



Board of Directors Meeting Agenda

East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District

(January 12, 2022)

Wednesday January 19th, 2021, 4:00 – 7:00 PM

To be held via videoconference: (1-253-215-8782) Meeting ID: (864 8361 6288) **OR** log in on your computer, tablet, or smartphone at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86483616288>

Strategic Planning Workshop AGENDA

4:00 pm – 4:25 pm Welcome

- Agenda Overview
- Introductions
- EMSWCD Meeting Agreements
- Framing our work together

4:25 pm – 4:55 pm Current EMSWCD Context

- Reflections from January 10 Board meeting presentation
- Stakeholder insights

4:55 pm – 5:20 pm Our Current Mission, Vision, & Draft Values (High-level Assessment in Small Groups)

- What resonates?
- What might be missing?
- How do these guide our work?

5:20 pm – 5:30 pm Break

5:30 pm – 6:00 pm Our Vision (Individual Work & Small Groups)

- What does it look like if we are successful at achieving our mission and living our values?
- What is different for the community we serve?

6:00 pm – 6:40 pm Our Vision (Full Group)

- What are the common elements?
- How does this vision serve, or not serve, our stakeholders?
- What does this *rough* vision tell us about what we should or should not be doing?

6:40 pm – 7:00 pm Synthesis and Next Steps

- Major takeaways
 - Prep and Preview for February 16 Workshop
 - Actions/Assignments for Strategic Planning Team (and others)
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Meeting attendees requiring Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations should call (503) 222-7645 x 100 as soon as possible. To better serve you, five (5) business days prior to the event, is preferred.



EMSWCD Strategic Planning Workshop #1 Advance Packet

January 19, 2022
4:00 – 7:00 pm

Virtual Meeting Link

Zoom: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86483616288>

PARTICIPANTS

Board
Management Team
Strategic Planning Team

Facilitators:

Chris Wallace Caldwell, Catalysis LLC
Jamila Dozier, New Theory Consulting

DESIRED OUTCOMES

Workshop #1: Our Foundation (January 19)

- Build understanding of current context (current stakeholder insights, and organization contexts)
- Develop a clear organizational mission, shared values, and aspirational vision
- Foster a sense of enthusiasm, inclusion, and cohesion for our work together

Workshop #2: Our Strategic Goals (February 16)

- Brainstorm critical success factors to achieve our vision
- Identify a preliminary set of major goals for the next 5 years
- Outline potential strategic initiatives to support major goals

ADVANCE WORK (ATTACHED)

- Review EMSWCD Meeting Agreements
- Read description of the purpose of mission, vision, and values (to be provided)
- Review and reflect on current mission, vision, and draft values

READ → EMSWCD MEETING AGREEMENTS

These Meeting Agreements have been adopted and are widely used by EMSWCD staff. We will review together at the start of our meeting.

The Agreements

Group agreements are a set of guidelines and expectations that help to set group norms and help create a positive group culture. We must all agree to hold ourselves accountable to the agreements, and use them as a framework to build relationships and provide one another with feedback. These have been adapted from resources provided by the Center for Diversity and the Environment, Center for Equity and Inclusion, [Nonprofit Inclusiveness](#), [Diversity Best Practices](#), [Aorta Collective](#), and more. (Co-created by EMSWCD staff and the Equity Team; Last updated Nov. 2020).

1. Be mindful of privilege, power dynamics, unconscious bias, and missing perspectives.

Reflect on who is present. What perspectives, levels of power, or community representation does everyone bring? Observe both differences and similarities, and respect one another's uniqueness. Ask yourself what biases you might bring into this interaction. Who might be missing from the conversation? Mentally note the community groups, partner organizations, individuals, coworkers, members of leadership, etc. who are not represented. Consider how this conversation and/or meeting ultimately impacts those who are both here and not here.

2. Honor privacy (personal stories stay, learnings go).

Personal stories can help us advance our understanding of each other and advance our equity efforts. As a public agency, we cannot guarantee complete confidentiality in any of our work. What we can and will do, however, is commit to respecting one another's personal privacy. It is up to each of us to decide what and how we would like to share any personal details about ourselves. Do your best to communicate whether you want something to be kept private. Some stories will serve as powerful learning tools for others and it is okay to share those learnings, while being respectful of everyone's personal information and privacy. Practice discretion, leave out the details of "who said what," and avoid statements that may reveal someone's identity. Practicing discretion and honoring privacy also includes, but is not limited to, the personal stories, emotions, reactions, expressions, etc. of all who are present.

