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6/26/2024 Public Listening Session

Attendees: 4

Summary

Portland is poised to face significant challenges over the next five years, including major construction projects such as bridge development and the rebuilding of North Portland, which will test the city's

infrastructure and resilience. Additionally, mental health issues, houselessness, and budget allocation will require urgent attention. The ideal city administrator should focus on addressing these social challenges, particularly by empowering citizens in budgeting decisions and partnering with organizations that support the community. They should be people-centric, unafraid to make bold decisions, and dedicated to both the city's well-being and its residents.

To guide Portland forward, innovative strategies must emphasize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), ensuring that everyone feels represented and secure in their roles. Programs focused on DEI, along with safeguards for diverse individuals, will be crucial. The city administrator's leadership style should reflect a commitment to compromise and a holistic view of the city, addressing the needs of all neighborhoods rather than focusing solely on downtown.

Experience outside of government work, paired with a deep understanding—or willingness to learn—about Portland's unique history and culture, will be essential. Effective communication will also be key, as the administrator must build trust and integrity through relationships. This includes helping Portlanders navigate changes in the city and fostering direct engagement through community sessions, such as those held at neighborhood associations. Finally, to truly align with the community's values, the city administrator must embody respect, transparency, and accountability.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

The City of Portland will face significant challenges related to the rebuilding of North Portland and the construction of new infrastructure, particularly bridges. These projects are likely to disrupt communities and require careful planning to mitigate long-term impacts.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

Key improvements include addressing mental health issues and houselessness, while returning budgeting power to the community rather than leaving it solely in administrative hands. The ideal administrator should demonstrate a strong commitment to social causes, partner with community-support organizations, and balance care for both the people and the city. They should also be decisive, with a focus on making impactful choices that benefit the entire community.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

The city administrator should promote diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) through increased programs and educational efforts to ensure representation for all. They should also implement accountability measures to protect diverse individuals and groups, ensuring they feel secure and supported within the city administration.

Question 4: What leadership style and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The administrator should exhibit a diverse leadership style that embraces compromise and inclusivity. They must focus on the needs of the entire city, not just the downtown area, and make decisions that reflect the broader interests of all Portlanders.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

The administrator must have a deep understanding of Portland's history or demonstrate a willingness to learn. Experience beyond government work is essential, particularly in areas where they have engaged with diverse communities and advocated for inclusive practices.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

The administrator should focus on relationship-building, ensuring communication is rooted in integrity and trust. Portland has undergone significant changes, and residents need help understanding and embracing these transitions. Beyond press releases or managing from the office, the administrator should engage directly with the community through public sessions at neighborhood associations, though the future of these associations is uncertain under new governance.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

The city administrator must embody respect and transparency, ensuring their actions and decisions are aligned with the community's needs and values.

8/8/2024 Public Listening Session

Attendees: 6

Summary

In the next five years, Portland will likely face significant challenges related to budget constraints, both for the city and its residents, as well as rising costs of living. These issues will particularly burden vulnerable populations, impacting their access to health benefits, medical care, and basic needs. Climate change will further exacerbate these problems, especially for underserved communities. To address these challenges, Portland's city administrator must excel at cross-bureau collaboration and prioritize community-driven solutions, empowering neighborhoods to create localized strategies. Innovation will be key, particularly in improving communication between the government and the public and fostering stronger partnerships across agencies, city departments, and the community. A citywide strategic plan is critical to shaping the future of Portland rather than clinging to outdated models.

In terms of leadership, the city administrator should be a strong communicator, decisive, and able to balance multiple perspectives, particularly from the most challenged populations. Having lived experience outside Portland or the Pacific Northwest would be beneficial, as would a progressive and collaborative approach. They should empower and uplift staff from non-traditional government backgrounds, particularly those with lived experiences of homelessness and food insecurity. Communicating with Portlanders effectively will involve improving the city's website, empowering staff to engage with the public, and occasionally sharing updates directly through newsletters or community events.

The city administrator must embody values of transparency, empathy, and equity, fostering a bottom-up approach that prioritizes the needs of those struggling the most. They should actively participate in Portland's community life, reflecting a genuine appreciation for the city's energy and culture.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

Portland will encounter budget constraints, both for the city and its residents, compounded by the rising cost of living. These challenges will particularly impact vulnerable populations, including those needing health benefits, medical care, and affordable housing. Additionally, climate change will disproportionately affect the underserved, creating further burdens on the city and its services.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

Collaboration across city bureaus and between city and county governments will be crucial. The administrator should empower neighborhoods to create localized, community-driven solutions that reflect their unique challenges and strengths. It is essential for Portland to take control of its destiny, fostering grassroots initiatives and engagement.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

Portland is undergoing a significant governmental transformation, and better communication methods between the government and the community are vital. The administrator must rethink partnerships that have been strained in recent years, approaching them with fresh perspectives. Strategic long-term planning is needed to address future challenges rather than focusing solely on immediate issues. A forward-thinking approach that envisions a new Portland, rather than trying to preserve the past, is key. Developing the city's first strategic plan, while not innovative in itself, is a necessary and overdue step.

