

PBEM BAC Recommendations

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

Budget Advisory Committee (BAC) Members:

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The following are the initial thoughts of the citizen BAC members of the Portland Bureau of Emergency Management (PBEM) Strategic Plan¹, specifically as it relates to potential performance metrics for the Bureau.

Mayor Ted Wheeler's *Priorities to Performance Budget Guidance*² support our own notion of metrics and equity goals. *Pursuing Innovation and Strengthening Resiliency* is one of his five principal areas of focus. The Mayor highlights the prominent role that PBEM and the NET program should play in achieving his goals:

- The use of data for determining the effectiveness and progress on the city's priorities.
- The improvement in equity of service delivery to underserved communities.
- The strengthening of community resilience to recover from disaster.

It is important to the BAC to see how the PBEM Equity Plan³ and language about inclusivity, diversity, and equity in the first part of the Bureau's *Strategic Plan* correspond to the specific objectives identified in the second half of the document. Here are instances where that appeared to be lacking:

- Apart from the Bureau's effort to reach out to the community in 10 safe harbor languages, of the 39 goals, only one explicitly mentions promoting NET diversity equity and inclusion.
- The PBEM Equity Plan does a better job of addressing these concerns, but it is unclear how these two plans relate or if the Equity Plan would receive commensurate support and visibility.
 - Additionally, the BAC is curious about the current status of the Equity Plan goals and would hope to see updates.
- How is the Plan addressing the observation that "Low income and vulnerable populations suffer a disproportionate share of disaster losses"?
- It is unclear how the homeless and other underserved communities will be sheltered in the event of a disaster.

¹ *Portland Bureau of Emergency Management 2017-2020 Strategic Plan*

² Memo dated January 2, 2018 from Ted Wheeler, Mayor to City Bureau Directors

³ Excel workbook *PBEM Equity Plan.xlsx*, dated 10/24/2016 (?)

- Statistics on diversity in race, income, and language – such as those that appear on the Net Coordinators Dashboard – could be important indicators of progress. How can these be included?

The BAC expects the strategic planning goals to be specific, transparent and also measurable in order to gauge progress and success:

- The language in some areas is overly vague and lacks quantitative measures.
- We believe that each goal needs specific milestones. As in the Equity Plan, there should be projected achievements identified by year or by phase of each project.
- There may be a way to use online tools such as Google Analytics more effectively.
- We suggest adding accountability to the plan by listing the team member responsible for each goal.
- Metrics should apply to outcomes over which staff has direct control.
 - Almost all of the goals in this document appear to meet this criterion, but we wonder if some achievements require the cooperation of other bureaus. Do those bureaus understand and support their piece of the implementation?
 - Where goals involve outcomes over which staff does not have direct control, such as achieving a certain level of “NET members within a 3-mile radius”⁴, staff should spell out the assumptions and models that serve as the basis for these goals to facilitate their refinement. Can PBEM explicitly link expenditures to program successes? Did hiring new staff allow new programs to thrive? Did money for outreach and inter-bureau communication result in new contacts and improved coordination plans?
- The plan should identify how best practices from other agencies and locations were used to estimate anticipated outcomes.
- To the extent possible, metrics should employ dashboard graphics. Staff should endeavor to make their objectives as accessible and simple as possible.

How will progress be tracked and reported and who will request midcourse corrections from management or the City Council?

- Quarterly or semiannual review of progress towards these objectives by all PBEM staff members would provide opportunity to clarify the role that staff efforts play in achieving these goals.
- With frequent progress review, not only is there less likelihood of last-minute surprises for disappointment, but objectives can be re-prioritized, rescheduled, or further funded or staffed to make progress.

Finally, the following is a list of potential performance measures that could be considered:

- Retention: It may be useful to see a measurement of retention, i.e. how many volunteers/participants are retained (after initial signup)

⁴ Memo referenced in footnote 2, second to the last paragraph

- Engagement: Is there a way to measure engagement and participation of active volunteers?
- Per Capita: Can the number of volunteers be calculated as a percentage of total population compared to other cities?
- Graphical Representation: It might be useful to create a visual map of Portland showing the location and number of active volunteers and NET teams. This would help visually illustrate current levels and may also show where improvement (i.e. expansion to new communities) is needed. In terms of equity this might show deficiency in certain neighborhoods and allow PBEM to target marketing and communication to those areas.
- Communication Goals:
 - How is PBEM information communicated and how can this be improved and measured?
 - What are current online communication activities and how can these be improved and measured?
 - Google analytics metrics could be evaluated
- Equity:
 - What is the % breakdown of POC/low income/homeless volunteers?
 - % of communication documents translated into other languages
 - # of languages translated
 - Is there an opportunity to train and utilize homeless volunteers?

Thank you for the opportunity to review the existing budget-related documents and we hope that our input and suggestions can help improve Portland's response to emergencies and provide equity of those services to the community.