



Innovation Team Visioning Session
Meeting Minutes
August 14, 2015
Portland State University Urban Center Building

Presenters/facilitators: Professor Marcus Ingle, Erin Pidot

Participants:

1000 Friends of Oregon: Amanda Caffall, Sam Diaz, Mary Kyle McCurdy

Metro staff: Amy Croover, Katie Edlin, Cliff Higgins, Peggy Morell, Nellie Papsdorf, Cary Stacey, Becca Uherbelau, Patty Unfred

Center for Public Service: Dr. Marcus Ingle, Phil Keisling, Erin Pidot

Meeting objectives:

- Review the current landscape
- Create a shared vision of success
- Begin to create a strategy for realizing our vision

1. WELCOME AND OBJECTIVES

Dr. Marcus Ingle and Erin Pidot welcomed the group and shared the meeting objectives listed above. They explained that the purpose of the meeting was to propel the group's collaborative work around building public trust through inclusive engagement and decision-making forward by brainstorming what success might look and feel like, and determining how to focus the group's resources over the next four months.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

Everyone introduced themselves to the group with their name, organization, and a word that describes something about them that others might not know.

3. REVIEW INNOVATION TEAM AGREEMENTS

To set the tone for the day and establish parameters for the discussion, Erin shared the following list of Innovation Team agreements:

- This meeting is but one step in our collaboration
- Be open to multiple points of view, listen deeply, and speak directly and with respect to one another
- Innovation is challenging, but also fun and creative
- Create a safe space and lean into the discomfort
- Approach this with a deep respect for the work
- Step up, step back
- Be mindful about language
- Active facilitation and the "bike parking lot" will help us stay on track

4. SETTING THE STAGE FOR VISIONING

In order to provide context for the Visioning Session, Erin provided a timeline for the project and gave a brief overview of the decision-making process work that had been done so far.

She explained that Metro and 1000 Friends of Oregon had received the Oregon Innovation Award from Portland State University's Center for Public Service in April 2015. From May through August, they focused on research by scoping and unpacking the challenge that the Innovation Award will address. As part of this effort, the project was discussed at three Innovation Team meetings as well as Metro's Public Engagement Review Committee and Public Engagement Network. Erin explained that the August 14 meeting represented the visioning stage of the project, meaning that the meeting's aim was to begin to develop what success at the end of the process might look like. After the vision is developed, it will allow the team to prioritize and design a strategy to achieve it, hopefully by December 2015. Implementation is slated for 2016 and successful realization of the vision for 2020.

Erin then provided an overview of the challenge that the innovation aims to address, which was pulled directly from what was heard at previous meetings. She pointed out that the challenge has two major and interacting components:

- a. Public Engagement: Lack of long-lasting, trusting relationships with underrepresented communities
- b. Decision-making: Decisions do not reflect the perspectives and priorities of underrepresented communities

On the public engagement side, some contributing factors to the challenge include: Metro's project-focused culture; communities and CBOs are overburdened and undercompensated for their contributions; it's not clear that it's worth the time and effort to engage due to a lack of results or a feedback loop; policy issues and decision-making process are not transparent or accessible; public meetings do not always feel relevant, useful or accessible; decisions being made do not feel relevant to people's daily lives; and there is a lack of consistent and meaningful evaluation.

On the decision-making side, some contributing factors to the challenge include: decision makers do not hear directly from underrepresented communities; there's an imbalance of power between underrepresented communities and other stakeholders; spaces where decision makers interact with the public do not feel safe or welcoming; elected, administrative leadership and advisory committee members do not represent the diversity of the region; and decision makers may not understand why relationships with underrepresented communities are critically important.

Erin shared two quotes from community members who have been involved in the process so far that help illuminate the challenge:

- "Our thoughts are taken, but we are left behind."
- "I want to see Metro balance the needs of people that don't have the resources to participate with those that do."

5. INTRODUCTION TO VISIONING PROCESS

Dr. Ingle introduced the visioning technique by conveying how visioning can be helpful as the Innovation Team works to develop what a successful implementation of the innovative strategy for inclusive engagement and decision-making would look like in 2020.

