

Growing Public Trust | Innovation Team Meeting | August 4, 2015

Location: Metro Council Chambers

Presenters/facilitators: Sam Diaz, Becca Uherbelau, Kim Ellis

Participants:

Metro staff: Peggy Morell, Becca Uherbelau, Kim Ellis, Tom Kloster, Amy Croover, Sheilagh Diez, Cassie Salinas, Heather Coston, Addie Shrodes, Peggy Morell, and Botond Kovacs

Center for Public Service (CPS) at Portland State University: George Beard, Masami Nishishiba, and Erin Pidot

Community Based Organizations: Sam Diaz, Lisa Frank, Elaine Freissen-Strang, Josie Savaria-Watson, Mee Seon Kwon, Jess Larsen, Sheila Amoo, and Karen Perl Fox

Welcome and objectives

- Purpose of the meeting:
 1. Unpack Metro's current decision-making process
 2. Identify ways to effectively influence this process
 3. Brainstorm opportunities for increasing access for underrepresented communities

Introductions

- Attendees and staff introduced themselves and the agency's they were representing.

Setting the context

- Community engagement process at Metro – unpacking how decisions are made here – who influences them, what influences them
- Specifically talking about how do we change the outcomes for underrepresented communities in the Metro region – low-income communities, communities of color, elderly or aging communities, youth, people with disabilities. Comes from legal framework out of Kim Ellis and Cliff Higgins research in transportation work.
- How do we provide access to these underrepresented communities and change the outcomes?

Review community agreements and agenda

Community agreements

- To set the tone - Informal space, want it to be safe, want to set working norms to help us power through
- Common goal to increase access to decision making for underrepresented communities in hope to change outcomes so that we achieve equity and justice. This meeting is neither the first or last step, part of collaborative process to get us to common goal.
- Innovation is team endeavor let's be open to multiple points of view, dialogue with one another
- Enjoy – should be challenging, fun and creative
- Lean into the discomfort – times when you may disagree with someone, but really try to talk it out and understand where they come from
- Deep respect for the work
- Active facilitation
- “Move up and move up again” – all of us are really engaged in this conversation; we all have the responsibility to move conversation forward. Be mindful of making sure everyone has space.
- Be mindful about language – we may be coming to this table with different language

- Bike parking lot – if issue comes up that is beyond scope of meeting but would like to generate some energy about it; comments or debriefs about issues we discuss today

Overview of agenda

- Part one and part two – Metro staff will “unveil” decision-making process and then clarifying questions. Part two – get together in small groups to talk about what we’ve heard and next steps going forward as Metro region.

PART I: UNPACKING METRO’S DECISION-MAKING LANDSCAPE

Presentation from Becca Uherbelau and Kim Ellis

- Becca Uherbelau, Metro Senior Community Relations Manager, provided an overview of Metro’s decision-making process. Four story lines to Metro’s work - land use and transportation, parks and natural areas, garbage and recycling, and venues. For transportation and land use planning there are technical and policy advisory committees. For transportation planning they have the Technical Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC) and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT). For land use planning they have the Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) and the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC). The technical advisory committees are made up of technical staff as well as other jurisdictional staff, experts from the private sector and community members. MPAC and JPACT are comprised of state agency and local government officials while MPAC also has community members. Public engagement occurs throughout the decision making process.
- Three main components of decision-making process:
 - Metro Council Action – vote upon any policy decision
 - Committee structure (TPAC, JPACT, MTAC, MPAC) – iterative process.
 - Public engagement – throughout process, constantly engaging community through one-on-ones, public testimony, etc. A lot of work happens before get to committees.
- Place-based projects like Powell-Division or Southwest Corridor have their own, very tailored engagement and decision processes
- All kinds of factors that influence decisions at committee or Metro Council level – anything from lobbying, personal relationships, elected leadership personal experience and worldview
- Kim Ellis, Metro Principal Transportation Planner, described the Climate Smart Strategy (CSS) within the context of the decision-making and community engagement process. CSS was a 4 year collaborative effort to develop a strategy to reduce greenhouse gas emissions for the region based on state mandates.
- This process also included work with county transportation coordinating committees from Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas County’s. Many members of these are also members of either TPAC, MPAC, or county policy coordinating committees where local elected officials meet at county level and advise two county reps who are on JPAC and MPAC.
- Engagement plan for CSS identified other opportunities for public to weigh in including stakeholder interviews, workshops, online surveys, public hearings as we were going into the adoption phase, one formal public comment period at beginning and one at the end on day when Council would be taking final action, formal comment period on draft strategy. As part of process as Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), we log all comments during formal

