

## MINUTES OF THE METRO COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLANNING

Wednesday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 2004  
Expo Building D 2<sup>nd</sup> floor

Councilors Present: David Bragdon (Council President), Carl Hosticka, Rod Park, Rod Monroe, Rex Burkholder, Brian Newman

Councilors Absent: Susan McLain

Others Present: Chief Operating Officer Michael Jordan, Chief Financial Officer Bill Stringer, Senior Policy Advisor Mike Wetter, Public Affairs Director Kate Marx, Parks and Greenspaces Director Jim Desmond, Council Operations Manager Chris Billington, Planning - Richard Brandman, Human Resources Director Ruth Scott, Assistant Zoo Manager, Planning - Jenny Kirk, Terri Dressler, Planning Director Andy Cotugno, Oregon Zoo Director Tony Vecchio, Financial Planning Manager Casey Short, Senior Auditor Doug U'Ren, Financial Planning- Brad Stevens, Project Manager- Reed Wagner, Data Resource Center- Paul Couey, Solid Waste and Recycling- Doug Anderson, Financial Planning -Kathy Rutkowski, Financial Planning -Karen Feher and Council Assistant Cameron Vaughan-Tyler

Mike Wetter convened the Metro Council Strategic Planning Meeting at 1:16 p.m.

Mr. Wetter asked the group to brainstorm about implementation and what they would like to see that is different or that needs to be emphasized to a greater degree.

Council President Bragdon stated that having a fresh and creative workforce, renewing perspective and expertise is of critical importance to Metro. Bragdon also discussed the fact that Metro has lost a good many younger people toward the creative end of the scale and that the agency is lacking in diversity. Councilor Newman discussed Metro's relationship with citizens. Councilors Newman and Burkholder would like to create more of an environment where employees are encouraged to think creatively, take risks, and encourage entrepreneurship. They also stated that Metro should be more open to training so that employees keep fresh perspectives on their work and the work of the agency. Burkholder also recommended finding more ways for the agency to incorporate rewards for fresh thinking and new ideas, he would like to see Metro become a more learning organization. Councilor Monroe input that Metro should not assume staff who have been employed for a long period of time are stale, that many long-time staff are keeping up with new ideas. He expressed concern that Metro does not need new blood in order to have new ideas. Councilor Hosticka stated that Metro should be looking for a standard of quality and Councilor Park suggested that more risk taking is necessary, and that he would like to see some kind of mechanism that recognizes the balance of taking risks. President Bragdon asked about the Council management system, and the differentiation between leadership and management. Staff Councilor relationship.

Councilor Park asked about Metro's role. Mr. Wetter stated the role depends on the particular subject matter and that this exercise is about looking at the role Metro would like to play with specific programmatic issues. Councilor Newman stated that there is collective leadership that they, as a council, communicate. The Council naturally creates an environment with their peers, but they need to create a culture, collectively.

Councilor Newman stated that if the Council is going to have an exercise on leadership, they need to know how do their partners and citizens perceive them. Do people come to the Metro Council with their problems—why is that? If the answer is no, then what is the problem? Wetter stated that the issue will be parked now and then address it later on when the group has had a chance to process the topic.

## **FULL GROUP DISCUSSION--**

Mike Wetter commenced this section and stated that the goal for today is to review the general direction on the goals, and contribute any new ideas for objectives.

### ***Regional Awareness***

Statements made from participants framed the overall question of whether people understand what Metro is? Is there a way to enhance awareness of what Metro does, regionally? What does it mean to be a regional economy?

Councilor Hosticka stated that citizens think regionally until they start to interact with government. They don't have the sense of being in a governmental arena until they start to try to solve a problem or get an answer. Councilor Park asked if it is awareness of regional issues or of being in a region that is really issue. Park went on to discuss the definition of a region. Is it jurisdictional or regional? Mr. Wetter stated that there is a question of helping citizens recognize that they are in a region. Ms. Billington commented on the fact that Metro needs to foster better awareness of the services it provides.

Mr. Jordan discussed how Metro thinks about regional awareness and hence, they view the jurisdiction as a homogenous place or as a loose confederation of states that all have their own needs, desires and wants. He also stated that it is the role of Metro to show that this is a single region, not separate states. Metro's role is to promote the regional aspect/ solution or agenda. Mr. Cooper asked what it is that we collectively or on our own have done over the years to cause the reaction of other governments or citizens to say "don't let Metro do it"? People don't want Metro involved because over the years there have been some bad experiences in problem solving which resulted in more problems than the solving of them. We cannot be all things to all people. Mr. Jordan asked the group to consider what characteristics Metro needs to have in order to be a good leader? How does Metro evolve along this set of characteristics and how does Metro change the culture of the council?

Councilor Newman pointed to the fact that Metro needs to communicate regionally—not just think regionally. Mr. Wetter stated that the group may need to test the language currently under consideration and Councilor Newman said that any testing or exercise should raise the discomfort level so as to yield better results. At the same time, Newman suggested that he would like to test the individual councilor's performances and that of the Council as a whole.

***Improving Metro's image and distinguishing Metro's Leadership:***

Mr. Jordan spoke to the fact that Portland and Metro often roll off the tongue in the same breath. Richard Brandman interjected that in Washington and Clackamas counties, Metro is perceived as having its own agenda. People have trouble distinguishing Metro from Tri-Met. Metro is not doing a good enough job of explaining what it is doing and how it is spending public funds. People feel that the quality of their life has gone down and that government is responsible and Metro is often the target of their ire. Even Metro's allies, at times, take rhetorical swipes at the agency. Metro needs to keep educating and being more sensitive, not telling people what to do and telling them in an elitist way. It is how Metro comes across and with citizens, where Metro often does the wrong thing. Metro needs to move away from power-point presentations with big words when it is communicating with citizens about their properties. Metro also needs to be more careful about how they articulate their perspective. Metro must get away from using the Calvinist approach—scaring people into a frenzy that leads them to believe they are going to have to sacrifice their lifestyle for Metro's decisions and rules. Councilor Park stated that he would like to see Metro do a better job when it comes to helping communities be partners in their common goals. He suggested that Metro needs more tools and to be smarter about which tools they reach for first.

