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# **MERC Commission Retreat**

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March 30, 2010  
8:00 am - 1:30 pm

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Leftbank Annex  
The Club Room  
101 North Weidler Street  
Portland, Oregon

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# MERC Commission Retreat

March 30<sup>th</sup> 2010  
Left Bank Annex – 101 N Weidler St.  
The Club Room (downstairs)

8am – 1:30pm

## AGENDA

- 8:00 Meeting Opening and Welcome**
- *Introductions*
  - *Agenda overview*
- General Manager's Overview**
- *Report card on the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan*
  - *Outlook going forward*
- 8:30 Venue Managers' Presentations**
- *Venue Managers' overview of the outlook and SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats assessment) for each venue and priorities for the five year planning cycle.*
  - *Q&A with Venue Managers.*
- 9:30 Break**
- 9:45 Metro COO's Update to the Commission on MERC/Metro business and administrative issues**
- 10:45 Situation Assessment**
- *Major influences (challenges, issues, trends, opportunities) in MERC's business environment.*
  - *Ranking of issues in order of urgency and importance.*
- 11:30 Lunch**
- Noon ("Working dessert and coffee") MERC Commission Operating Rules**
- *Discussion and Agreement*
- 1:30 Session Closing**

## **DRAFT - Summary of Selected Accomplishments to Date MERC Strategic Plans (2007-2012 and 2008-2013)**

**\*\*FOR COMMISSION USE AND PLANNING PURPOSES ONLY\*\***

The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) embarked on a strategic planning process in 2006 with key managers and staff to develop the 2007-2012 Strategic Plan. Shortly following its adoption by the Commission, a new MERC General Manager was hired to lead the organization, prompting a shift in the strategic focus, and therefore implementation, of the organization's guiding principles and plans. The modified plan, titled 2008-2013 Strategic Plan, was presented to the Commission in 2008 but not formally adopted. It has served as a directional tool for managers and employees since that time.

The goals are nearly identical for each plan. The 2008-2013 plan outlines a different strategic vision and outcomes for achieving the goals than the Commission-approved 2007-2012 plan. The mission and visions are listed below. Immediately following is a brief summary of selected accomplishments for each goal. It is intended for this information to provide background and context for the strategic planning process scheduled for the March 30, 2010, Commission retreat.

2007-2012 and 2008-2013 Mission: To enhance the livability and economic vitality of the metropolitan region through sound stewardship, expert management and creative development of the region's public assembly venues.

2007-2012 Vision: To be the acknowledged leader in public assembly venue management in the region.

2008-2013 Vision: To serve as a catalyst and advocate for community, culture and economic development.

### **2007-2012 and 2008-2013 Strategic Plan Goals**

**2007-2012 Goal 1: Maximize the positive impact of venues on the economy and livability of region**

**2008-2013 Goal 1: Create positive impact on the economy and livability of the region through MERC's leadership and venue management**

Accomplishments:

- Actively partnered with Travel Portland to market Portland and the Oregon Convention Center to increase national convention business
- Executive Team and senior managers served on community boards and commissions, Metro committees and hold key leadership positions in the industry trade association, International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM).

- A consultant was hired to review historical/current purchasing and employment policies and overall success of the First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) program; final analysis and next steps to be determined by summer 2010.
- Strategic development projects, such as Expo Master Plan and the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall (ASCH) renovation/Main Street development, underway.
- Participated in Metro Affirmative Action analysis and report; regularly engaged in employment and procurement outreach to minority groups.
- Required First Opportunity Target Area (FOTA) tracking and reporting in major contracts.
- Engaged employees in group volunteer projects and encouraged employee service on community boards and commissions.
- Conducted annual economic and fiscal impact reports in FY 2007-08 and 2008-09.

## **Goal 2: Exert leadership to ensure construction of an OCC Headquarters Hotel**

### Accomplishments:

- Property acquired by Portland Development Commission (PDC) and development team selected for project. Metro, PDC and developers negotiated final draft financing, operating and development agreements, but these agreements were not executed due to project termination in September 2009.
- OCC Blocks Vision plan developed; approved by Portland Development Commission (PDC) but not officially adopted by City Council.
- Plans underway to partially develop proposed “Sizzler Block” property to enhance Oregon Convention Center visitor experience with outdoor plaza and exhibition area.

## **Goal 3: Expertly manage world class public assembly venues**

### Accomplishments:

- Annual customer service survey targets consistently met or exceeded; currently working to increase number of surveys completed and returned.
- Implemented “secret shopper” program at the Oregon Convention Center.
- Hosted client receptions and customer/volunteer appreciation events at the Oregon Convention Center, Expo Center and Portland Center for the Performing Arts.
- Conducted annual site facility evaluations to determine building capital and maintenance needs.
- Developed and updated 5-year capital plans as part of budget process.
- Awarded new food and beverage contract which included \$2 million in capital improvement funds to invest in kitchen infrastructure, points of sale and soft goods.
- Travel Portland annual goals are met consistently and reported quarterly to MERC.
- Strategic fund balance goal met and/or exceeded on an annual basis.

- Marketing/sales/public relations team meets regularly to collaborate, coordinate and cross-market programs and events.
- Director of Business and Community Development position created and filled to explore new business opportunities and establish key community relationships.
- PSU study launched to research the exposition industry, identify trends, determine and report strategic recommendations for the Expo Center.
- Green Meeting niche pursued by OCC, which is one of the “greenest” convention centers in the world.
- New events, some co-produced by Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA), expanded community’s accessibility and use of theatres.
- Launched multiple sustainability practices in office and business operations – ie, use of products, and enhanced energy efficiency, composting, recycling, diversion rates (include rates). OCC obtained LEED Silver-EB. PCPA undergoing LEED audits for Hatfield Hall and Keller. Expo may pursue LEED per master planning process.
- Venues disaster/emergency preparedness plans incorporated into Metro’s plan; Memo of Understanding between MERC and American Red Cross executed in 2007; business continuity emergency management planning and other projects underway through MERC-wide team, and staff participate routinely in state, regional and internal emergency response exercises.
- Implemented systems efficiency software (SharePoint, Celayix, maintenance, etc.) to improve business functions.
- Coordinating with industry partners to establish performance benchmarking for the Portland Center for the Performing Arts and the Oregon Convention Center.
- Participated in the Columbia River Crossing Project to address impacts of proposed Marine Drive alignments on Expo Center.

#### **Goal 4: Effectively communicate MERC’s role and value**

##### Accomplishments:

- Economic and fiscal impact analysis completed on all venues for FY 2007-08 and 2008-09; will continue through 09-11. Local earned media generated for both years.
- Developed and implemented organization media protocol and training.
- Brand identity development on hold per Metro Code Title VI changes and GM recruitment
- Communication plan developed, portions implemented.
- Routinely updated communication vehicles (ie, websites) and actively participate in online social networking (Twitter, Facebook, etc.), Oregon Convention Center, Expo Center and Portland Center for the Performing Arts.
- Collaborated with Travel Portland on regular basis to generate earned media in national trade press.
- Exploration of stakeholder communication methods underway.

- Enhanced interaction with Metro counterparts and colleagues.

#### **Goal 5: Engage employees in creating an exceptional workplace**

##### Accomplishments:

- Employee values established and utilized/measured in annual performance review process.
- Performance evaluations, employee survey and customer feedback demonstrates employee commitment and loyalty.
- Training opportunities include Regional Leadership Initiative (RLI), International Association of Assembly Managers (IAAM) and others as designated per work groups; Information Technology (IT) Training Coordinator hired.
- Internal communication plan developed; partially implemented.
- Weekly email updates from GM on venue business and organization updates.
- SharePoint created and utilized by most managers; full roll-out underway.
- Employees recognized in Metro service award lunch.
- Staff “brown bag” Q&A sessions scheduled regularly for staff to interact directly with managers and directors.
- Collaborative work groups established by function; meet regularly.

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MERC Strategic Plan  
Background Information

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Communication

Synergy

Leadership

METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION RECREATION COMMISSION

STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

2007–2012

Innovation

Excellence

Expertise





# STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN

## 2007–2012

## Acknowledgements

### METROPOLITAN EXPOSITION RECREATION COMMISSION (MERC)

- George Forbes, Chair
- Don Trotter, Vice Chair
- Janice Marquis, Secretary-Treasurer
- Gale Castillo
- Gary Conkling
- Ray Leary
- Gary Reynolds

### STRATEGIC PLANNING TEAM

- Kathy Taylor, CFO, Interim MERC General Manager
- Julie Reed, Project Director, MERC Public Affairs Manager
- Rachel Bertoni, MERC Human Resources Manager
- Penny Knouf, MERC Administrative Assistant
- Chris Bailey, Executive Director, Portland Expo Center
- Jeffrey Blosser, Executive Director, Oregon Convention Center
- Robyn Williams, Executive Director, Portland Center for the Performing Arts
- Dan Cooper, Metro Attorney
- Nathan Sykes, Senior Attorney, Metro

### CONTRIBUTORS

- MERC employees
- Venue Advisory Committees for Portland Expo Center, Oregon Convention Center, and Portland Center for the Performing Arts
- Jeff Miller, former MERC General Manager
- Sheryl Manning, former MERC Commissioner
- Project Consultants—Elaine Cogan, Steve Faust, Cogan Owens Cogan; Cate Millar, Michael Lindberg, Fleishman Hillard

**We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations in our community that contributed ideas to help shape this plan and guide the future of MERC.**



## **ABOUT METRO**

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and good transportation choices for people and businesses in our region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges that cross those lines.

Citizens generally agree that a regional approach makes sense when it comes to protecting open space, caring for parks, planning for the best use of land, managing garbage disposal and increasing recycling. Metro programs and planning tools help protect our air, water, parks, natural areas and fish and wildlife habitat. Metro also oversees world-class facilities such as the Oregon Zoo, which contributes to conservation and education, and through MERC, the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Expo Center, and Portland Center for the Performing Arts, which benefit the region's economy and promote cultural vitality.

Metro is a directly elected regional government that serves more than 1.3 million residents in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and the 25 cities in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area.

Metro is governed by a Council President elected region-wide and six Councilors elected by district. Metro's Auditor is elected region-wide.

### **Metro Council**

Council President David Bragdon  
Deputy Council President Rod Park  
Councilor Rex Burkholder  
Councilor Kathryn Harrington  
Councilor Carl Hosticka  
Councilor Robert Liberty  
Councilor Brian Newman

### **Metro Auditor**

Suzanne Flynn

For more information, visit [www.metro-region.org](http://www.metro-region.org).



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# Executive Summary

This 2007-2012 Strategic Business Plan is an innovative blueprint for the Metropolitan Exposition and Recreation Commission's continued growth as a premiere public venue management agency. It represents a unified vision that at the same time recognizes the unique qualities of each MERC venue—the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, and the Portland Expo Center.

We have made great progress following the roadmap of the previous Strategic Business Plan, even during the difficult economic climate in 2000-2003. The Oregon Convention Center completed its expansion on time and within budget, increased revenues and achieved LEED® designation. Portland Center for the Performing Arts strengthened its financial structure and made substantial capital improvements to its facilities. Portland Expo Center continues to cover its operating costs and debt service without public support.

MERC plays an important role in shaping the vision, dialogue, and planning that address the needs for public assembly venue development and management in this community. Securing a convention headquarters hotel is essential for Portland to remain competitive as a national meeting destination and for the Oregon Convention Center to fully deliver its economic promise to the region. Sustainable funding is necessary to maintain and preserve existing infrastructure and to develop new facilities that will meet our region's needs for quality

performance arts, public event and entertainment venues. Responsible maintenance and investment in public infrastructure will help keep Portland a vibrant region, promote tourism, and support a healthy economy.

Throughout the process to create this plan, the agency engaged its commissioners, employees and management and reached out to involve many business and civic leaders and customers. Select employees participated in a full-day workshop and all employees were asked to complete a questionnaire. A separate questionnaire was distributed to customers. Interviews were conducted with community stakeholders, including business and political leaders. Finally, meetings were held with advisory and stakeholder groups from each venue.