3. Listen to understand.

Be an active and present listener. Listening is a conscious choice that requires focus and attention. This might look like paying attention, avoiding interruptions, asking questions, open body language, minimizing distractions, and more. Focus on what someone is saying at the time, instead of how you are going to respond afterwards. Good listening can make the speaker feel seen, validated, included and is ultimately an act of empathy and respect. This does not mean you will always understand exactly where someone is coming from or always agree with one another. The key is to focus on learning where the speaker is coming from instead of our own thoughts and emotional reactions.

4. Speak responsibly.

Challenge yourself to share your honest thoughts, feelings, and opinions in ways that are comfortable for you, while also being aware of the impact on others. Perhaps this means that you let the group know how you are feeling that day, or that you ask for an accommodation when necessary. Be aware that your words could have a negative impact on others and cause harm. It is important to remember that our truth is just one part of the whole, and that what we perceive as truth may be a belief instead. Because we all have

different lived experiences, others may disagree with your truth, identify it as a belief or have emotional responses. It is okay to make space for these differences, as long as we treat each other with respect. Allowing yourself to be vulnerable and authentically share while being mindful allows for all involved to connect, grow, and learn.

5. Make space/take space.

Be present and stay engaged. This means participating in conversations, while also practicing good listening skills when others are speaking (making space or sharing the “airtime”). Providing opportunities for others to speak can sometimes mean allowing space for silence and taking a pause before speaking up again. Practice self-awareness and challenge yourself. It can take courage to take up space, and it can take great self-restraint and patience to make space for others. Ask yourself the W.A.I.T. acronym: “Why am I talking?” or “Why aren’t I talking?” Embrace the discussion and resist the urge to change the topic. Courageous conversations can be challenging and bring up frustration, anxiety, discomfort, etc. This is normal! Leaning into these difficult moments can help us to challenge privilege as well as white dominant culture.

6. Acknowledge, accept, and work through mistakes.

We are all going to make mistakes, but the good news is we don’t expect anyone to be perfect. It is okay to be emotional, mess up our words, and to share thoughts that are not fully formed. To learn and grow, we must take risks in which we may make mistakes. Be patient with yourself and others, and recognize the impacts it might cause. Most important is how we address those mistakes. By acknowledging and working through our mistakes with others, we can invite mutual bravery into our conversations. Providing feedback, talking through the confusion, or asking clarifying questions can foster healthy relationships and personal growth. Sometimes we might want to minimize what happened, make others feel better for their mistakes, or protect someone for our own personal reasons. Explore those reactions in yourself and reflect what this situation is bringing up for you.

7. Be willing to do things differently and/or experience discomfort.

Stay present through discomfort, and be open to new perspectives and views. We expect everyone to challenge their own boundaries. We must learn to get comfortable in our discomfort. This can mean letting go of our usual expectations and norms, questioning those norms altogether, or trying new ways to communicate. Going outside of our comfort zones is one way in which we can challenge our layers of privilege and reflect on our values, perceptions, and behaviors. Being honest and participating in real dialogue can be truly scary. However, it is important to note that comfort does not equal safety. A conversation can be both safe and uncomfortable, and avoiding conversations and prioritizing the personal feelings of the dominant culture for the sake of comfort upholds only serves to perpetuate white dominant culture. Lean into your learning edge – recognize that where we experience discomfort can also be the places where we experience the most growth.

8. Expect and accept non-closure.

Some of our conversations will be easier than others, some questions will have clearer answers, and some problems will have more obvious solutions—and many won’t. All of that is okay! One aspect of white dominant culture is to focus on products and outcomes, as opposed to the journey and process itself. It is important to remind ourselves that we can’t solve the world’s problems in a day, let alone right now. We might leave a conversation from time to time feeling unresolved or uncertain. Invite yourself to sit with that feeling of “unfinished business.” Accepting non-closure can also be an invitation to keep the conversation going into the future.

REFLECT → MISSION, VISION, VALUES

Take a moment to refresh your memory of these guiding statements. We will not be doing a thorough review at our meeting, but we want to ground our discussion in these guiding statements. Pay attention to what jumps out at you and answer the following:

- 1) What resonates?
- 2) What might be missing?
- 3) How do these guide our work?

