

MPAC Worksheet

Agenda Item Title: High Capacity Transit Strategy Update: Report and Recommendations

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Purpose/Objective

With the pipeline of corridor investments for the region established, the final milestone for the High Capacity Transit Strategy looks backward to document how we got here and looks forward to create the roadmap for putting the pipeline to use in implementing the vision. The strategy renews our regional commitment to HCT as an essential tool for achieving many regional goals. The strategy update calls for HCT projects that fit within the context of communities, serve as the foundation of our regional transportation system, and provide an important tool for supporting community development and maximizing regional goals. To realize these investments and all the benefits they bring, the region will need strong partnership, local champions, and engaged communities to ensure HCT maximizes value to everyone in our region.

High capacity transit is one part – a key part, but still one of many parts – of the broader transit strategy. The Regional Transit Strategy establishes a broad vision using all the tools in our transit toolbox to expand the coverage of the local transit network and even make connections outside of the region, improve frequency on most arterial streets, make the bus better through priority treatments on corridors with greater delay and provide the highest quality investments (e.g., light rail, rapid bus, streetcar) where the most people need to move quickly along major travel corridors (see Figure 1 below). It's also broader than transit type and service – other actions implementing the strategy include investing in transit infrastructure (e.g., tunnel, dedicated lanes, signal priority), collaborating between transit providers and local jurisdictions, and expanding transit supportive elements (e.g., crossings, travel demand management). A corridor's inclusion in the vision, regardless of tier, reinforces its need for continued investment both in land use and corridor planning to develop the transit-supportive environment and with other tools in the transit toolbox to begin growing service so that we can have what we need in place first to successfully take transit to the next level in the future.

Action Requested/Outcome

MPAC provides feedback on the draft report, particularly the actions and recommendations for implementing the high capacity transit network vision, and reviews next steps for the HCT Strategy Update as the effort merges with the 2023 RTP Update process.

What has changed since MPAC last considered this issue/item?

Earlier this fall, MPAC, along with other Metro and County coordinating committees and regional stakeholders, provided feedback on the investment priorities and identified additional considerations for high capacity transit investment readiness. Since then, the Project Management Team (including staff from Metro and TriMet) has worked with the Working Group (including regional partners) to make adjustments to the corridor investment tiers and develop a report establishing the regional strategy for high capacity transit.

The draft report documents the regional strategy for high capacity transit investment – most importantly what it will take and how we can work together to realize the network vision. The report opens by setting the stage for how this work continues the legacy of the 1982 Light Rail System Plan and 2009 High Capacity transit plan, building from the foundation established by the

2040 Growth Concept and Regional Transit Strategy. It outlines what we were looking to do with this update, including taking stock of existing conditions, challenges and opportunities for high capacity transit, and why it was important to undertake now. It describes the process we went through together, including who was involved and how, and the outcomes for the policy framework, network vision, and corridor tiers. The appendix will include the technical memos previously reviewed at the other key milestones of the process to further document the details of this work. The report also includes call-out boxes throughout to highlight key points, themes or information, including best practices, what we heard from community, and lessons learned. Several adjustments to the corridor investment tiers developed with the working group are included in the final high capacity transit vision within the report:

- Given the community interest in the Killingsworth portion of the Line 72, its Tier 2-consistent evaluation score, and active consideration underway as part of the 82nd Avenue project, as well as the longer-term timeline planned for advancing streetcar on the NW Lovejoy to Hollywood corridor – the tiering of these corridors was swapped. Killingsworth from Swan Island to Parkrose is now Tier 2 and NW Lovejoy to Hollywood Tier 3.
- Given the current adjacent light rail line and the questions around feasibility for rapid bus along Burnside in the Washington County, we have removed the westside segment of Burnside from the corridor.

Then, most importantly, the report outlines the actions and recommendations that collectively make up the strategy for implementing the high capacity transit network vision. The implementation chapter kicks off by describing all of the different elements that create an environment supportive of high capacity transit and make a corridor investment successful: land use, urban context, and transit-oriented development; community stability and resilience; transit access, complete streets, safety and mobility options; transportation demand management programs and policies; transit affordability and fare programs; and transportation system management and operations. These actions are the culminating outcome from the framework of prior planning work, reflecting what we know now from more recent challenges and opportunities and emerging best practices explored earlier in the report. In addition to highlighting the importance of federal funding resources to design and construct these capital projects and the work needed to secure long-term funding resources for the future operation and maintenance of these completed projects, the report also recommends specific actions that regional partners can take to move corridors forward based on their tier status generally. A given corridor may have completed some to many of these actions already, so a working corridor-specific matrix of compiled opportunities, challenges, and recommendations for future corridor planning processes identified through planning efforts to date will also be included in the report appendix.

This spring, staff will be working with decision-makers, advisory committees stakeholders, and community organizations to refine the draft report. Additionally, the team is already reaching out directly to all of the community groups and advisory committees, advocacy organizations, agency stakeholders and business organizations engaged as part of other milestones throughout the process to indicate how their feedback informed the outcome and invite additional input on the draft report. In June, the HCT Strategy will be incorporated into the 2023 RTP document for public review in July and consideration for adoption in November.

What packet material do you plan to include?

1. Major Milestones and Meetings Outline (updated)
2. HCT Strategy Report: Executive Summary
3. HCT Strategy Report: Full Report Draft
4. Draft Engagement Summary Appendix (in progress)