Several themes that emerged through the planning process are paramount in this strategic business plan and will influence our work in the future:

- ✎ **Leadership and Expertise** - Administrators of MERC venues are experts in facility management and recognized by their peers as leaders in their field. Each venue takes pride in creating a positive customer experience. Commissioners bring business and industry expertise and experience.
- ✎ **Organizational Synergy** - We are dedicated to bringing together the expertise of staff in various venues to work towards the good of the whole organization.
- ✎ **Technology** - We will obtain and integrate emerging technologies essential to our internal efficiency and customer responsiveness.
- ✎ **Communication with Stakeholders** - It is vital that MERC build greater awareness of the benefit



its venues provide to the region's economy and livability.

- Capital Renovation and Development** - We will focus our efforts on the development of a convention headquarters hotel near Oregon Convention Center, replacing obsolete exhibit halls at Portland Expo Center, and renovate our performance halls.
- Marketing and Sales** - We will seek to retain existing customers and attract new ones through innovative marketing and sales strategies.
- Effective Workforce and Development Management Practices** - We will engage our workforce as business partners and invest in their development to achieve performance excellence.
- Sustainable, Diversified Funding Structure** - Long-term financial stability is crucial to preserving the integrity and growth of MERC and its venues.

This plan is intended to set the stage for the next 20 years, while encompassing strategic goals, strategies and implementation actions for the years 2007-2012. Shared values are a new element of the plan, which were developed as a direct result of employee involvement in the planning process. The following values reflect our aspirations for a common MERC culture:

- Respect**
- Excellence**
- Teamwork**
- Innovation**
- Community**

Five over-arching goals serve as the framework of this plan:

- 1.** Maximize the positive impact of MERC venues on the economy and livability of the region.
- 2.** Exert leadership to ensure construction of a convention headquarters hotel at the Oregon Convention Center.
- 3.** Expertly manage world class public assembly venues.
- 4.** Effectively communicate MERC's role and value.
- 5.** Engage employees in creating an exceptional workplace.

Each goal is followed by relevant strategies and measurable outcomes. The latter will help us chart our progress and make changes to increase our effectiveness. An Implementation Plan companion piece to this Strategic Business Plan contains actions to ensure that the plan is a living document that guides MERC's future decisions and activities.

# Introduction

This 2007-2012 Strategic Business Plan is ambitious in its vision, yet grounded in practical strategies and actions. The plan will serve as a guiding framework during the next five-year business cycle to promote livability and cultural vitality for the region through leadership, excellent service, expert management and accountable stewardship of the region's landmark public assembly venues.

We have made great progress following the roadmap of the previous Strategic Business Plan. The Oregon Convention Center (OCC) completed a \$116 million expansion on time and budget, increased its enterprise revenues at a steady pace, and achieved LEED® designation in 2003. The Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA) has been a cultural nexus for the region, strengthened its financial structure and made substantial renovations and infrastructure improvements to enhance the customer experience. The Portland Expo Center (Expo) is the region's hub for consumer shows and events. Through effective marketing and management, it covers its operating costs and debt service without any public funding support. Collectively, MERC venues serve over two million visitors every year at more than 1,000 performances and events.

The next five years hold many opportunities and certain challenges. Portland needs a convention headquarters hotel to fully realize the economic benefits from the expanded Oregon Convention Center and keep Portland viable as a preferred convention destination. MERC has an important role to play in shaping the vision, dialogue, and planning to address the future needs of public assembly venues development and management in this community. It is essential to secure sustainable funding

to maintain and preserve public venue infrastructure and develop new facilities to meet our region's needs for quality performance, consumer trade, public event and entertainment venues. This will help keep Portland a vibrant region, promote tourism, and support a healthy economy.

The plan is a unified vision that harnesses the ideas and expertise we gathered through an extensive stakeholder engagement process with employees, community and business leaders, and industry partners. At the same time, it recognizes the unique qualities and needs of each MERC venue. By strengthening relationships, building coalitions, employing creativity and innovation, wisely managing resources, and harnessing the talent and power of our workforce, we will create workable solutions to regional challenges and make the most of the opportunities ahead.

## Governance

The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission is an enterprise-driven public venue management agency charged with managing regional trade, convention and entertainment facilities in an effective, independent, entrepreneurial and accountable manner.

MERC is a subsidiary of the Metro regional government. MERC is governed by a seven-member citizen commission whose members are appointed by the Metro Council president and approved by the Metro Council. Commission members serve as representatives of the city of Portland and Washington, Clackamas and Multnomah counties. The commission appoints the MERC general manager, who is accountable to the commission for leadership and management of the agency.

MERC manages the Oregon Convention Center, the Portland Center for the Performing Arts and the Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center. MERC is supported primarily through its own operations and tax subsidies from the lodging and tourism industry and receives no property tax support for operations. More than 74% of MERC's funding is generated by its enterprise businesses from fees and services for facility rentals, event services, parking and food and catering operations. The remainder is from lodging industry taxes, government contributions and investments.

## Business Climate

The last two years have been marked by strong business growth as the meeting, hospitality, consumer trade and entertainment industries recovered from the nation's recession of 2000-03. Just as we were poised to open and market the expanded Oregon Convention Center, MERC and many other tourism and related facilities across the country were confronted with the recession and a subsequent downturn in revenues. Since then, OCC and PCPA have experienced major revenue increases while the consumer show business at Expo is experiencing more modest growth.

## Planning Process

This plan evolved over time to encompass new and innovative ideas as well as reinforce practices that have proved successful and should be continued and enhanced. It was developed with extensive participation from our employees and stakeholders.

The process was inaugurated with MERC Day, a full-day workshop attended by key employees from throughout the agency that expressed enthusiasm for

the opportunity to share ideas with others in the organization. Many productive suggestions from this workshop became the first stepping stones of the plan. In addition, all employees were asked to complete a questionnaire, and a separate questionnaire was distributed to our customers.

In further outreach, our consultants interviewed business and political leaders in the community, including MERC commissioners and Metro council members and staff. Meetings also were held with advisory or stakeholder groups for each venue and with key venue managers and administrators and the MERC management team. The thoughtful remarks and suggestions that we received were considered as the plan developed.

## Strategic Business Priorities

This forward-thinking framework for the future was undertaken with extensive dialogue and conversations with many key stakeholders regarding the future direction of this agency, its priorities, and how best to marshal its resources and community goodwill to meet the opportunities and challenges ahead. From these discussions emerged top priorities and findings around which this business plan is focused.

**Leadership and Expertise.** Administrators of MERC venues are recognized by their peers as leaders in their field. They hold office in national organizations and are frequently sought out for advice and counsel. They serve on community boards and committees dedicated to the enhancement of the region's vitality and livability for

its citizens and visitors. Through Metro, MERC is a key player in the drive to secure a headquarters hotel close to the Oregon Convention Center. We will continue to expertly manage our venues to create the ultimate customer experience.

**Organizational Synergy.** In recognition that the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, MERC is dedicated to bringing together the expertise of staff in all its venues to take advantage of organizational efficiencies. This allows MERC to coordinate its energy toward the good of the whole organization.

**Technology.** We will stay abreast of innovations that positively influence our operational and business effectiveness. Emerging technologies allow us to be more responsive to the needs of our customers and attendees and do our work more efficiently. We will commit resources to obtain and integrate new technology and train our employees to ensure its maximum utilization.

**Communication with Stakeholders.** It is vital that MERC build greater awareness among stakeholders and the public about the value and benefits of conventions, tradeshow and performance arts on the economy and livability of the region. Educating the public about the necessity of subsidizing these public venues as a critical component of the quality of life in this community is an ongoing responsibility.

**Capital Renovation and Development.** This will continue to be a priority. MERC doubled the capacity of the Oregon Convention Center, a \$116 million expansion completed on time and within budget, with the full

support of the lodging industry. To fully realize the economic potential of this venue and keep Portland competitive as a convention city of choice, Portland must secure a convention headquarters hotel. Replacing the remaining obsolete exhibit halls with modern facilities at the Portland Expo Center, the largest consumer show complex on the West Coast, is essential to meeting changing client needs and demands. New performance technology and changing audience demographics challenge PCPA to renovate its facilities to meet contemporary expectations and increase the comfort of patrons and performers.

**Marketing and Sales.** Marketing and sales are the lifeblood of MERC as an enterprise-focused, event-driven agency. Staying competitive and retaining market share is essential. We will collaborate among our venues to reach our optimum potential to keep and attract customers and seek opportunities to generate new business for each. We will consider new and innovative marketing and branding opportunities.

**Effective Workforce Development and Management Practices.** Engaging our workforce as business partners and harnessing the knowledge, skills, talents, and motivation of employees is essential. We will continually invest and promote technical competency and professional development to achieve performance excellence while retaining and enhancing our reputation for industry leadership and excellent customer service.

Secure a Sustainable, Diversified Funding Structure. Long term financial stability is essential to preserving the integrity and growth of MERC and its venues. We must seek to maintain strategic fund balances to weather

economic cycles. We will pursue enterprise revenue growth and maximize return on investments. We seek to secure appropriate public investments in MERC venues, including development of a headquarters hotel.

## The Plan

This strategic business plan will chart MERC's course for the next five years and beyond. It is ambitious yet practical and achievable. The plan is comprised of a vision, mission, new agency values, five over-arching goals and relevant strategies. It differs from the previous plan as it also contains measurements to chart success. A companion 18-month Implementation Plan assigns responsibilities for actions and outcomes beginning January, 2007. The program will be reviewed annually, with changes made to ensure MERC's effectiveness.

# VISION

## VISION

**To be the acknowledged leader in public assembly venue management in the region.**



# MISSION

## MISSION

**To enhance the livability and economic vitality of the metropolitan region through sound stewardship, expert management and creative development of the region's public assembly venues.**

# VALUES

## *Respect*

We embrace diversity within our workplace and our community. Employees, customers and guests are treated with care and appreciation. We promote an atmosphere of equality and personal integrity and seek to understand the perspective of others. We strive for a culture supported by honesty and trust.

Above all, we demonstrate respect for each other.

## *Excellence*

We aspire to achieve exceptional results and do not compromise quality. We practice continuous improvement and reflect on how we can improve in the future. We face problems head on and focus on finding the best solutions. Our goal is to meet or exceed the expectations of our customers. We promote employee development and encourage them to be their best.

## *Teamwork*

Teamwork forms the essence of our work environment. Through collaboration and commitment to common goals, we achieve greater outcomes. We value positive relationships and nurture them with cooperation and honest communication. Individually, we contribute to the greater whole by being dependable and accountable for our actions. We have fun and enjoy one another!

## *Innovation*

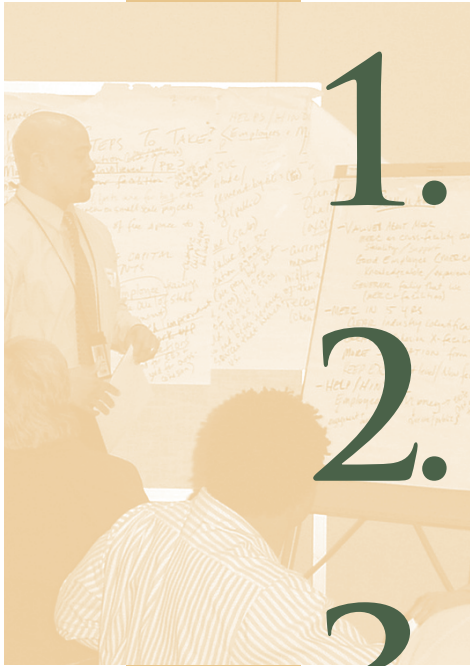
We understand the importance of taking appropriate risks and learning from our successes and setbacks. We encourage flexibility and embrace creativity and new ideas. We respond mindfully when challenges come our way and address obstacles with ingenuity. We are adaptable and strategic in the face of change. We serve our customers better as a result of anticipating and solving problems.

## *Community*

MERC plays an important role in the economic and cultural vitality of the region. We build strong relationships, alliances and partnerships in the community to better serve our citizens and visitors. We generously share our expertise and wisdom to promote community enhancement and development. We strive to make a positive difference through leadership and by taking action.