Question 4: What leadership styles and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The administrator must be a strong communicator, capable of making decisions based on input from all voices, not just the most recent. They should bring lived experience from outside Portland or the Pacific Northwest, offering a fresh perspective. A collaborative and progressive mindset, combined with a track record of building consensus, is critical. The administrator must engage with and uplift the city's most challenged populations, providing a balance in leadership between the mayor and city council.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

Minimal efforts in DEI won't suffice—Portland needs an administrator who is fully committed to empowering staff, especially those from non-traditional government backgrounds, and incorporating perspectives from individuals with lived experiences of houselessness, hunger, and other social challenges. Engaging meaningfully with the community and encouraging staff to do the same is essential to fostering inclusivity and equity.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

While the mayor and council members should take the lead in direct community engagement, the city administrator should support improved communication through better use of the city's website and other digital platforms. They should empower staff to connect with the community and keep the city's operations running smoothly in the background. Occasional "fireside chats" from the administrator, along with regular newsletters from various bureaus, would provide updates on key initiatives and demonstrate accountability.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

Transparency, empathy, and equity are essential values. The administrator should prioritize a "bottom-up" mentality, recognizing that helping the city's most vulnerable populations benefits everyone. A passion for Portland, a commitment to participating in community events, and an appreciation for the city's unique energy and culture are also important.

Repetitive Themes from Public Listening Sessions

Collaboration and Partnerships:

There is a consistent emphasis on the need for strong collaboration across city bureaus, with county agencies, and within neighborhoods. The city administrator must foster effective partnerships and approach them with fresh, solution-oriented perspectives.

Community-Driven Solutions and Empowerment:

Both sets of notes stress the importance of empowering neighborhoods to develop localized solutions and returning more control of decision-making to the community level. A bottom-up approach is emphasized, where those most affected by issues help drive the solutions.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):

A strong commitment to DEI is essential. The city administrator must promote diverse representation, empower staff from non-traditional backgrounds, and engage with vulnerable populations such as the houseless and underserved. DEI is mentioned in relation to both policymaking and leadership approaches.

Budgeting and Resources:

Budgetary constraints and the cost of living are highlighted as major challenges. The city administrator must balance limited resources while addressing critical issues such as houselessness, mental health, and climate impacts on vulnerable populations.

Communication and Engagement:

Improving communication with Portlanders is a repeated theme. Whether through enhanced digital tools (like the website) or direct engagement (fireside chats, newsletters), the administrator must establish transparent, accessible channels of communication to build trust and provide updates.

Leadership Qualities:

The city administrator must be a strong communicator, collaborative, decisive, and experienced. Experience outside of Portland or the Pacific Northwest is viewed as valuable to bring fresh perspectives. Additionally, they should have a proven track record of consensus-building and engagement with marginalized communities.

Vision and Strategic Planning:

The need for a forward-thinking, innovative approach is repeated, particularly in how the city handles ongoing challenges and prepares for the future. Developing a strategic plan and focusing on a "new Portland" rather than clinging to old ways are central themes.

Values of Transparency and Empathy:

Both sets of notes emphasize the importance of the city administrator embodying values such as transparency, empathy, and respect for the community. These values are seen as crucial to aligning with Portland's evolving identity and addressing its challenges.

Portland City Leadership Team Listening Session

Attendees: 8

Summary

In the next five years, Portland is likely to face significant economic challenges, with structural budget issues and deferred maintenance on public safety facilities. The city will require leadership that can navigate tough budget cycles, implement innovative solutions, and foster a strong sense of community trust.

Portland's new government system will demand an administrator with a high-level strategic view, a steady hand, and an understanding of climate change, equity, and sustainability. The city administrator should focus on building trust, breaking down organizational silos, and maintaining relationships with both council members and the community. Innovative strategies such as a city-wide strategic plan, public-private partnerships, and improved data management will be crucial.

Leadership qualities should include resilience, the ability to unify teams, and making difficult decisions during crises. A demonstrated commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is essential, as well as transparent, adaptive, and effective communication with Portland's diverse population through various channels. The administrator should embody values of collaboration, innovation, environmental stewardship, and responsiveness to align with the community's evolving needs.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

Portland will encounter significant economic challenges, which could make it difficult to maintain high morale and keep residents connected. Public safety infrastructure, such as facilities with deferred maintenance, presents a critical issue. The city faces multimillion-dollar projects to replace outdated structures, and these cannot be funded through the general fund. Additionally, the city will be entering another difficult budget cycle with structural balance issues. Solutions will require more than the typical expense cuts and revenue adjustments. Fundamental questions remain about Portland's future identity and who will fund it.

Portland's leadership must have a broad, strategic vision, especially in light of the city's transition to a new form of government. Climate change resilience, sustainability initiatives, and managing deferred maintenance are crucial challenges. Moreover, achieving these goals within a budget-constrained environment will demand leaders with equity-focused strategies. Public trust in the new government system and organizational cooperation will also be persistent challenges over the next five years.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

A city administrator should focus on building a collaborative culture to break down silos and foster teamwork. Trust is essential, both within city departments and with the community. The administrator must maintain strong relationships with all council members and build a solid relationship with the public. Establishing processes and relationships with the new city council will be key to success. Additionally, they must have strong strategic planning skills and the ability to implement plans effectively. An intelligent, efficient approach to managing city data is also critical.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

A citywide strategic plan within the next five years is essential to bring the community together. The city should also explore public-private partnerships and focus on better data management. This might involve creating a centralized data system or establishing an innovation hub to drive leadership development, strategic planning, and data unification. Portland's administrator should not be afraid to explore new budgetary approaches and consider innovative ways to manage the city's resources.

Question 4: What leadership style and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The city administrator should have the ability to bring teams together and lead them through challenging situations. Their focus must be on public service, demonstrating a willingness to make difficult decisions during tough times. Building strong relationships with fellow elected officials and fostering collaboration are essential. Additionally, they should be skilled at uniting diverse voices and guiding them toward a shared vision for Portland.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for the city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?

