



# CITY OF PORTLAND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES



1120 SW Fifth Avenue, Room 1000, Portland, Oregon 97204 ■ Nick Fish, Commissioner ■ Michael Jordan, Director

September 14, 2017

To: Melissa Merrell, PUB Analyst  
cc: Director Jordan, Jonas Biery, Todd Lofgren, PUB Members

From: Dawn Uchiyama, Deputy Director BES 

Re: BES Responses to PUB questions from August 1, 2017 Strategic Plan Presentation

Below please find BES responses to PUB comments and questions following review of draft BES Strategic Plan documents.

## Mission

1. How is BES achieving equity in the workplace, business practices, and service delivery? Can they provide examples?

*Equity is a high-priority area for the Bureau, and this is reflected in several sections of the Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee relied heavily on the Bureau's 2016-2021 Equity Plan to inform the equity activities that will be prioritized in the next ten years. That plan can be found at <https://www.portlandoregon.gov/oehr/article/589635>. That plan includes 24 actions focusing on equity literacy, equitable service delivery and business practices, and workplace equity. Draft recommended equity actions are included in the following Strategic Initiatives:*

- *Create a culture of equity, diversity, and inclusion. (Focus Area: Culture)*
- *Deliver services equitably. (Focus Area: Service Delivery)*
- *Lead the city in developing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve. (Focus Area: Workforce)*

*Those Strategic Initiatives also contain a list of suggested Action Items, which can be found on the attached Detailed Strategic Framework document; these are likely to change as subject matter experts begin implementation, but provide examples of the types of actions that are currently being contemplated.*

*As a specific example – input from the BES employee survey identified the need to hire an equity manager. We understood how important this is and acted on the recruitment before completing the plan. The equity manager will allow us to bring immediate resource and expertise in how we address some of the strategic initiatives listed above.*

2. Can BES share their definition of equity?

*BES embraces the working definition of equity established by the City's Office of Equity and Human Rights: "Equity is achieved when one's identity cannot predict the outcome."*

3. I don't see using the tax payer's money wisely, where does this fit?

*The wise use of money is an important topic for BES employees and it is understood that the Strategic Plan is directly connected to the budget process and the bureau's long-term financial planning. This topic appears in several places in the Draft Strategic Plan (emphasis added):*

- *We Value - Conscientious stewardship of our watersheds, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, and **financial resources**.*
- *We Value - Innovative, **sustainable**, and resilient solutions (sustainability means finding solutions that support our community financially, environmentally, and socially)*
- *Focus Area - Service Delivery/Desired Outcomes:*
  - ***Sustainable** and equitable investments in infrastructure systems and service delivery.*
  - *Lead City in **resource management**, restoration, reuse, and **recovery** (resource management and recovery include finding ways to do things more efficiently and utilize or market the products produced at our Wastewater Treatment Plants, such as biogas and biosolids.*
  - *There are several Strategic Initiatives which have an inherent component of financial stewardship, including a focus on **Asset Management, pollution prevention, and resiliency** (all different ways to help us invest appropriately now to prevent future, higher costs).*
- *Focus Area – Responsive Systems and Decision Making/Strategic Initiatives:*
  - *Reform budget, CIP, and financial planning processes to prioritize funding requests to **align with Strategic Plan priorities**.*
- *Focus Area – Leadership in City Government/Strategic Initiatives:*
  - *Evaluate and improve existing inter-bureau partnerships to maximize **efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery**.*
- *The theme of being good "stewards" of public money is something that is considered throughout the specific tactics of the plan.*

Strategic Focus

4. What is BES doing to support a diverse, high-performing workforce?

*The Workforce Development Focus Area is aimed at achieving a diverse, high-performing workforce. Draft Desired Outcomes are:*

- *BES employees feel valued and are encouraged to achieve their professional goals.*
- *BES fosters leadership and management excellence.*
- *BES provides attractive incentives and advocates for competitive compensation.*

*The Strategic Initiatives in this Focus Area are designed to achieve these outcomes and include one specifically focused on diversity: Lead the city in developing a workforce that reflects the diversity of the community we serve. In addition, our Bureau Culture Focus Area includes the following Strategic Initiative:*

- *Review all programs, policies, community relationships, and communications for diversity, equity, and inclusion.*

5. How are they training so they are a high-performing workforce?

*Training was a strong theme in the employee survey and other stakeholder input. Professional development for employees is in the Workforce Focus Area. One of the Strategic Initiatives is:*

- *Implement a professional development program to improve employee knowledge, skills, and leadership abilities at all levels of the organization.*

6. Can they provide examples of what they plan to do?

*Many specific Action Items were suggested during this Strategic Planning process. Specific implementation measures will be finalized by subject matter experts subsequent to the publication of the plan. A list of suggested Action Items are included under each Strategic Initiative on the attached Detailed Strategic Framework document; these are likely to change as subject matter experts begin implementation, but provide examples of the types of actions that are currently being contemplated.*

7. Can BES share the information they sent to the community and how they plan to build strong community and customer relationships?

