



Metro President's Work Group

June 16th Discussion Recap



Date: June 16, 4 pm to 6 pm

Location: Metro Regional Center

Summary prepared by Drawbridge Innovations

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JUNE 16 ATTENDEES

- Andrew Rowe – Member, Portland Metro Chamber
- Ben West – Commissioner, Clackamas County
- Christine Lewis – Councilor, Metro (joined virtually)
- Craig Roberts – County Chair, Clackamas County
- Jerry Willey – Commissioner, Washington County
- Julie Brim-Edwards – Commissioner, Multnomah County
- Kathryn Harrington – County Chair, Washington County (joined virtually)
- Keith Wilson – Mayor, City of Portland
- Lacey Beaty – Mayor, City of Beaverton
- Lisa Batey – Mayor, City of Milwaukie
- Lynn Peterson – Council President, Metro
- Melissa Erlbaum – Member, Here Together (joined virtually)
- Mercedes Elizalde – Member, Welcome Home Coalition
- Nellie deVries – Executive Director, Clackamas County Business Alliance
- Rachael Duke – Board Chair, Housing Oregon
- Sahaan McKelvey – Member, Coalition of Communities of Color
- Shannon Singleton – Commissioner, Multnomah County (joined virtually)
- Tim Rosener – Mayor, City of Sherwood
- Travis Stovall – Mayor, City of Gresham

Not in attendance:

- Alex Phan – Principal Broker, Portland Metropolitan Association of Realtors®
- Ashton Simpson – Councilor, Metro
- Andy Mendenhall – President, Central City Concern
- Elizabeth Mazzara-Myers – Executive Director, Westside Economic Alliance
- Joe Buck – Mayor, City of Lake Oswego

MEETING CONTEXT

The final meeting of the President's Work group focused on sharing key updates and gathering input on proposed next steps:

- Metro Staff presented a project update on the workstreams already discussed with the work group, including the synthesis of the regional vision framework and an update on current plans for the system evaluation.
- Metro Council President Peterson shared her proposed governance structure, including some new recommendations for an independent review body.

Participants in the work group provided a variety of feedback, thoughts and perspectives on these presentations. Conversation summaries are organized into key themes, below.

OVERALL THEMES AND TAKEAWAYS

Throughout the meeting some consistent themes emerged:

- More clarity is requested around **the make-up and roles** of the various governance entities as proposed.
- Show some **real-world examples** of how the governance structure might be applied to scenarios, so that the workgroup could understand the structure in real-world terms.
- **Greater accountability** needs further clarity, and while President Peterson acknowledged more work is still to be done here, the work group members shared a variety of comments about how accountability, non-compliance and corrective action would be handled.
- **The importance of data** as a means to measure performance and facilitate regional coordination; this has implications for future system evaluations as well as how the proposed governance entities would leverage data together
- **Balancing the need for system agility** to make decisions and performance improvements, **with the need for adequate oversight and governance** of SHS

SYSTEMS EVALUATION

Work group members shared the following questions and some recommendations related to systems evaluation as staff continue with their work. Key themes include:

Data Integration and Usability

There was a call for better data alignment and storytelling to track outcomes and system flow.

- *"What is being done to align and integrate different data sources into a system that can track, measure and [develop] trends over time? Ideally we would have a system to track the continuum of care and have data in a usable format."* — Andrew Rowe
- *"As counties are working together, they're collecting data, but I'm not sure how aligned that work is. Multnomah County is working to tell the story of inflow-outflow, to show a bigger picture, beyond just bailing out water."* — Commissioner Singleton

Scope and Design of System Audit

Some work group members recommended a clear, actionable scope that reflects the full ecosystem and leads to a meaningful end report.

- *“As the scope is refined for the evaluation, consider fast forwarding to what the report would be in its end-state, which would illuminate what the scope needs to look like now.”* — Commissioner Willey
- *“Regarding the system evaluation/audit scope: I hope it will include cities and agencies, such as first responders and orgs that feed into the challenge we have.”* — Mayor Rosener

Urgency and Parallel Action

Some work group members emphasized the need for urgent action. Multnomah County shared that they are already implementing reforms and expect the evaluation to complement—rather than delay—ongoing efforts. Clackamas County expressed interest in conducting a more robust audit and indicated they plan to move forward independently, even if there isn’t a shared regional appetite for that level of evaluation.