comment periods where recommending changes to draft materials and then make staff recommendations on that either to accept recommended change, make change with refinements, or not accept recommended change, and reason why. Provided to technical committees for them to make their recommendation to their respective policy committee and then policy committees take action on that as they make recommendation to the Metro Council.

- At each recommendation phase committee can choose to make different recommendation than what is brought forward and that is what happened in CSS process at the end.
- Important that we try to be transparent around the comments that we're getting, the recommendations we're making to committees, and why. Throughout process whenever we have any public engagement, we summarize it into public engagement reports that we present, and in some cases we have forum of joint meetings between MPAC and JPACT to communicate what we're hearing from community members and provide reports for them to consider in their recommendations.
- Part of our role as staff is to make sure we're bringing forward information from community whether its community organizations, local governments, or other stakeholders to help inform decision-making process throughout.

Clarifying questions and discussion

- George – **How do you factor in the Clark County factor?**
- Kim – George is referring to Vancouver, Washington. They have representatives on TPAC at the staff level and they have a corollary committee called the Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC). We have members that go between the two. There's another body called the Bi-State Coordination Committee, which was originally developed to focus on transportation but has begun talking about land use as well.
- Tom – JPACT and RTAC are unique because both federally recognized entities that existed before Metro Council and all Title VI requirements apply to everything they do. For Metro, these apply to broader agency, but in Vancouver more like typical metro area. We're different in that we have elected officials that represent our region
- Kim – as MPO for region, JPACT makes recommendations to the council and council has to adopt recommendation as it is for it to become policy, or make recommendations back to JPACT if they are unsatisfied with recommendation. Not something that's happened in the past, but this is the relationship. With MPAC, Council can adopt something that's different from what MPAC recommended, though there could be political recourse.
- Sam –we chose Climate Smart as a focus for the meeting because it was an incredibly responsive Metro campaign so we saw the back and forth and we saw staff recommendations reflect community member's input. **Want to ask Metro staff – using “communities of concern” as lens for the work we're talking about, are you seeing the representation of these communities in the committees that we're talking about? And how does Metro staff or Metro Council influence the composition of those committees?** Vancouver is a great example – housing advocates know that we are experiencing involuntary displacement. How does Vancouver then respond to the low-income communities and displaced residents? Are their voices being heard in transportation discussions?

