

## **Preamble on Evolving Success Criteria for Effective & Informed Decision Making**

### ***Why do we need evolving (continuously developed and adaptive) success criteria?***

- To define outcomes
- To facilitate decision making
- To ensure diversity, equity and inclusion is embedded as a foundational value

### ***How will we use these criteria?***

- To examine and weigh the impact of difficult decision alternatives
- To provide guidance when a conversation or decision is stuck and it's unclear what might be the best path forward

### ***Focal areas & foundational values defined:***

To ensure we are all grounded in how we define the three outcome focal areas and foundational values of diversity, equity and inclusion, definitions are provided below:

Conservation Scope: Our organizational mission, vision, and goals that determine what we do, why we do it and how we do it. This will be *affirmed or modified* as we move through the process. Conservation Scope also includes identifying specific initiatives and program areas that achieve our mission, vision and goals as determined through the LRBP update process.

Financial Sustainability: An organizational framework that ensures the long-term ability to successfully fulfill our mission while being a good steward of public funds through:

- a) Readily available financial resources to implement annual work plans
- b) Sufficient reserves to ensure resiliency during economic downturns and the capacity to support capital projects while maintaining our current staffing level

Organizational Health: An organization's ability to function effectively and effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within.<sup>1</sup>

### Diversity, Equity & Inclusion:

Diversity encompasses a wide range of qualities and attributes within a person, group, or community. When we celebrate diversity, communities and workplaces become richer, drawing upon the variety of experiences, perspectives, and skills that people can contribute.<sup>2</sup>

Equity is the concept of treating everyone fairly by acknowledging everyone's unique situation and addressing systemic barriers. The aim of equity is to ensure that everyone has access to equal results and benefits.<sup>2</sup>

Inclusion: Acknowledging and valuing people's differences so as to enrich or shift social planning, decision making, and quality of life for everyone. In an inclusive society, we all have a sense of belonging, acceptance, and recognition as valued and contributing members of society.<sup>2</sup>

1. Organizational Health Diagnostic & Development Corporation (Source: <https://www.organizationalhealth.com/publications/OHFinal.pdf> , 3/9/2020)
2. Nonprofit Association of Oregon, Equity & Inclusion Lens Guide, 2019 (Source: <https://nonprofitoregon.org/equity-inclusion-lens-guide-message> )

## **Conservation Scope Evolving Success Criteria**

*Given your examination of the following, how does this decision align with what we aim to accomplish as an organization:*

1. Aligns with our affirmed or modified mission
2. Aligns with our affirmed or modified vision
3. Aligns with our affirmed or modified goals
4. Results in long-term impactful conservation outcomes
5. Embeds equity and inclusion as foundational value in all that we do
6. Responsive to community needs
7. Allows us to fulfil a unique niche or unmet need with strategic partnerships leveraging our limited resources and expanding our overall reach
8. Effectively addresses identified threats

## Conservation Scope Direction Setting Conversation Questions

*The following questions will be posed separately the Board (at the Spring Board Retreat), to technical staff, and an advisory committee to guide our conversation on our conservation scope. Additional internally focused questions will be also be addressed by staff during the direction setting process. Findings from these conversations will be incorporated into our LRBP update through additional vetting of the advisory committee recommendations by technical staff and the Community Engagement Liaisons*

### 1. Mission affirmation or modification?

- a. Should we broaden our mission by either adding to or replacing “Soil & Water” with “Natural Resources”? Is the term “Natural Resources” too jargoned and extractive of a term, how else might we describe this?
- b. Should we include equity and inclusion in our mission? If yes, how?
- c. Are we missing an opportunity to explain how we get our work done? Should we explicitly call out how we work with others on their land?
- d. Does our reasoning or beneficiaries extend beyond “people, wildlife and the environment?”
- e. Can we state this more plainly?
- f. Is this too broad or too vague?
- g. Are we missing a key component?

### 2. Vision affirmation or modification?

- a. Are “economic viability and environmental health” the only beneficiaries we want to envision?
- b. Are “urban and rural residents, farmers, business owners, public schools and the general public” represent who the works with for implementing on-the-ground conservation?
- c. Should we consider adding equity, environmental justice, access and climate change in our vision?
- d. Do you have organizational or community visions (or desired future outcomes) that intersect with what we are proposing?
- e. Do you see your communities and their interests represented in this vision?
- f. What are we missing that we might include and why?
- g. What might you suggest removing and why?

### 3. Goals affirmation or modification?

- a. Do our current goals align with our affirmed or modified mission & vision? What goals are missing or might be changed to better align these goals?
- b. What results do we want within the next 5 years?
- c. Do you have concerns and/or lack of clarity around our goals?
- d. What community/organizational considerations or impacts might we take into account in achieving these goals?
- e. How should we prioritize our goals?

