

Council work session agenda

Tuesday, September 24, 2024 11:30 AM Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber;
<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> Webinar ID:
615 079 992 or 888-475-4499 (toll free)

This meeting will be held electronically and in person at the Metro Regional Center

Council Chamber.

You can join the meeting on your computer or other device by using this link:

<https://zoom.us/j/615079992> (Webinar ID: 615 079 992)

11:30 Call to Order and Roll Call

11:30 Work Session Topics:

11:35 Future of Regional Housing and Supportive Housing [24-6134](#)
Services Measure

Presenter(s): Council President Peterson, Metro Council

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

12:35 Chief Operating Officer Communication

12:40 Councilor Communication

12:45 Adjourn

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បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការអ្នកបកប្រែភាសានៅពេលអង្គ

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Future of Regional Housing and Supportive Housing Services Measure
Work Session Topic

Metro Council Work Session
Tuesday, September 24, 2024

REGIONAL HOUSING AND HOMELESS SERVICES FUNDING: IMPROVING OVERSIGHT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND IMPACT

Date: Sept. 19, 2024

Department: Metro Council President,
Office of the Chief Operating Officer
Work Session Date: Sept. 24, 2024

Presenters: Council President Lynn
Peterson (she/her), Chief Operating
Officer Marissa Madrigal (she/ella)

Length: 60 minutes

Prepared by: Craig Beebe,
craig.beebe@oregonmetro.gov

ISSUE STATEMENT

Metro has heard widespread desires for improving oversight, accountability and impact of regional affordable housing and supportive housing services investments.

ACTION REQUESTED

Council will identify priorities for addressing shared values and provide guidance on shaping proposed reforms for future Council action.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

At a work session on January 11, 2024, the Metro Council directed COO Madrigal and staff to advance five primary outcomes in the development of a recommendation for future housing and SHS funding and implementation. These outcomes included:

- **Urgency:** Identifying and addressing real, persistent housing instability and its effects on communities in the region
- **Stability:** Supporting the stability of existing housing and homelessness funding and programs in the region, including the 2018 Metro Affordable Housing Bond and the 2020 Supportive Housing Services measure
- **Pragmatism:** Recognizing and being responsive to public attitudes, priorities and experiences with these issues and the region's work to address them
- **Equity:** Advancing Metro's racial equity goals through engagement, decision-making and assessment of potential investments and structures
- **Accountability and transparency:** Learning from past measures and community/stakeholder feedback to improve implementation and tracking impacts

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- What are Council's priorities for potential reforms that address widespread themes of input from partners and stakeholders in addressing housing and homelessness?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Stagnant wages, rising costs and insufficient housing supply are all contributing to an affordable housing and homelessness crisis in the greater Portland region. Despite some

progress with voter-approved investments through Metro’s 2018 Affordable Housing Bond and the Supportive Housing Services program (SHS) created by voters in 2020, there is much more to do to address these challenges.

Beginning in early 2024, Metro conducted six months of engagement with a stakeholder advisory table, jurisdictional partners, housing and service providers, and community members, to explore potential options and directions for how regional investments can best address a persistent affordable housing and homelessness crisis. This input was incorporated into a Chief Operating Officer Recommendation received by the Metro Council in early July.

Since the release of the COO’s recommendation and subsequent Metro Council work sessions on July 25 and August 1, Council President Peterson has engaged in repeated conversations with county and city leadership, as well as key organizational advocates in regional housing/homelessness and business. These conversations have explored potential areas of agreement, as well as understanding concerns and needs for the future.

At this work session, Councilors will review key areas of feedback that informed the COO Recommendation and that have recurred in conversations with stakeholders and partners since that time. Councilors will be asked to discuss priorities and options for addressing widespread desires for improving regional investments’ impact, efficiency and accountability.

POLICY OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

The Metro Council has several options for advancing its priorities for the future of housing and SHS investments and governance. These include adopting some changes via resolution and/or ordinance, as well as proposing changes to voters in a future ballot measure. Any change to SHS uses or sunset must be approved by voters.

Pending Council direction, staff are prepared to develop legislation and a potential voter measure package for future discussion.

BACKGROUND

The COO Recommendation includes a range of broad and specific actions to continue sustainable funding for affordable housing and supportive housing services, and to improve accountability and impact of these investments to continue addressing the homelessness and housing crisis in the greater Portland region.

Among other details, the COO Recommendation proposed that Council ask voters to expand the uses of SHS funding to allow for investments in deeply affordable housing; extend the current 2030 sunset of the SHS taxes; create a reformed, independent regional governance structure and clearer accountability mechanisms; and adjust the SHS personal income tax to ensure it remains focused on higher-earning households and to reduce tax burdens.

Most of these recommendations are supported by a wide range of stakeholders, practitioners and the general public.