# STRATEGIC BUSINESS GOALS

# GOALS



**1.**

**Maximize the positive impact of MERC venues on the economy and livability of the region.**

**2.**

**Exert leadership to ensure construction of a convention headquarters hotel at the Oregon Convention Center.**

**3.**

**Expertly manage world class public assembly venues.**

**4.**

**Effectively communicate MERC's role and value.**

**5.**

**Engage employees in creating an exceptional workplace.**



# Strategies and Measures

## GOAL 1

MAXIMIZE THE POSITIVE IMPACT OF  
MERC VENUES ON THE ECONOMY AND LIVABILITY OF THE REGION.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES
1. Provide leadership and expertise to guide public assembly venue development and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop advocacy plan</li> <li>• Create Board development plan</li> <li>• Leadership in regional venue planning and decision-making</li> </ul>
2. Strengthen relationships and build alliances with community and business partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership on boards and committees</li> <li>• Partnerships with hospitality, cultural and tourism industry organizations</li> <li>• MERC's expertise is recognized and valued</li> </ul>
3. Promote opportunities for small, minority, women-owned and emerging businesses to provide services and products to MERC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purchasing benchmarks</li> <li>• Contracts with businesses</li> </ul>

## GOAL 2

EXERT LEADERSHIP TO ENSURE CONSTRUCTION OF A  
CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS HOTEL AT THE OREGON CONVENTION CENTER.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES
1. Transfer ownership of the headquarters hotel project from Portland Development Commission to Metro/MERC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Metro accepts the developer chosen by the PDC selection committee</li> <li>• Predevelopment agreements in place</li> </ul>
2. Develop a financing plan and secure funding for construction of a publicly owned convention hotel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financing plan approved</li> <li>• Construction bonds issued</li> </ul>
3. Determine the organizational structure to manage and operate the hotel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management structure and entity selected</li> </ul>
4. Build and open a first class convention headquarters hotel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convention quality hotel built on time and within budget</li> </ul>
5. Advocate for implementation of OCC Blocks Vision Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City approval of OCC Blocks Vision Plan</li> </ul>

## GOAL 3

### EXPERTLY MANAGE WORLD CLASS PUBLIC ASSEMBLY VENUES.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES
1. Deliver an exceptional customer experience for customers and attendees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percentage of repeat clients</li> <li>• Customer service surveys</li> <li>• Industry awards</li> </ul>
2. Effectively market and sell MERC venues and services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of new clients and events</li> <li>• Increased lead/conversion rate</li> <li>• Collaborative marketing approaches</li> <li>• Strong national marketing results</li> <li>• Increased net revenue</li> </ul>
3. Upgrade and maintain existing facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State-of-the-art venues</li> <li>• Venues meet or exceed customer requirements</li> </ul>
4. Optimize operational efficiencies and effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased profitability per event</li> <li>• Improved procurement processes</li> <li>• Cross-venue efficiencies implemented</li> <li>• EBMS optimization</li> <li>• Technology plan developed</li> </ul>
5. Attain and maintain sustainable, diversified funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic fund balance maintained</li> <li>• Innovative programs and projects funded</li> </ul>
6. Incorporate sustainable practices into all aspects of the organization.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LEED® certification where appropriate</li> <li>• Green purchasing results</li> <li>• Recycling recovery rates</li> </ul>
7. Prepare to respond to disasters, crises and major emergencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop and update disaster plans</li> <li>• Develop and implement crisis communications plan</li> <li>• Develop business continuity plan</li> <li>• Collaborate and train with regional disaster planning agencies</li> </ul>

## GOAL 4

### EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATE MERC'S ROLE AND VALUE.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES
1. Document the value MERC provides to the region.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic impact reports for all venues</li> <li>MERC annual report</li> </ul>
2. Clarify MERC identity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Brand evaluation process implemented</li> <li>Graphic identity goals and standards</li> </ul>
3. Promote greater awareness about MERC's role and value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sufficient resources allocated</li> <li>Communication plan developed</li> <li>Staff and Commissioners represent MERC effectively</li> <li>Annual communications audit</li> </ul>
4. Keep government, industry, business and community partners informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focused outreach activities increased</li> </ul>

## GOAL 5

### ENGAGE EMPLOYEES IN CREATING AN EXCEPTIONAL WORKPLACE.

STRATEGIES	MEASURES
1. Hire and retain a motivated workforce committed to MERC values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Competitive salaries and benefits</li> <li>Voluntary employee turnover</li> <li>Consistent employee recognition system</li> <li>Demonstrated collaboration among workgroups and venues</li> </ul>
2. Employees demonstrate performance excellence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual facility evaluations</li> <li>Internal customer service surveys</li> <li>Revenue indicators per employee</li> <li>Performance management systems</li> </ul>
3. Institute formal and informal training for all employees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hours of training per employee</li> <li>Networks to share expertise across venues and workgroups</li> </ul>
4. Encourage open, two-way communications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Roles and responsibilities defined and communicated</li> <li>Internal communication plan developed and implemented</li> <li>Program for regular employee input and feedback established</li> <li>Intranet for employee communications</li> </ul>

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APPENDIX

# APPENDIX



# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

## MERC Day Agenda

**April 18, 2006**

**Oregon Convention Center, Meeting Rooms B113-114**

### **Session One**

#### ***Meeting Room B113***

Seating is assigned to promote interaction with colleagues from different venues or work functions.

**8:00-8:30** Registration; continental breakfast

**8:30-9:00** Greetings and overview – Jeff Miller  
Logistics – Elaine Cogan

**9:00-10:15** Small Group Discussions – MERC

- Introductions
- What do we value most today about MERC?
- Looking ahead five years, in the best of all worlds, what is MERC like?
- What will help and hinder us from reaching that ideal MERC?
- What steps should be taken to reach that ideal?

**10:15-10:30** Break

**10:30-11:00** Group Reports

### **Session Two**

#### ***Meeting Room B114***

Seating assignments are changed based on functional area (operations, sales and marketing, events and administration)

**11:10-12:15** Small Group Discussions – Functional Areas

- Introductions
- What do we value most today about our functional area?
- Looking ahead five years, in the best of all worlds, how does our functional area operate?
- What will help and hinder us from reaching that ideal functional area?
- What steps should be taken now to reach that ideal?

**12:15-1:25** Lunch Break & Group Reports

***Return to Meeting Room B113***

**1:30** Adjourn

# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

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## Employee Survey

Summer, 2006

The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) is updating its strategic business plan, and we are seeking our employees' help to plan our agency's future.

This employee survey provides an opportunity to share your ideas and perceptions about our agency, facility priorities during the next five years, and what is important for MERC's success.

When MERC is referenced in this survey, it means the entire venue management agency, including all the facilities and employees of the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Expo Center, Portland Center for the Performing Arts, and MERC Administration. When "your facility" is mentioned, it means the place where you work. When selecting your answer, please circle the letter that corresponds to your choice unless otherwise directed.

Thank you for making the time to share your ideas and thoughts about planning for the future. Please complete this survey by Friday, June 16 and return it to Julie Reed at MERC Administration via interoffice mail or by fax at 503-731-7870.

**1. Where do you work?**

- a. Oregon Convention Center
- b. Portland Expo Center
- c. Portland Center for the Performing Arts
- d. MERC Administration

**2. What functional area do you work in?**

- a. Administration
- b. Event Services
- c. Marketing and Sales
- d. Operations
- e. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**3. How long have you been an employee of MERC?**

- a. Less than 1 year
- b. 1-5 years
- c. 6-10 years
- d. 11-20 years
- e. More than 20 years

**4. How is your facility doing in these areas? (1 = poor; 2 = average; 3 = good; 4 = excellent—circle a number)**

a.	Administrative support	1	2	3	4
b.	Client and customer service	1	2	3	4
c.	Employee communication and engagement	1	2	3	4
d.	Equipment and technology upgrades	1	2	3	4
e.	Facility appearance and cleaning	1	2	3	4
f.	Facility maintenance and repair	1	2	3	4
g.	Fiscal management and funding	1	2	3	4
h.	Industry advocacy and leadership	1	2	3	4
i.	Marketing and sales	1	2	3	4
j.	Providing community value	1	2	3	4
k.	Public and media relations	1	2	3	4
l.	Sustainability policies and practices	1	2	3	4
m.	Training and professional development	1	2	3	4
n.	Workforce motivation	1	2	3	4

**5. What does your facility do best?**

**6. In the next five years, what changes or accomplishments should your facility make?**



**7. What may get in the way of achieving these accomplishments or changes?**

**8. Which of these matter most to you in the workplace? (choose up to six —circle the letters corresponding to your choices)**

- a. Accountability/responsibility
- b. Achievement/excellence
- c. Acknowledgment/recognition
- d. Collaboration/cooperation
- e. Compassion/empathy
- f. Creativity/innovation
- g. Diversity of ideas/values
- h. Ethical action/behavior
- i. Flexibility/adapting to change
- j. Give/receive respect
- k. Honesty/direct communication
- l. Quality/continuous improvement
- m. Results/solutions-focused
- n. Other\_\_\_\_\_

**9. Are you familiar with MERC's mission statement?**

- a. Yes
- b. No

**10. What do you appreciate most about working for MERC?**

**II. How is MERC doing in these areas? (1 = poor; 2 = okay; 3 = good; 4 = excellent—circle a number)**

a.	Adequate resources and funding	1	2	3	4
b.	Administrative support to facilities	1	2	3	4
c.	Capital improvements and replacement	1	2	3	4
d.	Commitment to customer service	1	2	3	4
e.	Effective fiscal management	1	2	3	4
f.	Employee communications and engagement	1	2	3	4
g.	Facility maintenance and repairs	1	2	3	4
h.	Industry expertise and leadership	1	2	3	4
i.	Marketing and sales	1	2	3	4
j.	Political advocacy and leadership	1	2	3	4
k.	Providing community value	1	2	3	4
l.	Public and media relations	1	2	3	4
m.	Strategic and business planning	1	2	3	4
n.	Sustainability policy and practices	1	2	3	4
o.	Training and career development	1	2	3	4
p.	Workforce motivation	1	2	3	4

**12.** Does MERC's name accurately portray our agency as a premier manager of regional facilities?

- a. Yes
- b. No
- c. Not Sure

**13.** Can you think of a different name or words that would describe better what MERC does?

**14.** Do you think there are other public facilities in the region or state that MERC should manage?

- a. Yes
- b. No

**15.** If yes, which ones?

**16.** Is there anything else we should consider as we plan for MERC's future?

**Thank You!**  
**Thank You!**

# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

## Stakeholder Questionnaire

Summer, 2006

Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Experience with MERC or facilities? \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail \_\_\_\_\_ Fax \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewer \_\_\_\_\_

Our firms, Cogan Owens Cogan and Fleishman-Hillard, have been retained by MERC (The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission) to help the agency update its strategic plan. An important part of our work is to interview community leaders to ask about your perceptions of MERC today and advice about MERC's future role in our community.

As you may know, MERC is a subsidiary of Metro. It is responsible for managing regional public venues, including the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Expo Center, and the Portland Center for the Performing Arts. The first two public facilities are owned by Metro while PCPA is owned by the City of Portland. MERC's seven commissioners are appointed by Metro upon recommendation by other local governments.

All your answers will be confidential. We will report the results in the aggregate, not by individual response.

1. In your experience (or opinion), what word or words best describe what MERC does?
2. How important is MERC's role in the region ? Explain.
3. Does MERC's name reflect its role in the region?
4. If not, can you think of a more appropriate name?
5. MERC is a premier manager of important regional public venues. How well do they provide leadership and expert management of these venues? Explain.

6. What opportunities and issues should MERC address in the next 3 to 5 years to maintain or enhance its role as a premier venue management agency?
7. What are MERC's strengths? Its vulnerabilities?
8. MERC earns about 75 percent of its operating funding from its business operations and receives the remaining funding from government (public) subsidy. Do you have any suggestions about additional ways they can attain a more sustainable, long-term funding structure?
9. How important is it that people understand the relationship between MERC and the venues it manages? \_\_\_\_\_  
Between MERC and Metro, its governing authority? \_\_\_\_\_  
Explain.
10. MERC venues are pursuing environmentally sustainable principles and business practices. How important is this to you? To others in the region? Explain.
11. (To those with experience with the facilities): Of the MERC venues with which you have had experience(s), what are the greatest opportunities and challenges for its success and growth in the next five years? How should MERC respond?
12. Should MERC/the venue do anything differently to gain or retain its competitive advantage?
13. Not specifically thinking of MERC, what types of public facilities (arts, sports, hospitality, tourism, events) will we need in the region in the next 10 to 20 years? Explain.
14. Looking at all the public assembly venues we have now in the region - and their various ownerships and managements structures - are there any advantages to consolidating or coordinating their ownership and/or management under a regional agency like MERC? **Yes No** Explain.
15. Is there anything else you would like to add?

# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

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## Client Survey

Summer 2006

The Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) is updating its strategic business plan.

We are asking help from our clients to plan for our agency's future.

MERC is responsible for managing the Oregon Convention Center (OCC), Portland Expo Center (Expo) and the Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA). Our mission is to enhance the cultural and economic vitality of the Portland region through sound leadership and expert management of public event venues. MERC is governed by a seven member commission appointed by Metro, upon recommendation of local governments.

Thank you for making the time to share your ideas and thoughts about MERC's future.

1. How important is MERC's role in the region? (circle one - not important; somewhat important; important; very important)
2. MERC is a premier manager of important regional public venues. How well do they provide leadership and expert management of these venues? (circle one - poor; average; good; excellent)
3. What opportunities and issues should MERC address in the next 3 to 5 years to maintain or enhance its role as a premier venue management agency?
4. MERC earns about 75 percent of its operating funding from fee-based business operations, with the remaining funding coming from government (public) support. Do you have any suggestions about other ways MERC can diversify or strengthen its funding structure

5. How important is it that people understand the relationship between MERC and the venues it manages? (not important; somewhat important; important; very important)
6. How important is it that people understand the relationship between MERC and Metro, its governing authority? (not important; somewhat important; important; very important)
7. Does MERC's name accurately portray our agency as a premier manager of regional facilities? (yes; no; I don't know)
8. Can you think of a different name or words that would describe better what MERC does?
9. MERC venues are pursuing environmentally-sustainable principles and business practices. How important is this to you? (circle one - poor; average; good; excellent)
10. Are there any other public facilities in the region or state that MERC should manage? (yes; no; I don't know)
11. If yes, which ones
12. Which venue do you have the most experience or interaction with? (OCC; Expo; PCPA)
13. Considering the venue selected in the previous question, what are the greatest opportunities and challenges for that venue's growth and success in the next five years?
14. Is there anything else you would like to share?

# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

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## Expo Center Stakeholder Meeting AGENDA May 17, 2006 11:30am-1:30pm Expo Center

12:00	Welcome	Chris Bailey
12:05	MERC Strategic Business Plan Overview	Julie Reed
12:15	Group Discussion	Elaine Cogan
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does the Expo Center do well?</li><li>• What is your vision for the Expo in five years?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ What is different than today?</li><li>○ What is similar?</li></ul></li><li>• What opportunities and challenges will help or hinder the Expo from reaching that vision?</li><li>• What specific steps or actions should be taken to achieve the vision?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ In 6-12 months?</li><li>○ In 1-3 years?</li></ul></li><li>• What role should MERC play in helping Expo succeed?</li></ul>	
1:30	Adjourn	



# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

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**PCPA ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
AGENDA  
April 19, 2006  
12:00pm-1:30pm  
Artbar & Bistro  
(Enter through main lobby)**

11:55	Welcome	Scott Howard
12:00	MERC Strategic Plan	Julie Reed Cate Millar Steve Faust

- Explain purpose and process of strategic planning process.
- Looking ahead 5 years, in the best of all worlds, what is PCPA like?
  - What is the same?
  - What has changed?
- What will help and hinder us from reaching that ideal PCPA?
- What steps should be taken to reach that ideal?
- What role should MERC play in helping this facility succeed?

1:30 Adjourn

# MERC STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN | 2007–2012

## OCC ADVISORY COMMITTEE AGENDA May 9, 2006 11:30am-1:30pm King Board Room, OCC

11:30	Welcome	Jeff Blosser
12:00	MERC Strategic Business Plan Overview	Julie Reed
12:15	Group Discussion	Elaine Cogan & Cate Millar
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the Convention Center do well?</li> <li>• What is your vision for the OCC in five years?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What is different than today?</li> <li>○ What is similar?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What opportunities and challenges will help or hinder the OCC from reaching that vision?</li> <li>• What specific steps or actions should be taken to achieve the vision?             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ In 6-12 months?</li> <li>○ In 1-3 years?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• What role should MERC play in helping OCC succeed?</li> </ul>	
1:30	Adjourn	





**M**etropolitan **E**xposition  
**R**ecreation **C**ommission

**Strategic Business Plan**  
**Implementation**  
**2008-2013**

**May 28, 2008**

## **Vision**

**T**o serve as a catalyst and an advocate for community, culture and economic development.

## **Mission**

**T**o enhance the livability and economic vitality of the metropolitan region through sound stewardship, expert management and creative development of the region's public assembly venues.

# *VALUES*

## *Respect*

We embrace diversity within our workplace and our community. Employees, customers and guests are treated with care and appreciation. We promote an atmosphere of equality and personal integrity and seek to understand the perspective of others. We strive for a culture supported by honesty and trust. Above all, we demonstrate respect for each other.

## *Excellence*

We aspire to achieve exceptional results and do not compromise quality. We practice continuous improvement and reflect on how we can improve in the future. We face problems head on and focus on finding the best solutions. Our goal is to meet or exceed the expectations of our customers. We promote employee development and encourage them to be their best.

## *Teamwork*

Teamwork forms the essence of our work environment. Through collaboration and commitment to common goals, we achieve greater outcomes. We value positive relationships and nurture them with cooperation and honest communication. Individually, we contribute to the greater whole by being dependable and accountable for our actions. We have fun and enjoy one another!

## *Innovation*

We understand the importance of taking appropriate risks and learning from our successes and setbacks. We encourage flexibility and embrace creativity and new ideas. We respond mindfully when challenges come our way and address obstacles with ingenuity. We are adaptable and strategic in the face of change. We serve our customers better as a result of anticipating and solving problems.

## *Community*

MERC plays an important role in the economic and cultural vitality of the region. We build strong relationships, alliances and partnerships in the community to better serve our citizens and visitors. We generally share our expertise and wisdom to promote community enhancement and development. We strive to make a positive difference through leadership and by taking action.

**Goal 1** Create positive impact on the economy and livability of the region through MERC's leadership and venue management.

**Outcomes:**

- MERC's expertise is recognized and valued as the venue management resource of the region.
- MERC promotes livability of the region through cultural, social and economic development.
- MERC contributes to the achievement of Council goals.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1. Position the Board of Commissioners to strengthen MERC's impact on public assembly venue development and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Engage the commissioners to develop and implement a Board Development Plan including: recruiting, orientation, expectations, evaluations, on-going training and roles and responsibilities.</li> <li>b. Restructure board meetings to future and strategic focus.</li> <li>c. Identify optimal opportunities for commission involvement. Engage commissioners in strategic issues and events to maximize MERC's impact for the benefit of the region.</li> <li>d. Optimize and promote MERC's role in regional venue planning.</li> </ul>
2. Strengthen relationships and build alliances with government, industry, community and business partners.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Commissioners and executives build alliances for the benefit of MERC.</li> <li>b. Encourage MERC employees to actively engage on boards and committees and participate in new activities and events.</li> <li>c. Initiate regular contact with government, business and industry stakeholders to promote business opportunities for MERC.</li> <li>d. Develop partnerships with hospitality, cultural, community, social and tourism industry organizations.</li> </ul>
3. Actively advocate for social and livability issues that impact our community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Advocate for implementation of OCC Blocks Vision Plan.</li> <li>b. Capitalize on opportunities to work with diverse organizations to enhance broad social and cultural experiences.</li> </ul>
4. Conduct annual economic impact studies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Measure impact on employment, induced spending and tax revenues generated.</li> </ul>
5. Support Metro Council goals for Economic Development and Recreation, Arts and Culture.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Participate in Metro's goal related efforts including performance measurement and program budgeting.</li> </ul>
6. Promote opportunities for small, minority, women-owned, veterans, disabled veterans and emerging businesses to provide services and products to MERC by contracting with and hiring to represent the composition of MERC's community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop a 'state of the art' diversity program to increase contacts and contracts with MWESB type business.</li> <li>b. Review FOTA definition, policy and practice.</li> <li>c. Review resources and metrics available.</li> <li>d. Document business process (policy, procedures) and set up tracking system in EBMS.</li> <li>e. Engage Commission to link MERC into their diverse communities.</li> <li>f. Attend and actively participate in outreach activities.</li> </ul>



**Goal 2** Exert leadership to ensure construction of a convention headquarters hotel at the Oregon Convention Center.

**Outcomes:**

- Publicly owned, convention quality hotel built attracts more conventions to Portland.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1. <b>T</b> ransfer ownership of the headquarters hotel project from Portland Development Commission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>M</b>etro accepts the developer chosen by the PDC selection committee.</li> <li>b. <b>N</b>egotiate and finalize development agreement with development team.</li> </ul>
2. <b>D</b> evelop a financing plan and secure funding for HQH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>D</b>evelop financing plan for approval by Metro.</li> <li>b. <b>S</b>ecure intergovernmental agreement for financing plan.</li> <li>c. <b>D</b>evelop bond prospectus and issue bonds.</li> </ul>
3. <b>D</b> etermine the organizational structure to manage and operate the hotel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>A</b>nalyze and finalize agreement for ownership, management and operations of the hotel.</li> <li>b. <b>S</b>et management targets for MWESB.</li> </ul>
4. <b>B</b> uild and open a first class convention headquarters hotel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>S</b>elect owner’s representative for management and construction process.</li> <li>b. <b>S</b>et construction targets for MWESB for general and subcontractors.</li> <li>c. <b>A</b>nalyze and finalize agreement for construction of the hotel.</li> <li>d. <b>C</b>onstruct HQH on time and on budget.</li> </ul>
5. <b>P</b> lan B: Alternatives if Metro does not proceed with HQH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. <b>D</b>evelop plan to address OCC long term funding gap (especially renewal and replacement) if HQH is not built.</li> <li>b. <b>R</b>evise Market and Sales efforts to align with no HQH.</li> </ul>

**Goal 3** Expertly manage MERC’s public assembly venues.

**Outcomes:**

- Customers have exceptional experiences.
- State-of-the-art venues operate efficiently, are sustainable and meet the needs of customers.
- Effective business and operating processes support our business and customers.
- Funding is available for current level of service and for innovative programs and projects.
- The public investment in MERC venues is soundly protected.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1. Deliver an exceptional customer experience for customers and attendees.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Annually review and revise the measured by customer service survey. Develop and implement standards that are consistent for all departments and venues.</li> <li>b. Improve customer survey response rate.</li> <li>c. Analyze survey results and respond appropriately.</li> <li>d. Develop on-going customer service training program.</li> <li>e. Develop and design a MERC Business Office vendor and customer survey.</li> </ul>
2. Create development plan for new or expanded business opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evaluate and implement changes based on comprehensive review of business development efforts for each venue.</li> <li>b. Business development summit across all venues to identify opportunities.</li> <li>c. Support efforts to increase attendance at our customers’ events.</li> <li>d. Develop long and short range marketing plans.</li> <li>e. Identify additional strategic alliances and partnerships for business development opportunities.</li> </ul>
3. Develop and maintain facilities’ capital investments to support current and future business opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Evaluate facility improvement alternatives and develop long range capital.</li> <li>b. Conduct semi-annual comprehensive facility evaluations.</li> <li>c. Apply formal project management discipline for capital projects.</li> <li>d. Create an accurate Capital Asset Inventory.</li> <li>e. Implement appropriate improvements.</li> </ul>

