

MINUTES OF THE METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING

Wednesday, October 11, 2006
Metro Council Chamber

Councilors Present: David Bragdon (Council President), Rod Park, Robert Liberty, Rex Burkholder, Brian Newman

Councilors Absent: Carl Hosticka (excused), Susan McLain (excused)

Council President Bragdon convened the Metro Council Work Session Meeting at 1:04 p.m. He emphasized keeping the commitment to the six elements. Feedback from around the region has been moderately positive. Councilor Liberty encouraged our partners to feel some ownership of the process. He suggested ways to keep them engaged. He would like to use the New Look process as a vehicle for funneling other legislative needs. Council President Bragdon agreed, stressing the importance of coordinated actions. Councilor Burkholder spoke to the need for including a more strategic “fiscal screen” to evaluate where funds were targeted. Councilor Park wondered if an independent “Blue Ribbon”-type group would be useful in analyzing the components and relationships. Council President Bragdon felt these issues would be addressed at the October 25 roundtable. Council discussed the need to continue to integrate all the regional planning needs. Ongoing outreach and education would be invaluable.

1. STATUS REPORT

Robin McArthur, Regional Planning Director, distributed a discussion draft and roundtable agenda (a copy of each is included in the meeting record). Malu Wilkinson, Associate Regional Planner, distributed a draft of the infrastructure investment analysis tool (a copy is included in the meeting record). This was a framework to compare costs of alternative growth scenarios, direct the timing of infrastructure investments, and identify funding gaps. It would include a consultant and steering committee, with completion in July 2007. Ms. Wilkinson introduced Metro planner, Robert Wolcheski, who would help develop the scope of work. Councilor Burkholder requested that the data be captured on a per unit or per employee basis. How would it affect local finances? Councilor Liberty referred to some previous work done along the same lines. Cost information was crucial; jurisdictional fiscal tools needed to be considered as well. Councilor Newman stated that, in addition to dollar figures, it was important to know the source of the funds, and to see who ultimately paid the costs of development. Council President Bragdon supported the concept. Oregon law required a fiscal impacts analysis. This would be a communications tool as well as an analysis tool. Councilor Park proposed capturing cost per capita.

2. POLICY SCENARIO TIMELINE

Paul Couey, Senior Regional Planner, reviewed the timeline (a copy is included in the meeting record), including incorporation of the different elements. Richard Bolen, Data Resource Center Manager, said it was a tool for examining different policy options. The goal was to make it easier to compare options. He referred to the MetroScope model. A transit component has been added to this model. He filled in some details of the way the tool would be used. Councilor Liberty asked about corridors and light-rail stations, whether less investment could provide greater payoff in those areas. Dick said those would definitely be looked at. The model did have certain limits; it was more of a macro tool than a micro tool. Mr. Couey acknowledged MetroScope’s limits but added that we had other tools to use for that. Councilor Park asked what the “base case” would be. Dick replied that it would be the medium investment scenario. He listed the elements,

emphasizing that the base case was not the same as the current situation; it was a base for the model, not a base for the “real” world.

3. REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN OUTCOMES EXERCISE

Councilor Burkholder passed around the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update (a copy is included in the meeting record). He wanted to zoom in on what Metro could contribute to the effort. We needed to figure out the path down from the top of the cliff. Kim Ellis, Principal Transportation Planner, talked about the other groups that would be subjected to the exercise. John Rehm, Metropolitan Group, presented a handout to facilitate the exercise (a copy is included in the meeting record). He reviewed the handout and described the process and the elements that had gone into developing the exercise. The first comments were around the element of vibrant communities. Councilors provided their ideas on what transportation systems for a vibrant community would look like, such as transportation choice, shorter-distance travel, design aesthetics, and safety. They then turned to what elements of the current transportation system were working well to support vibrant communities, such as the lack of huge freeway projects, a functional street network, the regional planning process, and viable rail systems. Next was the challenges facing vibrant community development, such as fragmented funding responsibility, lack of funding for alternatives, lack of a shared vision on how to spend funds, lack of creative ideas, lack of understanding on the basics of transportation costs, fuel supply and cost. Mr. Rehm then asked Council to suggest some solutions; examples included a design review process, more flexibility in funding, implementing mixed-use compact development, bike commuter education starting with grade school, and the use of congestion pricing.