- *“Multnomah County isn’t waiting for the assessment. The county has made reforms in its budget already. With the City of Portland, Multnomah County is preparing for 2027 by looking at systems and budgets, and how to move from a patchwork of programs to a system that targets flowthrough.”* — Commissioner Singleton
- Commissioner Singleton encouraged the work group to review again her proposed reform package shared earlier in the process, which identified things that could be tackled in the short term while working through other efforts.
- *“A few months ago, I went to my board and said we need to conduct a robust audit in Clackamas County—a system review focused on efficiencies and accountability to help rebuild voter trust. The board unanimously supported it. Whether we do this county-by-county or as a region, the urgency is the same. I’m concerned that the level of scrutiny we’re applying locally isn’t being matched in the regional system review.”* — Commissioner West

GOVERNANCE

Work group members shared the following questions and recommendations related to President Peterson’s governance presentation. In real time, President Peterson provided initial reactions, responses and inputs to the questions posed, which is included below; but the meeting comments are not meant to indicate or signal any decisions made or final points of view. Key themes include:

Governance Structure and Membership

Work group members called for greater transparency and clarity around the proposed governance structure — particularly regarding membership, roles, and how the structure could function in practice. Specific areas of concern included:

- **Independent Review Panel – Role and Membership:**
Members requested more detail about who would serve on the panel and how they would be selected. Mayor Lacey Beaty raised concerns that Metro’s dual role—both selecting the Independent Review Panel and determining noncompliance — could present a conflict of interest.
- **TAC and PAC – Role and Membership:**

Participants asked for clear definitions of the responsibilities and composition of both the Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) and the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC).

- **Corrective Action Process:**

There was a strong call for more clarity on how issues might be identified, escalated, and addressed — particularly how corrective action would be implemented when performance gaps arise.

Metro Council President Peterson's Response:

- **TAC Structure:** The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) would be supported by Metro staff. The TAC chair would *not* serve on the Policy Advisory Committee (PAC).
- **Independent Review Panel:** The panel, as it is proposed, would be composed of a diverse group of individuals with expertise in this field, but who are not from this region. Members could include professionals such as university faculty or individuals with relevant experience at the federal level or in similar systems elsewhere.
- **Purpose of the Independent Review:** If the review identifies that a county is significantly off-track, it may trigger a corrective action conversation. However, if the review highlights system-wide gaps or opportunities, it would be intended to inform continuous learning and the development of a collaborative work plan.
- **Authority for Corrective Action:** Only Metro Council would have the authority to issue formal corrective actions.

Structure Complexity and Decision-Making Timelines

Several participants expressed concern that the proposed governance structure may be too complex, potentially slowing down urgent action and limiting real-time impact.

- *"How long is a reform process expected to take? If we identify something that needs to change, does it have to go through TAC and PAC? And if TAC only meets once a year, are we waiting a full year to act?"* — Mercedes Elizalde
- *The process feels too bureaucratic and slow, especially when community needs require timely responses. "If we're not meeting community needs, it shouldn't take a year to fix it."* — Rachael Duke
- *"The structure is too top heavy, involves too many people."* — Andrew Rowe
- *"We need to step back and ask: do more layers of governance help us solve the issue?"* — Mayor Lacey Beaty
- There was a request for practical examples with decision making timelines to build confidence in the model: *"Could staff walk a few existing programs—maybe one from each county—through the proposed process, so we can better understand how it would actually work?"* — Mayor Lacey Beaty

Metro Council President Peterson's Response:

- President Peterson acknowledged concerns about delays but clarified that the timeline for reforms would depend on the nature and complexity of the issue: *"If it's a funding-related issue, it may take*

longer due to negotiations and analysis. But if the problem is something like contracting—and we agree to prioritize it—it could move much faster.”

- She also emphasized that while the proposed structure may appear bureaucratic, it is intended to address a current gap: *“Right now, there’s no clear way for Tri-County Planning Body (TCPB) work to get done. This structure is meant to create a functional pathway, not add unnecessary layers.”*

Regional Decision-Making and Expertise

Some work group members emphasized the importance of including local experts in the governance model and expressed concern about whether that was adequately reflected in the current proposal.

- *“We don’t exclude local experts from policy conversations in any area other than homelessness. There are people in this community who live here and know how to do this work. I want to caution us against devaluing their expertise.”*— Commissioner Singleton

Another work group member emphasized the need to structure governance in a way that balances **jurisdictional input** with **regional decision-making authority**, minimizing conflicts of interest and ensuring the region moves toward shared outcomes.

- *“A jurisdictional elected official has a monumental conflict in a regional decision-making process when what’s best for their jurisdiction isn’t what’s best for the region. We need to put ourselves in the best possible position to make decisions that benefit the entire region.”* — Sahaan McKelvey

Metro Council President Peterson’s Response:

President Peterson **agreed on the importance of incorporating local expertise and said that local professionals would be represented throughout the governance structure**—with the exception of the Independent Review Panel, which is intentionally designed to include external experts to provide objective, third-party assessment.

