



Board Meeting
March 14, 2024, 2:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Travel Portland Office

Minutes

Attending:

Lisa Christy – Portland Japanese Garden (PJG)
Steve Cole – at-large
Joe Furia – World Forestry Center (WFC)
Kathy Goeddel – Arlington Heights Neighborhood Association (AHNA)
Anna Goldrich - Hoyt Arboretum Friends (HAF)
Todd Lofgren – Portland Parks & Recreation (PPR)
Dave Malcolm – Sylvan Highlands Neighborhood Association (SHNA)
Billie Moser – Travel Portland (TP)
Heather McCarey – Explore Washington Park (EWP)
Heidi Rahn – Oregon Zoo (OZ)
JC Vannatta – TriMet (TM)

Guests

Keith Baich – EWP
Sue Hildick - WFC
Meghan McCloskey - EWP
Passi Utpal – OZ
Hallie Wilkerson – EWP

Partner Updates:

- Dave (SHNA): The neighborhood is looking forward to the spring season.
- Heidi (OZ): Finished the Zoo campus plan and will be finding out how the public voted for the Zoo Bond.

- Steve (at-large): In-person group tours for Irvington have started back up for the first time in five years.
- Lisa (PJG): Cherry blossoms are around the corner and a new art exhibition is opening in partnership with Portland’s sister city, Sapporo. Just finished up the 2024 budget and will be shared with the PJG staff as part of a more transparent communication approach.
- Kathy (AHNA): Lost heat in 33 homes during the January storm but were pretty lucky overall as the down trees have been cleaned up.
- Todd (PPR): Gearing up for summer which means a lot of hiring. The city charter transition is underway and are expecting the City Administrators to be appointed by the Commissioners in the coming months.
- Billie (TP): New campaign will be starting in April called “Yours to Share” with residents in mind. Media buys will be outside of town and primarily dry markets. The new visitor guide is Travel Portland’s first guided section with on-the-ground information.
- Anna (HAF): Busy days in Hoyt with nice weather. The accessible trail project is moving forward to be constructed in 2026 with surveyors coming out next week. Two-mile paved accessible trail from TriMet up past the visitor center.
- Joe (WFC): Events are increasing, and a new art exhibit called “State of Forests,” which will be up until the end of April. Five new hires, including Sue Hildick, the new Managing Director of WFC.

EWP Annual Reports

Keith begins his presentation on the Annual Transportation Report, which is a collection of data for the 2023 peak-season. This report has been published annually since 2014 and the data is collected from intercept surveys that are completed each August. The survey received 1274 respondents this year, and a few additional questions were added to analyze tourism trends. This year, an off-peak intercept survey was conducted in February which will provide a more encompassing report.

A highlight includes that 45% of total Park visitors were Portland Metro residents. 37% of Park visitors were tourists, staying overnight somewhere in the area, with 68% staying overnight in the inner downtown area.

Todd wonders if there is an opportunity to get hotel nights conversion on this data. Billie believes looking into the economic impact would be the most feasible option.

People's attitudes towards the Park include feeling welcomed and seeing people of multiple backgrounds. Both Park's and the Free Shuttle's net promoter scores are 75, which is a very positive score. Visitor service interactions are similar to last year's at 43,000.

Todd shares that PPR will be hiring Portland State University to conduct a community survey that is completed every five to seven years. Some of this data may apply to Washington Park and it could be an opportunity to collaborate.

Joe calls out the opportunity to include safety and security questions in this survey as there is likely a strong correlation with some of the data points.

Heather mentions that EWP is in the process of creating a new data tool with consultants which will help derive some of these correlations. If anyone is interested in specific datapoints, feel free to reach out.

EWP Service Delivery Plan

Heather provides a quick report for FY23/24, which is broken down into the focus area of the Washington Park Strategic Operations Plan (WPSOP): access and circulation, visitor services, marketing and communication, internal organization, and identity. A highlight includes over 200,000 rides through the EWP Shuttle programs, which is a 53% increase from the previous year. Some of the marketing and communication metrics were low due to the absence of a marketing team.

Heather transitions to the upcoming FY24/25 Service Delivery Plan, which is structured very similarly to years prior. A few differences to note include the implementation of a parkwide audio tour that would play on the Free Shuttle to provide guests with a mental model of the Park. EWP will also be moving forward with the Metro RTO Grant to continue to provide free transit passes, as well as begin the equity shuttle program pilot.