- Becca - staff at Metro are working to increase the diversity of committee members on JPACT. JPACT lacks diversity partly because it is comprised of local elected officials and state agency officials who do not fully represent the demographics of the region. Work is being done to provide more opportunities for people to participate.
 - Metro adopted the Diversity Action Plan Core Area Team 3, an internal team dedicated to engagement and diversity on committees. Working for about 2 years and coming up with recommendations. Did pilot project with JPACT to see how they could get increased diversity – given structure of JPACT with electeds and jurisdictional partners, struggled because lack of diversity in that group itself. But Council is committed to it and we are going to bring recommendations to them about how to increase diversity on all committees. But admittedly, we’re struggling.
 - We did analysis about a year ago about diversity on our committees and it’s very clear that they’re not representative of the region. First step is to raise awareness and next step is to create a plan to change it.
- Kim – work that 1000 Friends through LULI to build leadership will help provide opportunities to be able to participate in these policy committees - this is another really important step
- Kim – there is a regional housing initiative that planning and development department is leading right now that I think is helping to provide forum to lead that conversation (about housing and displacement) forward. Last week at Bi State Coordination Committee, Emily Lieb (Senior Project Manager for Equitable Housing at Metro) provided update about her work – representatives from Clark County, Washington are on that committee. There isn’t large awareness within existing committees at Metro about this issue, but her program will pave the way for that.
- Kim - Also looking to work with Emily on how her work can inform next Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update because that was key area of concern raised during Climate Smart – what can we do at regional policy level to help ensure that people can stay where they are given that there will be significant transportation investments.
- Tom – very few of the seats on these committees are actually citizen seats and in the case of JPACT, none of them are. Committees largely reflect the fact that other agencies have same diversity issues we do. We’re drawing from less than diverse pool of staff. Who’s at the table is a difficult challenge – also calls on local jurisdictions to respond. Easier to do that on staff track than electeds.
- Tom - On citizen side, how to have citizens involved on TPAC and be effective. Hard one because time lines are long. Also, strong push back from TPAC and JPACT to expanding committees – people who are there like it to be small. Couple of years ago suggested having seat for PSU professor as non-voting member and got major push-back from cities and counties. This is a dynamic in TPAC and JPACT (the transportation decision-making track) in particular because funding decisions are made there. Stakes are so high so reluctance to move from the status quo.
- George – **was part of scope of RTP also looking at roll and volume of freight?**
- Tom – yes, this cycle updating regional freight plan
- Lisa - **Where are bright lines that we can’t cross in terms of balancing power of JPACT with community voices or broadening that scope? Seen examples like in Climate Smart issue with**

JPACT. Lack of balance of power. What are the openings? Where is there an opportunity to really improve that structure?

- Tom - We go through 4 year cycle of certification with the feds as an MPO – federal highway administration, federal transportation administration, and the EPA. We will go through one a year from now – this is something to watch, would like to see people more involved in that. The feds are really the ones who will challenge JPACT with any changes they need to make. Committee hasn't changed in decades. Have bylaws which include membership, so that's where that gets set. Did get challenged by federal review a few years ago – got a lot of county representation and relatively light on city representation and yet we've seen all this growth in suburban cities. How are you addressing that? Also, how is the smaller transit district in Wilsonville being reflected? Get periodic requests in form of recommendations or corrective actions to fix these – corrective action is something we have to address. One thing that encourages me is that they have been very focused on Title VI-related issues in the last few cycles, so this is definitely something on their mind. There is an opportunity there.
- Tom – in addition to no community seats, JPACT has no business seats, which is something state has pressed on in the past.
- Becca – to increase citizen involvement and diversity, need to improve outreach and awareness of opportunities generally, but when we do intentional deeper dive, still coming out short. Challenged to find where these folks are so any recommendations you have would be really helpful.
- Kim – staff feels that it is very important to work directly with organizations – for example in Climate Smart we had regular meetings with Mary Kyle McCurdy at 1000 Friends and others to help make sure materials were accessible. To ensure that community aware of upcoming decisions and opportunities to weigh in and have open conversations directly. Continuing to build those relationships is something we take very seriously.
- Tom – I have seen ebbs and flows in how citizens have been involved with TPAC and MPAC – we have struggled to have at-large citizens who successfully challenge local jurisdictions at the table – time commitment is a lot – huge packets once a month to read through – we have tried things like citizen caucus. Most effective community perspectives have been Community Based Organization (CBO) representatives in those positions because supported by an organization. Most effective at challenging cities and counties because have more capacity and backing of organizations. A couple of really good moments where we had all 6 citizens challenge cities and counties on funding decisions.
- Sam – **do community advocates have an example of a city or county that does a really good job with community engagement, that you trust and you feel like decisions are reflected by communities of concern?** And if not, then we have a problem.
- Sam – **Metro staff who hear decision makers talk about points of view that they're balancing in making a decision, what kind of arguments are carrying the day? What's most effective and resonates with decision makers?**
- Kim – with Climate Smart, the personal experiences of people who came and testified directly in front of the Metro Council. I heard a lot of discussion about that. Things that are connecting

directly – sharing experiences, good and bad, and connecting with outcomes and how outcomes can help improve the experience.

