

 **Metro** | *Meeting minutes*

Meeting: Public Engagement Review Committee  
Date/time: Monday, June 17, 2013, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
Place: Room 370 A

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**Attendees**

PERC members: Luis Nava, Barbara Smolak, Sue Marshall, Candice Kelly, Tara Sulzen, Mike Pullen, Greg Greenway, Stephen Roberts

Metro: Jim Middaugh, Patty Unfred, Heather Coston, Valerie Cuevas

Guest: James Kandell, DHM Research

Absent: Casey Barnard, Corinne Bloomfield, Julia Meier, Jennifer Sexton, Juanita Walton, Eleanore Hunter

**Welcome and updates**

Opening remarks by Jim Middaugh who shared various updates on activities across Metro including Metro's website improvement project that is now in the draft design development stage and will launch in 2014.

Metro's recent Regional Flexible Funds public comment process conducted in 4 languages for the first time, offering on-call telephone translation services. Tara Sulzen inquired about if there was any noticeable difference in comments received because of the newly offered translation services. Patty replied that although there was not any use of the translation services in this comment cycle, it is part of a long-term strategy and that first time opportunities can be just as much about education and we anticipate increased use the longer we have these services available.

Juan Carlos Ocaña-Chú was hired by Metro and so has resigned his position on this committee, which will be left unfilled at this time.

Metro's Equity Strategy Initiative project is currently appointing it's Equity Strategy Advisory Committee who will have a significant role in completing the equity baseline and creating a work plan. There will also be opportunities for technical assistance grants to community groups through the Equity Strategy Initiative and the PERC could be helpful in getting the word out for those. Nuin-Tara Key manages the Equity Strategy Initiative project and reports to the COO. She receives half-time support from associate public affairs specialist, Cassie Salinas.

Metro's communications department saw some reductions in budget resources for fiscal year 2014, but not any personnel reductions.

Metro has contracted several community organizations to conduct Limited English Proficiency (LEP) focus groups in 5 languages to influence how and what information Metro will translate into other languages.

The parks and natural areas levy was passed by voters in May and there will be related natural areas grants programs in the future. Heather Coston will also forward the committee the link to take a survey about the current publication, GreenScene.

### **Review and discuss Opt In results**

James Kandell from DHM Research, Metro's contracted vendor operating the Opt In online opinion panel, presented the results from the recent public engagement survey that took place in May 2013. A copy of James Kandell's PowerPoint presentation and results report was provided to the committee. Both Jim Middaugh and James Kandell spoke to the general make-up of the panel and that this self-selected group is one of many ways Metro can garner public opinion although it is not scientific and must be used with other tools to see a fuller picture of the region.

A key finding was that most survey participants interact with Metro through a park or venue which Jim Middaugh pointed out as the richest area to tap residents to become more involved in more planning focused Metro projects. James Kandell noted that the "other" engagement area on page 5 is mostly related to recycling.

In response to the data presented on page 9, Jim Middaugh noted that it has been a conscious decision by Metro to not dedicate the necessary resources to social media outreach. Greg Greenway spoke to possible age breaks in the engagement opportunities and Luis Nava inquired about the cost difference between newspaper ads and social media. Mike Pullen, Barbara Smolak and Tara Sulzen noted that the public may be confused between the choices of newspaper ads and media coverage.

Stephen Roberts inquired about the high interest in online engagement as most effective and James Kandell responded that online options reflect an ease of use and flexibility, noting the correlation between perceived effectiveness and number of participants.

Pages 11 and 12 spoke to the needs for continued effort to show participants how their input will effect a project. Mike Pullen suggested announcing the Opt In results back to participants as a way to close the loop. Luis Nava added the idea of placing the related action side by side with results online. Candice Kelly echoed the results by acknowledging that we all have a need to be heard. Tara Sulzen later suggested tying survey results into general project updates communicated to the public.

