

Council work session

Minutes

July 27, 2021

Metro

*600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov*



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Tuesday, July 27, 2021

2:00 PM

<https://zoom.us/j/471155552> or 877-853-5257 (toll free)

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2:00 Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: 5 - Councilor Christine Lewis, Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Councilor Bob Stacey, Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, and Councilor Mary Nolan

Excused: 2 - Council President Lynn Peterson, and Councilor Shirley Craddick

Work Session Topics:

2:05 Willamette Cove Engagement Plan Work Session

Deputy Council President Lewis introduced Paul Slyman [he/him], Matan [he/him/siya] and COO Marissa Madrigal to present to Council.

Staff pulled up the [*Willamette Cove Engagement Plan Presentation*] to present to Council.

Staff updated Council on Resolution Item. 4 from Resolution No. 20-5119, which made Willamette Cove eligible for Parks Bond funding.

Council Discussion

Councilor Rosenthal asked if Metro owns below the top of the bank. He also asked if Staff knew what sort of beach will be made available to the public, once the area has been cleaned.

Paul clarified that they own up until “ordinary low water.” He added that the process of decontamination has the potential to reshape the water bank, but Staff is not yet sure how.

Councilor Nolan asked who is leading the “remedial design” process, and if it includes a public engagement process. Paul explained that, in terms of regulations, the EPA is in charge of everything below the top of bank, DEQ is in charge

of everything from the top of bank to about the railroad track. The Port of Portland is project managing the study of the remedial design for both parcels. Staff is currently taking public comments regarding the cleanup process, but is not yet taking comments regarding the public amenities that will be added once cleanup is finished.

Councilor Nolan recommended that Staff engage the community regarding possible public amenities.

Councilor Rosenthal asked how Staff defines “communities” and “stakeholders.”

Matan defines “stakeholders” as people who currently have access to the decision making process and are community members, while “communities” refers to groups and people outside of the decision making process.

Councilor Gonzalez encouraged Staff to conduct more community engagement, and emphasized the local and regional significance of this site.

Councilor Rosenthal encouraged Staff to engage underserved communities, especially indigenous tribes. Marissa asked that everyone consider the greater implications of speaking with the tribes, that these interactions will affect future interactions on projects beyond parks.

Katie McDonald outlined the main priorities for Tribal Affairs: learning about tribal interests and priorities of the area, initiating meetings with tribes and tribal staff early and often, ensuring inclusive planning, and ensuring that feedback given is acted upon.

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Councilor Lewis asked two questions:

- What does community-lead planning look like?
- Is it dependent upon investment levels?

Matan described community-lead planning as “Not bringing folks to the table, but bringing the table to them.” This includes community leaders and a range of different people who then create a community engagement plan. However, it takes money, both to pay community members for their time and to eventually implement the plan they help create. Matan believes this cannot be done with \$125,000.

Councilor Lewis believes this type of planning is essential and is happy to trim down other parts of the project to make it happen.

Councilor Nolan supports community-lead planning for this project, with upfront parameters from Council. Matan agreed with Councilor Nolan and reiterated his plan to be as upfront and transparent with community members, while giving them as many chances to provide their input as possible.

Councilor Rosenthal asked if the cove will become a natural habitat park with a few public amenities, or if it will be a recreational park with some natural habitat.

Paul explained that the park would be primarily natural habitat with passive recreation amenities, and an extension of the N. Portland Greenway Trail. He compared the future park to the Smith and Bybee Lakes.

Marissa added more examples to help Council visualize a future Willamette Cove park.

Councilor Lewis recommended coining a better term than for “passive recreation.” She then asked if Paul and Matan had any closing comments.

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Paul concluded with these thoughts:

- Public engagement should have started years ago, but Matan has provided council with some ideas for meaningful engagement now.
- The staff report presented to Council has two possible options: Direct staff to implement this plan, or await site funding decisions around recreational amenities and implement this plan when it is clear the site will be developed. Staff would like direction on which option to take.
- Paul also mentioned the contingency remedy: DEQ offered to remove some of the contaminated soil to a landfill. Paul recommended Council wait until November, when staff will return to Council with more information about the contingency remedy, to make a decision. Implementing the contingency remedy would significantly alter the topography of Willamette Cove. Once direction is given, Staff will be have a much clearer idea of what Willamette Cove will ultimately look like, and will be able to have more transparent discussions with community members.

Council decided to wait until November to direct Staff.

Seeing no further discussion on the topic, Deputy Council President Lewis moved on to the next agenda item.

2:50 Chief Operating Officer Communication

Marissa Madrigal provided an update on the following events or items:

- The Zoo is currently being inspected and accredited.
- Multnomah County has now recommended that all vaccinated people wear masks indoors, due to the surge of the Delta Variant of COVID-19. Additional requirements are expected soon.
- Easing of COVID restrictions has helped spread other diseases.

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2:55 Councilor Communication

Councilors provided updates on the following meetings and events:

- There were none.

3:00 Adjourn

There being no further business, Deputy Council President Lewis adjourned the Metro Council Meeting at 3:09 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nathan Kim

Nathan Kim, Legislative Assistant