



METRO COUNCIL WORK SESSION
Meeting Minutes
October 11, 2016
Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

Councilors Present: Councilors Craig Dirksen, Shirley Craddick, Sam Chase, Kathryn Harrington, and Council President Tom Hughes

Councilors Excused: Councilors Bob Stacey and Carlotta Collette

Council President Tom Hughes called the Metro Council work session to order at 2:01 p.m.

1. CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER COMMUNICATION

Ms. Martha Bennett, Metro Chief Operating Officer, introduced two items. Ms. Bennett first provided an overview of the General Manager recruitment timeline. She informed the Council that interviews for the position would be conducted in January, and ideally the position would be staffed by April. Ms. Bennett next reminded the Councilors of an invitation to attend the Hands Up: 7 Playwrights, 7 Testaments event. Ms. Bennett introduced Ms. Kathleen Brennan Hunter, Director of Parks and Nature, and Ms. Olena Turula, Metro staff and Connect with Nature project manager, to discuss projects and programs currently in place to make Metro's parks and natural areas welcoming and inclusive to communities of color and low income families—including the Connect with Nature project. Ms. Turula invited the councilors to the first Connect with Nature workshop. Ms. Turula explained that the workshop would engage community leaders in discussions about culturally specific ways in which their communities would like to experience nature.

2. ELECTED OFFICIALS SURVEY

Mr. Jim Middaugh, Communications director, introduced the elected official survey. Mr. Middaugh explained that the survey was part of Metro's balanced scorecard and was conducted bi-annually. He also highlighted that working with CFM Strategic Communications to conduct the survey provided the elected officials with anonymity and the freedom to share their genuine opinions.

Mr. Tom Eiland, CFM Strategic Communications, reviewed the results from the 2016 elected official survey as well as the trending data that dated back to 2011. Mr. Eiland briefly explained the survey methodology: a maximum of five attempts were made to contact each official and conduct the survey; three attempts were via email, and the final two were via telephone. Mr. Eiland explained that the survey asked officials whether they agreed or disagreed with the statement that Metro provided valuable services that had positive impacts on their constituents; respondents who agreed were then asked an open-ended question about what they liked about Metro, whereas respondents who disagreed were asked an open-ended question about what they did not like about Metro.

Mr. Eiland shared that in total, 63 elected officials participated in the survey, amounting to a 38 percent response rate. City council members and mayors had higher rates of participation than county commissioners. According to Mr. Eiland, 75 percent of survey participants agreed that Metro was valuable, an increase over previous survey years. He shared with the Council that Metro's most frequently mentioned assets were green spaces, parks, and open spaces, along with coordination and leadership. Mr. Eiland highlighted that among the survey participants who disagreed that Metro provides valuable services, the most common concerns voiced were related to land use policies, disregard for local needs, and overreach of authority. Mr. Eiland went on to note the positive trend in ratings for Metro's management of parks, visitor venues, and recycling over the past two years. Meanwhile, scores for land use and transportation planning remained unchanged from previous survey years, with 66 percent of respondents indicating that Metro's effort in this area was fair to poor.

Mr. Eiland informed the Council that survey results indicated that elected officials received information about Metro predominantly from email, colleagues, the Oregonian, Metro News, Metro meetings, and the Metro website. Mr. Eiland also noted that some respondents were not aware of Metro's activities; he voiced his belief that these were opportunities for increased awareness, education, and improved information.

Ms. Becca Uherbelau, Metro Staff, highlighted attempts in the past year to improve Metro's communication and public engagement with elected officials around the region. These attempts included: the Metro hotsheet, quarterly exchanges, publication of Our Big Backyard, and investments in web enhancements. Ms. Uherbelau then suggested new ways of outreach to elected officials, such as turning the Metro hotsheet into an e-newsletter or sending mail directly to their households. Ms. Uherbelau and Mr. Middaugh discussed the Councilors' communication needs and proposed quarterly meetings between the Council and the Communications department to discuss hard questions from constituents and how to respond in a constructive manner.

Council Discussion:

Councilor Harrington stated that the strong City Council participation in Clackamas and Washington Counties was impressive. Councilor Craddick asked about the data's validity, and expressed concern about lack of response from Multnomah County elected officials. Council President Hughes indicated that Multnomah County's work and Metro's work do not often intersect. Council President Hughes also noted a disconnect between what survey respondents believed Metro did well and the concerns about wasted tax dollars and poor budget handling; he stated that most of Metro's revenues came from high-rated activities like handling solid waste, and most spending went toward high-rated venues like the Oregon Zoo and the Convention Center. Councilor Craddick inquired if it would be helpful for the Councilors to ask other elected officials to complete the surveys. Councilor Chase noted that he found the survey valuable and was impressed by the responses received from so many busy elected officials. Councilor Chase also indicated that he believed improved email and colleague communication should be top priorities. Councilor Harrington shared that her regional elected colleagues had voiced concerns to her about receiving a high volume of emails from the public, and noted that Metro staff does an excellent job of soliciting input from the community and creating feedback reports for the Council members. Councilor Craddick relayed to the Council that she has been given the suggestion to host town halls in order to bring people from around the region together. Council President Hughes announced that he was encouraged by the positive trends and areas in which Metro was improving. He also highlighted the importance of putting into perspective negative comments received on the survey; overall responses were positive, even if there were a handful of complaints. Councilor Dirksen stated the

critical nature of improving communication and helping people better understand what Metro does; he noted that based on survey data, the more an individual knows about the agency, the more favorable their opinion.

3. COUNCILOR LIAISON UPDATES AND COUNCIL COMMUNICATION

Councilor Dirksen announced that he and Councilor Stacey would be presenting a resolution about creating a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) at the October 20 Council meeting. Councilor Harrington and Council President Hughes shared discoveries from their recent trip to two different regions in Canada, Durham and Peel, where they explored waste-to-energy options. Councilor Craddick provided the Council with an update on the Powell-Division Transportation Project and the upcoming steering committee meetings. Councilor Craddick also mentioned discussions that were held at Travel Portland's annual retreat. Councilor Craddick reminded the councilors that they have been invited to take a tour of Multnomah County's levee system.

4. ADJOURN

Seeing no further business, Council President Tom Hughes adjourned the Metro Council work session at 4:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Taylor Unterberg", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Taylor Unterberg, Council Policy Assistant

ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF OCTOBER 11, 2016

None.