Sue Marshall inquired about any disconnect between Metro Councilor actions and Opt In results. Jim Middaugh responded that although all Metro Councilors receive results and go through the summaries, Metro is still working on a more digestible, easier to engage with way to present the results to not only Metro Councilors but managers and project staff as well, especially as related to the volumes of free text comments received through the surveys. Metro is currently working on a visualization map of survey results that can be sorted by topics and demographics. Both Heather

Coston and Patty Unfred spoke to how public feedback has an influence on projects but we need to tell that story, communicate expectations upfront and improve accessibility.

James Kandell concluded with general comments about the Opt In tool including that the average survey is kept to 12-15 questions with the least amount of open comment questions to ensure the highest completion rates. The Opt In panel is currently about 20,000 participants, 12,000 of which are active. Metro will conduct a re-profiling exercise to clean-up that list in the coming months as well. About 15% of survey participants already take the survey on a mobile device but of those, only 50% would like to download a separate application to take the survey. Patty Unfred spoke to Metro's efforts to design Opt In and the Metro website in a more mobile friendly manner rather than separate applications.

Jim Middaugh shared about recent partnerships with Multnomah County, City of Portland, Port of Portland, TriMet and Washington County Clean Water Services to expand panel memberships and share data.

Mike Pullen asked about any language issues the survey may raise. Heather Coston and Jim Middaugh replied that the survey is provided in English and translation is not a need that we have the capacity to service at this time since it involves much more than simply translating the questions. Metro is engaged in other efforts to hear from diverse populations outside of the Opt In panel.

### **Public engagement guide update**

Heather Coston informed the committee that the first draft has been provided to an internal focus group for review and will soon be reviewed by a Greg Greenway and Casey Barnard of this committee. There will be a 45 day public comment period in August before the final draft can be provided to this committee for additional comments. Metro Council will formally adopt the guide in late November before submission to the FHWA and FTA by December 10, 2013.

Patty Unfred explained that the public engagement guide is a federal requirement and Metro is using this mandated update period to make the document more robust, speaking to internal and external audiences when appropriate. Greg Greenway asked to clarify if federal requirements were to be agency-wide or just where federal funds were involved. Patty Unfred responded that Metro is seeking that level of clarification as well from both our federal liaisons and Metro senior leadership.

### **Community Summit**

Patty Unfred shared a new opportunity that has come up through partnership with TriMet and City of Portland to hold a 2-3 day summit centered on federal Title VI and Environmental Justice (EJ) requirements. This summit would be in place of a separate Metro community event and would involve local government partners, elected officials, stakeholders and community leaders. This summit would provide a time for high-level training in a collaborative atmosphere and would increase capacity building of our local partners and help inform community organizations of access points and impacts of new federal requirements. The summit could follow a format of day 1 for agencies, day 2 for community groups with some overlap between the groups but also with specialized tracks. The summit would incorporate how regulations relate to actual projects. OPAL and Coalition of Communities of Color have also shown interest in this sort of summit.

Mike Pullen, Barbara Smolak, Candice Kelly and Sue Marshall responded positively to this larger summit as more realistic for Metro and an excellent opportunity to bring so many people together under a worthy topic. Sue Marshall and Greg Greenway encouraged casting a wide net to the community and use this as a way to expand who we view as partners.

Tara Sulzen noted the differences to this proposed summit and the original idea of a summit of general public interest and suggested an exhibit space or session to highlight calendared events and upcoming decisions that the public could view easily and make connections.

Metro will provide the committee resources for more information on Title VI and EJ requirements.

### **Community updates**

Sue Marshall shared that Coalition for a Livable Future will soon be publishing their Equity Atlas. Patty Unfred noted that Metro's Climate Smart Communities project will be referencing this for upcoming engagement activities.

Stephen Roberts shared about Washing County's recent launch of Westside Voices, an online opinion panel. Westside Voices added over 1200 participants in this first week.

Candice Kelly shared that Tualatin Tomorrow is starting their five year update.

Hillsboro and Tigard have reached out to Luis Nava about holding Spanish language town hall meetings because of the recent success in Beaverton. There have even been requests from Clackamas County recently.

Tara Sulzen recently led a UGB Pedalpalooza bicycle ride for 45 participants and continues to receive great interest from Washington County residents.

Meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

