

Meeting Minutes

Multnomah County Library Bond Oversight Committee
July 25, 2022
4:00 - 6:00pm | Virtual Meeting

Committee Members Present

Ana Brophy, Cheryl Russell, Jason Green, Jeffrey Scherer, Kourtney Strong, Nicole Pexton, Randall Edwards, Rob Edmiston, and Sophia Suhu. Karl Dinkelspiel was unavailable.

Staff Present

Judith Moses, Bond Program Administrative Assistant; Kate Vance, PMO Deputy Director-DCA; Katie O'Dell, PMO Deputy Director-Library; Maddelyn High, Library Director's Assistant / Committee Staff Support; Mike Day, Bond Program Management Office (PMO) Director; Suzanne Chou, Bond Community Engagement Manager; Vailey Oehlke, Director, Multnomah County Library

Welcome + Introductions

Library Director Vailey Oehlke welcomed attendees, offered a land acknowledgement, and reviewed the meeting agenda.

Public Comment

Public comment was requested for submission via email ahead of the meeting. No known emails came in for public comment.

Committee Business

Committee Chair Randall Edwards welcomed attendees. Co-Chair Jeffrey Scherer moved to approve minutes for the April 25, 2022 meeting. Nicole Pexton seconded and minutes were unanimously approved.

Topic Spotlight: Community Engagement

Bond Community Engagement Manager Suzanne Chou joined to share information and updates on bond-related community engagement work, noting that community engagement is central to bond work and built into each project's scope and schedule so that what is developed can meet community needs. Chou summarized the bond team's [community engagement ethos](#) — the guiding values that drive its approach. Chou also emphasized the value of flexibility, in terms of asking for input on processes and approaches, and being open to listening and to change.

In response to a question from a committee member on who developed these principles, PMO Deputy Director for the Library Katie O'Dell shared that community engagement principles were developed early on across PMO and library leadership before work began so team members could hold themselves accountable to the values set forth.

Chou then gave some examples of the types of questions used during engagement efforts, noting that the questions asked change as design progresses for each project (from programming, to

schematic design, to design development, to construction documents) to make sure the library is asking for input on things that can be influenced. Broad initial questions might include:

- *What makes you feel welcome? What would make you want to stay?*
- *What types of activities, amenities, and community partnerships would have the most impact on your life? (giving visual examples of what other 21st-century libraries might include)*
- *What barriers have you experienced in accessing library space and resources?*

As projects progress toward the later phases of design and have a set design direction based on targeted community and staff input, the broader public will often then be engaged to help set the direction for interiors and exteriors of bond project sites.

Design teams are transparent with the community that not everything suggested can or will be implemented; but that hearing from community members is a core way to holistically assess how new spaces should be designed to meet community needs now while maintaining flexibility to adapt to community needs as they change in the future, all within bond constraints.

Chou also emphasized that differentiated community engagement approaches make sense for different audiences, sharing how many individuals have been reached through an array of engagement avenues so far, including public surveys and interiors voting; in-person and virtual meetings; meetings with community leaders and community-based organizations; tabling and community events; and some different longer-term paid design opportunities (including design cohorts specifically comprised of teens).

In response to questions about the nature of community partnerships and engagement (including multilingual engagement), Chou and O'Dell shared additional information, including the names of some of the culturally-specific organizations the library is working with to recruit for focus groups and paid design opportunities. O'Dell noted that the library is working toward consistent patterns of purposeful involvement — not without some challenges, including local organizational capacity for engagement. Different bond projects have different design teams, who also each bring their own community engagement expertise and relationships to this work. The bond team works within the library's in-house translation process to reach communities in their preferred languages.

The communities engaged for each project are unique to that library location, and lessons learned from [Chapter 1 projects](#) (Albina, North Portland, Midland, and Holgate) will be analyzed to inform [Chapter 2](#) (East County Library) engagement work. Chou summarized key engagement activities for each of the bond projects that are currently underway, and shared some feedback quotes from participants.

Information from engagement activities is anonymized, documented, and tagged with event details; and then synthesized into themes and narratives for integration into design and to inform development of services and programs.

Chou concluded her presentation, and staff responded to questions about how the bond team engages with the houseless population to get input on library building design, programs, and

services; plans for community engagement for the new East County Library; and on engaging the philanthropic community to support items not funded by the bond.

