

Greenspaces Policy Advisory Committee

James A. Zehren, Chair



MEETING NOTES

Thursday, Sept. 23, 2004
5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Metro Regional Center, Rm. 501
600 NE Grand Ave., Portland

Committee members present: Chair Jim Zehren, Kim Gilmer, Steve Greagor, Mike Houck, Esther Lev, Mike Ragsdale, Zari Santner, Dick Schouten

Committee members absent: Ernie Drapela, John Griffiths, Faun Hosey, Doug Neeley, Don Trotter, Thanh Vu, Jill Zanger

Metro staff present: Jim Desmond, Heather Kent, Lia Waiwaiole

Guests: Terry Bergerson, Scott Montgomery, Kelly Punteney, Duane Roberts

Convene

The meeting was called to order by Jim Zehren at 5:35 p.m.

Comments from Metro Committee for Citizen Involvement and guests

None

Items for the good of the order

Jim Zehren brought up a recent Tigard survey that found that Tigard residents would support paying for a community recreation center and purchasing wetlands and open spaces. There was little support for a separate recreation district and a skate park.

Kim Gilmer said that Lake Oswego had also recently conducted a survey about parks. Trails and a community center polled high. She will forward the results once they have gone through city council.

Jim Desmond mentioned that the Metro Council had time reserved for parks topics at their informal sessions on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, and that the council was

ready to hear from GPAC. The committee agreed that they would like to wait to go to council until there was a work plan to present.

Jim Zehren also informed the committee that he was going to try to get together a few people from both the parks forum group and GPAC to have an informal conversation about how the two groups might work together.

Items from Metro Council/MPAC/JPACT

None

Vision statement

The committee reviewed the latest draft of the vision statement. The first part of the discussion centered on the following sentence in the second paragraph of the vision statement:

All residents live and work near and have access – regardless of income – to nature, areas for recreation and leisure, and public spaces that bring people together and connect them to their community.

Jim Zehren had added “or wealth” after “regardless of income” in his last draft of the vision statement. Several members felt it wasn’t necessary to make room for that distinction. Then the committee discussed whether the issue of economic access should be called out at all or could be covered – along with physical access for people with disabilities and other access/equity issues – by just using the word “access”. The committee also considered going the other direction and including a longer list of qualifiers. Ultimately, the majority felt that using “access” without “regardless of income” would be misunderstood as referring only to geographic access by most people, and that adding additional qualifiers weakened the sentence. The sentence stayed as it is written above.

The committee also discussed the inclusion of Vancouver in the vision statement. Jim Desmond expressed his concerns, from the point of view of implementing the vision, about including something in the scope of the vision over which Metro has no jurisdiction. Particularly when it comes to funding, he felt that the two systems would for the foreseeable future be complimentary but separate. Some committee members shared these concerns but all agreed that the vision should not be limited by what seems possible now. Several members also pointed out the strategic advantages of working together and success stories of bi-state regionalism in other parts of the country, particularly on the issue of federal funding. The committee decided to leave Vancouver in the vision statement.

The committee voted unanimously to adopt the vision statement. The adopted vision statement will be included as part of this record.

Park SDC’s

Jim Desmond briefed the committee about the potential of legislative changes to park system development charges (SDC’s). Neither the Oregon Recreation and Park Association or the Homebuilders Association has brought anything forward yet, but both groups are interested in making changes to the current system. Jim reported that the ORPA would like

to be more proactive and communicate and coordinate better with the Homebuilders. Ideally, the two groups would develop a methodology for SDC's together. Randy Tucker, Metro's staff lobbyist, is going to assist with this issue. Jim said he would keep GPAC informed and let them know if there was a way for them to help.

SCORP

Terry Bergerson from Oregon State Parks presented some of the findings of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), which included extensive surveys and needs assessments of public and private sector recreation providers, recreational interest groups and citizens.

The top land and water conservation issues for region two (the Portland metropolitan region) identified by the SCORP advisory committee were land acquisition to keep pace with population growth, major rehabilitation of existing outdoor recreation facilities and non-motorized recreational trail connectivity.

Other recreation trends:

- The most popular activities are a reflection of the population, which is aging, more concerned about fitness and increasingly metropolitan.
- Activities are generally engaged in near home and on a regular basis.
- The state's population is growing older, more highly educated, with higher income levels, increasingly urban and more and more ethnically diverse.
- The public is asking land managers to place an increasing emphasis on the protection of streams, fish, wildlife habitat and threatened and endangered species.
- The recreating public has less disposable leisure time and are taking shorter trips.
- Nature study activities are rising in popularity.
- In some areas in the near future, water may be more valuable for recreation than for agriculture.
- There is a rapid increase in non-motorized boating in the state.
- Demand for golf has risen significantly in the last 15 years.

Terry also presented some information about the state trails plan. Issues identified include need for trail connectivity, need for additional non-motorized trails close to where people live, need for additional funding for acquisition and development, and need for more public access to waterways.

More information about SCORP and the trails plan is available on the Oregon State Parks web site at www.prd.state.or.us/scorp.php.

Level of service

Heather Nelson Kent presented the committee with the Level of Service Report completed by a subcommittee of GTAC in 2000. The report includes a detailed list of park land classifications and recreation facilities that might help GPAC in its own level of service analysis. The report also includes a survey of local providers' system master plans and individual level of service standards, which Metro staff is updating. The chair and other members were glad to see that this work had already been done and agreed that it might cover a lot of the information that GPAC will need to begin its work.

Zari Santner mentioned that the City of Portland is currently engaged in a level of service analysis using a new methodology, and thought GPAC might find it useful for this discussion. Their model looks at level of service from the point of view of experiences rather than facilities. For example, a park system would be evaluated against an array of natural and urban experiences that people should be able to have, such as access to nature or opportunities to interact with their communities. Zari offered to have someone from Portland Parks come and make a presentation about this new methodology for GPAC to consider it. GPAC members were enthusiastic about this idea and asked to have the presentation at the next meeting.

GIS analysis

Heather Nelson Kent presented several maps produced by Metro's data resource center. The maps represented potential methodologies for region-wide system analysis using existing data such as Metro's region-wide parks and greenspaces inventory, demographic data and 2040 system planning data. One example was a map showing proximity of families with children to parks with playgrounds. Committee members were encouraged that extensive data and high-level GIS analysis was available and agreed that it would be very helpful to their work.

Next meeting

In closing, the committee briefly discussed agenda items for the next meeting. It was reiterated that a presentation from Portland Parks should be included, that discussions with the Metro Council and the Parks Forum group should be postponed until GPAC's work plan is further developed and that identifying strategies for implementing the GPAC vision should be the bulk of the next meeting's agenda.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 p.m.