



METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Meeting Minutes
January 5, 2016
Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

Councilors Present: Councilors Shirley Craddick, Carlotta Collette, Craig Dirksen, Sam Chase and Kathryn Harrington.

Councilors Excused: Council President Tom Hughes and Councilor Bob Stacey

Councilor Craig Dirksen called the Metro Council work session to order at 2:06 p.m.

1. CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER COMMUNICATION

Chief Operating Officer Martha Bennett updated the Council on the following items:

- Regional closures due to snow and ice conditions, including the ongoing closure of the Oregon Zoo,
- Two recent break-ins at the Expo Center including the theft of an ATM machine,
- The upcoming Portland State University tour is on Wednesday, January 13th, and
- The materials for the 2016 Legislative Agenda have been distributed to the councilors for their review.

2. TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: UPDATE AND WORK PLAN CHANGES

Ms. Elissa Gertler, Metro's Planning Director, and Mr. Jonathan Williams, Metro staff, presented the Transit Oriented Development Program Update and Work Plan Changes. Ms. Gertler and Mr. Williams discussed the Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Program's current activities, the updated Strategic Plan Map reflecting new high frequency transit routes and changing market conditions, and the proposed Work Plan changes. Key elements of the presentation included:

- The basic strategies used to achieve the program's success, including land acquisition and providing incentives to private developers,
- Three criterion used to determine whether a project is eligible for support from TOD, including the value of increased transit ridership, the incremental costs incurred to achieve higher density, and the demonstrated financial need in order for the project to move forward, and
- Three categories of areas eligible for investment, including Infill and Enhance, Catalyze and Connect, and Plan and Partner designations.

Council Discussion:

The councilors thanked the staff for their hard work and noted their appreciation for the TOD program. Councilor Harrington spoke to her support for the methodology used, and suggested they continue to analyze need and opportunity and look at the long-term project vision. Councilor Harrington also expressed her interest in seeing more affordable housing projects in areas designated for Infill & Enhance and Catalyze & Connect, and inquired about the average investment amount for TOD projects. Councilor Chase advised the team continue to pursuing affordable housing projects even in areas such as Northeast Portland where neighborhood resistance for such development is strong. Councilor Craddick noted that the materials the team has put together could also serve as a basis for an affordable housing analysis. Councilor Craddick shared her goal for Metro as a regional agency to involve local jurisdictions in making sure there is adequate affordable housing throughout the region. Councilors Craddick and Dirksen and Ms. Gertler discussed the potential of coordinating with multiple agencies to address the affordable housing issue. Councilor Collette spoke to her interest in seeing more information about the return on investment for TOD projects. Councilor Collette also highlighted a recent study regarding how renters in Portland differ from renters in the rest of the country due to their desire to find housing with amenities such as sustainability certificates and green initiatives, as well as more common housing desires such as proximity to transit, grocery stores, and restaurants. Councilor Dirksen noted that the presentation offered the best explanation he's heard for the economic benefits and return on investment for the TOD program. Councilor Dirksen emphasized the importance of not focusing money on areas that will develop even without additional investments, or on areas that will likely not develop even with significant investment. Councilor Dirksen also spoke to the need for helping people understand the importance of creating affordable housing throughout the region.

3. EQUITABLE HOUSING INITIATIVE UPDATE

Ms. Gertler and Metro staff Ms. Emily Lieb presented the Equitable Housing Initiative Update. Ms. Lieb and Ms. Gertler updated the Council on the research and engagement of experts and stakeholders that has been completed, and offered recommendations regarding the regional framework for equitable housing implementation and some specific program recommendations for Metro to support regional implementation efforts. Key elements of the presentation included:

- The current working definition of equitable housing as *diverse, quality, physically accessible affordable housing choices with access to opportunities, services, and amenities*,
- A framework consisting of four strategies, including increasing and diversifying market-rate housing, leveraging growth for affordability, maximizing and optimizing resources, and mitigating displacement and stabilizing communities,
- A set of recommendations that propose a range of programmatic and policy actions for Metro to take over the next several years in order to leverage our resources to achieve the region's goals, and
- An update on the status of the Equitable Housing Leadership Summit, scheduled for February 1, 2016.

Council Discussion:

Councilor Harrington spoke to the importance of achieving results rather than analyses and noted that, in her district, appreciable funds would be more useful than technical assistance for the development of affordable housing projects. Councilor Collette shared that in her district elected officials have expressed a need for case studies and examples of successful projects as guidance,

and also noted that CPDG funds will likely prove to be essential to the development affordable housing projects. Councilor Collette acknowledged that a housing and transportation calculator would be a very useful tool for realtors and community members to help them make informed housing decisions, but suggested that the team adapt an existing model rather than use time and resources to create a new one. Councilor Collette also suggested that the team seed out information and case studies from the Equitable Housing Initiative at MPAC meetings. Councilor Chase spoke to the challenges that have been overcome already as part of this project, and the challenges he predicts the team will face moving forward. Councilor Chase noted that public awareness about the affordable housing issue is greater than ever before, and suggested that the next steps include engaging community members and local jurisdictions to identify the best ways to help them. Councilor Chase added that while awareness of the issue is high, resources and funding will be increasingly important for the project's future progress. Councilor Dirksen noted how affordable housing and transportation issues are intrinsically linked.

4. COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATES AND COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

Councilor Dirksen updated the Council about the Region 1 ACT input on the ODOT STIP Non-Highway Enhance Grant applications. Councilor Collette shared her work on the selection committee for determining the new members on the board of directors for the Rediscover the Falls non-profit group.

5. ADJOURN

Seeing no further business, Councilor Craig Dirksen adjourned the Council work session at 4:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kyra Schneider, Council Policy Assistant

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF DEC. 15, 2015

There were none.