The city administrator must demonstrate concrete actions taken in previous roles to advance DEI principles. It's crucial that they showcase successful outcomes achieved in other cities. The administrator should understand

the nuances of DEI and know how to apply these values in ways that promote equity and inclusion within Portland’s government and community initiatives.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

The city administrator should be able to engage with a diverse range of Portland residents, including those who may not use traditional communication methods. They must reach out to neighborhood associations and organize personal meetings, such as “cookies and coffee” style one-on-ones. They should also explore innovative ways to engage younger and more diverse audiences, including social media, podcasts, or other non-traditional platforms. Emotional intelligence (EQ) is key for crafting a message that resonates outside of the legislative process while maintaining professional boundaries.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community’s values?

The city administrator must prioritize transparency to set the tone for city leadership. They should be adaptable and recognize the significant changes Portland is undergoing. Innovation, collaboration, and a commitment to DEI are essential values. Environmental stewardship, responsiveness to the community’s needs, crisis management skills, and resiliency are also crucial. Above all, the city administrator must understand what Portlanders expect from their government and work to meet those expectations.

Economic Development Small Group Listening Session

Invited Organizations: Black Business Association of Oregon, Partner's in Diversity, Portland Metro Chamber, Business for a Better Portland

Organizations that Attended: Portland Metro Chamber

Summary

There is a sense of relief that Portland now has a city administrator position, as it removes the potential for the mayor to appoint friends and allows for a more impartial and qualified candidate. Many believe that it would be beneficial if the candidate comes from outside of Portland, as they could make tough decisions without being swayed by local dynamics. The city cannot afford a long learning curve for this role; the administrator needs to have extensive knowledge and authority from the start. Portland's new form of government will likely create tension between the executive and legislative branches, which is unfamiliar territory for the city. The administrator must have experience managing large organizations, handling crises, and staying calm in difficult times.

Over the next five years, Portland will face significant challenges, including economic uncertainty and issues with major employers like Nike and Intel. The health and education systems are under strain, and a massive turnover in government is underway. Structural economic scarcity, particularly in commercial real estate, will create severe budget constraints, exacerbated by a drop in property tax revenues due to high vacancy rates.

For long-term success, the city administrator will need to focus on rebuilding a dysfunctional bureaucracy. Portland's bureaucracy has developed apathy and dysfunction over the years, lacking a strong organizational culture that responds to residents' needs. The first administrator must embrace the challenge of leading change and fostering a culture of creative problem-solving.

Innovative strategies will be necessary, particularly around accountability and measuring city services. A "311" system that treats residents like customers could improve service delivery. In terms of leadership style, the administrator should value staff, boost morale, and be visible and engaged with frontline work. Tough conversations will be necessary, but the administrator must communicate what the city needs to hear.

In terms of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), the administrator should have a strong record of applying DEI effectively in other cities. DEI should not just be a political talking point but an actionable part of government operations. Portlanders don't expect the city administrator to be a savior but want them to focus on delivering results. Communication should be more about actions and less about public appearances or social media. The community understands that the administrator can't solve everything, and expectations for the role should be realistic. Ultimately, the administrator needs to demonstrate a commitment to the city, not as a steppingstone for their career but as a long-term commitment to Portland's well-being.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the next five years?

Portland's economy faces uncertainty, with major institutions such as Nike, Intel, and the healthcare system struggling. The education system is also at risk, with enrollment declines potentially draining resources. The city is experiencing massive turnover due to the new government structure, compounded by structural economic scarcity. Portland's central city faces high commercial vacancy rates, which could cause significant property tax revenue declines, contributing to ongoing city budget challenges. The transition to a new government will also introduce executive-legislative tensions not previously experienced, requiring careful management to maintain stability.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a City Administrator?

Portland's first city administrator must focus on establishing core values and demonstrate leadership as a change agent. The city bureaucracy is highly dysfunctional, with built-in apathy and dysfunction. The administrator must wield this large, growing organization with an awareness of its weak culture and poor responsiveness to residents. They need to embrace and rebuild a broken organization, fostering creativity and problem-solving. Over time, a second skill set will be required for the long-term vision. A major priority is to instill accountability and reject the apathy that currently characterizes the city's administrative structure.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

The city administrator must prioritize measurable outcomes, ensuring that strategies can be tracked for effectiveness. A key innovation could be expanding the city's 311 system, treating residents like customers to improve responsiveness and overall service delivery. Execution, rather than just generating ideas, is critical. Strategies that work should be supported and enhanced, with an emphasis on accountability, measurement, and improving how city services are provided to the public.

Question 4: What leadership style and qualities do you believe Portland's City Administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The city administrator must lead with gratitude, valuing the staff, and providing a morale boost to a broken organizational culture. They should take a frontline approach, engaging directly with the challenges the city faces, rather than remaining behind a desk. Team-building skills are critical, especially in a context where there is limited flexibility in making new hires. The administrator must be willing to have tough conversations and be vocal about the city's needs, creating an atmosphere where hard truths can be acknowledged and addressed.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's City Administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding DEI?

DEI principles should be applied effectively in government, not as a political tool but as a practical framework for achieving equity. The candidate should offer concrete examples of DEI success in other cities, demonstrating a clear understanding of how DEI can function to benefit Portland. DEI must not be a mere policy objective but a practice that yields measurable, positive outcomes.

Question 6: How do you envision the City Administrator communicating with Portlanders?

The city administrator should communicate their successes through their work, not through excessive public

appearances or social media. They should remain focused on improving the city and refrain from seeking a savior-like role. Residents should be aware of the administrator’s presence through tangible improvements rather than constant visibility. The goal should be to adjust public expectations about what this role can achieve, promoting a shared responsibility between the city’s leadership and the public.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community’s values?