<b>Goal 3 - Expertly manage MERC's public assembly venues. (Continued)</b>	
<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<p><b>4. Optimize operations' efficiencies and effectiveness to enhance facility operations and customer/vendor relations.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. To continuously improve service delivery and operations, align business systems and services, including EBMS and related processes.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish mission, roles and responsibilities for executives and for venues with respect to business processes.</li> <li>➤ Establish service delivery and operations training program to improve knowledge and skills for both executive and venue staffs.</li> <li>➤ Apply formal project management discipline for major changes or improvements to business systems and services.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>b. Align information and technology services, including EBMS and related processes, to continuously improve service delivery and operations.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Establish technology standards.</li> <li>➤ Develop long term technology plan for services, systems and management including evaluation of emerging technology, such as web, mobile devices.</li> <li>➤ Establish a technology project approval process to prioritize investments based on impact and benefits.</li> <li>➤ Apply formal project management discipline for IT projects.</li> <li>➤ Establish IT training program for technology users.</li> <li>➤ Formally track technology efforts and accomplishments.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>c. Collect MERC policies, procedures, guidelines, forms and training materials in a central easily accessible tool (i.e. SharePoint).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Process to periodically review and update policies, procedures and processes to improve customer/vendor relations, internal controls and operating efficiency.</li> <li>➤ Develop training program to include MERC policies, procedures and guidelines.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>d. Identify and use performance measurements to be used as MERC's indicators of success.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Using success indicators, create an executive tool to view current status of performance.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>e. Identify opportunities to share expertise across venues.</b></li> <li><b>f. Create and implement a MERC-wide contract management system.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Attain and maintain sustainable, diversified funding.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>a. Explore and advocate for new or enhanced public financial support.</b></li> <li><b>b. Collaborate with Metro for balanced fiscal relationship that recognizes our efforts to meet our own unique enterprise requirements and fairly contribute to the cost of regional government.</b></li> <li><b>c. Determine appropriate renewal and replacement goal and fund long term renewal and replacement reserve.</b></li> <li><b>d. Establish and maintain strategic fund balance.</b></li> </ul>

<p><b>Goal 3 -</b> Expertly manage MERC’s public assembly venues. (Continued)</p>	
<p><b>Strategies</b></p>	<p><b>Actions</b></p>
<p>6. Apply sustainable practices into all aspects of the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Obtain or retain LEED® certification where appropriate.</li> <li>b. Research and evaluate opportunities for sustainable practices and energy efficiency.</li> <li>c. Implement alternatives for sustainable practices and energy efficiency.</li> <li>d. Increase sustainable purchasing.</li> <li>e. Increase recycling and composting efforts.</li> </ul>
<p>7. Prepare for and respond to disaster, crisis and major emergencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Update emergency and security plans and procedures.</li> <li>b. Develop and implement crisis communications plan.</li> <li>c. Develop and implement technology disaster recovery plan.</li> <li>d. Develop business continuity plan.</li> <li>e. Actively participate in regional and national disaster planning efforts.</li> <li>f. Complete and maintain agreement with American Red Cross.</li> </ul>

**Goal 4** Effectively communicate MERC's role and value.

**Outcomes:**

- MERC has sufficient authority, status and resources available to meet MERC's mission and vision.
- MERC can accumulate reserves and fund balances for the long term benefit of our venues.
- MERC can attract committed and motivated Commissioners and employees.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1. Establish MERC's identify.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Conduct brand evaluation.</li> <li>b. Inventory and analyze competitor's branding.</li> <li>c. Develop graphic identity goals and standards.</li> </ul>
2. Document the value MERC provides.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Communicate economic impact reports for all venues.</li> <li>b. Prepare facility and MERC annual reports.</li> </ul>
3. Promote greater awareness about MERC's role and value.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop Communication and Advocacy Plan for Venues.</li> <li>b. Develop Communication and Advocacy Plan for Commissioners.</li> <li>c. Develop Communication and Advocacy Plan for Advisory Committees.</li> <li>d. Develop MERC annual meeting to communicate accomplishments and celebrate stakeholders' relationships.</li> </ul>
4. Keep stakeholders government, industry, business and community partners informed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop and maintain key stakeholders' contact database.</li> <li>b. Focused outreach activities.</li> </ul>
5. Evaluate trends and emerging technology to communicate information about MERC including venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Define opportunities such as web and mobile devices.</li> <li>b. Continuously maintain web site infrastructure.</li> <li>c. Continuously maintain web site content.</li> </ul>

**Goal 5** Engage employees in creating an exceptional workplace.

**Outcomes:**

- Demonstrated trust, respect and collaboration among workgroups and venues to achieve common goals.
- Employees demonstrate performance excellence consistent with MERC values.

<b>Strategies</b>	<b>Actions</b>
1. Hire and retain motivated workforce committed to MERC values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Develop and implement an employee orientation program.</li> <li>b. Develop and maintain an employee recognition system.</li> <li>c. Implement Target Achievement Program for incentive pay.</li> <li>d. Implement Merit Matrix.</li> <li>e. Merit Matrix structure revised annually.</li> </ul>
2. Incorporate MERC values into work processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Survey employees about understanding, application and acceptance of the values.</li> <li>b. Produce events to promote MERC culture.</li> <li>c. To improve communication skills, apply RLI Project Management tools &amp; techniques.</li> </ul>
3. Institute formal and informal training for all staff.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Create an employee training plan.</li> <li>b. Project Management training for all managers and supervisors.</li> </ul>
4. Develop employee communication plan to keep employees informed and involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Establish program for regular employee communication input and feedback.</li> <li>b. Create an Intranet for employee communications.</li> </ul>

## METRO COUNCIL GOALS

### GREAT COMMUNITIES

**GOAL 1:** Accommodate growth in a sustainable and compact metropolitan structure.

#### Goal

Directing regional growth toward more sustainable patterns leads to the use of fewer natural resources and less energy for our homes, businesses and transportation needs, and creates the capacity for more affordable living choices in housing and transportation.

#### Why this goal matters

**GOAL 2:** Provide access to cultural, artistic and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

Engagement in cultural, artistic and recreational activities enhances the quality of life for the residents and visitors of our region. The goal is to create and promote access to these types of opportunities so that people can engage and participate as they chose and to the degree they are able.

### HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

**GOAL 3:** Protect and enhance the region's natural assets.

#### Goal

**GOAL 4:** Manage the region's solid waste sustainably.

#### Why this goal matters

Protecting and enhancing the region's natural assets will assure that those resources are available for future generations to enjoy. Those assets include clean air and water, quality habitat for fish and wildlife, and sustainable climate patterns.

The region's solid waste system should be managed first, to reduce the amount and toxicity of solid waste generated and disposed; and second, to ensure environmentally sound and cost efficient disposal of waste that cannot be prevented or recovered.

### VITAL ECONOMY

**GOAL 5:** Provide efficient access to jobs, services, centers

#### Goal

Efficient access to jobs, services, centers and industrial areas is important to connect people to places and goods to market. By

#### Why this goal matters

and industrial areas.

reducing average trip length and vehicle travel time, and encouraging multi-model transportation usage, the economy of the region becomes more time and resource efficient and sustainable.

**GOAL 6:**

Support a sustainable economy.

A sustainable economy provides for the current economic needs of people and businesses in the region while preserving or creating economic opportunities for future generations.

**SMART GOVERNMENT**

**Goal**

**GOAL 7:** Use Best Business Practices to operate Metro sustainably, efficiently, and accountably.

**Why this goal matters**  
Metro must conduct its own business practices in ways that put limited resources to their best use, that promote sustainable practices, and that ensure Metro can accomplish its high level regional goals in collaboration with its partners.



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# **MERC Commission Retreat**

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March 30, 2010  
8:00 am - 1:30 pm

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MERC Venues' Background  
Information

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**Metro Council – Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) Meeting  
February 16, 2010  
Venue Background Information**

## **Metro/MERC Regional Venues**

The Metro venues operated by the Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission (MERC) include the Oregon Convention Center, Portland Center for the Performing Arts and Portland Expo Center.

In total, nearly 1.9 million visitors attend roughly 1,500 events each year at these venues.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2008-2009, combined, the venues generated \$522 million in direct and indirect spending throughout Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington Counties, supported 5,540 jobs, contributed \$203 million in employment earnings, and \$18.2 million in state, regional and county taxes.

Each venue is unique in building features, clientele and event type, and the funding structure varies as well.

MERC's \$43 annual budget is comprised of 70% operating revenues and 30% transient lodging taxes and other government support.

## **Oregon Convention Center (OCC)**

### **Introduction/mission of venue:**

The Oregon Convention Center was opened in 1990 by Metro to serve as an economic development tool to draw convention and business clientele to the Portland region and to support business activity across the state.

### **Business and client description:**

OCC hosts roughly 600 events and 650,000 visitors each year. The range of clients varies from meeting planners who arrange international and national business travelers to convene at association conventions, meetings and industry trade shows, to state and local organizations who meet to conduct business and provide training workshops. Rounding out the bookings are special events and catered functions, such as the Martin Luther King, Jr. breakfast and the Oregon Business Association dinner.

In FY 2008-2009, national meetings and conventions comprised 15% of OCC's total bookings. These events were the largest contributor to OCC's economic impact and represents about 40% of OCC's enterprise revenues.

Throughout the tri-county region, OCC generated \$421 million in direct and indirect spending and supported 4,410 jobs. Over \$15.2 million in state and local taxes were generated.

In partnership with Travel Portland, OCC continues to book large national conventions into the future, 2-6 years out, which is beneficial to the community because out-of-town guests tend to spend more than local/regional event attendees. In November, the National United Methodist General Conference booked its 2016 convention which is estimated to attract 5,000 attendees and generate \$7.2 million in economic impact. Conventions booked 4-5 ago are also remaining strong throughout FY 2011-2012. For example, the North American Gay Volleyball Association will hold its 2010 championships at OCC in May, which is expected to attract 1,500 attendees and generate \$1 million in economic impact, and in July, the 2010 Convention and Exposition of the International Decorative Artisans League will draw 700 attendees and generate \$1.85 million in economic impact.

#### **Financial information:**

The FY 2009-2010 budget for OCC projected \$16.5 million in revenues generated directly from booked events and \$8.9 million in transient lodging tax revenues and Visitor Development Investment (VDI) funds.

The Metro 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Report indicated that most booked conventions and trade shows at OCC are continuing as planned and attendance remains strong, despite the economic recession. Attendance at consumer shows is lower however, by approximately 8-12%. Food and beverage revenues are meeting budget projections, which were anticipated to be lower than in previous years.

To date, this fiscal year, transient lodging taxes remain flat and economists, along with Travel Portland and the hospitality industry, expect that at years' end, revenues will be down 12% from last year, representing a decrease in projected revenues for OCC of \$500,000. In 2010-2011, OCC proposes to utilize approximately \$199,000 in strategic reserves to cover the deficit resulting from lower transient lodging taxes and is exploring the use of grants and other funding sources to cover specific capital projects. Reductions in travel, training and conference expenditures, as well as goods and services, have also been implemented to accommodate lower than expected revenues.

#### **Industry trends:**

Many convention centers throughout the nation are experiencing trends in which bookings remain strong but the size of events is reduced and/or attendees spend less on parking and food and beverage. Industry experts expect that, as in past economic challenges, once the national economy begins to recover, it will take at least a year for the convention and tourism industries to follow suit. Improvements in room rates and occupancy growth should also be slow; by mid-2011, the market is expected to begin rebounding.

Because OCC tends to book fewer local corporate clients, such as Nike and Intel, the fact that these companies have scaled back employee meetings and events has had minimal impact on business. Other centers that rely on corporate meetings are facing significant financial challenges.

As a result of its innovative marketing programs and continued pursuit of sustainable business practices, OCC has outperformed its competitors. OCC was the first convention center in the U.S. to achieve LEED-EB certification in 2003 and LEED-EB Silver in 2008. In addition, it holds numerous environmental stewardship designations and partnered with Travel Portland to develop the first-ever “green meetings toolkit” to cater to organizations and corporations who are committed to meeting with a reduced carbon footprint. Convention centers around the country have since adopted many of OCC’s practices and meeting planners routinely choose Portland because of its reputation as a green destination. OCC will continue to pursue sustainability initiatives, including the installation of rooftop solar power panels.

### **Challenges:**

OCC maintains a competitive edge with its sustainability accomplishments but faces systemic challenges to retaining current and earning new national clients, in part due to the lack of ability Portland hoteliers have to partner in securing large room night blocks years in advance. A collaborative effort is underway to reach out to national meeting planners based in Washington, D.C. and Chicago in which Travel Portland will conduct focus groups to learn what the region can do to continue meeting national clients’ needs.

