

# **Metro**

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**Metro**

## **Minutes**

**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)**

**Council work session**

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**

Council President Peterson called the Work Session to order at 11:31 a.m.

**Present:** 6 - Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Councilor Mary Nolan, Duncan Hwang, Christine Lewis, Ashton Simpson, and Lynn Peterson

**Excused:** 1 - Juan Carlos Gonzalez

**11:30 Work Session Topics:**

11:35 Future of Regional Housing and Supportive Housing Services Measure

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)

Council President Peterson introduced COO Marissa Madrigal to begin the presentation on the Future of Regional Housing and Supportive Housing Services Measure.

Staff pulled up the Regional Housing and Supportive Services: Governance Discussion slides to present to Council.

*Presentation*

COO Madrigal reported that over six months, Metro engaged with many stakeholders, experts, and regional partners to capture a broad range of perspectives. COO Madrigal shared that stakeholders and community voters expressed support for continued investment in homeless services and affordable housing, expanding investments instead of instituting a new property tax, and adjusting the SHS personal income tax thresholds to account for inflation.

The key themes for improvement that emerged from those conversations included clearer regional vision and roles, better experiences for providers and recipients, and more efficient decision-making and spending to achieve better outcomes.

Council President Peterson emphasized the growing housing challenges in the region and reported that unsheltered homelessness throughout the Metro region had tripled since 2020. Council President Peterson expressed that the current system of governance is insufficient for addressing the problem.

Council President Peterson outlined four main goals for improving governance:

- Clearer outcomes: need for a single, shared regional vision, articulating expectations, performance metrics
- Better experiences: more consistency throughout the region, inclusion of lived experience, response to community needs, better communication with cities
- Stronger accountability: robust oversight, clearer authority roles, ability to make course corrections
- Greater efficiency: establishing streamlined processes that match the urgency of need

The key proposals:

- Identify a “North Star” for the future of housing and supportive services, including a regional action plan, forward-looking budgets, and a defined role for the Metro Council
- Establish a committee of elected officials, community members, and experts from various fields
- Work with cities in a different capacity on the supportive housing services measure

Council President Peterson concluded by providing the Council with questions for guiding discussion.

*Council Discussion*

Councilor Lewis highlighted the inconsistencies between counties regarding the accounting and reimbursement for specific housing services and recommended more unified standards for providers and supportive services.

Councilor Nolan mentioned that 43% of people living in the region are renters and encouraged accurate representation and a commitment to racial equity among the individuals responsible for overseeing the success of the project.

Councilor Rosenthal remarked that his sense of a North Star is reducing chronic homelessness to the bare minimum and to prevent people at-risk from becoming homeless. Councilor Rosenthal advised that there be more formal input from service providers in the process.

Councilor Simpson raised concerns over the barriers to access faced by cities and smaller jurisdictions in the region, as well as the lack of communication about available services. Councilor Simpson shared letters from the cities of Troutdale and Wood Village demonstrating the need for better resources and funding in those communities.

Councilor Hwang echoed concerns about service providers and local jurisdictions having difficulty accessing resources. He noted the disconnect between their day-to-day work and high-level policy decisions and the importance of bridging this gap. Councilor Hwang acknowledged that service providers and housing developers are both part of the solution and emphasized the need to avoid battles when

allocating resources.

Council President Peterson expressed that deeper work regarding enrollment in the system for unhoused people, sheltered or unsheltered, would be necessary. Councilor President Peterson suggested system-mapping and developing clear definitions and guidelines at all levels of government.

Councilor Rosenthal noted that it is difficult to assess the expectations of unhoused people who seek support services.

Councilor Nolan advised that Metro aim to achieve functional zero homelessness by 2034 and develop a structure of governance that is transparent and easy to understand. Councilor Nolan added that the City of Portland should be actively engaged in the process given its population and proportion of homeless residents.

COO Marissa Madrigal summarized the recurring theme that conflicts often arise from ambiguous expectations and a lack of clearly defined roles. COO Madrigal requested that councilors share their initial thoughts on improving the governance structure to address that issue.

Council President Peterson recommended facilitating a conversation with different stakeholders to determine regional standards and expectations for a timeline and services. Council President Peterson remarked that current system of prioritization lacks clear guidelines and conveyed the need to align expectations and procedural goals.

COO Madrigal reviewed the specific categories of recommendations for governance and identified a

foundational lack of prioritization across the region as a focus area for improvement.

Councilor Hwang advised that the “North Star” include more tools for Metro to promote accountability. Councilor Hwang expressed that the current system is too decentralized and encouraged the Council to take on an ownership role when developing the new system.

COO Madrigal remarked that the program is not a limitless resource, even though the need is almost limitless and emphasized the need for better prioritization of investments.

Council President Peterson proposed improving the flow of information and government structure within the Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs).

Councilor Simpson identified Metro as the ultimate authority and spoke to the importance of compliance and enforcement and added that non-compliance is funds sitting in an account while people are on the street.

COO Madrigal noted upfront expectation-setting for costs and resources as an important element.

Councilor Nolan conveyed a need for confidence in Metro's goals for the project and being succinct about desired outcomes.

Councilor Rosenthal remarked that supportive services and housing are inseparable projects and would need to be addressed in tandem.

Council President Peterson stated that there was not yet

consensus on priorities and that an exploration of financial scenarios would follow the governance conversation.

Seeing no further discussion, Council President Peterson moved on to the next agenda item.

**12:35 Chief Operating Officer Communication**

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

- Thanked everyone who attended the Metro mixer in Wood Village
- Thanked Senator Merkley for visiting Organics Bay at WPES Metro Central Transfer Station with Councilor Lewis
- WPES leadership expressed appreciation for the proposed federal budget note to help fund a food waste package

**12:40 Councilor Communication**

Councilors provided updates on the following meetings and events:

- Councilor Rosenthal reported on the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) meeting: implementation of procedures for ensuring election safety and security
- Councilor Simpson reported on the Travel Portland Board saying goodbye to CEO Jeff Miller
- Councilor Simpson reported that the GPI Sports Summit highlighted the importance of transportation and sports tourism for the region

**12:45 Adjourn**

There being no further business, Council President Peterson adjourned the Metro Work Session at 1:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Emma McIntosh*

Emma McIntosh, Legislative Assistant