*To better understand how we serve our community, BES gathered input from internal and external groups, including government and regulatory agencies, conservation and environmental groups, business and industry, and community organizations. Internal stakeholder opportunities included numerous face-to-face engagements and an anonymous and confidential survey to all BES employees. To build strong relationships with customers and the community, the Community Relationships Focus Area includes the following six Strategic Initiatives:*

- *Communicate transparently and effectively to inform our customers and the public about how our work benefits the communities we serve and improves the health of our waterways.*
- *Conduct ongoing stakeholder engagement to maintain communication during periods between projects and to receive input that shapes our work, particularly in communities most impacted by BES projects.*
- *Streamline and improve the equity and accessibility of financial assistance offered by the bureau for a suite of costs incurred by customers, including monthly bills, mandatory and voluntary sewer connections, grease treatment, and other costs incurred by our customers.*
- *Utilize expertise in equity to inform BES's community relationships and communications.*
- *Proactively engage with agencies that regulate that our work to increase effectiveness, consistency, and strategic direction of interactions with those agencies.*

- *Work with businesses, residents, educational institutions, nonprofits, and agencies to partner on projects and to support private activities that complement bureau work.*

8. How are they building trust so they can be a trusted service provider?

*The Community Relationships Service Area focuses on building trust with the community. Desired Outcomes and Strategic Initiatives in this Service Area all related to ways to achieve this over the next ten years. In addition, the Responsive Systems and Decision Making Service area includes the following outcome focused on transparency, a key element to building trust:*

- *BES's systems and organizational structure support transparent decision-making at the lowest appropriate level, promote collaboration, and facilitate coordination of work.*

*Specific implementation measures will be finalized by subject matter experts subsequent to the publication of the plan. Please see the Strategic Initiatives listed in the answer to question 7.*

### BES Goals, Outcomes, and Strategic Initiatives

#### General Observations

9. There are several general references to programs (e.g., proactive pollution prevention program, innovative programs for managing watershed health, etc.). If they already exist it may be beneficial to tie directly to them (as opposed to general references) and if they do not exist it may be beneficial to clearly identify them. Developing and implementing a new program is likely a bit more laborious than tweaking an existing program or work practice.

*Thank you for the suggestion, we will try to make that more clear in the final version of the plan.*

10. Are goals in priority order? Is #1 more important than #3?

*The Goals/Focus Areas in the draft are not presented in priority order. We are planning to address this in the final plan and how we describe our priorities. We expect that priorities will evolve and be adaptable through continuous learning and on-going use of the Plan in decision-making and budget development*

11. There are 6 goals, 35 outcomes, and 36 initiatives (if I counted right). That seems like an unworkable number. How does BES plan to accomplish this?

*We agree this is an important consideration. We wanted our process to consider challenges the Bureau faces for ten years. That said, we can't do everything at once. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee has spent much of the last month refining, streamlining, and prioritizing the Outcomes and Strategic Initiatives, reducing it to 26 outcomes and 29 Strategic Initiatives. We will prioritize to create a smaller recommended number of Strategic Initiatives which should be started within the next three years.*

12. There are initiatives that I'm assuming will help achieve the outcomes which will help achieve the goals, but are there, or will there be, specific metrics, timelines, and benchmarks for each of these to show where BES is succeeding and where it needs improvement?

