

Growing public trust | Metro, 1000 Friends of Oregon & the Mark O. Hatfield School of Government's Center for Public Service at Portland State University

The need for change

Our region is one of the fastest growing in population and diversity. But the demographics of those engaged in our decision-making process generally remain the same—predominantly White, age 35-54, Multnomah County residents, and with four or more years of college.¹ Regional decisions most likely to impact people of color, people with low incomes or English language learners, as well as youth and older adults, may not adequately reflect their needs and priorities. Metro is collaborating with partners from across the region to change this.

The Oregon Innovation Award

In April 2015, Metro and 1000 Friends of Oregon received the inaugural Oregon Innovation Award from the Center for Public Service at Portland State University for a proposal to co-create **an innovative approach for inclusive public engagement and decision making**. The award provides 1,000 hours of consultation and facilitation from the Center's faculty and staff, as well as a Hatfield Fellow who will support the work through Dec. 31, 2015.

The benefits of a new approach

The assumption of the innovation work is that by planning our public engagement approach for communities historically underrepresented in the decision-making process, both the community and Metro realize immediate and long-term benefits from growing levels of public trust, including:

- Stronger community voice in policy decisions that directly impact quality of life
- Higher likelihood that adopted plans and policies are sustainable, inclusive and responsive to community needs
- Greater diversification of Metro's advisory committees and work force

Our partners

The Innovation Team leading this effort includes representatives from Metro, 1000 Friends of Oregon and the Center for Public Service. Representatives from many other community based organizations and local jurisdictions have also been involved at varying levels, including: Native American Youth and Family Center, Center for Intercultural Organizing, Coalition for Communities of Color, Community Cycling Center, Bicycle Transportation Alliance, Community Partners for Affordable Housing, Elders in Action, AARP, Transportation Justice Alliance, International Association for Public Participation, Hansa Research, Clackamas County, Multnomah County, Washington County, the City of Portland and the City of Gresham.

The process



¹ *Opt In panel | Who's joined [<http://optinpanel.org/whos-joined/>]

Draft vision, guiding principles and strategies

Vision	<p><i>Working side by side, Metro connects historically underrepresented communities to the decision-making processes that impact their lives, bringing voices to the table that inspire innovation solutions to the emerging challenges of a growing region.</i></p>				
Guiding principles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Value community expertise We value the expertise of people we serve about their own lived experiences and the communities with which they identify. 2. Acknowledge social, historical and institutional context We acknowledge the social, historical and institutional context in which we operate and own our role in it as a public agency and as individuals. 3. Share power and authority We share the power and authority we hold as a public agency through connecting community to the decision-making processes that impact their lives. 4. Listen deeply We call for and promote authentic dialogue by creating a safe space and environment where community can be heard. 5. Serve the public We approach our work, distribute our resources, and design our decision-making processes as public service activists with a first responsibility to the people we serve. 				
Strategies	<p><i>Develop long-term relationships</i> through meaningful engagement that reflects community values</p>	<p><i>Build staff and community capacity</i> through dedicated resources that support participation from all communities</p>	<p><i>Ensure transparency</i> through a decision-making process that is relevant, accessible and responsive</p>	<p><i>Raise accountability</i> through community-validated evaluation methods</p>	<p><i>Inspire a public service culture</i> that listens deeply to community voices</p>