

Metro

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

Minutes

Tuesday, January 24, 2017

2:00 PM

Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

Council work session

2:00 Call to Order and Roll Call

Councilors Present: Council President Tom Hughes and
Councilors Craig Dirksen, Bob Stacey, Sam
Chase, Carlotta Collette, and Kathryn
Harrington

Councilors Excused: Councilor Shirley Craddick

Council President Tom Hughes called the Metro Council
work session to order at 2:03 p.m.

2:05 Chief Operating Officer Communication

Ms. Martha Bennett, Metro Chief Operating Officer,
provided the Council with a draft copy of the 2017 Metro
Council legislative priorities. Ms. Bennett also announced
that Mr. Shawn Fleek of OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon
would be part of a lunch and learn at the Metro Regional
Center on January 25. Mr. Fleek was to discuss the
environmental justice movement in Oregon. This event was
part of Metro's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) work.

Work Session Topics:

- 2:10 Update on the Division Transit Project Locally Preferred Alternative and
Amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan

Councilor Stacey introduced the Powell-Division
Transportation Project presentation. He discussed his time
spent on the project's Steering Committee and how
meaningful he found the experience of engaging the
community in the committee process. He noted that the
Steering Committee process led to the Locally Preferred
Alternative (LPA).

Ms. Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, Metro Investment Areas Project
Manager, noted that the Division Project was about more
than the transportation component; a corridor-wide
approach also addressed issues of safety, active
transportation, community development, and affordable

housing.

Ms. Noelle Dobson, Metro Senior Public Affairs Specialist, spoke to the community engagement on the project. The Steering Committee sought community representation and strived for multicultural outreach. There were 22 members on the Steering Committee, many of whom were community members. Ms. Dobson highlighted that this was a new model for a transportation steering committee. New voices were brought to the table and as a result, the goals and objectives set were driven by community needs. A new method of decision making was also employed on the committee; red, yellow, and green cards were utilized in a consensus-based approach that led to committee dialog and problem-solving. Ms. Dobson also noted that the wide range of community voices engaged meant that discussions moved beyond the transportation project and included other issues of concern to community members such as economic development, community stabilization, affordable housing, and local jobs.

Ms. Mrs-O'Hara delved into the corridor-wide strategy, which intended to advance transportation and efficiency along with wellbeing and equity. There were three components to the corridor-wide strategy: transit investment, equitable housing and community development, and safety and active transportation. She informed the Council that equitable housing and community development initiatives were being led by the local jurisdictions of Portland and Gresham; Metro helped these jurisdictions by providing them with Community Planning and Development Program (CPDG) grants. Metro had also purchased a vacant furniture store on the corner of Division and 82nd Avenue that would be used as a community space. The Division Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) LPA was part of the transit investment.

Ms. Mrs-O'Hara explained the need for transit improvements along the corridor. She noted that

Powell-Division had a high transit demand and high ridership. Demand exceeded capacity; there were passenger pass-ups, standees, and ridership was only expected to increase. She also pointed out that this was one of the most diverse parts of the Metro region. She noted that light rail would not fit in this particular corridor. The BRT was a different mode that would increase reliability and speed of transit while maintaining the existing character of the streets.

Ms. Mros-O'Hara explained to the Council that the Powell-Division Corridor LPA identified the mode, route, and station locations of the transit project. The BRT would travel from downtown Portland to Gresham Transit Center. While the Tilikum Crossing was the LPA's preferred method of crossing the Willamette River, frequent blockages by Union Pacific that could potentially impact the reliability of the BRT was a consideration. Ms. Mros-O'Hara informed the Council that TriMet was working with Union Pacific, the City of Portland, and Metro, before making a final decision on whether the BRT would cross the Tilikum Crossing or the Hawthorne Bridge.

Ms. Mros-O'Hara highlighted the project features. The number of stops on the new BRT line would be reduced from the current number of stops on the 4-Division bus line. New articulated 60-foot long buses would allow faster boarding and carry more people. Improved stations would feature weather protections and lighting. Traffic signal priority would allow buses to communicate with lights and hold greens. Upgraded sidewalks and improved street crossings would improve safety. She informed the Council that community members had requested more North-South service and by replacing the 4-Division bus line with BRT, the hours saved would be available to invest in other bus lines. She elaborated on the improved travel times of the BRT; it would be about 15 to 20 percent faster than line 4-Division between 82nd avenue and Pioneer Courthouse. The BRT

would reduce travel time by approximately 10 minutes.

