



**METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION**  
**MEETING SUMMARY**  
December 11, 2012  
Metro Council Chamber

**Councilors Present:** Council President Tom Hughes and Councilors Rex Burkholder, Shirley Craddick, Carlotta Collette, Kathryn Harrington, and Barbara Roberts

**Councilors Excused:** Councilor Carl Hosticka

Council President Tom Hughes convened the Metro Council work session at 9:33 a.m.

**1. CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER COMMUNICATIONS**

Chief operating officer Ms. Martha Bennett reported three items to the Council:

- There has been a lot of media attention on Metro in the past week. Media may attend meetings this week and Councilors should be mindful of their presence.
- On December 12 there will be a brown bag lunch to inform staff of facts about the Natural Areas Local Option Levy.
- The Portland City Council has approved the Washington Park Transportation Management Agreement.

**2. ELEPHANT HABITAT AND RELATED INFRASTRUCTURE**

Ms. Kim Smith and Mr. Craig Stroud of the Oregon Zoo presented to the Council on the Elephant Habitat and Related Infrastructure.

The Oregon Zoo has been in the process of designing a new elephant habitat as a part of implementing the 2008 capital improvements bond. The project includes the elephant habitat and associated buildings and a variety of infrastructure work needed to support the improvements. The infrastructure work entails building a new perimeter service road, diverting the zoo train route, moving the birds of prey mew, and upgrading various facilities.

Due to the topography of the Oregon Zoo site the new elephant habitat has encountered several geotechnical challenges. Consequently, the project plan has been revised to include the necessary mitigation for the geotechnical issues faced. However, the new estimate exceeded the cost identified in the original project budget.

Subsequently, zoo staff and consultants identified opportunities to reduce plan costs to bring the project nearer to the original budget while retaining the full commitment made to voters in the 2008 capital improvements bond. Zoo staff and consultants found \$9.2 million in potential scope

reductions for the train route and the elephant habitat and buildings all while maintaining a quality visitor experience and a habitat that exceeds industry standards. Zoo staff and consultants did not recommend reductions to the proposed perimeter service road as they believe that it will be vital to the project and guest safety during construction.

At this work session staff was seeking the Council's direction on balancing the project budget to resources. Staff recommended reducing the project costs by the \$9.2 million made possible by scope reductions. However, the project would still be over budget by \$3.9 million. Consequently, staff also recommended allocating \$3.9 million of the \$10.4 million bond sale premium fund to complete the balance. The Council had the option to direct staff to implement their recommendations, or suggest other options.

**Council Discussion:**

- The Council considered the elephant habitat project relative to all of the capital improvements bond projects. Staff stated that \$70 million of the bond's \$125 million will have been used upon the completion of the elephant project.
- The Council discussed the importance of the elephant habitat to the Oregon Zoo's future as it will attract visitors for years to come. The Council wanted to ensure that the exhibit's quality is upheld despite the scope reductions so that in coming years Metro does not have to spend even more money doing repairs and renovations.
- The Council considered the proposed scope reduction to the zoo train which would cut a proposed overpass where the train currently crosses a pedestrian path on the ground. The overpass would be very expensive to build due to geotechnical issues. The Council felt the current train crossing is functional and safe and an overpass is not necessary at this time.
- The Council discussed improvements and expansions to the zoo train. The train is one of the Oregon Zoo's oldest features as well as one of its most popular. The zoo train could potentially be improved/expanded in the future. Staff responded that improving the zoo train is not the highest priority on the Oregon Zoo's list at this time.
- The Council agreed with staff's recommendations for scope reductions and approved the Oregon Zoo to use up to \$4.9 million of the bond premium to close the remaining gap between the original budget and revised budget.

**3. ADJUORN**

Seeing no further business, Council President Hughes adjourned the Council work session at 10:20 a.m.

Prepared by,



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**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF DECEMBER 11, 2012**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DOCUMENT TYPE</b>	<b>DOC DATE</b>	<b>DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>DOCUMENT No.</b>
<b>1.0</b>	Handout	12/11/2012	Council Meeting Agenda	121112cw-01
<b>2.0</b>	PowerPoint	12/11/2012	Elephant Habitat and Related Infrastructure	121112cw- 02