At a work session on July 25, Metro Council President Peterson led the Council in a discussion of the COO Recommendation. In particular, the Council discussed desired outcomes for improved partnership and accountability between Metro and county implementation partners, and several potential oversight committee models to explore. Council also discussed potential options for increasing or indexing the SHS personal income tax threshold.

On August 1, Council received two informational presentations on aspects of the COO Recommendation: the purpose and potential of key performance indicators (KPIs), and potential the revenue implications of different tax policy options.

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? **x Yes** " No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? " Yes **x No**

Materials following this page were distributed at the meeting.

Metro Council Work Session

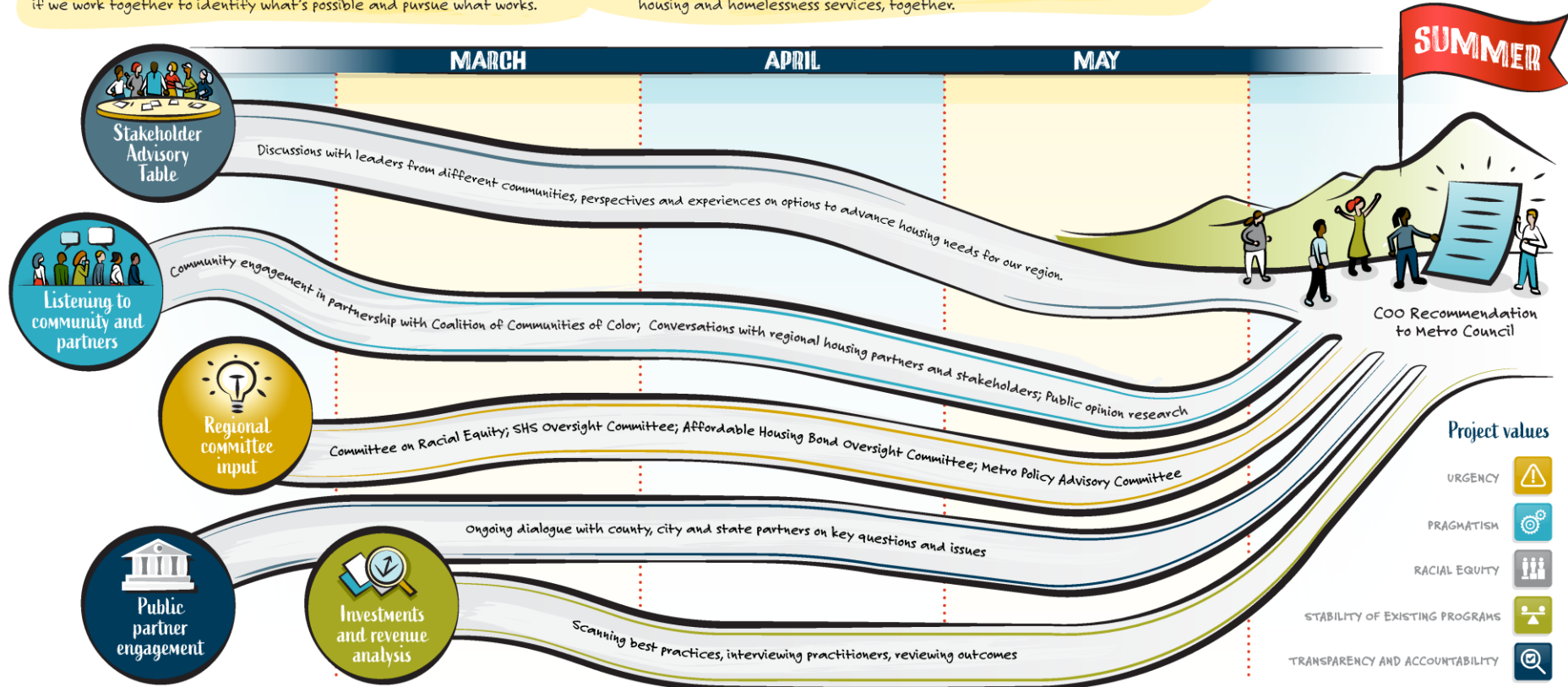


Path to a regional housing recommendation



The Portland region is facing a persistent housing and homelessness crisis. We have made progress, but there is more to do. We know there are solutions if we work together to identify what's possible and pursue what works.

In spring 2024, Metro convened a conversation with stakeholders, partners and communities across the region to explore how to keep making progress on housing and homelessness services, together.