Ms. Mros-O'Hara shared that the adoption of the LPA was unanimous. The City of Gresham, City of Portland, TriMet, and Multnomah County all adopted the LPA, and the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) submitted a letter of support. She discussed The City of Portland's conditions of approval of the LPA, as well as the stipulations of the Mount Hood Community College (MHCC) and Eastside agreement. She discussed the project timeline moving forward. Project highlights included that TriMet was to take the lead on design and engagement, Metro was to adopt the LPA and amend the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) in June of 2017, and project construction would take place from 2019-2021.

Council Discussion:

Councilor Harrington asked how many miles the BRT would extend. Ms. Mros-O'Hara informed her that it would cover 12 miles. Councilor Harrington also inquired about the difference between the LPA adopted by agencies in 2016 and the LPA adopted by Metro in June of 2017. Ms. Mros-O'Hara explained that an in-depth environmental analysis needed to be conducted before the Metro Council adopted the LPA. Councilor Chase was curious to know how eliminating stops from the BRT line impacted efficiency and ridership. He also noted the impact of transit costs on the communities of color and low income communities that the BRT would serve. Council President Tom Hughes asked about the frequency of transit to MHCC. He noted that the amount of public involvement in the project had revealed some points of concern and dissatisfaction among community members, such as individuals associated with MHCC being upset that the BRT line was not going to reach the college.

3:00 Introducing the Community Placemaking Program

Ms. Elissa Gertler, Metro Planning and Development Director, introduced the Planning Department's 2040 vision,

which involved effectively responding to growth and change. The 2040 growth model focused on land and infrastructure, funding and financing, policies and regulations, and community and cultural capital. The Placemaking program, to be discussed in further detail, would be part of the community and cultural capital segment of the growth plan. Ms. Gertler spoke about the Placemaking program as an evolution of Metro's former Enterprising Places program.

Ms. Tyler Frisbee, Metro Policy Development Manager, informed the Council that the Policy and Innovation Team, of which she was apart, brought resources in the form of grant funding and partnerships to the Planning Department. The Placemaking program was focused specifically on partnership building, and would entail working with community members to bring their community visions to fruition.

Ms. Dana Lucero, Metro Policy and Innovation Team member, introduced the Community Placemaking program as an evolution of the Enterprising Places District Transformation grant program. District Transformation grants formed in response to declining investments in downtowns and main streets. Initial outreach focused on storefront improvement grants and was so successful that limited focus was placed on District Transformation grants. Since then, Metro had adopted an Equity Strategy. A Community Placemaking program would incorporate best practices of the placemaking field as well as community engagement, which Ms. Lucero stated was a necessary component in authentic placemaking. Ms. Lucero noted that the Placemaking program would prioritize projects that involved and benefited communities of color or locations where Metro was already actively engaged. She explained that an advisory group with expertise not only in placemaking, but also in social justice, community development, urban planning, and public engagement, would be created.

Ms. Lucero explained placemaking. Placemaking was a process that repurposed public places, activated streets, and enlivened spaces with art and activity. It could be temporary, or become permanent. It could spark dialog and raise awareness. Ultimately, placemaking fostered quality spaces that helped people feel connected to place and community. Placemaking occurred in public spaces that were accessible to everyone, fulfilled community needs, highlighted local and/or cultural assets, and brought diverse community members together. Metro's program intended to support and stabilize communities, facilitate social interaction, and improve quality of life. The program would provide grants and technical assistance for projects that met necessary criteria.

Ms. Lucero outlined the criteria for successful grant proposals. Successful proposals would: address a community challenge or opportunity and involve those most impacted; be a project which the public contributed to, engaged in, and benefitted from; be consistent with plans for the future; enhance livability; provide an innovative event, activity, or destination; use art as a tool for engagement and change; and enhance opportunity or benefit communities of color. Ms. Lucero noted that the Equity Strategy was being built into the criteria for the project selection. Grants would range from five to twenty-five thousand dollars, and the goal was to have two grant cycles a year.