### **Strategic opportunities:**

OCC will continue to focus on client needs and pursue the following projects to maintain its leadership within the industry:

- Partner with MERC food and beverage contractor, ARAMARK, on the “Culture, Nature, Nature” brand campaign to strengthen utilization and recognition of seasonal, locally grown, sustainably harvested foods and Oregon-based beer, wine and distilled spirits.
- Pursue locating the Leg Up program, a collaborative joint venture with ARAMARK, at the Metro Regional Center space formerly leased by Big Town Hero to recruit and train economically disadvantaged individuals and provide the opportunity to develop skills, gain experience and launch a viable food service career.
- Complete phase I installation and plan phase II expansion of the rooftop solar power panel project, allowing OCC to increase its renewable power usage to over 50%.
- Capitalize on the early success of Stir cocktail lounge, one of the first higher-end boutique convention center lounges of its kind, to attract distinctive clients and serve neighborhood businesses and residents.
- Consider developing the block of property (commonly referred to as the “Sizzler” block) directly across from OCC as open space with the potential to serve as outdoor event space for certain clients.

## **Portland Center for the Performing Arts (PCPA)**

PCPA was created by residents to catalyze the neighborhood into a cultural arts district in 1989. Its mission is to support resident and nonprofit arts organizations through subsidized theatre usage. At the same time, it operates as a vibrant commercial business and, due to strong operating revenues and subsidies provided by the City of Portland, local transient lodging taxes, and Visitor Development Funds, PCPA is able to offer some of the lowest rental rates in the country to local nonprofit groups.

### **Business and client description:**

PCPA hosts, on average, 800 performances and 800,000 attendees each year, although in FY 2008-2009, PCPA hosted 1,100 events that attracted 938,000 attendees.

Six resident companies occupy its theatres: Oregon Ballet Theatre, Oregon Children's Theatre, Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Portland Opera, Portland Youth Philharmonic and Tears of Joy Theatre. These performing arts "clients" accounted for nearly 65% of all performances last year.

Commercial clients are local and national promoters, including the Broadway Across America series, which accounted for 30% of total attendance last fiscal year. Lecture series sponsored by Portland Arts and Lectures and the World Affairs Council, performances by White Bird contemporary dance and various music concerts and comedy acts are also popular events. PCPA has become a host to pre- and post-performance diners at its Art Bar and Bistro located in Antoinette Hatfield Hall and the Keller Café and Martini Bar at Keller Auditorium.

In FY 2008-2009, PCPA generated \$65.2 million in direct and indirect spending throughout the region and supported 730 jobs. In addition, \$1.7 million in state and local taxes was attributed to PCPA business.

### **Financial information:**

The FY 2009-2010 budget projected \$7.5 million in event-related revenue, \$760,000 in support from the City of Portland and assumed \$1.9 million in transient lodging taxes and VDI revenues.

Overall, event-related revenues are meeting projections, as indicated in the Metro 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Report. The number of weeks booked for the Broadway Across America series is less than in the previous year (9 weeks compared to 14.5 weeks), but 13 weeks are currently booked for FY 2010-2011.

Transient lodging tax revenues comprise 17% of PCPA's total revenues and, with these revenues anticipated to be 12% lower than projected by fiscal year end, amounting to a \$200,000 revenue reduction for PCPA, a slight budget deficit is anticipated in FY 2010-2011. A strong Broadway season next year will help to mitigate the impact of declining transient lodging taxes. For the remainder of this fiscal year, some one-time expenditures will be delayed and PCPA will monitor overall expenses and revenues so that a "break-even" budget can be met.

**Industry trends:**

Despite the economic recession, PCPA has fared well, in part due to strong ticket sales for Broadway shows and other commercial offerings, and because the resident companies have prevented their tickets sales from falling precipitously. In FY 2010-2011, a budget deficit is expected resulting from the reduction in rental rates and ticket fees PCPA granted all local nonprofit arts groups in FY 2009-2010, which allowed many, including some resident companies, to remain in existence.

Sustainability has become an increasingly popular trend among performing arts centers across the country and patrons will soon come to expect, not just appreciate, that halls and theatres are operated with environmental stewardship in mind. PCPA has incorporated many sustainable business practices into its operations and employee culture and is currently pursuing LEED-EB certification for Antoinette Hatfield Hall. Feasibility planning for future large scale sustainability projects, such as solar panels is also underway.

PCPA continues to pursue innovative partnerships and business opportunities, such as obtaining sponsorships for its annual summer concert series, Music on Main, supporting arts education through free summer camps and discounted children's performances, and by enhancing the Art Bar & Bistro and Keller Café and Martini Bar to better accommodate patrons before, during and after performances.

**Challenges:**

PCPA relies on its public subsidies and strong operating revenues in order to fund the deep discounts in hall usage the resident companies and nonprofit arts groups enjoy. While PCPA maintains adequate reserves to mitigate relatively short-lived reductions in subsidies, its financial stability could be at risk if those reductions linger and, even greater so, if its operating revenues drop below unprecedented levels. Less than ten years ago, PCPA had minimal financial reserves, and through disciplined financial management and planning, built them to a level in which PCPA is able to sustain economic challenges for a short period of time. Maintaining healthy subsidies and support, operational revenues and reserves is critical to the financial viability of PCPA and the cultural arts hub Portland residents created two decades ago.

**Strategic opportunities:**

A number of strategic initiatives are underway to retain PCPA's position as a community arts partner, sound steward of historic buildings, thriving downtown business and national competitor among performing arts centers.

- Design and feasibility studies are underway to renovate Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall with patron amenities such as additional restrooms, more comfortable seating, and acoustical upgrades that allow it to better accommodate the needs of the Oregon Symphony Orchestra and other arts users. A plan is underway to develop the Main Street plaza (between SW Broadway and Park) into an iconic space for additional performances, arts education and revenue-generating opportunities such as a restaurant and banquet facilities.

- PCPA is pursuing a multi-stakeholder partnership to launch a Cultural Video Project in the lobby of Antoinette Hatfield Hall to enhance arts education and accessibility to schools and communities across the state less-inclined to be exposed to diverse arts experiences.
- As Mayor Adams, Councilor Collette and Commissioner Schouten lead the Creative Action Network, PCPA is actively participating to raise awareness of arts programs and pursue a long-term funding mechanism for performing and other arts in the region.

## **Portland Expo Center**

### **Introduction/mission of venue:**

The Portland Expo Center has served as the region's primary destination for consumer trade shows for decades. More recently, Halls D and E were constructed, adding 180,000 square feet of new, quality exhibition and meeting space, and allowing Expo to diversify its client base to include special events, catered receptions and business meetings. Some clients still enjoy older halls A and B, including the Rose City Rollers, but these facilities are past their economic lifespan and are marginal without full services, such as air conditioning.

### **Business and client description:**

Expo typically hosts 500,000 visitors and 100 events each year. Consumer shows are mainly operated by local producers who arrange annual multi-day events such as the Pacific Northwest Sportsmen's Show, the Home and Garden Show, Dog and Cat Shows and the Rose City Gun and Knife Show. Many shows have been produced locally at Expo for twenty years or more.

In FY 2008-2009, the number of events increased (110 events) but attendance was lower (454,000 attendees) due to the economic recession, mainly. Consumer and public shows comprise the largest category of events. Meetings and other events, such as roller derby and warehouse sales, each comprise roughly 20% of the total bookings.

Expo generated \$35.4 million in direct and indirect spending in FY 2008-2009 and supported 400 jobs, which translated to \$13.2 million in employee earnings. State, regional and local taxes generated from Expo business totaled \$1.3 million.

### **Financial information:**

Expo is unique among the venues in that it is a self-sufficient operation receiving no public subsidy in the form of transient lodging taxes or other government support. It pays excise taxes and carries its own debt service payments, in addition to all operating expenditures. Expo relies solely on its own operating revenues.

In FY 2009-2010, Expo projected its event-related revenues to be \$3.7 million and \$2.11 million in food and beverage sales. The Metro 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarterly Report indicated that the number of consumer shows held and those attending shows were slightly down, year-to-date, which will impact those revenue projections. Expo is working with clients to reduce costs where necessary so that the booked business is retained this fiscal year and beyond. When operating revenues are down, Expo has had to dip into its strategic reserves to maintain operations and customer service. This has been the case for the last two years. This is a condition that cannot continue in the long term.

**Industry trends:**

Exposition centers around the country are faced with changing business dynamics resulting from the increasing popularity in online shopping and changing consumer interests. Expo has actively sought to expand the range of events and shows to appeal to a broader market segment. For example, a new tattoo show was added this year and it was highly popular.

**Challenges:**

The Portland Expo Center is unique among its competitors in that its funding structure lacks government or public support. The result is that Expo can afford to make only minimal business and facility investments, reducing its ability to respond to market changes and client needs, maintain existing facilities and develop new facilities. Expo has the challenge and opportunity to rebrand itself away from its historic image as a livestock exposition and fairgrounds into a more urban and community-oriented facility.

**Strategic opportunities:**

Expo recently received the results of an outside, independent study conducted by PSU Masters in Business Administration students in which recommendations for business growth were included. Those recommendations are being analyzed for feasibility and costs. We expect to work with the Commission to prioritize marketing and branding efforts and begin initial phases of implementation next fiscal year.

Long-range planning is also underway as the Expo Conditional Use Master Plan is updated to reflect current business trends and the local market.

Additional revenue sources are being pursued, such as grants and other funding sources to pay for capital upgrades and improvements. In addition, Expo is weighing the costs and benefits of creating a lounge to cater to clients and nearby businesses.



# MERC Venue Fast Facts

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## Oregon Convention Center

Known as:

- Largest convention center in the US Pacific Northwest
- First in the US to be LEED-EB certified by USGBC in 2003
- First in the US to be LEED-EB Silver recertified by USGBC in 2008
- Leader in sustainability practices, in part because:
  - LEED certification
  - Food composting rates (88.92 tons in FY 2008-2009)
  - Material recycling rates (258.1 tons in FY 2008-2009)
  - Percentage of waste diverted from landfills (54.67% in FY 2008-2009)
  - Efficient use of utilities and purchase of renewable energy (soon to be 100% renewable)
    - Purchaser of Pacific Power's Blue Sky voluntary wind power purchase program
    - Purchaser of carbon offsets through NW Natural's Smart Energy program
    - Working with SunEdison to install and operate solar power panels on roof
  - Salmon-Safe certified in 2007 and recertified through 2012
  - 2003 BEST (Businesses for an Environmentally Sustainable Tomorrow) Award for innovative rain garden storm water management system

Facility features:

- Total space: 1 million square feet
- 255,000 square feet available for rent:
  - Two grand ballrooms (Oregon – 25,200 sq. ft.; Portland – 34,200 sq. ft.)
  - 50 individual meeting rooms totaling over 52,000 sq. ft.
  - Prefunction/registration areas totaling roughly 100,000 sq. ft.
  - Skyview Terrace – 7,000 sq. ft.
  - Two VIP suites above Exhibit Hall B (1,670 sq. ft.) and Exhibit Hall D (1,200 sq. ft.)

Employees:

- 100+ full-time staff
- Part-time staff scheduled per event needs
- 4 collective bargaining contracts:
  - AFSCME – utility workers
  - 707 – engineers and electricians
  - Longshoremen – security
  - B-20 IATSE – admissions/ticket staff
- 80 volunteers as greeters, information counter reps, tickets, admission, etc.