*Yes, one of the other major tasks the Steering Committee has taken over the past month is to begin to draft metrics for each Outcome. They are aimed at helping us determine whether or not the actions we are taking are helping us achieve the outcomes we want. A working-draft list of these metrics is included in the attached Detailed Strategic Framework document.*

13. How do goals/outcome/initiatives overlap? If you were going to use a Venn diagram to illustrate the goals, what would be the nexus, the central connection? For example, it seems as though there's a connection between:

Goal 1, outcome 7  
Goal 2, outcome 1  
Goal 3, outcome 4  
Goal 4, outcome 1  
Goal 5, outcome 3  
And all of Goal 6

*We agree, and are discussing the best way to acknowledge the connections and overlap in the final plan, both graphically and through the text. We expect that progress in achieving any single outcome is likely to impact other outcomes.*

Goal: Service Delivery

14. Outcome 1 is "BES knows the condition of our infrastructure systems" This includes green infrastructure systems too, correct? I certainly hope so.

*Great point! The final Plan will explain that infrastructure includes both grey and green infrastructure.*

15. Outcome 4 is "BES' systems are resilient to climate change, emergencies, and other events." This is too narrow a focus! BES is a bureau leader on this front and the outcome needs to be something grander, like: City systems, green/grey and human system management infrastructures are resilient to climate change, emergencies, and other events.

*We include human and natural systems in our concept of "systems" and we will clarify this in the final draft. Also, the word "BES" has been removed from the draft Outcome. It now says "Systems that are resilient to climate change, emergencies, and other events." The word "systems" includes built, human, and natural systems.*

16. The 'infrastructure systems' mentioned in numerous places under this goal should specify somewhere that it includes both green and grey infrastructure. The mention of Level of Service makes me fear that it is overly focused on the grey infrastructure.

*Absolutely. See the reply to comment 13 above. Levels of Service, and other Asset Management concepts, are not exclusive to only grey/built infrastructure. BES has worked over the years to establish Levels of Service for both green and grey infrastructure.*

17. In Strategic Initiative #1, is the Asset Management approach a centralized effort by one group or is it done by various groups throughout the bureau? How will BES ensure there is no duplication of effort?

*The bureau's Asset Management program is currently coordinated in one Division in the bureau, but is implemented throughout. This centralized coordination ensures efforts are not wasted in duplication of tasks.*

18. Under Strategic Initiative #5, will BES consider environmental protection for the community?

*The Strategic Plan includes an emphasis on the bureau's role in setting and achieving all city goals, including goals related to environmental protection.*

19. Somewhere in this section should be mention of finding new ways to incentivize best practices, maybe under Strategic Initiative #6. With the sunset of the downspout disconnect program, we need to find new incentives for folks within and beyond the CSO service area to limit and disconnect their impervious areas. This could include a 'cap and trade' system on new pavement. Or a stormwater fee rebate for folks who tear out pavement and/or install a sustainable stormwater feature.

*Thank you for these suggestions. The Community Relationships Focus Area includes actions to improve the equity and accessibility of financial assistance programs and we can include these ideas to be considered.*

20. Under Strategic Initiative #7, does the bureau have examples of how they deliver services equitably?

*A list of suggested Action Items is included under each Strategic Initiative on the attached Detailed Strategic Framework document; these are likely to change as equity and subject matter experts begin implementation, but provide examples of the types of actions that are currently being contemplated. Equity actions will also be informed by the bureau's 2016-2021 Equity Plan.*

#### Goal: Workforce

21. Under Strategic Initiative #2, can BES give examples of how they will lead the City in developing a workforce that exceeds the diversity of the community?

*Specific implementation measures will be finalized by subject matter experts subsequent to the publication of the plan. A list of suggested Action Items is included under each Strategic Initiative on the attached Detailed Strategic Framework document. Currently we are working with Water, BHR and OEHR to advance our recruitment strategies.*

#### Goal: Responsive Business Systems

22. The strategic initiatives for Responsive Business Systems seem a bit generic and unfocused. The other strategic initiatives throughout the document are very well focused and identify particular aspects to improve on but these feel unfocused and may be a difficult stepping stone to work from.

*These initiatives have evolved since the draft was provided to the PUB. They are more focused now:*

- *Reform budget, CIP, and financial planning processes to prioritize funding requests to align with Strategic Plan priorities.*
- *Optimize information technology and data management systems to prioritize responsive governance, access and sharing of information, supporting and training employees, and data security.*
- *Evaluate existing service delivery and decision-making systems and prioritize systems for re-engineering or reorganization to align with the Strategic Plan.*
- *Clarify and implement Emergency Preparedness Plans for event response.*