He noted that as different stakeholders view the solution to a challenge in different ways, visioning

allows them to create a common goal for their individual and collective work. It offers the possibility for fundamental change or “making a difference that counts” while providing a “sense of control” and something tangible to move toward.

Dr. Ingle explained that visioning is a participatory technique for supporting a team of stakeholders in creating a shared vision of a “better future together” in response to an articulated challenge. For the Innovation Team, visioning would be used to imagine what the success of the group’s innovation work in the Metro landscape would look like in the year 2020. The vision is to provide “the common ground of success” for the Innovation Team to move toward collectively.

Dr. Ingle added that there are several ways to do visioning, noting that the Innovation Team session would use a hybrid form referred to as the “key words technique” that is tailored for groups of stakeholders confronting a compelling challenge. The visioning session would include the following steps:

1. Each participant will work individually first to generate “key words” that represent their views of the vision
2. Then the participants will work in 3 groups—diverse in makeup—to organize and map their words to form a common vision
3. Each group will create an overarching vision statement
4. Each group will then report on their results to the group at large for discussion and integration

6. BREAK

7. VISIONING IN ACTION

Working individually, participants created two to four post-its with key vision words and/or phrases that answered the following question: In the year 2020, when our innovation has been successful, what will engaging with Metro in the decision-making process look and feel like?

Afterwards in small groups they had 20 minutes to organize, aggregate, and map their vision words and phrases to create an overarching vision statement in one to three sentences. The three groups then shared their vision statements with the full group.

TEAM 1

Composition: Mary Kyle McCurdy, Katie Edlin, Cary Stacey, Patty Unfred

Vision statement: “People from all walks of life are excited to participate in Metro’s decisions because it’s easy and they understand how it will make a difference in their communities. Metro builds trust by having a culture, leadership, and practices that reflect and serve all walks of life.”

Additional comments from sticky notes:

- Long-term, meaningful relationships with communities
- Food, child care, transit passes
- Metro engagement takes place outside of the Metro building, in neighborhoods, mostly
- Move toward empowerment (from inform/involve/consult → empower)
- Go to them
- More porous boundary

- Like its about them and not us (Metro), Metro backseat
- Metro is walking their talk
- People see how their input was used in the decision – feedback and accountability
- Easy for people in the community
- Diveres participation on committees, decision-making
- Quality and ease - talk to me how I want, what will happen, what would it look like to real people, go to them
- Diversity of age, race, income, ability, gender, background, experiences at all levels from those participating to Metro Council
- Diverse Metro staff in leadership positions
- I don't recognize most people at engagement activities (i.e. no the usual suspects. They are just folks from neighborhoods)
- People know what Metro does and why
- Transparent, access, clear
- People are excited to participate – they invite others
- Community leaders are an active part of the process

TEAM 2

Composition: Amanda Caffall, Amy Croover, Becca Uherbelau, Cliff Higgins

Vision statement: “Participation is institutionalized as accessible, fun, safe, easy, generous, comfortable and diverse, which leads to real and lasting relationships and tangible and impactful policy outcomes that are responsive to competing interests.”

Additional comments from sticky notes:

- All stakeholders recognize that there may be competing interests, but ultimately we are in this together
- A flexible structure is in place that will outlast any Council, any set of community leaders, any set of staff
- Multi-lingual
- Responsive, accessible, fun, widely understood, publicly experienced, broad and deep representation
- Everyone knows where the door is. The door is close. The door is unlocked. Everyone has the opportunity to get a foot in the door.
- It's making a visible and measurable difference in policy.
- Visible, tangible, measureable movement at the dial for communities
- Cultural revolution at Metro
- Feedback and expressions of experience are generously offered and generously received
- It will not be hard to find diverse members from the community to serve on committees
- All communities will feel like their opinions are reflected in policy decisions

TEAM 3

Composition: Sam Diaz, Nellie Papsdorf, Phil Keisling, Peggy Morell

Vision statement: “We know we are successful when communities feel that engagement with Metro is worth the effort. Through diversity of leadership and staff, Metro is equipped to turn

conflict into decisions that benefit the collective good. Metro funds community as well as staff leadership development and programs to promote accountability in a constructive way that builds public trust and does not co-opt these programs.”