Meghan discusses the 5-year Marketing Plan that the Board approved in 2022. This includes projects, tasks, channels, and KPIs that will be measured over the next 18 months. One of the main goals of this marketing plan is to increase visitor transit use to and within the Park. In order to achieve this, guests need to understand what Washington Park is and the activities that are available to them. EWP has broken this process down into three steps: introduce, invite, and guide.

A few changes that will occur in the next year include Washington Park advertisements on 36 TriMet buses, targeted emails and advertisements, itineraries and guides. A more detailed breakdown of these projects is included in the board packet and has been shown to the Washington Park marketing committee.

Heather transitions back to the remaining components of the Service Delivery Plan, and there are questions behind when the Board will be able to see the Transportation Access Plan.

The consultants should have most of their work wrapped up by the end of the fiscal year, and then the consultants will continue to help EWP on some aspects of the plan with the goal of having the plan approved by the Board at the end of the calendar year.

Todd asks whether the funding diversification study listed in the Service Delivery Plan is seen as a task under the existing PPR contract or funded from an outside source.

Heather states that this study was approved in this year's fiscal budget as part of the WPSOP, and it will not be an item for next fiscal year.

Todd clarifies that the new contract started January 1st and is different from the FY23/24 budget approved last year. There is a question of which task the funding diversification study will be billed against to make sure everyone is on the same administrative page.

These funds will come out of the WPSOP funds and will be a high-level study costing \$15,000 to help determine what EWP can raise money for in the future.

FY 24/25 Budget:

Heather transitions to the FY24/25 budget, which is broken out by the new task areas designated by the PPR contract including: equity/access, shuttles, visitor services, marketing, and internal organization. There is a \$620,000 difference between the revenue allocation that EWP is receiving, and the proposed expenses. This is because the organization has been operating with pre-pandemic revenue allocation numbers and post-pandemic expenses. Since 2020 when revenue allocation was last reviewed, both expenses and service levels have continued to increase. EWP will also start charging an overhead cost which the 5-parties approved during contract negotiations.

This proposed revenue increase has been presented to the 5-parties, who preferred to have the EWP board approve a budget before revenue allocation is discussed.

EWP no longer has reserves that can be pulled from when operating under deficit budget. The PPR contract did allow EWP to have \$618,000 of funds that will go into a restricted account that

requires board approval to use and can only be used towards services listed under this contract. The use of this account is possible to cover the deficit budget, but it would lead to no reserves for the organization.

Todd mentions the carryover funds listed in EWP's financial statements at the end of December 2023 to highlight the different sources of funding the organization will have in the future. Highlighting these different sources of funding in the financial statements to the board could be helpful moving forward.

Heidi makes a quick callout that the Zoo would like to meet with EWP to create an expectations agreement for overflow parking operations.

Lisa asks what the process will be for EWP if the organization does or does not receive the \$620,000 revenue increase. What would this mean for the Trust Fund as well as the organization?

Todd clarifies that the Trust Fund has the \$620,000 to cover the revenue increase. However, this is money that can no longer be put towards other capital investments or maintenance services. This is a one-time allocation that parking fees can afford.

This discussion highlights the necessity for an improved funding model for the organization.

Motion: Steve moves to approve the FY24/25 EWP Service Delivery Plan, Joe seconds, and the vote passes unanimously.

Motion: Steve moves to approve the FY24/25 EWP Budget, Dave seconds, and Todd abstains due to administrative conflicts.

Transportation Access Plan:

Heather provides a quick update regarding the Transportation Access Plan. EWP is currently moving forward with deliverables approved by the Board, and there is a plan to involve both the Transportation Advisory Committee and the EWP Board throughout this process. Some deliverables will be completed by July, while others will need to be revisited such as the prioritization of capital improvement project.

Heidi acknowledges that the Transportation Access Plan may highlight which capital improvement projects need to be prioritized.

Consent Agenda

Motion: Steve moves to approve the consent agenda, Kathy seconds, and the vote passes unanimously. JC was absent for this vote.

New Officers

There will be a vote for two new officer positions. Heidi will take on Board chair and Lisa will take on Vice Chair.

Motion: Steve moves to approve the new officer positions, Joe seconds, and the vote passes unanimously. JC was absent for this vote.