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Oregon Convention Center – continued

#### History:

- Voters/legislature approved construction bonds and funding in 1986
- Opened in 1990; estimated economic impact to date: \$6 billion
- Original construction cost: \$90 million
  - \$65 million in property taxes collected in Clackamas, Multnomah & Washington co.
  - \$15 million from State of Oregon
  - \$15 million from Local Improvement District (LID) funds
  - \$5 million in interest funds generated
- Expansion complete in 2003
  - \$115 million in bonds for expansion construction

#### Budget (FY 2009-10):

- Operating budget: \$22 million
  - \$16.5 million in event-generated revenues
  - \$8.9 million in transient lodging taxes/Visitor Development Initiative (VDI) Funds
- Operating expenditures:
  - \$22.9 million for facility operations
  - \$2.8 million in support costs paid to MERC/Metro
  - \$500,000 estimated in capital projects

#### Business summary:

- Roughly 600 events annually, in FY 2008-2009: 521
  - 86 convention/tradeshows
  - 276 meetings
  - 109 other (includes food & beverage/catered special events)
- Roughly 630,000 visitors annually, in FY 2008-2009: 548,300
- Booking examples:
  - Farwest Nursery (August): 3 days; 10,000 attending per day
  - Auto Show (month): 4 days; 84,000 attending per day
  - Oregon State Bar meetings: 50 held each year;
  - Classic Wine Auction: evening event drawing 900

#### Economic impact to the region (FY 2008-09):

- \$421 million in economic impact to tri-county region
- Supported 4,410 local jobs
- Generated \$15.2 million in state, regional and county tax revenues

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Portland Center for the Performing Arts

Known as:

- Hub of downtown arts and culture scene
- 5<sup>th</sup> largest performing arts center in the nation
- Umbrella management organization for 5 performing arts spaces:
  - Keller Auditorium
  - Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
  - Newmark Theatre
  - Dolores Winningstad Theatre
  - Brunish Hall

Facility features:

- Keller Auditorium
  - Built in 1917 as Municipal Auditorium, renovated in 1968 and in 2000, renamed after Richard B. Keller for his donation of \$1.5 million funding latest renovation
  - Home to Portland Opera, Oregon Ballet Theatre and Broadway Across America
- Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall
  - Built in 1928 as Portland Publix Theatre, Italian Rococo Revival style
  - Seats 2,776; features orchestra pit and choir shell, portable acoustics, dressing rooms for 90
  - Home to Oregon Symphony Orchestra, Portland Arts & Lectures, Portland Youth Philharmonic and White Bird Dance Company, among others
- Antoinette Hatfield Hall, containing:
  - Newmark Theatre
    - Edwardian style, seats 880
    - Home to Oregon Children's Theatre and numerous local arts groups
    - Intimate setting; no seat further than 65 feet from stage
  - Dolores Winningstad Theatre
    - Elizabethan style, seats 292
    - Versatile and movable stage and seating
    - Home to Tears of Joy Puppet Theatre
  - Brunish Hall
    - Open space available for small performances, meetings, special events
    - 3,150 total square feet
    - Room capacity: 200

Employees:

- 35 FTE plus several hundred part-time, event-based employees

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Portland Center for the Performing Arts – Employees (continued)

- Union representation:
  - IOUE Local 701: engineers, electricians, custodians
  - IATSE Local 28: stagehand department heads
  - IATSE B-20: gate and ushers
  - ILWU Local 28: security
- 625 volunteers who provide reception desk clerical support, lead tours, run the gift shop and usher in the Newmark and Winningstad Theatres

#### History:

- 1976: Performing Arts Task Force appointed by City of Portland to evaluate need for performing art space in downtown core; recommended that 3 new theatres be added in addition to Keller Auditorium
- \$19 million in bonds approved by voters to fund construction of theatres
- \$12 million contributed by businesses, foundations and private individuals
- 1980: decision to purchase and renovate the Paramount Theatre into a 2,700 seat concert hall and build two new theatres across the street
- 1984: Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall opened
- 1987: The New Theater Building (renamed Antoinette Hatfield Hall in 2006) opened containing Newmark and Winningstad Theatres
- 2000: Corey Brunish donates \$350,000 to build out an unfinished rehearsal space; named Brunish Hall. It becomes available as an event space after Portland Center Stage moves to Gerding Edlen Theatre

#### Budget: (FY 2009-10)

- Revenue sources:
  - Operating revenue: \$7.5 million
  - Transient lodging taxes/VDI: \$1.9 million
  - City of Portland support: \$760,000
- Revenue expenditures:
  - Operating expenses: \$8.9 million
  - MERC support: \$1.096 million
  - Metro support: \$872,750

#### Business summary:

- 800+ events annually, in FY 2008-2009: 1,100 events
  - 677 performances
  - 125 Broadway shows
  - 30 lectures
  - 41 meetings/receptions

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Portland Center for the Performing Arts – Business summary (continued)

- 104concerts
- 114 miscellaneous
- Approximately 800,000 visitors annually (in FY 2008-2009: 938,000)
- Resident companies:
  - Oregon Ballet Theatre
  - Oregon Children’s Theatre
  - Oregon Symphony Orchestra
  - Portland Opera
  - Portland Youth Philharmonic
  - Tears of Joy
- Performing arts groups pay user fees and rent on space per a Commission-approved schedule

#### Economic impact to the region (FY 2008-09):

- \$65.2 million in economic impact
- 730 jobs supported
- Attendees spending ranges from \$18-125 per event
- Taxes generated:
  - State of Oregon: \$990,000
  - Multnomah county: \$731,000

#### Other:

- PCPA is advised by an Advisory Committee comprised of arts advocates, hospitality and tourism industry professionals and MERC Commissioners.
- A private, non-profit, fundraising arm of PCPA is the Friends of the Portland Center for the Performing Arts. Gary Maffei – Merlo Foundation - is the Executive Director.
- Strategic projects include the renovation of ASCH and development of Main Street at SW Broadway.
- PCPA is committed to its partnership with the arts and culture community. An example is the reduction of user fees and rental rates for its resident companies and all nonprofit arts groups.

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center

Known as:

- Portland Expo Center or “Expo”
- Oregon’s largest multi-purpose facility

Facility features:

- Complex of 5 halls:
  - Exhibit Halls
    - Hall A: 48,000 sq. ft.
    - Hall B: 36,000 sq. ft.
    - Hall C: 60,000 sq. ft.
    - Hall D: 72,000 sq. ft.
      - Hall D can be divided into Halls D1 and D2
    - Hall E: 108,000 sq. ft., max seating from 5,280 – 9,000
      - Hall E can be divided into Halls E1 and E2
  - 11 Meeting Rooms
    - Boardroom (Hall D): 204 sq. ft., conference table for 10
    - D 101 – 103; D201 – 204; E101 – 102: sq. ft. ranges 330 – 2,380
    - Lounge (Hall A): 1,500 sq. ft.
- Outdoor exhibit space/parking = 2,500 vehicles

Employees:

- 13 full-time employees
- Part-time employees employed on event basis for admissions, ticketing, security, etc.
- Parking and catering services contracted through City Center Parking and Aramark

History:

- Original buildings constructed in 1921 by the Pacific International (PI) Livestock Association
- Campus supported nearby meat processing plants and stockyards built along the Columbia Slough
- After a fire destroying these buildings, rebuilt and established as the largest livestock expo on the West coast; buildings also hosted rodeos and auctions
- 1942: Temporarily renamed the “Portland Assembly Center” using original buildings to house 3,500+ Japanese Americans for 5 months before being deployed to WWII internment camps in CA and ID
- 1965: Multnomah County purchased and renamed it Multnomah County Exposition Center
- 1969: Multnomah County Fair moved to site; also began hosting consumer events
- 1994: Metro assumed ownership/management and began facility updates

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center – History (continued)

- 1997: Hall E opened; first modern building with column-free exhibit space, temp control, loading bays, large lobby and meeting rooms
- Smithsonian’s traveling exhibit displayed at Hall E’s inaugural event (33 days, 423,000 attendees)
- 2001: Hall D replaced and reopened as improved and expanded space
- 2004: TriMet opened MAX light rail yellow line with northern destination at Expo

### Budget (FY 2009-10):

- Revenue sources: \$5.8 million
  - Operating revenue: \$3.705 million
  - Food & Beverage: \$2.11 million
- Expenses:
  - Operating expenses: \$4.4 million
  - MERC support: \$305,000
  - Metro support: \$273,000
  - Hall D debt service: \$1.18 million
  - \$180,000 capital projects
- **Expo is only venue to receive no TLT or public subsidy**

### Business summary:

- Roughly 100 events annually; draws roughly 500,000 people per year
- Host to consumer and trade shows, special events, sports, examples:
  - Pacific Northwest Sportsmen’s Show
  - Home and Garden Shows
  - Portland Boat Show
  - Rose City Classic Dog Show
  - Northwest Ag Show
  - Rose City Gun and Knife Shows
  - Portland Auto Swap Meet
  - America’s Largest Antique and Collectible Shows
  - Special events: Hardy Plant Sale, Boys & Girls Club; Catlin Gabel Rummage Sale, Rose City Rollers
- In FY 2008-09:
  - 56 consumer/public events
  - 24 miscellaneous/other (includes roller derby)
  - 19 meetings
  - 8 trade shows/conventions
  - 3 catered events

## MERC Venue Fast Facts

### Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center –Business summary (continued)

Economic impact to the region (FY 2008-09):

- \$35.3 million in direct/indirect spending generated throughout tri-county area
- 400 jobs supported
- Attendees spending ranges from \$20-75 per person/day
- Taxes generated:
  - State of Oregon: \$532,000
  - Metro (excise): \$415,000
  - Multnomah County: \$396,000

Other:

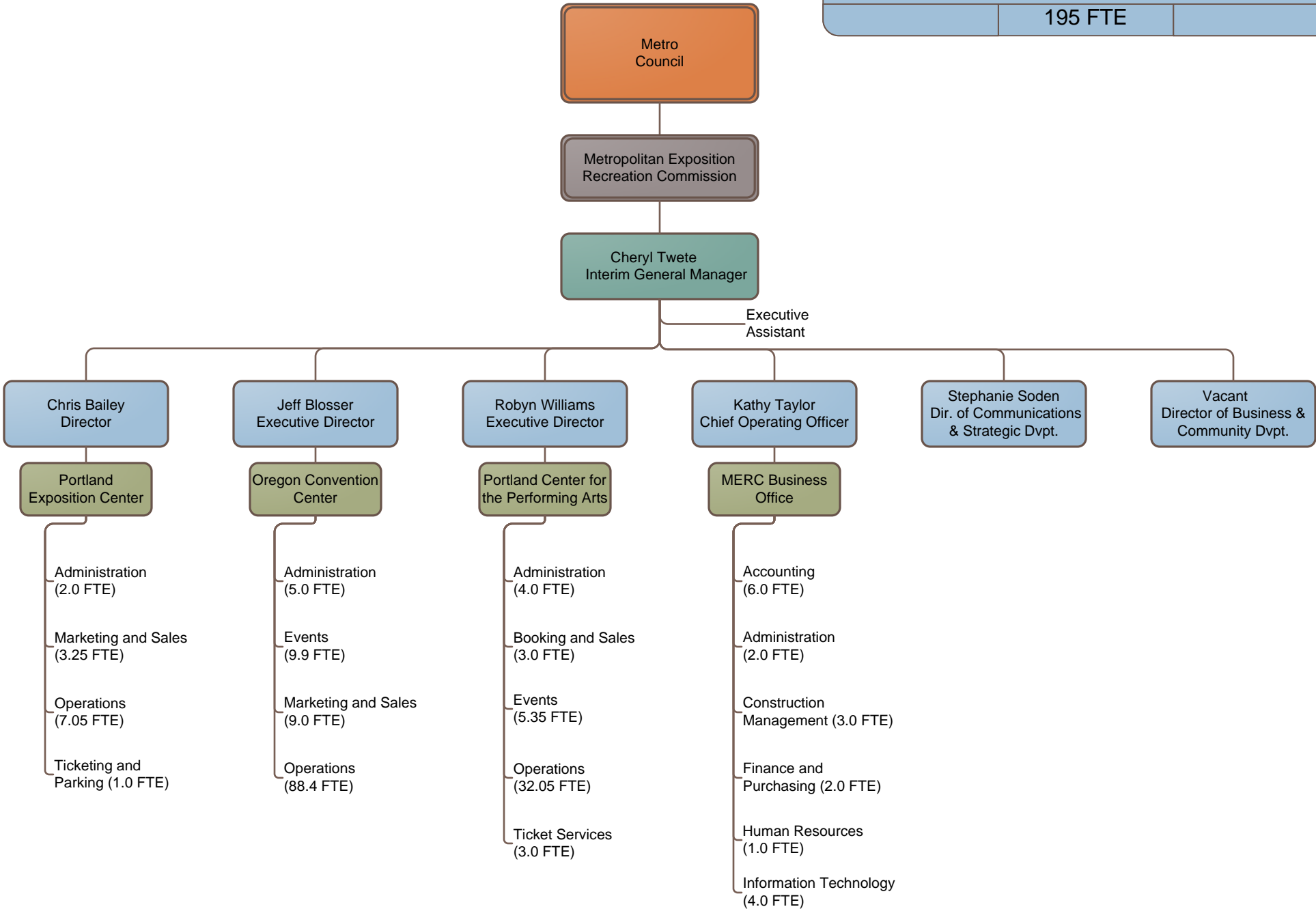
- Located on TriMet's MAX yellow line as northern-most destination.
- Sustainable operations and practices currently being implemented.
- A project team is currently updating the Portland Expo Center Master Plan.
- The Columbia River Crossing (CRC) project will have some impact on Expo; a project team is monitoring the bi-state planning process.
- A project team from the Portland State University Graduate School of Business recently engaged in an industry research project to support the development of an action/business plan geared to business retention, business trends and potential growth.