**Goal: Bureau Culture**

23. Outcome #1: "Create a culture of 'One BES' based on our values that works together across groups to create and maintain a common identity and improve our work." I commented to Dawn at our meeting that I think this is too narrow a goal. I think the goal needs to be a 'One City' culture, with reduced bureau silos. The One City vision includes not just City bureaus like BES and PWB, but also the City's numerous partners (like nonprofits, neighborhood groups, etc.) who are helping implement measures under the watershed plan, climate action plan, etc. When I came to City Council in 2012 to testify in support of the renewal of the City's watershed plan, this is what I emphasized: that the watershed plan is not the BES watershed plan, it is not just City government's watershed plan, it is actually the wider City community's watershed plan...it belongs to the citizens and nonprofit partners as well. And we are partners in implementing it. The City will not be successful in implementing its ambitious plans without its various partners. The BES strategic plan needs to reflect this and therefore a One BES vision is too narrow and myopic, and insular.

*Agree, the Leadership in City Government Focus Area specifically addresses this concern about how BES can contribute to a culture of functioning as "One City." The Steering Committee felt strongly that because this is a BES Plan, the "One BES" language should also be included. We need language about both working together as a city and working together as a bureau. We received strong feedback received by staff that the siloes within the bureau need to be reduced.*

24. Outcome #6: "We demonstrating, rewarding, and celebrating behaviors..." is identified but there doesn't seem to be a focus on that in the strategic initiatives. There could be an opportunity to hit on a strategic initiative focused on rewards and recognition that sometimes businesses overlook.

*Agree, those concepts are contained in within the "Create a culture that supports continuous improvement, problem-solving, innovation, and achievement" Strategic Initiative and will be addressed during implementation. A list of suggested Action Items are included under each Strategic Initiative on the attached Detailed Strategic Framework document; these are likely to change as subject matter experts begin implementation, but provide examples of the types of actions that are currently being contemplated.*

**Goal: Community Relationships**

25. For Community Relationships, outreach may have been overlooked a bit. There's discussion of how to communicate and stakeholder engagement but outreach to the

greater community may have been missed. The focus group results show that the greater community has a poor understanding of BES and are likely less inclined to search for the info that BES can provide.

*The following Strategic Initiatives in this Focus Area are aimed at achieving this:*

- *Communicate transparently and effectively to inform our customers and the public about how our work benefits the communities we serve and improves the health of our waterways.*
- *Conduct ongoing stakeholder engagement to maintain communication during periods between projects and to receive input that shapes our work, particularly in communities most impacted by BES projects.*

26. Outcome #1 - "Portlanders feel comfortable swimming and recreating in the Willamette River and have a sense of connection to their local waterways." Great! But I have to ask why not: "Portlanders feel comfortable swimming and recreating in the Willamette River, Columbia River, Johnson Creek, and other waterways that cross the City..." Why are we singling out the Willamette River? We have high fecal coliform levels in Johnson Creek and the public health risks associated with this contaminant needs to be a priority. Especially during heat waves, like this one, when people are drawn to water...especially kids. People should be able to safely swim close to home, without fear of harm from degraded water quality. This is an equity issue writ large! Poor kids in Lents can't commute to the Willamette or Sandy to swim, they want to do it in their backyard: in Johnson Creek!

*Thank you for the suggestion, we will consider this comment for the final version of the plan.*

27. Outcome #6: How do you measure "effective relationships with partner agencies..."?

*The Steering Committee has been working over the last month to put together metrics for our Outcomes. This is a hard thing to measure, any suggestions you provide are welcome. The current Draft Outcome Metrics are:*

- *Number of communications to community not directly related to specific issues or projects.*
- *Number of community events BES participates in.*

28. Under Strategic Initiative #2, does the bureau maintain a database of the input they receive from the community? If the input will shape BES work, it would be important to store where everybody can access.

*Thank you for the suggestion, it will be provided to the implementation team.*

Goal: Leadership in City Government

29. Under Strategic Initiative #1, Leadership in City Government, will BES have a designated liaison to work to improve collaboration with other bureaus and with the community?

*This will be considered in implementation, and is included as a proposed Action Item under this Focus Area.*



30. Strategic Initiative #1 & #2: "BES will evaluate collaborative models and improve existing inter-bureau collaborations....AND implement new inter-bureau collaborations." GREAT! *Agreed.*
31. Strategic Initiative #3: "City goals are integrated into BES culture and the way we do our work." AND I would suggest adding to this: BES' collaborative approaches are a model for other bureaus. [Make it more of a two-way street]

*We agree that this would be a good outcome but have only included Strategic Initiatives for changes to BES, not other bureaus.*