Accountability

There is concern among some work group members that while SHS funding is substantial, there is not enough accountability to ensure that all counties deliver outcomes. Cities expressed frustration at being held to targets they are expected to meet, despite having limited agency to influence the strategies or funding that drive those outcomes. This tension is especially pronounced when counties underperform — yet there is no clear mechanism for cities to intervene or for corrective action to be enforced.

- *“This is such a large source of funding—it should have a material benefit to the community. Right now we’re not holding accountability for those outcomes. If a county is performing poorly based on outcomes, there must be a process for corrective action.”* — Mayor Wilson
- Mayor Wilson also urged a rebalancing of roles, asking whether cities could work more directly with Metro as a neutral arbiter — especially when cities are not seeing results and feel they lack agency to drive change within the current county-centered structure.

- *“Consequences come down to money. What are the accountability and the consequences, such as financial incentives and penalties? That’s where the rubber meets the road!” — Andrew Rowe*

Metro Council President Peterson’s Response:

President Peterson stated that there’s still work to do in defining the process for identifying a problem, escalating it, and allowing counties time to respond or come into compliance. Any consequences—such as funding adjustments — would need to be phased in over time and could not affect existing budgets.

Integration of State and Federal Requirements

Cities and counties have obligations related to state and federal resources, and work group members raised questions about who is responsible for integrating these requirements — particularly around compliance, reporting, and funding alignment — and how that responsibility fits within the proposed governance model.

- *“Who’s responsible for integrating state resources? Is it happening at the County level? Make sure we’re not getting in each other’s way.” — Rachael Duke*
- *“Cities have to consider federal and state implications/compliance/reporting expectations. Metro should consider how to recognize that.” — Mayor Lacey Beaty*

Metro Council President Peterson’s Response:

President Peterson acknowledged the importance of this alignment, stating: *“I can reintroduce language that reflects federal and state inputs, but would welcome suggestions.”*

Community Outcomes

Work group members emphasized that governance and other systems changes alone are not the measure of success — what matters is whether homelessness is actually being reduced in communities. Multnomah County officials emphasized the need to balance resources with the need to drive effective outcomes.

- *“The work around rare, brief and nonrecurring homelessness must continue. Governance structure isn’t the goal. The measure is: are we reducing homelessness in the community?” — Commissioner Brim-Edwards. The Commissioner noted that support for future funding, like SHS renewal, depends on real impact — not process.*
- *Commissioner Brim-Edwards also cautioned: “If we don’t deliver results, we’ll keep asking people what they want and they’ll keep saying, ‘We’ve told you.’ We need to shift the focus from how to get voters to pass a ballot measure, to how to make progress which will get different results.”*
- *“We can’t keep avoiding the real conversation about how resources are allocated in a way that matches the level of need across counties — especially in Multnomah County. I know it’s a hard conversation, and I know we’re not having it in this group. But we can’t keep dancing around it and expect different outcomes — especially when we’re facing dwindling resources and growing need.” — Commissioner Singleton*

Housing Production Intersection with the Proposed Structure

Some work group members voiced the need to clearly address housing production within the proposed governance model — in addition to currently addressing SHS-related services.

- There were requests for more detail on how housing production fits into the structure, including the roles of the TAC and PAC in shaping or influencing regional housing development efforts.
- *“It’s clear how this structure supports SHS spending, but how are both homelessness services and housing production being addressed at this table?”* — Commissioner Singleton
- *“We need to have a real conversation about housing production. People are getting stuck in shelters because there simply isn’t enough housing. If we have a corrective action plan to move people from the streets to shelter and then to permanent housing—but housing production isn’t keeping up — we’re missing a critical piece. There must be accountability for one of the most essential parts of the system: housing.”* — Commissioner Brim-Edwards
- Mayor Rosener reminded the work group of the constraints cities face in housing production: *“Cities don’t build housing. We can help make it easier, but there’s a lot stacked against us: infrastructure challenges, financing hurdles for developers, and more. And we also have to pay attention to what’s filling the bucket—prevention needs to be a major part of the solution.”*

Sharing of Materials with Regional Partners

Some work group members recommended more proactive communication — such as email or web alerts — when key materials are released for review or comment, rather than relying on partners to search the Metro website. They also emphasized the importance of providing sufficient time for review and meaningful feedback when input is being requested.

FINAL REFLECTION

Members were asked to conclude the meeting by sharing any surprises or takeaways from this process.

