

Regional emergency transportation routes (ETR) update | Phase 2

Prioritizing and tiering the network routes

Disasters, both natural and human-caused, can happen anytime, and the transportation system needs to be prepared to withstand them and support lifesaving and life-sustaining activities.

Project overview

New technology, data and mapping have greatly expanded the region's understanding of potential hazard risks, including earthquakes, wildfires, landslides, floods, volcanoes and other extreme weather events.

Coordinated emergency management planning helps mitigate the risks these hazards pose to the public health and safety of communities and the region's economic prosperity and quality of life. Identifying emergency transportation routes is a critical element of emergency preparedness for the region.

First designated in 1996, regional Emergency Transportation Routes (ETRs) are travel routes that, in case of a major regional emergency or natural disaster, would be prioritized for rapid damage assessment and debris-removal to aid the movement of first responders, people who need medical care, fuel, supplies and equipment.

Outcomes from Phase 1

From 2019 to 2021, Metro partnered with the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) on the first phase of the project to reassess and update the designated RETRs for the five-county Portland-Vancouver metropolitan region, which includes Clackamas, Columbia, Multnomah and Washington counties in Oregon and Clark County in Washington. Before that, the last update occurred in 2006.

The primary outcome of the first phase was a regionally-accepted network made up of **1,204 miles over 195 total routes connecting over 75% of state and regional critical infrastructure and essential facilities.**



There were 89 new routes totaling 305 miles added to the network. Visit the [RDPO project page](#) to view the route maps and detailed regional ETR data charts.

Criteria across the following three dimensions were used to identify the best regional routes for emergency response during a seismic event

- **Connectivity and access** to regional assets and from state to local routes
- **Route infrastructure resilience** to multiple natural hazards
- **Equitable access** to vulnerable and isolated communities

Desired outcome for Phase 2

This second planning phase will build on the previous work on regional ETRs by developing a tiering methodology and prioritization framework to inform which routes among the identified regional ETRs should be evaluated, cleared and opened first, next and last in a catastrophic scenario; and to guide on-going maintenance and capital investments to ensure top tier routes are increasingly resilient.



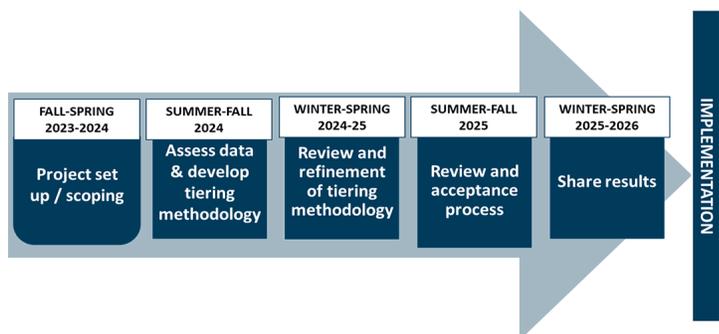
Metro RDPO

Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization



Project timeline and decision-making

Phase 2 scoping began in fall 2023 and the project is expected to be completed in spring 2026. Project recommendations will be brought forward for review and endorsement consideration by regional policymakers, including the RDPO Steering Committee, the RDPO Policy Committee, the Metro Council, Metro Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the Southwest Regional Transportation Council (RTC).



Project phases

- **Fall 2023 to spring 2024:** Project set up and scoping
- **Summer to fall 2024:** Assess data and develop tiering methodology
- **Winter 2024 to spring 2025:** Review and refinement of tiering methodology
- **Summer to fall 2025:** Review and acceptance process
- **Winter 2025 to spring 2026:** Share results

Partnerships and collaboration

The regional ETR update project is co-led by the Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) at the City of Portland and Metro and will be supported by a number of local, regional and state partners, as well as a consultant.

As in Phase 1, Phase 2 will rely on existing RDPO and Metro technical committees and working groups, as well as briefings to county-level technical coordinating committees to engage individual cities within each county in a coordinated manner.

Other agencies and groups will be engaged and consulted as key stakeholders due to their roles in emergency response and/or critical infrastructure and social services for vulnerable populations, including community-based organizations and RDPO discipline-specific work groups.

This project is a collaboration between public, private and non-profit stakeholders, co-led by the five-county, bi-state Regional Disaster Preparedness Organization (RDPO) and Oregon Metro, the metropolitan planning organization designated by the Governor of Oregon to serve the urban portions of Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties.

Funding for this project is being provided by an Urban Areas Security Initiative grant.

Questions?

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rdpo.net/emergency-transportation-routes