- Lisa – I’ve been hearing a lot over the last year about the Cost of Congestion study that the Port of Portland commissioned. There’s a lot of data in there that’s very compelling to policy makers – a lot of big, scary numbers – but at the same time, the Port’s paid lobbyists had the opportunity to present at all of these different committees whereas there’s been lots of research and lots of community engagement work done on other issues that doesn’t necessarily get on the TPAC agenda or memos to Council. At same time some of Metro’s own research – like that crashes actually cost the region more than congestion – hasn’t gotten the airtime. Not weighed as heavily because not hearing about it as much. So this question of the paid staff having more of the support and more of the time and resources to get the word out means that some information doesn’t really get heard.
- Kim – economic argument, but linking it to other pieces like environmental protection and equity – in Climate Smart we tried to make that economic case for why, but you can’t have a strong economy without equity or a healthy environment. We as an agency are still getting to a place to be able to articulate that and provide information base to help inform policy discussion and what those trade-offs are. That’s a fair critique of the Cost of Congestion work. It’s very narrow in its view and we would like to see a broader perspective on the cost to society.
- Becca – personal stories, yes, but one step further; it’s personal relationships. Having the consistency of that conversation and that experience has a direct influence on policy makers. And having someone to call with questions throughout the process.
- Tom – that’s a really important point. We publish a list every week of who meets with the councilors. I wouldn’t call this lobbying, but relationship building. Councilors trying to sort through a lot to make a decision at the end of some time line and have multiple tracks going – starved for feedback that’s not just the core recommendations from staff. They really value those kinds of meetings, one-on-one less stilted conversations than you have at a big meeting.
- George – **to what extent on the government side do we have policy level decision makers who are willing to synthesize and listen versus having their own agenda? Whose interest is being represented – my interest as elected official, or all of the perspectives I represent?** If on the governance side we have people who are tone-deaf, than you can have really good engagement, but it doesn’t make any difference. **To what extent do we have a governance issue with some of the electeds? Is that any part of this?**
- Tom – way less than in Salem. Salem is extremely driven by lobbyists. I don’t think we have that in our region. Electeds want to make a difference.
- George – I respectfully disagree – I can think of local jurisdictions where agenda is not to represent public interests, but to represent narrow political agenda.
- Tom – there are some examples, but predominately not that way. I think some of the folks who have been in that camp are somewhat marginalized in conversations we’ve had at the regional level.
- Peggy – to shift a little bit – a couple of things that occur to me. We’re sitting here because of the Innovation Award that we won – to do work about how to reach communities that we’re

currently not reaching. I really believe that we are sitting here today as a result of work like Climate Smart and the engagement that others around the table do here at Metro – we take feedback we hear about our engagement seriously and we have several sources of that— stakeholder interviews, auditor review, Oregon fellow focus study on relationships between CBOs and Metro, Title VI Environmental Justice assessment that was done last year, baseline indicator report—it was because of all of that feedback that we were able to articulate where we had gaps in our approach and where we needed help. That’s what we took to the Center for Public Service as our public service challenge and our approach was meetings like these. All that to say, for those of you from CBOs who have participated in some of our engagement, your comments have led us here today. I think that’s a pretty direct line. On the flip side of that, for those in the region not affiliated with a CBO, it’s still a group that’s hard for us to reach. Often rely on CBOs to serve as connectors to their networks.