The city administrator must care deeply about Portland, showing a commitment to the city’s long-term success. They should not be focused on using this position as a steppingstone to another job. Instead, they need to demonstrate a willingness to fight for the city and help guide it through challenging times. While it may be difficult to gauge this if they are an outsider, their dedication to Portland’s future must be evident in their approach to the role.

Cultural Small Group Listening Session 1

Invited Organizations: Urban League of Portland, Albina Vision Trust, NAACP, Kairos PDX, Self Enhancement Inc, Coalition of Communities of Color

Organizations that Attended: Coalition of Communities of Color

Summary

Over the next five years, Portland will face major challenges, including housing and houselessness issues, and ensuring the government is more responsive to communities of color. The new city government system has its critics, so it must prove its effectiveness for everyone. Traffic and infrastructure problems, particularly downtown, and improving communication to educate the public on the roles of the council and mayor are also key concerns.

For future improvements, the city administrator must be firm, running the city with business-like efficiency, holding people accountable, dissecting budgets, and focusing on manageable areas like permanent supportive housing. They should depoliticize decisions and refuse to accept inefficiency or distractions.

Innovative strategies include actively listening to the community, engaging in public processes that bring in new perspectives, and emphasizing community input to lead to better decisions.

Leadership qualities should include firmness tempered with fairness, making thoughtful, data-driven decisions, especially given the unpredictability of the new city council. Patience and the ability to make quick, fact-based decisions will be essential.

Regarding DEI, the city administrator needs lived experience, a track record of diversifying the workforce, and the ability to explore unconsidered viewpoints. They must gather the right data and understand what's missing to inform decision-making.

The city administrator's communication strategy should involve quarterly meetings across the city, engaging both new and traditional media, and being present in places like nursing homes and schools. They should proactively schedule community engagement to show their commitment to accessibility.

In terms of values, the administrator should live in Portland, disclose their personal background, and demonstrate that they care about the same issues residents face. They must be an honest, progressive thinker who can engage diverse audiences in a relatable way. Finally, as the role develops, the administrator must avoid over-bureaucratization, allowing enough time for effective, thoughtful action without rushing to conclusions.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming 5 years?

Portland will need to address critical issues surrounding housing and houselessness, while also ensuring the government becomes more responsive to communities of color. There is skepticism about the new government system, and the city will need to prove its effectiveness to all residents. Traffic congestion and transportation challenges in the downtown area will also require attention. Additionally, consistent communication and education about the roles and powers of the council and mayor will be key to navigating the new system effectively.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

The city administrator should adopt a firm, business-like approach, holding people accountable and rigorously analyzing budgets. They must focus on both short-term fixes and long-term solutions, particularly around permanent supportive housing. The administrator should prioritize what they can control, avoiding unnecessary politicization. A strong stance on holding people accountable will be essential to driving improvement.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next 5 years?

The city administrator must prioritize listening to the community and ensure public processes are integral to decision-making. Engaging the public will lead to more informed and inclusive solutions that elected and appointed officials might otherwise overlook. Returning to the basics of civic engagement will help foster better decisions by incorporating diverse community input.

Question 4: What leadership style and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The administrator should be firm but fair, making thoughtful decisions based on data and facts rather than political influences. Given the uncertainty of the future city council, they must be patient but also able to make quick, data-driven decisions. This balance between firmness and flexibility will be key to navigating the complexities of Portland's evolving political landscape.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding DEI?

The administrator must have lived experience and a proven track record of using data to drive diversity and inclusion initiatives. They should also value unconsidered viewpoints and actively seek out diverse perspectives, diving deeper into data to understand what may be missing. Their approach to DEI should be rooted in tangible success and an understanding of the diverse needs of Portland's communities.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

As this is a new role, the administrator should establish regular, proactive communication, including quarterly meetings across different parts of the city. Utilizing social media and maintaining an informative website will be critical, as well as making regular appearances in traditional media. The administrator must also be accessible to all residents, visiting nursing homes, schools, and other community hubs. By embedding outreach into their schedule early on, they will demonstrate a commitment to prioritizing community engagement.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community’s values?

The city administrator should live in Portland, disclose their identity transparently, and show that they are a regular resident who shares the same concerns—such as taxes and city cleanliness—as everyone else. They must be a progressive thinker, honest in their intentions, and capable of engaging with multiple audiences. Being more human and relatable than some current officeholders will help build trust and rapport with the community.

Economic Development Small Group Listening Session 2

Organization Invited: Greater Portland Inc

Organization that Attended: Greater Portland Inc

Summary

Portland is likely to face many of the same challenges it experiences today over the next five years, including the ongoing mental health crisis, houselessness, and strained relationships with the county and sheriff's office. The city must address high taxes, provide adequate services, incentivize businesses, and contend with population loss.

For improvements, the city administrator needs a clearly defined relationship with the mayor, understanding where their respective authorities begin and end. They should also work to cut through bureaucratic red tape, with the mayor's approval, to streamline government operations.

Innovative strategies should focus on fostering a competitive business environment to drive economic growth. The administrator must be decisive, avoid overanalyzing, and make swift decisions supported by data. Transparency, collaboration, and the ability to evaluate talent are essential qualities. While private-sector experience is preferred, the administrator should also balance tolerance and compassion while navigating political dynamics, particularly with the mayor.

Regarding DEI, while it is valued, the administrator's primary focus should be on leadership competency and team building. DEI appreciation is important, but it doesn't need to be a leading qualification.

In terms of communication, the mayor may take the lead, but clarity in communication between the city administrator and the mayor is crucial. The administrator should be accessible across all communication platforms, but what residents most want is visible change, not just communication.

