection. Performance-based UGB decisions and neighbor city growth expectations were also linked. One way of implementing the agreement about growth was a discussion of where to put the public's money. He also thought it was important to ask, what did all this mean for inequality? There were ways to spend money that created equality.

Council President Bragdon summarized the hows: 1) establish the vision prior to the decision points; 2) recognize that we have to help the implementers; 3) make better use of MPAC; 4) local will was very important; 5) scenarios were a good tool; and 6) to have a public vote on some topic. Councilor Newman was glad to have the headnods, but he still didn't have a sense of the priorities. We needed to prioritize our own work based on staff and on financial and political capital. Councilor Burkholder observed that we were not starting from scratch; we had a lot of local visions that were all consistent and needed to be integrated into our work.

Council President Bragdon was most interested in the financial piece and in Centers. He was positive MPAC was not sufficient for that. It just wasn't the right personalities or setting, and it didn't include the growth industry that would be paying some of the bills. We had to convene a different type of discussion. He wanted to make sure the financial decisions resulted in the desired outcomes. Council discussed the role of MPAC and the work that could be expected from them. Councilor Liberty liked the use of short-term committees with a targeted charge. He felt there was more flexibility than was commonly acknowledged, within the existing legislative framework.

Council President Bragdon felt people were at different stages of denial or anger. Some people loved the old system, some realized that it wasn't working anymore but thought we could just find more money; the future would belong to those who could say, yes, it's changed, and we're part of the replacement, and we will get better outcomes. Councilor Park said we needed to consider who would benefit from the new model and who was currently benefiting from the old model. This could lead to identifying soldiers in the army. Councilor McLain remarked that everybody thought they were a who. If we invited someone to the table, we had to either use or ignore their input. This caused some ridiculous factors, and sometimes torpedoed the work.

Councilor Newman had two quick thoughts. 1) Two immediate steps would be helpful for him – have it written up. We would have a better discussion if we had clarity on the focus; and then identify the 2-3 dozen people who were the most important to reach to see if they were on board with at least agreeing to the issues that needed to be addressed. 2) Get a Metro group together to put something together in front of the Council, a political architecture on how we were going to accomplish this over the next 2-3 years, with dates and format, and buyoff at different levels. Until we started committing this to paper, he felt we were just drifting.

Michael Jordan, Chief Operating Officer (COO), said the Council collectively needed to be on board with the list of principles, the outcomes that we wanted to accomplish. They would be in the refinement process for a while. This needed to happen before the outreach to Whoville. Council unity was very important. "Out there" we were viewed as a "counting to four process." He thought Council wanted to move toward a more consensus-decision model than a count-to-four model. Regarding the financial model, the system was so far beyond repair that it was really hard to even decide a way to approach it. If we could get agreement on growing inside, this could

make it easier. Be aware that change in one area could make for unpredictable results. We needed to balance our path with the broader public path.

Councilor Burkholder commented that, on the fiscal piece, we needed to establish what the reality was. We might not be able to change it, but we needed to recognize it. Also, be aware of the fear of not acting because we don't think we have enough information or consensus. We had real deadlines; change was happening that we needed to react to. He would like to get there in a rational, principled manner, although he might not live that long. Councilor Liberty said that Portland was about 10-12 years behind Seattle in terms of vehicle traffic. It was good that we were at least having the discussions.

Councilor McLain was encouraged to hear Council consensus. Things always took a lot longer and were more complicated than anticipated. Remember the history. Don't put it too far out in the future. Working with jurisdictions outside our sphere of influence was a challenge. Many strategies had been tried before. Councilor Newman reiterated the point of making the decision; it was good to think big and broadly, but it was also important to think small. Sometimes we needed to just plunge in and try something and do what we could do. We couldn't solve everything right away.

Councilor Burkholder said we should aim at the fact we have a lot of compatriots, volunteer mayors and councilors, who were trying to make decisions. We had an opportunity to build a planning process, in centers and corridors, to accommodate a lot of people, whatever the exact number turned out to be.

Ms. McArthur was pleased by the conversation. She liked the focus on the political architecture and process. This was very helpful to her and her staff. Mr. Jordan wondered what the Council thought about the New Look issue papers, laying out the problems we faced, the issues and considerations for each of the elements. How could we add a section that incorporated Council comments into the preferred outcomes?

There being no further business to come before the Metro Council, Council President Bragdon adjourned the meeting at 4:12 p.m.

Prepared by,



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**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF
JUNE 28, 2006**

Item	Topic	Doc Date	Document Description	Doc. Number
II	New Look themes	February 2006	New Look: Coming to Grips with Growth	062806c-01