- Peggy - The other thing that really strikes me in landscape of what influences decision maker is that for as long as I’ve been at Metro we’ve had community surveys about what is important to you, what are your values, and almost without fail they come back with safety as number one. Safety and transportation, safety and where they live, personal safety, safety for their families. But when we recently had a series of bike/automobile crashes, that turns up the spotlight. There’s no way to say how much that impacts decision makers. Those things that just happen as part of life in the region really turn up focus and provide opportunities to shed spotlight on something that you’ve maybe been advocating for and not quite had the audience.
- Tom – how do you use citizen slots in these committees to grow new electeds from your organizations? Taking the long view – we have a diversity problem, one way to address that is to plug people into these processes and some of them might get the bug.
- Sam – CBOs that run leadership programs like Welcome Home, which has a housing advocate program, and 1000 Friends, trying to figure out how to get the curriculum that transfers the information, but I definitely think it’s a community-based conversation. Helpful to hear these decision points to inform the curriculum to make advocates effective, but Metro has a lot more resources than a CBO. Because we have a problem right now with how committees are comprised, **how does Metro use its authority as an innovative regional entity to pressure local jurisdictions to represent people who aren’t currently represented? We have leadership programs trying to get people in there, but what can Metro do now to create top-down pressure? How do we work together to get the change that we all want?**
- Karen – I was very involved in Damascus process which had multiple layers of charrettes, which was one of best things about the process. Trying to use a new process that is not top-down, where everyone has a voice, and where there’s good representation of the community that you’re working in. The charrette process that both 1000 Friends and Metro did were really good in terms of getting information out and everyone being heard. Where things seemed to fall apart was disconnect with rabble rousers in the community who could never be persuaded and got control of the process somehow. What I learned from this is that the process itself was very, very good and that there are potential ways that disconnect can happen afterwards in political process. One thing I would recommend is going back and looking at the broad processes – the

processes that we can use that aren't top-down and not dependent on a very brave person standing up in front of decision makers – a person from a diverse community – that's a very difficult thing for most people to do. But rather reaching into communities to share language back and forth so that both sides are heard in the process and acquainted with each other in a way where trust is actually built before you're in a very intense decision-making process where everyone has stakes. That early work is so very important in establishing trust and using some of the good tools that we know – charrettes is a very good one. Communicating in a way that's respectful back and forth and then bringing that up and tying it back to decision makers and committees – that connection back. **What can we do from base of good communication strategy in the field to connect back to decision-makers?** I think that's where the next step is.

- Sam – in Climate Smart, summaries of public engagement process – given maybe 3-5 minutes on the agenda to report back about this kind of process to the decision-maker.
- Kim – and decision-makers should hear directly from the voices of people impacted

Part II: NAVIGATING AND TRANSFORMING THE LANDSCAPE

- Meeting members broke up into small groups that included both Metro staff and community advocates. Two questions for discussion included:
 1. What are the most effective ways to influence a decision?
 2. How can we create long-lasting access between currently underrepresented communities and Metro decision-makers?
- After the group discussion, members returned to the meeting and shared their answers to the discussion questions.

Notes from small groups

Group 1 (Peggy Morell, Masami Nishishiba, Sheila Amoo, Amy Croover, Elaine Freissen-Strang)

Most effective ways to influence a decision?

- Employment
- Make your immediate boss look good
- Relationships
- Good data
- Sharing of the data
- Partnerships e.g. academic and community
- Coalition building
- Power of issue
- Issues that are hot topics and bring a sense of urgency
- Quid pro quo

How can we create long-lasting access between currently underrepresented communities and Metro decision-makers?

- Making issues feel relevant to community members
- Tension between immediate community needs and long-range planning horizon
- Barriers of govt to speak effectively communicating issues to community

- Feelings by communities of color that government agencies want their input and then leave them behind
- Need for long-term relationship building between government and communities
- Employment
- Consistency in relationships
- Listening
- Relationship building that isn't just issue-based, but has a broader presence
- Other types of relationships – job fair, government hosting at parks, going to celebrations
- Information about opportunities at Metro (employment/volunteer) are not reaching communities of color
- Culturally specific considerations
- When government goes out in communities and “brings their government with them” people may still not want to listen
- Don't come out so formal, lead with social
- “Our thoughts are taken, but we are left behind.”
- “Collecting data is great, but we want to be at the table.”