The city administrator should embody values of accountability to the people, integrity, collaboration, and a willingness to ask tough questions. Building strong relationships with state and county officials will be key to success.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the city of Portland likely face in the next five years?

Portland will continue to face the same challenges it experiences today, including the ongoing mental health crisis and the need for adequate mental health centers. Strengthening relationships with the county and the sheriff's office will be crucial, as will addressing houselessness and the city's tax structure. Providing adequate services for residents while incentivizing businesses to thrive, all amid a population loss, are also major concerns for the city's future.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

Clarifying the working relationship between the mayor and the city administrator is important, as there is uncertainty about the division of authority between the two. The city administrator should have authority, though this must be clearly defined. Additionally, removing bureaucratic red tape is critical, though this process would still require the mayor's approval.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

Fostering a strong competitive business environment is essential for Portland's long-term growth. The city administrator should prioritize creating conditions that support a thriving business landscape, ensuring the city remains economically competitive and appealing for businesses to operate in.

Question 4: What leadership style and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful?

The city administrator should be decisive and capable of swift decision-making, avoiding analysis paralysis. They should rely on data to inform policies and actions and maintain transparency. Being collaborative and a team player is essential, as well as having an eye for evaluating talent within the government. The administrator should balance tolerance and compassion while having a private sector-driven mindset, ideally without being a legacy government employee. It's important they navigate political challenges effectively, especially in balancing the relationship with the mayor. Having strong private sector experience is preferred, especially if they are from Oregon.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding DEI?

DEI-related challenges are not seen as central to this role, though the city administrator should possess current leadership competency. A strong ability to build and lead a team is more important than having a deep background in DEI. The administrator should appreciate and value DEI without making it the focal point of their leadership style.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

There should be a clear division of responsibilities when it comes to communication between the mayor and the city administrator, with the mayor potentially taking on a larger role. Communication is important, but changes in the city's functioning are seen as more critical. The administrator should be accessible across multiple communication platforms, though town halls are seen as potentially biased.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

The city administrator should be accountable to the people and taxpayers, lead with integrity, and be collaborative. They must be willing to ask questions and understand where gaps exist in the city's systems. Building strong relationships with state and county officials, including the county chair, county sheriff, and district attorney, will be essential for long-term success.

Cultural Small Group 2 Listening Session

Organizations Invited: Latino Network, Hispanic Metropolitan Chamber, Verde PDX

Organizations that Attended: Verde PDX

Summary

Portland's primary challenges over the next five years will center on the transition to a new government system, with shifting powers and the need for an effective executive branch responsible for delivering services and policies. There is concern that cross-bureau decisions may get lost in the process, making it crucial for the city administrator to balance political demands without becoming an obstacle to a visionary council. The responsibility to carry out the will of the people will be a key focus.

Future improvements for the city administrator include increasing efficiencies and ensuring employees receive living wages without getting caught up in bureaucratic issues. Portlanders also want better ways to voice their concerns and see those concerns turned into actionable steps, with the administrator serving as a bridge between the community and government.

The city administrator should possess qualities like resilience, transparency, and collaboration, and be direct and firm, not passive-aggressive. With many voices influencing decisions, advocacy must be sharp, and local knowledge would be an asset.

For DEI, lived experience is essential, but there is concern about putting a woman of color in the role under a "glass cliff" scenario, where they may face unfair blame. The administrator should be sensitive to Portland's deep-rooted racial issues and strive for meaningful change.

In terms of communication, the administrator should use creative, relatable social media strategies to cut across demographics and counter negativity about the city. Grassroots efforts and district office strengthening should also be prioritized.

Lastly, the city administrator must embody values of equity, especially in supporting immigrant and refugee communities in East Portland, ensuring equitable, rather than equal, focus on the entire city.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

The most significant challenge for Portland will be the transition in government and the associated shifts in power and authorities. Establishing an executive branch responsible for delivering services and policies will be critical. Decisions requiring collaboration across different city bureaus may be overlooked, making it vital for the city administrator to remain detached from day-to-day political activities at City Hall. While the administrator's expertise will be valuable, they should not hinder a visionary council that relies on their insights. Ultimately, the administrator will be tasked with translating the will of the people into actionable policies.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

The city administrator should focus on improving efficiencies within city operations. A priority should be ensuring that employees receive living wages and that the demands of unions are met, all while avoiding bureaucratic entanglements that can drain budgets.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

The city administrator should create channels for Portlanders to voice their concerns, as current systems like 311 feel ineffective. Transforming these community voices into actionable outcomes is essential, positioning the administrator as a bridge between the community and local government.

Question 4: What leadership styles and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

Key qualities for success include resiliency, transparency, and collaboration. The administrator must be able to triage issues effectively and communicate directly and firmly while maintaining their values. They should be open to a variety of voices and advocate decisively, hitting the ground running. A local candidate would be preferable to navigate Portland's unique nuances.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

While lived experience in DEI is important, caution should be exercised to ensure that the first city administrator is not solely a woman of color who may face undue scrutiny or act as a scapegoat. The candidate should be sensitive to the city's entrenched racial issues and committed to fostering change without becoming a target for hostility.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

The city administrator should utilize engaging and relatable social media content to connect with diverse demographics, despite the current negative climate surrounding the city. It's crucial to maintain a message of progress and invest in grassroots efforts. The administrator should facilitate communication from multiple sources, ensuring that they are not the sole spokesperson for the city.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

The city administrator should prioritize inclusivity, particularly for immigrant and refugee families in East

Portland, ensuring these communities feel welcomed and supported. A focus on equity across all districts is essential, emphasizing equitable resource distribution rather than equal treatment across the city.