Ms. Lucero discussed placemaking and equity; the Planning and Development Department was working with DEI to embed the Equity Strategy into the work plan. Next steps were to identify potential advisory group members and grant applicants, review the grant application and grant guide, develop evaluation metrics, finalize the work plan, establish an advisory group, and raise program awareness. The target deadline for grant applications was early spring, and project implementation was set to occur in the summer

of 2017.

Council Discussion:

Councilor Collette expressed her excitement about the program and acknowledged that art and artists were a cost-effective investment in communities because small grants could revitalize public spaces. Councilor Collette suggested a partnership with the Regional Arts and Culture Council (RACC). Councilor Dirksen voiced approval for the way in which the Placemaking program would repurpose government money to stimulate community. He appreciated that the approach would allow communities to make their own decisions, rather than having decisions thrust upon them by a government agency. Councilor Harrington voiced uncertainty about the program as currently presented. She thought the objectives were unclear and was worried about the scale of the program; she felt that there was potential for Metro to promise more than it could feasibly deliver with available funds. She spoke about the Enterprising Places program. Ms. Gertler responded that the Placemaking program was similar to the Enterprising Places program, which could be brought back per Council's request. Ms. Gertler went on to say that the Planning Department was bringing the Placemaking program proposal to Council earlier in the work program stage and wanted feedback early in the process. Council President Tom Hughes noted that the Placemaking program would involve finding and collaborating with people out in the community who are already engaged in positive community work. He noted that chambers in Hillsboro and Beaverton were active in cultural events, and other chambers around the region could also be worthwhile resources. Councilor Harrington restated her concerns about investing Metro money without identifying the desired outcomes and objectives as they related to the 2040 growth concept that the investments would achieve. Councilor Chase believed it was helpful when proposals came to Council early on, but concurred with Councilor Harrington that linking the Placemaking program to Metro's

2040 goals was important. He also thought there should be a majority of people of color on the advisory groups in order to adequately serve the needs of communities of color. Ms. Frisbee addressed Councilor concerns by stating that the criteria for grant application would be that applicants must be in an area where Metro was already investing time and financial resources; the idea of the Placemaking program was to enhance and support Metro's existing work. Ms. Gertler informed the Councilors that the Planning Department would come back to the Council to discuss a capital investments piece to the Placemaking program, and that staff would be able to more clearly define program outcomes at a later time. Councilor Stacey identified places in the region that did not have active chambers or active community centers, but were still in need of community revitalization. Councilor Harrington suggested utilizing Metro's Public Engagement Review Committee (PERC) to identify community members worth reaching out to. Councilor Collette highlighted that the program would be a great tool for DEI, and that art and events in community spaces were a great way to expose people to other cultures.

3:30 Councilor Communication

Councilor Harrington mentioned a Hillsboro Chamber Board Retreat and a Forest Grove City Council meeting. She discussed sanctuary cities resolutions occurring in cities throughout her district. Councilor Stacey discussed his attendance of an Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon (APANO) capital campaign kickoff; the campaign's aim was to raise two million dollars to acquire the ground floor of the SE 82nd avenue furniture store. Councilor Chase discussed a Low Income Fare Task Force (LIFT) meeting wherein the Task Force identified what income level would allow individuals to qualify for the program and the level of discount that would be provided. Council President Hughes acknowledged the passage of Gilliam County Commissioner Dennis Gronquist.

4:00 Adjourn

Seeing no further business, Council President Tom Hughes adjourned the Metro Council work session at 4:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, 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 JANUARY 24, 2017

ITEM	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOC DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT NO.
1.0	Handout	01/24/17	Draft Metro Council Legislative Priorities	012417cw-01
2.0	Handout	01/24/17	Powell-Division Transit and Development project	012417cw-02
2.0	PowerPoint	01/24/17	PowerPoint: Powell-Division Transit Project	012417cw-03
3.0	PowerPoint	01/24/17	PowerPoint: Community Placemaking and Metro	012417cw-04