Bond Implementation Update

Bond PMO Director Mike Day gave an update on the overall bond budget, highlighting an increase of \$1 million from the bond reserve for an opportunity to acquire a property adjacent to Albina Library. This is in addition to \$5.6 million of bond reserve funds already allocated to address seismic issues at Albina and North Portland libraries. Day also shared that the PMO continues to actively monitor and evaluate ongoing risks around market conditions, inflation, supply chain issues and labor shortages, permitting schedule impacts, and more; and Day gave an example of how the team forecasts risk in the bond budget. In response to a question about labor shortages, Day shared that the bond team and CMCG partners work to get subcontractor commitments as early as possible through early outreach and procurement.

Related to DEI, Day shared that the Regional Workforce Equity Agreement (RWEA) is now executed and being implemented for the library's first bond project, the Operations Center. Day also gave an update on COBID participation numbers (percentages based on estimated cost of work), and shared a snapshot of some dashboards in development to track DEI-related metrics as projects move into the construction phase.

The overall bond project sequencing schedule remains unchanged.

PMO Deputy Director for DCA Kate Vance, who is in charge of the physical built environment for the bond, gave project-level updates as follows:

- The *operations center* (renovations and additions) is on schedule for target opening in November 2023. Vance thanked committee members who were able to attend a July 6 groundbreaking ceremony. Soft demo work and furniture and fixture procurement is happening while permit documents are under review by the City of Portland. GMP was approved on June 30.
- *Holgate Library* (new construction) is in the construction document phase. Vance shared an image of the winning interior design concept (determined by patron vote), and highlighted planned sustainability features (including rooftop solar arrays). Design work continues, and Vance shared examples of how some key elements from community feedback are incorporated into building design. Vance also played a short fly-through video of Holgate's interior design. The project is still on schedule for completion in spring/summer 2024, although the permitting process is taking longer than anticipated. Current cost estimates are tracking ~2.5% over budget, and the team has identified some balancing strategies.
- *Midland Library* (addition and renovation) is also in the construction document phase. Vance shared an image of the winning interior design concept (also determined by patron vote), and shared examples of how community input has influenced the site plan and interior designs, including an interior gathering circle that will feature a RACC art installation. Completion is still expected in spring/summer 2024, and current cost estimates are tracking slightly high, which the PMO team is working to align with the budget.

- *Albina Library* (historic renovation and addition) is in the schematic design phase, and preparing for permitting. A proposed acquisition of an adjacent property is in the due diligence phase, and would allow for future growth and site flexibility. Bond reserve funds have been allocated toward the purchase (and were previously allocated to address seismic issues). Vance shared some initial site plans. There are no overall schedule changes, and completion is still expected in summer 2024.
- *North Portland Library* (historic renovation and addition) has moved through schematic design and is entering the design development phase. Program planning for the building's addition, which will house a Black Cultural Center, is underway and incorporates feedback from the community. Schematic design came in over budget, and the team identified a strategy to get back on target. There are no major changes to the project's schedule, and completion is planned for summer 2024.
- Day provided an update on the *East County Library* (new building), which now has a pending LOI for a site in Gresham. Siting this library has been a big effort for a few years now, and the library is working with site owners and City of Gresham now on shared goals and site requirements as part of early due diligence. Pre-design is underway with Adjaye and Holst, and Fortis has developed plans to contract with three COBID-certified firms. There are no changes to the project timeline at this time, and groundbreaking is anticipated in late 2024. Day used this project as an example case study for how bond leadership is thinking about risk mitigation, while balancing costs and responsiveness to the community.
- *Refresh Project* work is still in progress, with *Central Library* work beginning first. There are no overall changes to the schedule or budget for these projects.
- *Technology*: Vance shared that initial discussions about technology needs for the East County Library are underway — as a regional asset, this large library will have some unique amenities.

Vance then previewed a draft dashboard for the bond oversight committee, describing different sections and information sources. Vance asked for initial feedback and suggestions for improvement from committee members. Changes will be implemented ahead of the committee's next meeting in October, and Vance welcomed folks to send other feedback via email.

Action Items + Closing

Committee Liaison Maddelyn High reminded that the committee's primary deliverable is an annual report and board presentation. The primary audience for this report is the Board of County Commissioners. High and Edwards asked for volunteers to form a small workgroup to draft an annual report template with common elements to include year after year. Ana Brophy, Jeffrey Scherer, Nicole Pexton, and Sophia Suhu volunteered. High will support scheduling and resources for this workgroup, and the full committee will plan to review a draft template at its next meeting in October 2022.

The meeting adjourned at 6:06 pm.