- **Sahaan McKelvey:** “I am happy with the number of things that we agree on. I was worried we wouldn’t agree, but there’s lots we do agree on and it’s a good place for us to start. We didn’t spend time on things we don’t agree on. We have work to do to get to a place of unity in those spaces.”
- **Commissioner Singleton:** “It’s clear there’s passion about people who are stuck in horrible conditions. As a new commissioner I’m excited to see passion about the people we serve. We’re forging ahead on things at Multnomah County. I look forward to more convos about that with colleagues.”
- **Councilor Lewis:** “I want to lift up the work to look at this as a functional system. We said when we passed this [SHS] that we knew how to get people out of homelessness. It’s still true; but also putting more money into the system shows big holes where people fall through. We need more systems, not just more services.”
- **Mayor Beaty:** “I read “Abundance” by Ezra Klein and “Nothing Works” by Marc Dunkelman. We need to step back and ask: do more layers of governance help us solve the issue? Also, mayors are being held accountable to solve a problem we don’t have agency for.”
- **Rachael Duke:** “I liked understanding that this room cares about the people. We’re talking about centering people we’re serving, not just systems. Keep that up.”
- **Andrew Rowe:** “There’s an incredible level of complexity we have in front of us: complex systems, problems, that hold us in a state of inaction or with an inability to bust out of built-up systems and ways of thinking. What I’m surprised by is us not applying more best practices, where system transformation has helped other areas of the county. The “How’s” can be informed by others outside our area. All of us could go on a journey to discover what’s working in other jurisdictions, to be the best here in Portland.
- **Commissioner Brim-Edwards:** “I appreciate that a lot of leaders show up here. It sends a message that we care about addressing this problem, and make it better. Our work isn’t done. If we’re not focused on getting results, we’ll keep asking people what they want, and they’ll say “We’ve told you.” We’re not seeing a change in that. How do we get voters to pass a ballot measure, vs. how to make progress which will get different results.”

APPENDIX | WRITTEN PERSONAL REFLECTIONS AND ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS SUBMITTED AFTERWARD

As time was limited, work group members were invited to provide any additional comments or questions using personal reflection sheets and note cards on each table, which they could submit in writing for Metro staff's visibility. The following feedback was submitted in writing as the meeting came to a close, and is transcribed here verbatim. Emphasis theirs:

Sahaan McKelvey:

- If there are aspects about roles and responsibilities that still feel unclear, please note them here:
 - Roles are clearly presented, but I believe the bodies are mismatched. Decision making should be done by regional stakeholders and regional experts who are making decisions on the implementation and efficacy of this regional fund. The only electeds that should be part of regional decision-making body are Metro councilors
 - TAC should consist of broader jurisdictional stakeholders. This would include jurisdictional electeds, on the ground partners, etc.
- What role should the independent body play in the regional planning process?
 - What is difference in function between TAC and independent body? If TAC is utilizing LP [note illegible] then what is the flow and timeline of information?

Andrew Rowe:

- If there are aspects about roles and responsibilities that still feel unclear, please note them here:
 - It's all clear but:
 - Too top heavy/complicated
 - Decision making responsibility unclear
 - Where is the actual planning done?
 - Who is accountable for delivery of system improvements?
 - What is Metro Council's scope of authority for holding counties accountable for achieving goals?
 - How are counties held accountable for improving systems?
- What role should the independent body play in the regional planning process?
 - Performance evaluations
 - System improvement recommendations
 - Formulate corrective action plans
 - Identify financial consequences for non-performance as input to Metro Council
 - Provide input on best practices from other jurisdictions
- What steps can Metro Council take to ensure a smooth and effective transition to a new governance structure?
 - Negotiate new agreements with counties that are performance-based
 - Create financial incentives and penalties tied to performance
 - New IGAs to include specific commitments to system reforms with improvement metrics
 - Metro should set standards for system improvements based on best practice (continuous improvement/lean management)

Mercedes Elizalde:

- Understand the role your providers play – this might help narrow process
- Governance:

- Fewer bodies.
- Recommendation body + decision making body
- No more – don't force these spaces to be low-information by siloing them or disallowing direct contact
- Be clear about what is a “community data point” and what is a “metric.”
 - Healthcare, public health, illness, jails, ER, education, private development = data point
 - Speed, placement, stability = metric
- Why is Built for Zero not part of this evaluation process?
 - That whole project is about eval + process improvements
 - All counties already under contract
 - Spending too much on consultants! (emphasis theirs)
- There is no “independent” body that can save us from ourselves. We are either capable or not. No one knows this work like the people doing it = providers and public staff all included.

Mayor Beaty:

During the meeting Mayor Beaty drew a graphic to show what she understood of the structure and also suggested the need for Metro to create a visual one pager. The graphic she drew is included below for reference:

