

Minutes of the SPECIAL MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Wednesday, July 31, 2013

Committee Members Present: Van Eyll, Rummel, Elkins, Melander, Duininck, Munt, Commers, Brimeyer, Reynoso, Chávez, Wulff, Rodriguez, Schreiber, Doãn, Kramer

CALL TO ORDER

A quorum being present, Thrive Working Group Chair Van Eyll called the special meeting of the Council's Committee of the Whole to order at 3:04PM on Wednesday, July 31, 2013.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND MINUTES

It was moved by Rummel, seconded by Kramer to approve the agenda. **Motion carried.**

It was moved by Kramer, seconded by Rodriguez to approve the minutes from the July 17 and July 31 Committee of the Whole meetings. **Motion carried.**

THRIVE MSP 2040

Overview of Council Policy Options on Climate Change—Libby Starling and Dan Marckel

Libby and Dan provided a brief overview of the discussion paper on climate change. One of the Council's proposed goals for Thrive MSP 2050 is: a resilient region minimizes its contributions to climate change and is prepared for the challenges and opportunities of a changing climate. The Council has been addressing climate change in transit and wastewater operations and in planning work, specifically as it relates to surface water and water supply issues. The Regional Development Framework does not place an emphasis on climate change, but it does include policy directions and priorities to work toward minimizing climate change, including the emphases on transit ridership, bicycle connections, access to parks, and mixed-use development. In 2012, the Council adopted a Sustainability Policy for Internal Operations and Management, which states that the Council will conduct its operations in a sustainable manner, when economically feasible, to increase energy efficiency and use of renewable energy sources, reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations, conserve and protect water resources, and reduce solid waste generation, reuse and recycle materials.

Discussion: Direction for Climate Change-related Policies in Thrive MSP 2040

The first topic the Council addressed was advancing statewide goals for greenhouse gas reduction. The Regional Development Framework was created prior to the establishment of the state's ghg reduction goals. The Council's Sustainability Policy states the Council will reduce ghg emissions from its operations when it is economically feasible. The Council members discussed whether they should expect greenhouse gas emission reduction goals from jurisdictions requesting Council grants. Council members suggested not penalizing jurisdictions if goals are not reached, but perhaps offering credit for a "wow" story.

The next topic the group addressed was supporting regional/local climate change planning. The Regional Development Framework offers no explicit guidance on this topic. The group discussed offering technical assistance to the region's local governments across all issues related to climate change. Support for all approaches listed was expressed, including providing technical assistance and information (energy and climate data, regional indicators data, regional greenhouse gas emissions inventory) to local units of government and participating in regional convening and leadership on climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Council also discussed creating an internal Climate Change team to identify opportunities in the Council's planning work or a Climate Change Working Group which would consist of Council members.

Overview of Regional Parks and Trails—Dan Marckel and Libby Starling

Dan and Libby presented an overview of the regional parks and trails issues. In 1974 the Metropolitan Parks Act created the Regional Parks System and gave the Council authorization to identify land to meet the outdoor recreational needs of the people of the metropolitan area and to grant capital funds to regional park agencies to implement the Regional Parks Policy Plan. Regional parks and open space is one of the Council's statutory

systems named in the Metropolitan Land Planning Act. The regional parks and trails system is made up of nearly 55,000 acres of regional parkland and more than 300 miles of regional trails. In 2012, there were nearly 46 million visits to the regional parks system. The Regional Development Framework states that the Council's roles related to this system are to conserve natural resources—particularly water resources—and protect vital natural areas when planning and constructing regional infrastructure (including regional parks and open space) and to expand the regional park system, as appropriate, to conserve, maintain and connect natural resources identified as high quality or of regional importance. Invest in acquisition and development of land for the regional park system.

Discussion: Direction for Regional Parks and Trails in Thrive MSP 2040

The group discussed equitable access to regional parks and trails. The Council conducted a survey in 2008 that showed usage of the parks system was not representative of the demographics of the region, specifically as it relates to communities of color. Potential actions that were offered as suggestions included: encourage local and regional partners to offer communications, programming and facilities to address the findings; collaborate with local partners to link regional parks and trails with concentrations of residents of color; convene regional parks agencies with communities of color; and continue research on parks usage to meet changing needs. The group agreed that stronger language should be used. The group also discussed focusing on linking the regional parks and trails, especially between areas that do not have the parks and trails within them. The second topic the group addressed was integration of regional parks and trails investment with transit. The group agreed that there are several ways to connect transit with the parks and trails. Highlighting intermodal access and the connections between transitways and regional park and trails was discussed. The last topic the Council discussed was the integration of regional parks and trails with bicycle transportation. The group discussed a desire to collaborate with regional bike systems and the need for bridging the gaps between cities. It can be very challenging to get between certain cities by way of bicycle when the trails do not cross city lines. Potential actions that were discussed included collaborating with partners to increase awareness of the regional bicycle network and strengthening alignment of planning and resources between the regional trail system and the transportation system.

ADJOURNMENT

Business completed, the meeting adjourned at 5:35PM.

Emily Getty, Recording Secretary