

# Metro | Meeting minutes

Meeting: Public Engagement Review Committee  
Date/time: Monday, May 5, 2014  
Place: Metro Regional Center, 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, Rooms 370A and B

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## Attendees

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

Metro: Patty Unfred, Heather Coston, Valerie Cuevas, Cassie Salinas, Cliff Higgins

Guests: Dorila Nava, Glenna Dryden, Tom Black

Absent: Casey Barnard, Julia Meier/Donita Sue Fry, Jennifer Sexton,

## Welcome

Patty Unfred welcomed everyone and introduced new committee members William Gifford. William Gifford introduced himself and all committee members briefly introduced themselves. Announcements included Metro's new publication *Our Big Backyard*, Metro's new website scheduled to launch May 20 and communications staff openings. Communications recently promoted internal candidates Laura Oppenheimer Odom and Cliff Higgins after an open application process to fill 2 communications supervisor positions. Please share with your networks the 2 openings for senior public affairs specialist that Metro is now recruiting for; more information is available at [www.oregonmetro.gov/jobs](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/jobs).

In response to a review of the agenda, Sue Marshall asked for a budget update. Patty Unfred replied that Metro Council is scheduled to adopt the FY14-15 budget this week. For Communications department budget, there were not any staff reductions and one limited duration staff was converted to regular status. [Correction: One design position that recently became vacant due to a retiring employee was not refilled to allow for converting a limited duration employee to regular status.] Additional materials and services budget requests for contracting with community organizations for public engagement did not get approved this year. In response, Communications is looking to hire a graduate or post-graduate student through PSU's Oregon Fellows program to put together a more robust strategy and budget proposal for contracting with community organizations for public engagement. Sue Marshall suggested that PERC discuss budget proposal, which will fit in nicely in the budget schedule with PERC's November meeting.

## Community engagement guide update

Metro's Public Engagement Guide is a multiple audience resource of best practices and procedures for staff that was adopted by Metro Council in December 2013. Cassie Salinas thanked the committee for their assistance and involvement with the guide last fall. One of the many resources in the guide for Metro staff and local government partners is the Local engagement and non-discrimination checklist, Appendix G. Engagement around the guide included discussion and focus

groups to inform translated content for Metro's new website. Metro will be sharing the guide with local jurisdictions and partners in the coming months. Ideas and feedback are welcome from the committee on how Metro will share and publicize the guide as a resource. The committee suggested sharing with IAP2, CPOs and related newsletters. A copy of the guide and more information is available at [www.oregonmetro.gov/engagementguide](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/engagementguide).

Stephen Roberts shared the draft version of Washington County's [Public Involvement Guidelines](#) that provides a toolkit approach that can be adapted for specific engagement needs. The guidelines were also shared with the Public Engagement Network last week. Like Metro's guide, the audience is primarily staff doing public involvement but can be a resource to CPOs and communities. The guidelines are scheduled to be adopted by the Washington County Board of Commissioners this summer.

Tara Sulzen praised the development of the evaluation criteria and guidelines and asked who at Metro will actually complete the evaluations. Patty Unfred replied that project managers and communications public involvement staff will complete the evaluation process. Cliff Higgins added that evaluation has already been happening this way and that the guide's more formal evaluation criteria will add the needed metrics to be more intentional about project evaluation. Additionally, Metro's metropolitan planning organization (MPO) functions are audited by federal regulators. Candice Kelly offered that the PERC can also play a role in the evaluation process. Greg Greenway, Candice Kelly, Sue Marshall and Tara Sulzen led a discussion around what the PERC's role should be in evaluation. Although it is not feasible for PERC to review individual project public involvement plans, the committee can continue to interact with agency-level practices, using the Public Engagement Guide as a baseline to inform criteria for evaluation of the Public Engagement Annual Report. The committee may be involved in providing feedback for involvement for region or system-wide decisions that require early stage public involvement. It will also be beneficial for Metro to be able to do ongoing tracking of public involvement at the project level throughout the year to inform an executive summary.

### **Fall Community Summit**

Cliff Higgins shared an update on the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) public comment period, March 25 to May 5. To make effective use of participants' time, energy and effort, the RTP comment period was integrated with public engagement on Climate Smart Communities Scenarios project and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). At last tally, Metro received 1215 responses to a general-level questionnaire about community vision and 175 responses to project-specific questionnaire for RTP, 83 responses for MTIP questionnaire and 1700 responses to an Opt In survey on Climate Smart Communities Scenarios project. Additionally, an open house with Metro Councilors present, was held in each county.

The committee briefly discussed project engagement techniques in lieu of traditional open house events. Suggestions included incentives, raffles, capacity building around what is Metro, going to festivals and farmers markets where people are already gathered and providing activities for kids. William Gifford expressed caution with informal surveys like SurveyMonkey that can be non-representative and are non-scientific.

In light of this spring's public engagement efforts and best practices, Metro is working on a proposal for building the fall community summit around convening a broad cross-section of stakeholders from various sectors to work on common interest opportunities. Possibilities include an external futurist who could present on the region and speakers and discussion for business, environmental justice (EJ), education and public health trends and priorities. Community summit feedback could be incorporated into upcoming Metro region-wide engagements on the 2018 RTP, growth management decisions, parks and natural areas levy and Let's Talk Trash engagement.

Tara Sulzen suggested to continue to keep in mind what people are getting out of the community summit, make sure we are giving people more of a reason to show up than simply more information. Corrine Bloomfield suggested polling key stakeholders on interests with Sue Marshall adding that stakeholders will want to be able to have some influence, to elevate their issues. Mike Pullen commented that a futurist speaker would be a draw and cautioned that careful thought will need to go into channeling networking into something useful for Metro. Greg Greenway suggested that outcomes should be related to Metro's scope of authority or tied to where Metro has influence. Cliff Higgins agreed that this could be an opportunity to elevate Metro's role as a regional convener to expand what Metro is willing to hear from the public.

Luis Nava commented that engaging youth will be key to any futurist discussion. Schools, newspaper recognition programs and NPOs could be tapped to connect with youth. Additionally, corporate sponsorships would help with costs and provide a draw for youth and the general public.

Next steps will include working with the PERC, especially members who are interested and available to be involved at a deeper level in review of goals for the community summit. Luis Nava, Tara Sulzen, Candice Kelly, William Gifford and Greg Greenway expressed initial interest in further involvement.

### **Opt In public engagement survey**

Metro is preparing to launch our third annual public engagement survey through the Opt In panel. A draft of the survey will be sent to the committee for review of any areas that may be missing or additional comments. We are looking to keep the survey consistent year-to-year for comparison purposes, but welcome committee input.

### **Metro Diversity Action Plan**

In order to best serve and represent the region's communities and encourage diverse participation on decision-making or advisory bodies, Metro is asking committee members to complete a brief, anonymous demographic survey. Participation will allow us to understand who is currently serving on Metro committees as a first step toward a goal of ensuring that committees represent the diversity of the region. All information is anonymous and your participation is voluntary. Demographic indicators will be reported on aggregate to ensure that no personally identifiable information will be reported in analysis. On average, this survey takes 5 minutes to complete.

The survey will be emailed to the committee tomorrow by Valerie Cuevas.

### **Closing announcements**

Stephen Roberts shared that Washington County's Public Works fair will be at the Beaverton farmer's market on May 17, 8 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Meeting notes and action items from this meeting will be emailed shortly.

The next PERC meeting will be November 3, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.