

Meeting Summary

Meeting: Housing Bond Oversight Committee Meeting
Date/time: Wednesday, February 22, 2023, 9:30 AM – 12:00 PM
Place: Virtual meeting (Zoom)
Purpose: Preview outcomes data and prepare for annual report process.

Attendees

Kira Cador (she/her), Brandon Culbertson (he/him), Scott Greenfield (he/him), Co-chair Jenny Lee (she/her), Ann Leenstra (she/her), Willie Poinsette (she/her), Mara Romero (she/her), Co-chair Steve Rudman (he/him), Andrea Sanchez (she/her), Karen Shawcross (she/her), Nicole Stingham (she/her), Trinh Tran (he/him), Juan Ugarte Ahumada (he/him)

Metro Councilors

Christine Lewis (she/her), Mary Nolan (they/them)

Metro staff

Melissa Arnold (she/her), Ash Elverfeld (they/she), Emily Lieb (she/her), Jimmy Oporta (he/him), Alison Wicks (she/her)

Facilitator

Ben Duncan (he/him)

Note: The meeting was recorded via Zoom; therefore, details will be mainly focused on the discussions, with less detail regarding the presentations. Presentation slides are included in the archived meeting packet.

Welcome and introductions

Co-chairs Steve Rudman and Jenny Lee welcomed the Committee to the meeting.

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis reflected on her time serving as Council Liaison for the Committee and thanked the Committee members for their work.

Metro Councilor Nolan thanked Councilor Lewis for her service and introduced themselves as the new Council Liaison. They shared their passion for the work.

Willie Poinsette and Scott Greenfield introduced themselves as new members.

Karen Shawcross asked to receive an update on the 4% Private Activity Bond.

Emily Lieb, Affordable Housing Program Manager, Metro, noted that there is state legislation underway to allocate PAB allocation authority to OHCS. Staff did not have information about the current status of the legislation. She noted that significant progress had been made toward getting all current projects in the pipeline on a good path with closing dates.

Mara Romero added that partners for the Walker Road Project and others are also working to ensure the Private Activity Bond legislation moves forward and are confident in its passing.

Members approved the meeting summary from December 2022.

Meeting Summary

Conflict of interest declaration

Co-chair Lee shared a potential conflict of interest.

Andrea Sanchez shared a potential conflict of interest.

Public comment

No public comment was received.

Annual review process overview

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, presented an overview of the Committee's review process and timeline.

Preview of equitable contracting and workforce outcomes

Emily Lieb, Metro, shared the purpose of outcomes reporting.

Jimmy Oporta, Housing Analyst, Metro, presented on post-construction outcomes on Certification Office for Business Inclusion and Diversity (COBID) contracting and workforce participation. The seven completed projects have met COBID contracting goals.

Kira Cador asked how workforce outcome data were collected for jurisdictions that had no data on workforce goals.

Jimmy Oporta, Metro, replied that those jurisdictions are currently developing their goals, but are collecting demographic information.

Emily Lieb, Metro, added that the City of Portland has established workforce goals and is tracking their progress, whereas some other jurisdictions and projects are committed to tracking but have no established goals.

Karen Shawcross asked if it was possible to track what job training programs were providing workers and apprentices.

Jimmy Oporta, Metro, responded that they don't currently track this but can look into it. Metro has workforce diversity and training experts the housing team can meet with.

Emily Lieb, Metro, clarified that the data does not capture where apprenticeships are coming from, but does capture the trades of COBID-certified firms. Tracking where apprenticeships originate is beyond the current expertise and capacity of Metro's housing team.

Andrea Sanchez asked if Affordable Housing Bond (Bond) projects can help get firms COBID certified.

Jimmy Oporta, Metro, replied that the State of Oregon requires Minority, Women, and Emerging Small Businesses (MWESB) reports for each project quarterly. They direct qualifying firms to the COBID office to obtain certifications. He added that last year Metro offered technical assistance funding to jurisdictions, and Washington County, Beaverton, and Hillsboro used that funding to contract with LatinoBuilt to get 10 firms COBID certified.