Group 2 (Kim Ellis, George Beard, Heather Coston, Lisa Frank, Karen Perl Fox)

Most effective ways to influence a decision?

- Personal relationships
- Understanding current decision-making process – who, when, where
- Key influencers
- Increase numbers of people weighing in and spreading out/connecting to decision makers
- Develop compelling, representative process
- Having CBOs in leadership positions (eg. Building pipelines)
- CPS could serve in leadership training role

How can we create long-lasting access between currently underrepresented communities and Metro decision-makers?

- Community docents
- Partnering between CBO leadership programs and PSU/CPS
- Community member reps need a support network (e.g. TPAC) to be effective
- Metro in-reach working with diverse communities to build trust at large/open doors to Metro process/provide support during process
- Continue building relationships
- Funding to support participation/providing expertise
- Using/connecting with existing institutions/relationships and identifying gaps
- Managing portfolio of relationships
- Looking at aggregation of relationships strategically to ensure ongoing/not episodic, continuous and mutually beneficial
- Charting process for decision-making (transparent and clear)
- Getting diverse perspectives at highest level of decision-making

- Federal requirements for decision-making (what are they really?) to ensure diverse perspective included and heard
- Investing in relationships on front end of process/building trust with/in diverse communities (ex. Powell-Division)
- Increase diversity of Metro staff
- TOP 3 IDEAS: getting diverse perspectives at highest levels of decision-making; investing in relationships on front end and throughout process – continuous, mutually beneficial, trusting – with diverse communities; develop compelling process with diverse representation to get us there – underrepresented voices are heard

Group 3 (Becca Uherbelau, Jess Larsen, Cassie Salinas, Botond Kovacs, Mee Seon Kwon)

Most effective ways to influence a decision?

- Bringing community voice forward in an authentic way
- Create intentional relationships long-term
- Create capacity in the community – leadership development/pipeline
- Be there at the beginning – bring policies forward
- Make connections
- Be consistently present
- Make the process easy to understand – accessible, transparent (e.g. sharing timelines), directive (this is when/how...)
- Voting
- Staff representative of community

How can we create long-lasting access between currently underrepresented communities and Metro decision-makers?

- Relationships with staff (leverage these relationships)
- Hiring and retention of staff representation and advancement
- Contracting/financial partnerships
- Outreach for internships and mentorship – change criteria for internships
 - OMA model?
- Get Metro Council out in the community
- Connection to community leaders/network
- Change time/dates of meeting
- Ordering of “agenda”
- Dedicated funding for leadership development
- Language accessibility and culturally appropriate engagement

Group 4 (Addie Shrodes, Josie Savaria-Watson, Sam Diaz, Tom Kloster, Sheilagh Diez)

Most effective ways to influence a decision?

- Stories and personal relationships
- Relationships – 2-way exchange: organization + council (policy making) + staff (recap and stay ahead of process) + committees (move from status quo decisions made)

How can we create long-lasting access between currently underrepresented communities and Metro decision-makers?

- Citizen caucus
 - CBOs coming together on committees
 - How also to advocate on behalf of youth – youth representation
 - Time commitment
 - Leadership development – how to be effective
 - Resources and support provided by Metro
 - What does Metro offer?
 - Show list, let people choose what they want
 - Issues identified by community members
- Buy-in arises in interest and relevance to their lives
- What’s mandated and where is there flexibility within it?
- Flexible agenda – core theme for agenda with space for community voice
- Role of getting advocate voices and new voices to the table
- Education to diversify job candidates
 - Ambition + track + pipeline
 - Needs council support
 - Youth development piece
 - AmeriCorps model – reflect region
- Create space for youth participation
- 2040 youth track
- Need to pique youth interest
 - Long-term development
 - Stay in the community, be engaged
- Blogs or planning updates for youth audience
- Game space for interactive planning
- Planning lacks mission to do education
- Need youth feedback
- Get Metro’s name out there for awareness
- Government education with Metro piece in public schools
 - Create curriculum materials freely available online for teachers