Mr. Wetter reiterated that he was hearing a great deal about Metro needing to better define its culture and attitude, to work at not being judgmental, to be wiser about how to approach a problem. Ms. Scott asked if it might be helpful for the group to go through an exercise of what qualities make a regional leader. The group suggested that while this is a good idea, it should be addressed at a later strategic meeting.

Mr. Wetter moved on to talk about public trust and fiscal prudence. Ms. Marx suggested that the term "asset productivity" be added to the list of goals.

Councilor Park addressed the issues at the Oregon Zoo and talked about how Mr. Vecchio looks at maximizing and optimizing. But, that the mission of the zoo is broader than the mission of Metro. Mr. Wetter suggested that there would be time for a lengthier conversation around this issue at a later time. Mr. Jordan also stated that there would be conversation surrounding the next steps for all departments, including the zoo. There will be a closer examination of resources and how they are allocated in every department.

Ms. Scott said that she is unsure if the goals for operating, recruiting and retention are the right goals and wants to know if is she doing what the departments need? She wondered if there is a way to ask if she is providing the right services? There was much support for Ms. Scott's work and outreach to the departments, but several attendees stated that there must be a fundamental cultural change at metro and that the current culture in the building is a problem

There was more group discussion about how Metro has been inconsistent and needs to work and train better as a team. Better training will help Metro achieve some of its goals and flexibility with staff will make them happier and hence, customers more satisfied. Ms. Marx asked the group to be more explicit and that there needs to be better Council direction to management and a better conversation of what the current "culture" is. Mr. Vecchio expressed concern about the fact that many staff members are innovative and entrepreneurial, but have been afraid to speak out because of fear of risk or rejection. Other departments expressed similar concern over the fact that there are too many restrictions and that perhaps, a number of Metro policies are not as flexible as they could be.

Mr. Short discussed the issue of customer service and how departments are sometimes torn between who their client is and who the customer is. Often times, there are conflicts between a department wanting to do something that Mr. Short and his staff feel would be against their professional judgment. He stated that they perceive their principle clients to be the Council and the public. Mr. Jordan, stated that there will be competing goals and hence, there will always be two customers—the public and the person at the counter.

Mr. Wetter talked again of performance and that reward ought to be a goal. He stated that performance is an outcome. Mr. Jordan suggested to the group that at the end of these exercises, there needs to be a preamble statement regarding the goals and that all goals are important.

BREAK-----

***Promoting a collaborative relationship between staff and council:***

The old regime saw the council as an obstacle to achieving its objectives. There are members of the Council and Metro staff who feel that the culture has not completely moved away. President Bragdon stated that the council in the old regime was not as forthright and other Councilors stated that there are times when they felt that they were only being presented with part of the information needed. In some cases, that lack of information ended in decisions being made that had undesired results. It was suggested that as future councilors come on board, the Council could work on better communication. It was mentioned that, at times, staff selectively pulled out notes to control the interpretation. Mr. Jordan stated that the council needs to understand that the staff's job is to reduce the universe of information to a policy that is useful and understandable. Councilor Burkholder we need to make sure that the council sees all of the policy options and would like to see staff bring all the information forward so that the council has all the options available in order to make the best decision.

Mr. Wetter then asked the group to define what good staff work is and to create a statement and tell us what good staff work is. Councilor Park stated that Mr. Cotugno influences him with his opinion but also tells the full range of options. There continued to be conversation about what makes a good staff person and the group came up with a list of adjectives (*listed under **Develop Objectives Related to Operating Goals** in bold italics*) describing qualities Metro should look for in its workforce.

The follow objectives were handed out to the participants and those items in *bold italics* are changes that were suggested in today's meeting.

### Develop Objectives Related to Operating Goals

#### 1. Review, add, and edit objectives related to the following goals

- Foster regional awareness. Lead regional problem solving and regional initiatives. *Having the right tools for the job.*
- As stewards of the public trust, practice fiscal prudence and operate efficiently—*transparent and easy to understand. Durable efficient technologies, i.e. computers, people soft,*
- Recruit and retain an exceptionally competent and professional workforce. *Means to identify professional development needs and opportunities, identifying competency gaps, enhancing employee appreciation, retaining job satisfaction, job shadowing job sharing, retention of people who may be in the wrong job. GROUP—to reward talent and excellence, expect our employee to be high performers—we will support them, but they must perform. Adjectives related to the goal--Creative, entrepreneurial, flexible, fresh, risk-taking, expectation of high level of performance, productive, competent, motivated.*
- Foster a collaborative relationship between a council, focused on policy questions, and staff, focused on providing objective policy options and rigorous analysis.
- Create, support, and encourage a diverse environment that reflects the community we serve. Provide leadership in our community through our diversity practices.
- Maintain integrity and accountability and *optimize asset productivity, sustainable operations, regional consequences of our expenditures*
- Manage the public's resources responsibly. *The overall return we get from the public.*
- Maintain open, collaborative working relationships with other governments and organizations.
- Communicate effectively with and respond to the needs of the region's residents
- *Does this agency have a responsibility to the private sector, what goal addresses that responsibility to the private sector, are we competing with the private sector – Leveraging resources, sustainable operations.*

#### 2. Adjourn (4:32 PM)

There being no further business to come before the Metro Council, Council President Bragdon adjourned the meeting at 4:32p.m.

Prepared by,

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