February 2010



**Metropolitan Exposition Recreation Commission**

195 FTE



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# **MERC Commission Retreat**

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March 30, 2010  
8:00 am - 1:30 pm

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MERC Commission Operating  
Rules – Background  
Information

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## MERC Commission Housekeeping Issues – March 2010

Item	Current Practice and Rationale	Proposed Options/Considerations	Questions/Comments
Commission <u>Meeting Date, Time and Location</u>	<p><b>CP:</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 12:30 p.m. Depending on venue event schedule, schedule meetings at different MERC venues to allow Commissioners and meeting attendees to become familiar with specific venue features.</p> <p><b>R:</b> Day of month and meeting start time same since 1970's; past schedules have included: 3<sup>rd</sup> Wed of month and 4<sup>th</sup> Wed of month. Moved to 1<sup>st</sup> Wed of month to accommodate EBMS financial report closing deadlines.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No change</li> <li>● Move to end of day- 3:30 pm</li> <li>● Preference of Commissioners?</li> <li>● Public Meeting/Consistency</li> <li>● Event schedule is a factor when setting calendar year Commission meeting schedule</li> <li>● Agenda presentations may dictate which venue serves as meeting location due to technical/equipment needs.</li> </ul>	
Commission <u>Luncheon</u>	<p><b>CP:</b> 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of each month at 11:30 a.m.</p> <p><b>R:</b> Volunteer Commissioners asked to meet during lunch timeframe – current practice since 1970s; luncheon provides networking and informal conversation opportunities (with staff and Metro Councilors and guests); cost of luncheon budgeted and monitored; luncheon menu dependent on food service needs of events in venues – Chef's choice - which allows facility chef to use 'extras' if event Food &amp; Beverage guarantee not met by event planner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No change</li> <li>● Discontinue Luncheon</li> <li>● Scale down Menu</li> <li>● Scale down luncheon attendees</li> </ul>	
Commissioners' <u>Contact Information</u>	<p><b>CP:</b> Because the Commissioners hold voluntary positions, business and home contact information is not provided to the public at large. Any inquiries are directed to the GM's office and the specific Commissioner is notified of the request. Same routine for telephone calls received for Commissioners – email sent from MERC GM office to specific Commissioner.</p> <p><b>R:</b> In the past, individual Commissioners did not want their home telephone numbers given out upon request (retirees, etc).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Continue current practice</li> <li>● Another preference?</li> </ul>	

Item	Current Practice and Rationale	Proposed Options	Questions/Comments
<p><u>Commissioners' Additional Engagements</u></p>	<p><b>CP:</b> MERC GM office purchases, on behalf of MERC Commission, 5-8 tables annually to business and community events. As well, Commissioners are invited to attend a variety of MERC partners' events (i.e. Travel Portland FAM tours) or participate in tours/receptions for potential major venue clients. Tables currently include: PBA Annual meeting, OAME Luncheon, ML King Breakfast, NW Breakfast of Champions, Urban League Dinner, Travel Portland Breakfasts (2), Hispanic Celebration, and others as needed.</p> <p><b>R:</b> Two of the current MERC Strategic Plan strategies are measured by board development and partnerships with hospitality, cultural and tourism industry organizations. Having MERC Commissioners participate in these activities, when schedules permit, provides MERC business with a name, a face and a presence for regional businesses and communities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● No Change</li> <li>● Re-confirm or refresh participate in, type and number of additional engagements for MERC Commission.</li> </ul>	
<p><u>Commissioners' Communications</u></p>	<p><b>CP:</b> Majority of MERC business-related communications by email; some by telephone and in person from staff. Most email communication requests a response from Commissioners. Executive Team staff communicate with Commissioners directly. Most routine Commission communications come from the GM office.</p> <p><b>R:</b> MERC has attempted to alleviate confusion for Commissioners by channeling most communication through the GM's office. This allows GM/Assistant to be responsive to Commissioners and efficiently manage Commissioners' time with MERC business and activities. This also allows GM/Assistant to assist Commissioners with reminders, cancellations, changes to upcoming meetings, activities etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● What is preference of current Commissioners?</li> <li>● Do individual Commissioners have specific and direct communication method preferences?</li> <li>● Is there a preference to have all Commission communication come from one office?</li> </ul>	

Item	Current Practice and Rationale	Proposed Options	Questions/Comments
Staff attendance at Commission meetings	<p><b>CP:</b> Current practice allows for staff attendance if presenting an agenda item or staffing the Commission meeting. Current Metro practice is similar.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue current practice with GM determining which staff should be in attendance.</li> </ul>	
Commissioners and Ethics Laws	<p><b>CP:</b> Abide by Metro's Ethic's Communication Memo describing what is and is not allowed by law.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue as is and have Metro Attorney provide updated ethic's law presentation when available</li> </ul>	
Other Items:			

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# **MERC Commission Retreat**

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March 30, 2010  
8:00 am - 1:30 pm

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Samples of Working  
Agreements Used by Other  
Organizations

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## Working Agreements (Sample)

- ➔ Individual perspectives and experience are valued. But the role of the Commission is to balance the range of perspectives and interests of the whole city.
- ➔ Meeting agendas will have specific start and end times, and realistic but specific timeframes for each discussion item. Commissioners should expect to conduct business items within the timeframe allotted, however timeframes can be extended by the Chair if circumstances warrant.
- ➔ There is a range of discussion and decision-making styles on the Commission. All will manage the extreme edges of their individual style. Some will have to manage the desire for more detailed discussion and data. Others will have to manage their impatience to move on.
- ➔ A member with detailed questions not likely to be of interest to other members can contact staff and get more detailed information in advance of the meeting, or take questions that come up in the meeting off-line at a later date.
- ➔ All will arrive a meetings prepared, as it consumes time at the meeting when members need to ask questions that are already addressed in the packet material.
- ➔ The Commission will request an annual meeting with Council or its designated representatives to get an understanding of Council's goals, priorities and expectations. This meeting can also be a "two-way-street". Commissioners may use the opportunity to educate Council on upcoming policy issues.
- ➔ The Commission will set goals and establish a high-level workplan annually, subsequent to its meeting with Council, leaving enough open space in the workplan to accommodate the unexpected. Staff will maintain the workplan, update it on a quarterly basis, and report on the updates to the Commission.
- ➔ The workplan forms the basis of the rolling agenda. The rolling agenda will be distributed electronically in advance. This will enable members with questions and concerns to have them clarified in advance of the meeting so that time in the meeting is used more efficiently. The Chair will determine how the rolling agenda will be addressed at meetings.
- ➔ The Chair works with staff to establish meeting agendas and is the staff go-to person on late-breaking issues, but...
- ➔ ...the role should be carried out according to the ethic of "No Surprises".
- ➔ The Chair runs the Commission meeting, managing the Commission discussion and public participation, and moving topics along. However each Commissioner is responsible to "keep their own gate" and stay on task.
- ➔ The Chair has a role in insuring inclusivity. The Chair will make sure all have an opportunity to contribute their view, and will keep Commissioners "in the communication loop".
- ➔ The Chair, other Commissioners, and staff will all do each other the courtesy of adhering to the ethic of "No Surprises."
- ➔ The staffperson assigned to the Commission does not "work for" the Commission. However the Commission can expect that the staff assigned to the Commission will:
  - Manage the workplan.
  - Be prepared and knowledgeable at meetings.
  - Work with the Chair on the Commission agenda.
  - Foster good communication.
  - Meet Commission expectations as capacity allows.
- ➔ "Land use is messy." Offer each other appreciation and the benefit of the doubt.

# WORKING AGREEMENTS INVENTORY

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## Definitions of group membership

- How a member is appointed (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Length of member terms (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Appointment of group officers
  - Roles
    - Chair or team leader(s)
    - Vice-chair
    - Other (\_\_\_\_\_)
  - Appointment process (\_\_\_\_\_)
  - Length of officer terms (\_\_\_\_\_)

## Arriving at an outcome \*

\*"outcome" = decision, agreement or conclusion

- Voting model
- "Consensus-intention" voting model
  - Majority/minority reports
    - Allowed  Not allowed
  - Definition of a quorum (\_\_\_\_\_)
  - Definition of "majority" for voting purposes (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Consent model
- Consensus model

## Determining key process agreements

- Agenda protocols
  - Distributed in advance (\_\_\_) days prior to the meeting
  - Established method for getting an item onto the agenda
- Materials for consideration
  - Distributed in advance ( \_\_\_) days prior to the meeting)
- Discussion protocols
  - Parliamentary procedure  
(Members speak to the merits of proposals Members are recognized before speaking)
  - Modified parliamentary procedure  
(Procedure used when needed to further the discussion and insure fair participation)
  - Open format (Members "keep their own gate")
- Meetings are facilitated
  - By the team leader or chair
  - By a facilitator
  - By members who rotate the function
- Role of the facilitator
  - The facilitator may participate in the discussion
  - The facilitator may frame issues or broker agreements, but not participate in discussion
  - The facilitator only participates in process, not in content, framing or brokering
- Role of proxies
  - Allowed or  not allowed
  - If allowed:
    - Empowered to act for an absent team member

### **Working Agreements should address five primary aspects of interaction:**

- ✓ Guidelines for membership.
- ✓ Method for arriving at an outcome.
- ✓ Key process agreements.
- ✓ Any ethical considerations.
- ✓ Standards of participation and conduct.

*Some groups have by-laws or a formal charter which outline many of the "rules of the road", but Task Groups and Advisory Groups typically lack such a formal mechanism.*

***This list indicates some of the key details a group should clarify before the deliberations begin!***



- Empowered to listen and report back only
- Empowered to participate even if regular member attending
- Substitutes, in event a member drops out.
  - Not allowed.  Allowed. If allowed, how appointed (\_\_\_\_\_)
- Meetings start and end on time
- Notes are kept and distributed
  - (\_\_\_) days after the date of the meeting)
- Privileges of non-members attending meetings
  - May participate
  - May not participate
  - May participate at specific points on the agenda
- Member representation
  - A stakeholder group (for instance, a neighborhood representative)
  - All stakeholders (for instance, the Mayor)
  - Individual member point of view
- Purpose, charter and role for any sub-committees
- Agreements on momentum
  - Commitments to productive discussion practices (e.g. speaking to agenda topics only, solutions not concerns, 2-person dialogs taken off-line, etc.)
  - Timeframes for completion of tasks and the work of the group.
  - Limits on calls for additional or new data.
  - Timeframe for commenting/reopening discussion conclusions / decisions.

### **Considering group ethics**

- Conflicts of interest
- Disclosure of conflicts
- Confidentiality requirements
- Open meeting policies relative to convening a quorum
- Lobbying outside of the meeting
- Media contacts, or any other public discussion of the work of the group

### **Determining standards of participation, conduct and courtesy**

- Standards for respectful and courteous conduct
  - Waiting to speak in turn
  - Speaking with civility, both in tone and content
  - Valuing diverse perspectives and the right of others to express differing points of view
  - Avoiding adherence to a position or ideology and seeking solutions all can support.
  - Speaking to issues, not individuals (Avoiding making or taking issues personally)
  - Arriving for meetings on time
  - Striving for brevity, avoiding restatement or speech-making
  - Avoiding side conversations and distractions during meetings
  - Sharing information and opportunities to participate fairly among all members
  - Turning off all electronica ( cell phones  beepers  lap tops)
- Expectations for level of participation at meetings  "Share the floor"  "Participate!"
- Attendance commitments
- Commitments to be prepared for the meeting
- Support for decisions of the group
- Extension of trust relative to the intentions of other members