Cultural Small Group 3 Listening Session

Organizations Invited: Unite Oregon, Immigrant and Refugee Community of Oregon

Organizations that Attended: Unite Oregon

Summary

The City of Portland is likely to face several significant challenges over the next five years, including the ongoing issues related to houselessness, particularly in light of recent Supreme Court rulings and a national trend toward criminalizing poverty. There is a pressing need for resources dedicated to community care and recovery, as well as for policies that support housing and shelters without criminalizing public drug use. The new government structure will bring its own set of challenges, necessitating clear communication regarding the city administrator's responsibilities.

Improvements from the city administrator should focus on budget transparency, specifically how funds are allocated to areas identified by communities as needing support. This includes separating political agendas from administrative functions and ensuring that community members can influence policy. Full translations for community communications are essential to ensure accessibility for all Portlanders, not just affluent or corporate constituents.

Innovative strategies for the city administrator may include reevaluating the use of tax increment financing, which has historically harmed Black communities, and considering equitable infrastructure investments. There is potential for exploring universal basic income and increasing community involvement in decision-making processes based on lived experiences, fostering trust without a paternalistic approach.

Leadership qualities essential for success include transparency, resilience, innovation, and a genuine commitment to public service. The administrator should embrace shared power, avoid gatekeeping information, and maintain a growth mindset that allows for course corrections when necessary. They should have both learned and lived experiences, particularly with a proven track record in diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, understanding the unique context of racism in Portland.

Effective communication with Portlanders should encompass a wide range of methods to ensure accessibility, including digital platforms, written materials, and town halls, with consideration for childcare needs. Ultimately, the city administrator should embody values such as empathy, collaboration, and a commitment to human rights in housing, education, and healthcare, as well as uphold antiracist and pro-Black principles, reflecting the community's values.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

Portland will confront ongoing challenges such as the implications of the Supreme Court ruling on homelessness and the national trend of criminalizing poverty. There is a pressing need for resources to support community members in recovery and to uphold DEI and social justice values. A comprehensive analysis of community care is necessary, along with clear policies and resources for housing and shelters. The city must resist the criminalization of drug use by promoting deflection programs instead. It is vital to address issues transparently and ensure that challenges are met with adequate resources, especially as the new government structure introduces additional complexities. Clarity around the responsibilities of the city administrator will also be essential.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

Improvements should focus on budget transparency, specifically how funds are allocated to areas identified as priorities by the community. Clear communication regarding the use of tax dollars is crucial, as is the separation of political agendas from administrative functions. The city administrator should also facilitate community input in policymaking and ensure full translations are available for all Portlanders, not just affluent or corporate interests.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

The city administrator should explore alternatives to tax increment financing (TIF), which disproportionately harms Black communities. Equitable infrastructure investment and innovative community involvement strategies are necessary. Implementing concepts like universal basic income could empower residents, emphasizing a trust-based approach rather than paternalism, allowing individuals to meet their own needs.

Question 4: What leadership styles and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

Essential qualities for the city administrator include transparency, resilience, and innovation. They should be dedicated public servants, adaptable in the face of challenges, and willing to admit mistakes. Shared power and open access to information for communities are crucial, along with a growth mindset that fosters continuous improvement.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

The city administrator should possess both learned and lived experience, with a proven track record of dismantling the status quo. A minimum of five years living in Portland is essential to understand its unique context, especially regarding the subtleties of racism that may be overlooked in a seemingly progressive environment.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

The city administrator should utilize every possible communication channel to reach residents, being mindful of those not active on social media. Accessibility is key, with information provided in multiple languages and formats, including written, digital, and virtual options. Town halls should be organized with consideration for

childcare needs to encourage broader participation.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

The city administrator should embody empathy, collaboration, and innovation. They must advocate for housing, education, and healthcare as fundamental human rights, while upholding antiracist, pro-Black, and decolonizing values. A deep understanding of and alignment with the community's values will be critical for success.

Environmental Small Group Listening Session

Organizations Invited: East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District, 1000 Friends of Oregon, EcoTrust of Oregon

Organizations that Attended: 1000 Friends of Oregon

Summary

The City of Portland is likely to face significant challenges in governance, particularly in establishing a clear strategic vision and strengthening the executive branch, which has been perceived as weak and at times forgetful. To improve the situation, a city administrator could organize a retreat with new commissioners to develop a compelling strategic plan accompanied by effective communication strategies that make it easy to track accomplishments. Innovative approaches such as scenario planning and a focus on social safety nets are essential, especially considering potential federal attacks on critical services.

The administrator should prioritize revitalizing underutilized spaces in the city, like OMSI and the Lloyd Center, to draw resources back and enhance the urban landscape. Successful leadership will require the ability to build teams and invite diverse contributions while adapting communication to reach the community effectively. It's crucial that the administrator demonstrate a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion, recognizing the injustices faced by residents and valuing public protest as a means of pursuing justice.

Effective communication with Portlanders should foster partnerships and tap into the community's creative energy, ensuring that outreach is relevant and impactful. Ultimately, the city administrator should embody values of honesty, directness, open-mindedness, and strategic thinking to align with the community's aspirations.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

One of the major challenges for Portland will be establishing a clear strategic vision for the city. The executive branch has struggled with consistency and effectiveness, leading to moments of oversight that need to be addressed to ensure robust governance.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

Improvements should include organizing a retreat for new commissioners to facilitate team building and provide focused assignments. A clear and compelling strategic plan, accompanied by effective communication, is essential to track accomplishments and foster accountability.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

The city administrator should engage in scenario planning to strengthen social safety nets and prepare for potential challenges posed by federal administrations that may threaten essential services. Revitalizing underutilized buildings and bringing resources back to the city are critical. Opportunities such as enhancing areas around OMSI and Lloyd Center and developing light rail stations could significantly contribute to urban renewal.