Additional comments from sticky notes:

- Dialogue between communities and Metro are ongoing and reciprocal
- Communities feel that engagement is worth the effort
- There is a clear, accessible pathway to engaging with Metro Staff and electeds (for all types)
- Contentious
- Unpredictable, at times chaotic
- Complicated
- Intense listening
- Satellite community/public spaces established in the community
- Through diversity of Metro staff, trainings, Metro is equipped to turn conflict into decisions that benefit the collective good
- Metro funds accountability measures to create social change and build trust with agency
- Metro staff reflects diversity of region
- Metro leadership reflects diversity of region
- Leaders and staff bring their networks with them
- Pop-up spaces for community/public engagement throughout region
- Easy to understand how to engage
- Don't need to strain yourself to give input because decision makers value and analyze experiences and data
- Communities understand the collective good for present and future generations
- Public spaces are not co-opted by interests that value exclusion, bigotry or greed
- Youth know what Metro is and how it connects to local jurisdictions
- Civics 101 in school curriculum

8. CREATING A STRATEGY FOR REALIZING OUR SHARED VISION

Erin explained that the next step was to begin to develop a path towards the team's visions, acknowledging that it would be the first step of many and the process would in no way be complete by the end of the meeting.

She explained that the initial proposal to co-create an innovative strategy for inclusive engagement and decision-making included three components that fit into the categories of relationships, evaluation, and transparency. Over the past three months, these three components and categories have further developed and expanded, and new ideas have emerged that don't easily fit into these categories.

She shared a chart that organized the components pulled from the project's initial proposal and ideas shared at previous meetings into the three overarching categories, emphasizing that it was not a complete list, but meant to highlight the major themes that had emerged. She pointed out the addition of a fourth "other" category that included ideas that didn't quite fit into the other three.

Erin then asked the groups to scan the chart and then focus in on the ideas listed in the "other" category to come up with one or two additional "big picture" categories for realizing the vision—beyond relationships, evaluation and transparency—and to identify gaps in the chart as a whole. The groups split up for discussion and reconvened to share their ideas with the larger group.

The first group focused on the importance of imbedding Metro with a culture of innovative public engagement reflected in the agency's day-to-day operations and long-term goals. The additional big-picture category they proposed was organizational capacity building and resiliency. Metro needs resources and adaptability to grow its public engagement capacity and keep relationships working well.

The next group proposed two additional big-picture categories: internal leadership and external leadership. The internal leadership piece would include the internship program, hiring and retention of diverse employees, as well as a culture change at Metro that would institutionalize its commitment to innovative public engagement and access to decision-making. The external piece would focus on using Metro's convening role to facilitate conversations that could inspire other organizations and jurisdictions to follow a similar model. The group also noted that they felt that budget accountability and resource sharing needed to be added to the evaluation category.

Dr. Ingle noted that some of the group's suggestions seemed to include potential additional category titles, such as Metro's convening role and Metro's leadership.

The last group proposed the big-picture category of innovation. They stressed that there needs to be more importance given to innovation in Metro's existing public engagement policies, and gave the example of programs focused on external leadership development that could provide a pipeline to decision-making roles and greater public engagement in Metro's processes. In terms of strategies missing from the chart, they concurred with the other groups that honest and open dialogue about budgeting was crucial.

9. NEXT STEPS

Erin thanked the group for participating in the visioning session and expressed her appreciation for their input. She added that the session was in no way the final step of the process, but was an important part of developing shared goals for the project.

Dr. Ingle explained that the next step was for the leadership team to review the three vision statements created at the meeting and synthesize them into one vision. The vision will be shared with the group for further discussion and evaluation. The input received at the meeting will also be used to formulate a more developed strategy for moving toward this vision.

The meeting notes with the Innovation Team's feedback will be sent out in the next two weeks, and participants were encouraged to contact Erin or Dr. Ingle if they have any additional thoughts about the visioning work, or feedback about how the session went.