
MERC Commission Meeting

September 2, 2015
12:45 pm

**7.0 FOTA Project Update
Supplemental
Recommendation**

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Metro appointed the community-based task force with a limited mandate: to review and recommend new boundaries and income eligibility requirements for the FOTA program. The task force began its work with one important assumption: that updating the physical boundaries and income thresholds would be the main drivers of improved outcomes in the FOTA program. Thus, although the *written mandate* of the task force was limited in scope, this shared assumption speaks to the *spirit of the civic mandate* from Metro to an informed and engaged group of citizens.

In the course of learning about the FOTA program and analyzing data summarizing recent outcomes, four things became clear:

First, merely updating boundaries and thresholds would not lead to success for the FOTA program. The task force learned through engaging with Metro staff that there were other, more significant, drivers of success.

Second, even though the task force could complete work solely related to the written mandate without addressing those other issues, none of the task force members could support that approach as it would not adequately respond to the spirit of the mandate.

Third, the task force learned that success in recruiting and retention for the FOTA program was deeply enmeshed with enterprise-wide human resource efforts at Metro. Success for FOTA can only be achieved in the context of a broader effort within Metro.

Finally, the original connection of the FOTA program to construction funding for the Convention Center, underscored the importance of the FOTA framework to workforce efforts *within* Metro (i.e. the internal opportunity) as well as workforce opportunities *connected to* Metro through its contracting practices (i.e. the external opportunity).

Thus, in addition to the five recommendations related to physical boundaries and income thresholds, the task force offers the following recommendation.

For both Metro recruitment and retention and Metro contracting, provide enough funding during the next fiscal year to: (1) obtain supplemental information and data that are critical to success (e.g. labor force demographics for targeted employment outreach and more accurate identification of MWBE contractor population for targeted outreach) and (2) contract with community-based organizations to effect targeted outreach to job candidates and prospective contractors.

The task force believes that it is a board-level, strategic imperative to provide adequate funding resources in order to achieve the original FOTA program objective of hiring and retaining more people from lower income households and from communities of color.