Question 4: What leadership styles and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The ideal city administrator should be a team builder who embraces diverse leadership styles and invites contributions from individuals with varied lived experiences. They must be able to communicate adaptively and reach a wide audience quickly, fostering an inclusive environment.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

The city administrator should have a practical demonstration of DEI values, recognizing and addressing systemic injustices. They should appreciate the significance of public protest in the pursuit of justice. While it's not essential for them to be from Portland, they must show a solid track record of advocacy and action beyond mere titles, avoiding any premature crises in their new role.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

Once the strategic vision is established, the city administrator should cultivate partnerships with the community, tapping into local creativity to revamp city council meeting structures. Effective communication should focus on genuine engagement rather than over-saturating well-represented groups with services they do not need.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

Core values for the city administrator should include honesty, directness, open-mindedness, and strategic thinking, ensuring they are well-aligned with the community's expectations and needs.

Government and Public Bodies Small Group Listening Session

Organizations Invited: Port of Portland, Prosper Portland, Tri-Met, Multnomah County, Energy Trust of Oregon

Organizations that Attended: Tri-Met, Multnomah County

Summary

The City of Portland faces several primary challenges in the upcoming five years, particularly in adapting to a new governance structure and clarifying roles within it. Supporting departmental leaders through this transition will be crucial, especially as downtown revitalization efforts present unique challenges for the next council. Long-term funding for affordable housing and diversifying low-income communities will also be critical. Additionally, the current political climate, marked by tension between the city and county, necessitates the development of professional relationships to overcome existing divides and build trust.

Future improvements sought from a city administrator include fostering strong partnerships with local bureaus, establishing consistent long-term visions despite changes in leadership, and enhancing transit support. The administrator should prioritize creating networks that promote economic growth while improving community engagement and trust in government.

Innovative strategies should focus on collaborative efforts across all jurisdictions to strengthen the city, addressing community dissatisfaction by prioritizing projects that reflect their needs. The ideal city administrator should possess a collaborative, transparent leadership style, characterized by curiosity and a commitment to lifelong learning. They must value partnerships and be capable of synthesizing input to create a clear direction.

Experience in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is essential, with an emphasis on building diverse teams and fostering curiosity about the community's needs. Communication should involve a mix of traditional media, direct engagement with constituents, and supportive town halls to ensure cohesive organizational messaging.

Lastly, the city administrator should embody values such as equity, social justice, and community pride, demonstrating a readiness to engage with Portlanders and lead the city into its next phase.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the City of Portland likely face in the upcoming five years?

Portland will need to navigate governance and adapt to its new government structure, ensuring clarity in roles and responsibilities. A unified approach among departmental leaders will be essential, especially in creatively supporting downtown revitalization. Long-term funding for affordable housing and diversifying low-income communities are pressing challenges. Additionally, building professional relationships to bridge divides, particularly with the county, is critical. There is a need for new city leadership to foster trust and collaboration, moving away from political pettiness and toward productive partnerships.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

Improvements should focus on fostering partnerships between the city and local bureaus, establishing long-term visions that endure through changes in leadership. Support for public transit and riders is crucial, alongside planning for economic growth and enhancing networks beyond TriMet's influence.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

The city administrator should prioritize building up the city and addressing community dissatisfaction through targeted inquiries. Trust in government is low, so it's important to find ways to effectively deliver on the needs expressed by the community.

Question 4: What leadership styles and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

A successful city administrator should adopt a collaborative approach, be a lifelong learner, and value partnerships. They must be curious about the community's history and transparent in their dealings. The ideal candidate would possess a unique blend of collaborative skills and the ability to synthesize input into clear direction.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

While there is currently no centralization for DEI efforts, the administrator should understand both internal and external initiatives. They should demonstrate a commitment to building diverse teams and possess a genuine curiosity about the community they lead, fostering inclusivity.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Portlanders?

The administrator should leverage traditional media and engage in direct communication with constituents through town halls. They must also focus on supporting departmental communication and promoting a cohesive organizational messaging style.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the community's values?

Core values for the city administrator should include equity, a sense of social justice, and a readiness to engage with the community through inquiry. They should take pride in Portland and demonstrate leadership that guides the city into its next phase.

Tribal Nations Small Group Listening Session

Tribal Nations and Organizations Invited: Native American Youth and Family Center, Grand Ronde, Siletz, Warm Springs, Umatilla, Cowlitz, and Yakima Nations, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation

Tribal Nations and Organizations Attended: Native American Youth and Family Center

Summary

The Native Community in Portland is facing significant challenges in the next five years, particularly due to a generational leadership shift as many elders retire and younger leaders emerge. Integrating this new generation into high-level roles across various sectors, including city government and education, is crucial. Additionally, many community centers, owned by organizations like NAYA, are aging and require support for upgrades and maintenance to continue providing essential services. The city administrator should prioritize investment in neighborhoods historically overlooked, fostering prosperity in these areas rather than concentrating on downtown developments.

Innovative strategies must include climate resilience initiatives, ensuring that resources from the Portland Clean Energy Fund are accessible to traditionally marginalized communities. NAYA, which serves low-income residents, needs physical support for its campus to effectively respond to climate-related challenges. The city administrator should embody a collaborative and strategic leadership style, focusing on authentic community engagement and building relationships. Essential qualifications include lived experience within BIPOC or Native communities and a proven track record of working with these populations, to ensure inclusivity in decision-making.

