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EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

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Technology is rapidly changing the way people access and act upon information. For public agencies, new technology offers the opportunity to increase transparency by providing the public easy and immediate access to board meetings, board actions and the materials used in the decision making process.

The relative ease of access to the documents and proceedings of government is key to establishing effective public oversight and participation, which in turn helps produce greater knowledge and societal progress.

Metro has made great advances in using technological advances such as social media to inform the public about changes in service, upcoming public hearings, project updates, board hearings, board decisions and transportation trends in the region. However, the advances achieved have not extended to board meetings, board actions and materials.

Currently, access to live proceedings of the Metro Board is only available by direct attendance or telephone call in. The phone system suffers from limited capacity so it is not uncommon for members of the public to reach a busy signal when items of significant public interest are before the Board.

The Board Archives System, which is a searchable archive of Board minutes, meetings, reports and presentations, is difficult to navigate, returns imprecise searches and is generally a clumsy tool for members of the public interested in specific board actions and the materials used to arrive at those decisions.

In the interest of improving transparency, Metro should explore innovative methods for storing and accessing with an eye towards the latest emerging technologies.

I THEREFORE MOVE that Metro staff research and report back to the Board in May on technology improvements to Board Archives System, incorporating the following elements and principles:

- A system built on the concept of a paperless office that supports document sharing, a cloud type of storage and indexing of records that moves away from labor-intensive scanning of materials and manual data entry
- A searchable electronic index of the Metro Boards actions, reports, motions, and other official and public documents in the legislative record that can reliably return specific records.
- An interface that allows users to subscribe to a specific project or action to receive emails of file activity and use RSS feeds for subject matter reports.
- Searchable document contents.
- The ability to track verbal reports, or provide a place to "deposit" (scan) documents submitted during verbal reports and general public comment discussion.
- The ability to link Committee and Board discussions and actions to segments of audio or video records.
- A database of contracts awarded that the public can easily access and search.

I FURTHER MOVE that staff explore live-streaming of Metro committee and Board proceedings on the Metro website for easy access and viewing by the public. Staff should also be directed to report on the expansion of the phone access system to ensure that the public never reaches a busy signal during the proceedings of the Board.