## **Financial Sustainability Evolving Success Criteria**

*Given your examination of the following, how does this decision effect our long-term ability to successfully fulfill our mission while being a good steward of public funds?*

1. Strategic use of funds (Our funds are strategically utilized on priority expenditures that are integral in fulfilling our mission, vision and goals as outlined in our LRBP).
2. Maximizes financial resources (Our funds are heavily leveraged whenever possible to ensure maximum outcomes with our limited financial resources).
3. Ensures financial resiliency (Our budgets are developed and implemented with medium-term and long-term projections and goals to ensure we have ample reserves to ensure financial resiliency)
4. Prepared and responsive to financial threats & opportunities (Financial threats and opportunities are addressed with appropriate spending caps and strategies alongside appropriate growth plans to ensure we are prepared to weather financial threats & take advantage of financial opportunities)

## Financial Sustainability Direction Setting Conversation Questions

*The following questions will guide our conversation on financial sustainability. Findings from these conversations will be incorporated into our LRBP Update.*

1. How will we ensure there are readily available financial resources to implement the LRBP and corresponding work plans?
  - a. What is essential and of utmost value in fulfilling our LRBP, the areas where we spend our money and how will we ensure our resources are used on what we most value?
  - b. How many months of District operations do you feel we should keep on hand as a reserve account like a rainy-day fund?
  - c. What do you see as the primary use of our current and projected financial reserves?
  - d. Should we use our current and projected financial reserves to sustain our essential items in our LRBP?
2. What future financial opportunities and threats should we ensure we are prepared for?
  - a. Increasing personnel costs: Insurance increases, PERS, COLA
  - b. Financial forecasts: 3-5 Year revenue forecasting, tax base growth, compression, economic climate/considerations
  - c. Rent/Lease Up: projected market values, opportunities to address needs
  - d. Fundraising: grants, foundations, bonds, pay-for-service model
3. How will we build sufficient reserves to ensure greater resiliency and flexibility during economic downturns?
  - a. Do you agree with the tactic to match annual expenses to annual income such that we are not depending on carryover savings from the previous year to cover the next year's expenses; allowing these savings to go into reserve accounts?
  - b. How will we ensure un-spent funds at the end of each fiscal year are directed into contingency, rainy day, and unallocated budget categories?
  - c. Do staff need any additional information and support, aside from a revenue forecast before programmatic budgeting occurs, to determine budgets within the aimed cap?
  - d. What additional measures should we take to build our reserves?
4. Should we take on large projects that exceed annual appropriation limits and what are the tradeoffs in making this level of investment?
5. How will we build the capital savings needed to ensure we have capacity to take on projects that exceed annual appropriation limits, if desired?
6. We've identified a need to develop a fixed step system for staff merit increases that provides clear opportunities for advancement and a cap that limits merit increases after staff reach the final step. Cost of living increases would be provided for staff that reach the cap as funds are available. The following questions should be addressed in developing this system:
  - a. What questions and concerns exist around this and how will they be addressed?
  - b. How will caps and steps be determined and structured?
7. How will we embed equity into the financial sustainability framework we build?

## **Organizational Health Evolving Success Criteria**

*Given your examination of the following, how does this decision effect ability to function effectively, to cope adequately, to change appropriately, and to grow from within:*

1. Aligns with our organizational values
2. Staff have methods for realistic goal setting
3. Effective and efficient workflow
4. Effective and known lines of communication
5. Staff is comfortable with work/life balance
6. Transparent decision making and continued shared leadership
7. Equity & Inclusivity is ingrained in our decision making
8. Time is devoted to slow down to be more equitable and inclusive
9. Staff and Board feel valued and recognized for their work
10. Staff are empowered to engage in preferred focal areas and are supported in areas of less strength or expertise
11. Benefits and flexible schedules to be maintained
12. Professional development and growth opportunities are supported and encouraged
13. Staff have adequate facilities and resources to perform their jobs

## **Organizational Health Direction Setting Conversation Questions**

*The following questions will guide our conversation on organizational health. Findings from these conversations will be incorporated into our LRBP Update.*

1. Do we currently adhere to and agree with our organizational values as stated? What's missing and what might be changed to better reflect our values?
2. What methods should be implored to ensure realistic goal setting?
3. How might we improve workflow effectiveness and/or efficiency?
4. What tactics are needed to ensure effective and known lines of communication?
5. How can we encourage and facilitate a comfortable work/life balance amongst our staff?
6. What steps might we take to ensure transparent decision making and continued shared leadership?
7. How can we ingrain equity and inclusivity in our decision making?
8. How should we value and recognize our staff and board?
9. How shall we ensure ample time and slower pace is supported to be more equitable and inclusive?
10. What actions and systems are needed to empower and support staff to engage in preferred focal areas while providing support in areas of less strength or expertise.
11. How will we maintain benefits and flexible schedules?
12. How will we support and encourage professional development and growth opportunities?
13. Our building lease is up in 2022, how will we respond to issues identified with our current facility?