Effective communication with Tribal Leaders is vital, requiring direct engagement and attendance at community events like Powwows. The city administrator should prioritize relationship-building and reciprocity, embodying values of cultural identity, accountability, and connection to support the Native community's needs and aspirations.

Synthesized Notes

Question 1: What primary challenges will the Native Community likely face in the upcoming five years?

The Native Community is experiencing a significant generational leadership shift, with many elder leaders retiring and younger individuals emerging. A key challenge will be integrating this new generation into high-level leadership roles across various sectors, not just in nonprofits. Additionally, organizations like NAYA own aging community centers dating back to the 1950s and 60s, which are critical for delivering services. Without city support, upgrading these facilities will be difficult, and there is an urgent need to expedite resource allocation for necessary renovations.

Question 2: What future improvements would you ask of a city administrator?

The city administrator should prioritize investment in areas that have historically been overlooked, rather than focusing solely on downtown development. Creating prosperity in specific neighborhoods that lack investment is crucial, and the approach should be holistic rather than centered on flashy projects.

Question 3: What innovative strategies or visionary approaches should the city administrator consider over the next five years?

Strategies should include a focus on climate resilience and ensuring access to resources from initiatives like the Portland Clean Energy Fund for traditionally marginalized communities. NAYA, which serves low-income residents, will need support to maintain its facilities, especially during extreme weather events. The city administrator should ensure these facilities can provide shelter and support to residents in times of need.

Question 4: What leadership styles and qualities do you believe Portland's city administrator should possess to be successful in this role?

The ideal city administrator should be collaborative, strategic, and intentional about resource allocation, particularly for underserved communities. They should support the tribal liaison program, understand the importance of working with Native communities, and be authentic in their commitments. The administrator should also prioritize relationship-building, showing up in the community rather than remaining isolated in City Hall.

Question 5: What experience do you believe is essential for Portland's city administrator to demonstrate, particularly regarding Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion?

Lived experience, especially from BIPOC or Native communities, is essential for understanding the importance of equity and inclusion. The administrator should have a proven track record of working effectively with communities of color and demonstrate results. Hiring internally from the Portland area could facilitate faster onboarding, but the city has not prioritized BIPOC candidates, making it challenging for talented individuals to pursue these roles. Additional support structures should also be established to retain the city administrator beyond the initial years in the role.

Question 6: How do you envision the city administrator communicating with Tribal Leaders?

The city administrator should engage directly with the city's tribal liaison program to build relationships with tribal leaders. Communication should prioritize face-to-face interactions over digital methods, reflecting the community's relational communication style. Attendance at cultural events, such as Powwows, is essential to foster trust and strengthen connections.

Question 7: What values should the city administrator embody to align with the Native community's values?

Core values should include reciprocity, accountability, and cultural connection. The administrator should emphasize the importance of giving back to the community and supporting cultural identity and pride. They should also commit to being accountable to the community, ensuring they follow through on their promises and responsibilities.

Small Group Listening Sessions Overall

Summary

The City of Portland faces several significant challenges in the upcoming five years, particularly in adapting to a new governance structure and clarifying roles within it. Supporting departmental leaders through this transition will be crucial, especially amid downtown revitalization efforts and the need for long-term funding for affordable housing and diversifying low-income communities. The current political climate, characterized by tension between the city and county, necessitates the development of professional relationships to bridge divides and build trust. A city administrator should prioritize fostering strong partnerships with local bureaus, establishing consistent long-term visions, and enhancing transit support while creating networks that promote economic growth and community engagement. Innovative strategies should focus on collaborative efforts across jurisdictions to address community dissatisfaction by prioritizing projects that reflect residents' needs.

The ideal city administrator should possess a collaborative and transparent leadership style, valuing curiosity and lifelong learning, while emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI). Effective communication should involve a mix of traditional media, direct engagement with constituents, and supportive town halls to ensure cohesive organizational messaging. Ultimately, the city administrator should embody values of equity, social justice, and community pride, demonstrating readiness to engage with Portlanders and lead the city into its next phase.

Repetitive Themes

Governance Structure and Role Clarity:

A consistent emphasis on the need for adapting to a new governance structure and clarifying roles within it appears throughout your notes. This includes the importance of supporting departmental leaders during this transition.

Community Engagement and Trust:

The necessity for fostering strong community engagement and building trust between the government and residents is highlighted repeatedly. This involves listening to community needs and prioritizing projects that reflect those needs.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI):

There is a strong emphasis on the importance of DEI in leadership, including building diverse teams and fostering an understanding of community needs. This theme underscores the expectation that the city administrator should have experience in DEI initiatives.

Collaborative Leadership Style:

A collaborative and transparent leadership style is repeatedly mentioned as a crucial quality for the city administrator. This includes valuing partnerships and engaging with various stakeholders effectively.

Communication Strategies:

The need for effective communication through a mix of traditional media and direct engagement with constituents is emphasized multiple times. This includes organizing town halls and ensuring cohesive messaging.

Long-term Vision and Planning:

The importance of establishing consistent long-term visions despite changes in leadership and focusing on innovative strategies for community improvement is reiterated.

Economic Growth and Infrastructure:

The focus on fostering economic growth, enhancing transit support, and revitalizing underutilized spaces is a common thread in your notes, indicating the need for a strategic approach to urban development.

Responsive Governance:

The expectation that the city administrator should demonstrate responsiveness to the community and be proactive in addressing emerging issues is a recurring theme.

Additional organizations reached out to, but did not attend:

Outside In

Basic Rights Oregon

PDX Q Center

PFLAG Portland

Emerging Professionals of Portland

P:ear

Asian American Council of Oregon

AARP

KairosPDX

Neighborhood Associations of Portland