Mr. Rehm stated that these results would be coordinated with the feedback from the others doing the full exercise. As a last sample, he asked Council to answer the same questions, under the heading of fiscal stewardship. Regarding the question of what the system would look like, suggestions included having the users pay for the externalities, a better understanding of the connection between the infrastructure and the costs, using a return on investment approach, maintenance funds to accompany construction funds, citizen education efforts, transparency, and reduction in complexity of the funding process. They then talked about what was working well to achieve the outcome of fiscal stewardship; the list was short, but some examples were the lack of funds to over-build, which forced prioritization and choices, and the weight-mile tax mechanism. Mr. Rehm then asked, what were some challenges to achieving the outcomes? Suggestions included territoriality, inflation, growth, lack of a regional identity, inflexibility in the funding sources, and separation of land-use planning from transportation planning. In proposing solutions, some ideas were budgeting for outcomes, the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), a return on investment analysis, and optimal maintenance of existing systems.

Lastly, Mr. Rehm asked Council for their preferred, overall vision of a regional transportation system. Examples included commute times half of current times, a variety of transportation options over a wider area, seamless transition from mode to mode, diversity of commercial activity (suburbs more than just bedroom communities), more kids walking or biking to school, ripping up impermeable pavement, and a lower ratio of parking spaces to cars. Mr. Rehm said he would return with some suggested measurable outcomes.

4. NEXT STEPS

Ms. McArthur said the main next step was the October 25 roundtable. They were trying to build momentum with the regional agenda. There was still a lot of work to be done in convincing

people there actually was a problem, and that our solution was the right one. Council discussed their expectations for outcomes. Councilor Liberty encouraged a bolder vision and franker discussion at such events. His experience with small group discussions had been pretty tepid. Council President Bragdon tended to agree. Ms. McArthur said a primary goal was to foster a feeling that these issues could only be addressed in a regionally collaborative fashion. Council and staff discussed the best way to structure the roundtable, and what the Council President and facilitator Mike Gleason should say.

Councilor Newman encouraged keeping the focus on the Council-identified six elements. We did not have a lot of information on how people outside the building would respond. Council suggested ways to enhance the desired conversation and outcomes of the roundtable. Michael Jordan, Chief Operating Officer (COO), proposed that a Councilor be at each table, to bring that focus to the small groups. Councilor Park had been impressed with the Oregon Metropolitan Planning Organization Consortium (OMPOC) small groups. He hoped the October 25 meeting could be as well run and productive. Council President Bragdon thought this would be a chance to evaluate how dedicated people were to the 2040 concept. Andy Cotugno, Planning Director, felt the value of emphasizing the linkages was key. Everyone would jump on the bandwagon for reserves. Perhaps we should adopt urban reserves with a list of criteria for when they would be triggered. We needed to find out how to use reserves as a reward for achievement.

Council and staff discussed the optimal size and composition of the roundtable discussion groups. Could we somehow track participants' commitment to the process? Councilor Park spoke to the reality that some people would not trust anything Metro did. Council discussed legislative strategies. Council President Bragdon suggested ignoring the guidelines. Richard Benner fortuitously being present, he reminded Council that our capacity analysis was due by the end of 2007; this was non-negotiable. After that, there was another year to address 50%, and a second year to address the rest. Either of these deadlines was extendable.

Council and staff discussed using the legislative tools to accomplish our goals. He asked Mr. Benner to investigate the details of getting the extensions. They all debated what steps could be taken under current law to achieve what we wanted, and whether legislative changes were really needed. Mr. Jordan said the legislative process was a crucible for bringing heat to the issues. Council and staff discussed the politics of using the various techniques. They talked about the use of urban reserves and how and whether those would be differentiated from an urban growth boundary (UGB) expansion. Council President Bragdon reminded Council that there was a strong, motivated constituency opposing 2040 and no comparable force in favor. Councilor Liberty emphasized the importance of keeping the elements together as a package, and the need to bring other allies on board with the same philosophy. Mr. Tucker reviewed the language of the discussion draft and suggested some improvements.

There being no further business to come before the Metro Council, Council President Bragdon adjourned the meeting at 3:44 p.m.

Prepared by,



Dove Hotz
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**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF
OCTOBER 11, 2006**

Item	Topic	Doc Date	Document Description	Doc. Number
1	Update	8/1/06	To: Metro Council From: Robin McArthur Re: New Look at Regional Choices, Proposed Policy Elements, Discussion Draft	101106c-01
1	Update	10/25/06	To: Metro Council From: Robin McArthur Re: New Look Regional Roundtable	101106c-02
1	Update	10/11/06	To: Metro Council From: Malu Wilkinson Re: New Look Infrastructure Investment Analysis	101106c-03
2	Timeline	undated	To: Metro Council From: Paul Couey Re: New Look Policy Scenarios "sketch"	101106c-04
3	RTP Exercise	undated	To: Metro Council From: Rex Burkholder Re: RTP Update Process Update	101106c-05
3	RTP Exercise	undated	To: Metro Council From: John Rehm Re: Desired Outcomes for Transportation	101106c-06