Mission

We help people care for land and water.

Vision

Our lands and waters are healthy and sustain farms, forests, wildlife, and communities.

Broad Strategic Goals

1. Protect and improve water quality and quantity.
2. Protect and improve soil quality and quantity.
3. Protect and improve natural habitats.
4. Protect agricultural lands.
5. Increase the sustainability of agriculture.
6. Provide equitable access to nature.

Organizational Values (Draft)

Draft from staff (as presented at the May 2020 Board meeting)

Equity

We are deeply committed to understanding the current and historical inequities in the environmental movement and society at large and to using our work to help reverse patterns of racial, economic, and environmental injustice. We believe that the intersection of conservation and community well-being offers tremendous opportunity for bettering the lives of impacted constituents. In allocating EMSWCD resources, we prioritize benefits to BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color) and other marginalized groups. We strive for a diverse and welcoming work environment where we continue to learn and grow and use our unique position to combat privilege and oppression.

Environmental Responsibility (Sustainability / Conservation)

Clean water and air, healthy soils, a stable climate, and rich biodiversity are the foundation of a healthy environment and healthy communities. A thriving natural world is important to support the well-being of current and future generations. We model good stewardship and support people and organizations in their effort to improve the environment and their communities.

Public Service (Accountability / Transparency)

The essence of EMSWCD is providing excellent service to our community while being good stewards of District resources. We hold ourselves accountable by being equitable, transparent, collaborative and

respectful in our relationships, both internally and with our entire community. We aim to implement our goals, processes, decision-making, and outcomes consistently, fairly, openly, honestly and in a way that allows for discussion as well as our individual and collective growth.

Clarity (Alignment)

Staff and Board have a clear understanding of their roles and a shared commitment to and understanding of our goals. Communication is clear, direct, honest, and respectful. When confusion or differences arise, we first seek to listen and then work to have a shared understanding of common goals, responsibilities, and process. When we receive feedback or encounter different viewpoints, it is welcomed with appreciation for the opportunity to learn, adapt, and improve.

Curiosity (Innovation)

We acknowledge that we all have growth and learning to do, that others have viewpoints we can learn from, and we continually look at ways we can improve. Our workplace is a safe place to share creative ideas and approaches. It is also a place where mistakes are shared and seen as opportunities to adapt and learn.

Trust (Empowerment / Support / Nurture)

We recognize that we depend on each other and that we need to be able to have confidence in the fairness and reliability of our colleagues and partners in order to fully succeed as individuals and as an organization. Empowerment is nurtured through trust, kindness, empathy, vulnerability and support. We recognize that we put ourselves in a position of vulnerability when we trust others, such that our wellbeing rests partly in their hands. Yet in that, is strength - that we are all on the same team with the same goals, and we want to help each other succeed.

Respect (Respectful / Empathy)

We recognize that respect and respectfulness are not synonymous and that position of power is not an indication of righteousness. We work to create an environment where each person's opinion and lived experience is valued and where everyone, at each level of the organization, is treated with equal consideration and kindness. We value curiosity and the willingness to try to understand another person's perspective or circumstance. We strive to be courageously humble and to acknowledge that we all have different strengths, and it is this diversity of strengths that make us great and our impact lasting.

Relationship (Relationship Building, Fun, Collaboration)

EMSWCD recognizes that we work better when we work together. We prioritize ongoing genuine relationships that are not attached to products or goals. Open-mindedness, assuming good intentions, clear communication, empathy, and trust are important in developing authentic relationships. Everyone has different needs and preferences, we therefore create both formal and informal opportunities for fun both during and outside of work, and encourage and trust staff to take part in what they enjoy. We recognize that by valuing and actively engaging the diverse voices of our staff, our partners, and our community, we foster better outcomes for all.



VISION

- A vision creates a clear picture of the future you want to create.
- It should be aspirational, inspiring, relevant, and achievable.
- The vision may have a specific timeframe.

MISSION

- A mission describes the reason your organization exists. It is the fundamental work you do or the business you are in.
- Your mission should be fairly stable and be relevant for a longer period of time.
- A mission helps to clarify what is within the scope of an organization and who you serve.

VALUES

- Values are guides that inform how you collectively approach your work everyday.
- Values can describe how we interact with our customers and partners, how we make decisions, how we define our culture.
- Values can be used in performance management strategies.