Metro Councilor Nolan suggested that the Committee consider recommending workforce goals to Metro Council if it's deemed a priority.

Meeting Summary

Juan Ugarte Ahumada asked if the data could detail actual dollar amounts per demographic.

Jimmy Oporta, Metro, replied that to get the dollar amount per demographic, Metro would have to ask how much each worker is getting paid. He said they can explore what it would take to add that to the data collection form.

Emily Lieb, Metro, added that the data collection form was originally created to align with the City of Portland's existing tracking form.

Juan Ugarte Ahumada emphasized the importance of ensuring people of color are provided equal opportunities in the field and that the program should encourage folks to enter the workforce at all levels of pay, not only the lowest job classification.

Co-chair Jenny Lee agreed with Juan Ugarte Ahumada and suggested tracking job classifications to collect a similar data indicator.

Emily Lieb, Metro, shared that there are barriers to tracking data and that any additional collection should serve a purpose. She asked the committee what level of data is most helpful.

Kira Cador replied that tracking job classification would be helpful since it is easier to track and a strong indicator.

Nicole Stingh noted that the current amount of soft costs being paid to COBID firms is low and suggested increasing spending in that category to support higher-wage opportunities.

Andrea Sanchez stated this data relies on reporting from COBID-certified subcontractors. She asked the Committee to consider the burden on small businesses to provide this data.

Jimmy Oporta, Metro, replied that increasing Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) participation is a larger question for the industry and that there is more work needed to ensure these trades are well paid.

Co-chair Steve Rudman stated that the Committee should consider ways to improve racial equity in the workforce as a recommendation. He suggested that Metro's Construction Careers Pathway Project could be a model to move work forward.

Brandon Culbertson noted the significant absence of Native American contractors and stated the need for culturally specific outreach. He asked if the data included projects that were completed in partnership with the Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA).

Jimmy Oporta, Metro, agreed that the absence was prominent and shared that NAYA partnership projects accounted for the 1% shown in the data.

Preview of occupancy outcomes and discussion of methodology

Alison Wicks, Program Coordinator, Metro, shared the six projects that have reported preliminary occupancy outcomes. She detailed the occupancy outcomes methodology and data.

Scott Greenfield asked what percentage of the Metro area is BIPOC and what would be a successful percentage target for the Bond. He asked if reporting outcomes are incentivized and if there are tenant-based impact services built into these communities.

Meeting Summary

Alison Wicks, Metro, replied that the Portland Metro Area is 34% BIPOC based on 2020 Census Data. She added that she will follow up and reach out to onsite providers and managers to better understand what the barriers are to collecting optional occupant-level demographic data.

Emily Lieb, Metro, added that the low-income BIPOC percentage in the Metro area is 38% and asked what would be the most helpful regional metric.

Nicole Stingh said low-income and low-income housing cost burden data would be beneficial.

Melissa Arnold, Metro, shared that there is an opportunity to reach out to providers and offer support and improve the data collection form. She noted that it's important to understand from a property manager's perspective what the barriers are and what support would be helpful.

Mara Romero noted that building community trust is important since some folks distrust demographic data collection due to past harm. She suggested reaching out to organizations that had a 100% completion rate to understand their collection methods. She added that it could be helpful to explain why the data is important and offer one-on-one assistance to those filling out the forms.

Karen Shawcross asked what can be done to collect data.

Emily Lieb, Metro, replied that the next step is to speak to service providers to ask that question. She noted that this was the first round of data collection, so they were not surprised by lower response rate and want to understand what support is needed to improve reporting moving forward.

Co-chair Jenny Lee said it could be helpful to contextualize data in annual reports with features and amenities such as access to transportation. She also asked what the data form looked like and if they were tracking data to assess outreach strategy, such as asking how occupants learned about the opportunity.

Emily Lieb, Metro, responded that the reporting form was included in the December meeting packet and referrals are included in the form.

Melissa Arnold, Metro, added that RealD Data is the standard but there is a gap between what service providers and contractors collect. She shared that they are working on identifying what collection practice is best.

Andrea Sanchez shared that living in affordable housing is not easy and tenants are often disturbed, so Metro needs to consider who the data is for, who it benefits, and who it harms.

Nicole Stingh stated that data is an impactful way to look at lease-up strategies and to ensure that efforts are meeting their intentions. She suggested compensating tenants for their time in completing the form.

Co-chair Steve Rudman said it's important to identify what data points are nice to have versus a necessity. He added that Metro shouldn't be alone in this effort and that the jurisdictions and property owners should be involved.

Meeting Summary

Kira Cador noted that there will always be pushback from property managers and it's important to communicate how this data impacts project performance.

Mara Romero shared that the form should include accessible unit requests and placement.

Emily Lieb, Metro, circled back to her question on what regional metrics would be useful. She noted that Nicole Stingh suggested looking at housing cost burden and that Metro can pull that metric at either the neighborhood or regional scale.

Nicole Stingh shared that the intent would be to look at renter households.

Andrea Sanchez stated that every project is required to have an affirmative marketing plan that targets specific households that are least likely to apply, which may be useful. She noted that outreach is mainly through word of mouth.

Brandon Culbertson shared his support for collecting culturally specific data. He expressed that the Bond was advertised as a diversity and equity initiative and outreach and engagement should reflect that.

Karen Shawcross agreed with Brandon Culbertson and added that this investment needs to go to those who need it.

Questions for jurisdictions discussion

Co-chair Steve Rudman stated that Metro staff will share a few questions with the jurisdictions ahead of the March meetings. He shared the three questions the Committee asked the jurisdictions last year and asked if these questions were still relevant. He expressed that he thinks the first two questions are still important to ask.

Andrea Sanchez said it's important to understand how projects are doing with high-interest rates and the Committee should ask the jurisdictions what project support is needed, if there are financing gaps that need to be addressed, and if any policy changes are needed.

Nicole Stingh agreed with Andrea Sanchez and noted that the market is volatile and there are supply chain issues. She suggested asking what the jurisdictions' plans are to address the market, and how can Metro and the State can help.

Co-chair Steve Rudman noted that the cash call system could be improved and reflected that one question shared with the jurisdictions should include project impacts and needs around market volatility.

Kira Cador shared that the lack of cash call funds, or uses, is primarily related to the increased interest rate as construction debt is floating rate and exceeds what the budget anticipated.

Mara Romero stated that the lease-up question is still valid, and jurisdictions could discuss the process in their presentations.

Scott Greenfield asked about Bond strategies to address households experiencing homelessness.

Meeting Summary

Co-chair Steve Rudman replied that the Supportive Housing Services (SHS) fund is addressing that issue. He shared that the co-chairs of this committee meet with the SHS committee chairs to discuss alignment.

Emily Lieb, Metro, shared that the Bond does have a goal to serve households at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The current direction is to integrate SHS and Bond funding.

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West, reflected that questions one and two from last year seem to still be relevant and that there will be a third question on project needs and impacts around the current market.

Andrea Sanchez noted that the third question should include how jurisdictions are addressing problems and how the Committee can help.

Mara Romero shared that this is an opportunity to build relationships between tenants and property managers.

Next steps

Ben Duncan, Kearns & West thanked everyone for the great meeting.

Next steps include:

- Metro to share jurisdictional reports
- Metro to follow up with property managers and service providers on data collection practices
- Metro to share draft questions for the jurisdictions before the March meetings
- The Committee to consider culturally specific outreach methods
- The Committee to consider what success targets look like
- The Committee to consider ways to improve racial equity in the workforce, including tracking job classifications as a data point

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.