Guiding Principles for Meaningful Public Engagement
Summary of input received through May 30, 2023

Metro is updating the Public Engagement Guide in 2023. The first step is to refresh the guiding principles to bring them up to current best practices with input from the Public Engagement Review Committee, Committee on Racial Equity, Metro staff and the Metro Council.

Public Engagement Review Committee will oversee the update of the Public Engagement Guide.

Input from Public Engagement Review Committee
The committee advised on two drafts of the updated guiding principles. Their input includes comments about language and best practices for engagement:

- Public input should impact decision-making.
- Accessibility and inclusion for people living with disabilities and people of diverse cultures should be a priority.
- Evaluation is important and should be done with participants.
- Adaptive timelines, restoration of past harms and accountability are important.
- Communities are not a monolith, be specific about who we mean.
- Benefits to the public should be prioritized in decision-making.
- Trauma informed practices should be used and provide a space for healing when repair is needed.
- Support for removal of "citizen"
- Changing staff often can harm relationships with partners.
- Support use of Equity Framework tool, suggest sharing with public.
- Be aspirational, avoid overpromising.
- Engage businesses based on sector.
- Expand on "community-based organizations" to include programs.
- Metro should apply the final guiding principles during the development of the Public Engagement Guide.

Input from Committee on Racial Equity
The committee advises Metro Council on the Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. They advised on the second draft of the updated guiding principles. Their input includes comments about language and best practices for engagement:

- Consider Cultural Humility values in engagement practices.
- Support for repair and accountability.
- Consider engagement during emergencies like natural disasters or another pandemic.
- Does "public" include everyone?
- Evaluation should include communities.
- Add "responsiveness" to principle 7.
- Some small businesses serve as a cultural, community hub.
- Consider how this guide will be shared across all Metro departments.
- Avoid transactional engagement practices.

Both committees will advise on the update the Public Engagement Guide.

Questions?
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Input received from Metro Council:
The Council advised staff on two drafts of the updated guiding principles. Their input varied among each councilor. It includes comments related to the language, Council concerns and expectations about engagement or communication practices:

- Appreciate seeing a reflection of years of best practices in guiding principles.
- Shorten the list and clarify language.
- Add capacity building for partners.
- Work to develop civic leadership among participants of engagement processes.
- Support for acknowledgement of accountability.
- Support consideration of impacts of projects within engagement planning.
- Consider being more specific than "public" since our work is often community based.
- Metro needs to improve digital engagement practices.
- Appreciation for past work advancing racial equity
- Desire for staff to reach out to more businesses, environmental and labor organizations, people living on the edges of the greater Portland region.
- Include risk assessment during engagement process.
- It's important to stay accountable to voters.
- Want more connection to residents and staff in work sessions or briefings.
- Communications messaging should be inclusive of the diversity in lived experiences of the region.
- Ensure follow up with participants after a project ends.
- Reduce barriers of participation by addressing needs of participants, through stipends, childcare, etc.
- Consider translating principles to different languages.
- Desire to understand more about the decision-making process for planning projects with engagement.
- Desire to set minimum expectations for all projects in terms of communications with interested parties.
- Need to create shared understanding between staff and Council about who has access to Metro Council.
- Metro needs to continue growing in how we do engagement outside of committees, outside of expecting people to come to MRC.
- Need to identify needs for specific communities and include that information in community engagement plans – not a one-size-fits-all approach to engagement.

The Metro Council expressed support for an updated set of eight Guiding Principles for Meaningful Public Engagement with minimal updates during a Worksession on May 30th.

Metro's Guiding Principles for Meaningful Public Engagement
(Draft to be adopted on June 15, 2023)

1. Public participation is an essential part of Metro's decision-making.

2. Transparency in decision-making is fundamental to successful public service and includes communicating about project outcomes and impact of community contributions to the process.

3. Meaningful public engagement processes apply equity, diversity and inclusion strategies and tools to help identify and address the needs of impacted, underserved, and historically excluded communities.

4. Engagement and communications are accessible, informative, timely and inclusive of a rich diversity of lived experiences and perspectives.

5. Collaboration and capacity-building efforts with community-based organizations, programs, initiatives and individuals that are impacted, underserved, or historically excluded are essential to address regional issues equitably.

6. Intergovernmental collaboration, coordination, and consultation are essential to address regional issues holistically and efficiently.

7. Evaluation of engagement activities during and after a project encourages responsiveness, growth and process improvement.

8. Adaptive project timelines allow for meaningful engagement with the most impacted audiences early and throughout the project.

Metro

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