What we heard: Stakeholder process

Most stakeholders, community, voters support:

- Ability to use SHS dollars for both housing and services
- Long-term certainty – extend 2030 SHS sunset
- Improving oversight, transparency, accountability

Many stakeholders, community, voters support:

- Changes to SHS personal income tax thresholds, rate

What we heard: Improving oversight

Stakeholders, community members and voters indicate that these are their top priorities for governance:

- Clearer outcomes and regional vision
- Better experiences – providers and community
- Clearer roles and ability to change when needed
- More efficient decision-making and spending

Refresher: Where we're at

July 9: COO Recommendation released

July 25, Aug. 1: Council work sessions

- Clear desire for momentum
- Recognition of needs to improve oversight

August/September: Talking with partners

What we've heard:

Clearer outcomes

- Need for a single, shared regional vision: What are we trying to achieve?
- Key performance metrics: Build to vision and inform decision-making
- Clearly showing what we're achieving

What we've heard:

Better experiences

- More consistent contracting, procurement, services across the region
- Keep population focus, listen to community
- Address city partners' needs

What we've heard:

Stronger accountability

- Regional challenge needs a regional program, and robust regional oversight
- Clearer roles, lines of accountability
- The ability to correct when needed

What we've heard:

Greater efficiency

- More streamlined processes to meet the urgency of need
- Closely tied to clearer roles and authorities

Proposal: What we need most

- A clear, regional North Star
- Regional action plan: The whole picture
- Forward-looking budgets and allocation
- Clearly-defined Metro Council role

Questions for discussion

What reflections do you have on these areas?

What is the highest priority to solve?

What characteristics are most important in a governance model?

What should be Metro Council's role?



July 29th, 2024

Councilor Ashton Simpson
Metro
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Re: Concerns about assistance from the JOHS

Dear Councilor Simpson,

Thank you so much for your concern regarding the assistance, or lack thereof, we have been receiving from the Joint Office of Homeless Services. To prepare to send you this letter, I went back through 4 years of notes, emails and documents. The stack on my desk is over 5 inches high. For me to give you a detailed list of east county's frustrations with the JOHS would take me days, and after reading through it all, I am too depressed to spend that much time on the issue! But to your basic question, are the east county cities happy/satisfied/comfortable with the JOHS help out here? Absolutely not. I am not suggesting that they don't have lots of great people over there who care about providing aid and assistance to the homeless and those struggling to get stable housing, but they are stuck in a system that is failing them, area residents, and the homeless.

Overall, the JOHS is afflicted with imbedded systems of incompetence. We relate to them specific needs, they say they are working on it, and then nothing comes of it. The organization seems more concerned with talking about the problem of homelessness, and not doing anything meaningful to solve the problem. Let me give you some examples.

One of the most obvious signs of the homelessness problem are people living on the streets and in the woods. To kick them out, or give them a criminal ticket, does not solve the problem. They simply move around, and the problem remains. To stop this vicious and dangerous pattern, we have constantly asked the JOHS to establish safe camping/pods/RV parking locations for them to go to. This not only is safer, but they would have more access to resources and social workers who can build relationships with them and help direct them to the most appropriate services. In August of 2021 the Director of the JOHS told me they were working diligently to establish "an outdoor shelter program" in east County. 4 years later, nothing! All we get is excuses.

Second, a critical part of assisting those struggling with homelessness is that they develop relationships with trained "navigators" who can get to know them, their individual "issues", and become trusted. If you ask the MCSO's HOPE team, they have been literally begging the JOHS for help in this regard for 5-6 years. This was also a specific request I discussed with the Director of the JOHS 4 years ago. I was told that, "I'll get back to you ASAP on a timeline for hiring the nav(igator) team". Since then this issue has come up literally monthly with the JOHS. While, for a few months, we see sporadic work in the field by "contract" agencies, they then vanish never to be heard from again. This pattern has continued for 4 years. This week I confirmed this with

MCSO's HOPE team (our ONLY consistent resource to help the homeless in east county, outside of the City of Gresham). They called it a "hodgepodge approach" to providing any "boots on the ground" help for the homeless. The JOHS relies upon various contract NGOs to provide navigators and they come and go like the wind in east county.

Almost 2 years ago, on September 28th, 2022, we thought we had a break through. On that day the 3 east county cities had a meeting at Wood Village with the JOHS and several NGOs and their staff. We were introduced to about 5 people who we were told would consistently provide navigator help in east county. In less than 6 months they vanished, never to be seen again. We have heard various excuses over the years for why navigators never stick around. They either don't like coming out "this far", they leave employment due to low wages, or they don't "feel comfortable" working with the HOPE team, i.e. they don't like law enforcement. For years I have told the JOHS, and our Commissioner, that the whole model of relying on non-profits, on contract and barely accountable to the County, is a failed model. I am not alone, countless news articles, and even government audits, have confirmed the weakness of this model for providing effective services.

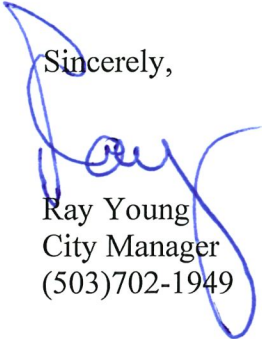
Thirdly, during the last 4 years we have constantly asked for supportive or other types of housing facilities in east county. Currently, other than the City of Gresham, the JOHS has no shelter type housing for homeless individuals east of 181st. In 2022 they began looking at Cook Plaza on Stark in Gresham. The County finally purchased the vacant building in December of 2022. Several times since purchasing the building they promised to figure out what to do with it as a shelter. Now, 19 months after closing on the purchase, they finally have the basics of a plan for the building. Yep, it took 19 months to even come up with a plan; and they made no effort to seek input from the 3 east county cities on its use. They now plan on not even starting construction to modify the building for homeless use until 2025, and it will not be finished until at least December of 2025. Do the math, that is exactly 3 years after they acquired it before it will be a long-needed help to the homeless. (they have used it a couple of times for an emergency site during freezing weather or heat events, but nothing to help long-term, chronic homelessness)

Finally, of many other things, the JOHS never cares to actually respond to our expressed needs. First, for two years the 3 cities have published and provided a proposal for our own east county homeless office. Patterned after the successful one Gresham has and which is partially funded by the County. The County has pretty much ignored this ask. The ask is only a million dollars a year, out of a current budget of \$394 million (which historically they have not spent all of!) Instead, 6 months ago, without east county even asking for it, they hired a "East County Coordinator" in the joint office to "help" us in some undefined way. Then, again, without even asking the 3 east county cities, they tossed in \$300,000 in this year's budget for "Program #30308B - Housing Placement & Retention - East County Homeless Services". We are working with the County now to how to spend these funds. But it is already clear that it can not be used for our two most pressing needs-consistent navigation support and congregate sites for camping and RV's.

There is so much more to say. But it is clear, Troutdale, Fairview and Wood Village, and the areas east of here, like 1000 Acres, feel completely unsupported when it comes to helping the

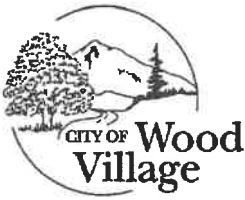
chronic homeless living on our streets and in our woods. We would appreciate any assistance you can give in correcting these concerns and getting the County to actually provide the services we need in east county.

Sincerely,



Ray Young
City Manager
(503)702-1949

Cc Mayor Randy Lauer



Mayor
John C. Miner

Council President
Jairo Rios-Campos

Councilors
Mark Clark

Dara Tan

Patricia Smith

Councilor Ashton Simpson
Metro
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

July 29, 2024

Re: Joint Office of Homeless Services Satisfaction

Councilor Simpson,

Thank you for your interest in learning more in how the cities of Wood Village, Fairview, and Troutdale are being served by the County's Joint Office of Homeless Services. As we have talked in the past, it is hard to feel that the Joint Office effectively represents and responds to the three East County cities in a meaningful capacity. Even the recently adopted Homelessness Response Action Plan leaves out the three cities. The term "East County" is used a couple of times, and refers to a voting member of the new oversight board. The cities are not included in any specific action plans or goals. The cities are not even named as existing in the county.

When the supportive services measure passed in 2020, there was much excitement about the newly available resources that would be used to help some of our most vulnerable and in need community members. Instead, it feels that nothing has changed. The cities do not have access or referral ability for even the simplest needs such as rent assistance. If someone were to walk in or call City Hall for help with rent assistance, we have no information to provide other than 211. According to 211's website, there are only three agencies east of I-205 that handle rent assistance. Of those three agencies, only one is east of 102nd. One agency for rent assistance in an area of over 150,000 people when you include Gresham.

The cities heavily rely on the Multnomah County Sheriff's Office HOPE Team for our daily outreach and service needs. The HOPE Team is only able to provide services Monday through Thursday 8am-4pm. There are no evening or weekend services. The cities have struggled to coordinate outreach and response with the Joint Office and its contracted partners with the HOPE Team. Whether it is from a lack of providers in this region, to resistance in working with the HOPE Team, the outcome is the same. It is an uncoordinated hodgepodge of services that tends to weaken connections and the legitimacy of what little in programming we have. The largest issue remains the lack of shelter, safe rest, and safe parking locations in our area. We often hear of unhoused people willing to go to a site in our area, but we do not have any sites. There is not one site in any of our three cities, and the few sites in Gresham tend to be reserved or held by the non-profit outreach workers contracted by the Joint Office.

It feels that the three cities have tried and tried to communicate the needs of our community members. We have provided comprehensive proposals, one-off pilot concepts, and locations for services. Yet we remain unserved. I am at a loss for words and worst of all, I do not know how to get help to those most in need. Thank you for your continued support and advocacy.

Greg Dirks: City Manager