

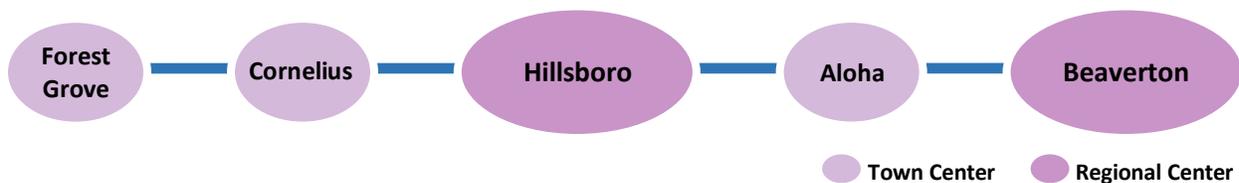
# TV Highway Transit Project

## Initial Purpose and Need Statement

### BACKGROUND

Tualatin Valley (TV) Highway (Oregon Route 8) is an important regional and county urban arterial that supports the movement of goods and people through the communities of Forest Grove, Cornelius, Hillsboro, Aloha, and Beaverton (Figure 1). It serves as an access route to Highway 217 from points west, connects to the regional light rail system in two locations, and supports one of the highest ridership bus lines in the region. The corridor also serves many communities of color, limited English proficiency speakers, and lower income communities.

Figure 1. TV Highway Corridor Communities



In 2010, TV Highway was identified as a priority corridor for high capacity transit (HCT) in the HCT System Plan. In 2018, Metro updated and replaced the HCT System Plan with the Regional Transit Strategy, in support of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The 2018 RTP includes an “enhanced transit concept” investment in the TV Highway corridor on the financially constrained project list. This type of capital investment is a context-sensitive approach to improving transit speed and reliability with lower-cost and easy to implement improvements. Subsequent transit corridor planning was completed as part of Washington County’s 2019 Moving Forward TV Highway Enhanced Transit and Access Plan, as well as the 2020 regional transportation funding measure. The current planning effort builds on the analysis and findings from these prior plans.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the TV Highway Transit Project is to improve speed, reliability, accessibility and safety for transit riders on TV Highway, and in particular for communities of color and low-income communities.

### NEED

The TV Highway Transit Project would address three major needs in the corridor:

1. **Safety:** need to improve access to transit and bus stop amenities in a high injury corridor
2. **Transit speed and reliability:** need to provide faster and more reliable transit service in order to be more competitive with driving and to improve access to destinations

3. **Transit-dependent communities:** need to provide safe, efficient, and reliable transit service to meet the needs of the high concentration of communities who rely on transit

The following subsections provide more information on each need.

### **Safety**

TV Highway is designated as a regional high injury corridor in the 2018 Regional Transportation Safety Strategy (RTSS) and a priority high crash corridor in Washington County's Transportation Safety Action Plan (2016). The portion of TV Highway between Beaverton and Hillsboro had the seventh highest rate of serious crashes per mile out of the 181 high injury corridors identified in the 2018 RTSS.<sup>1</sup> Overall, there were 237 serious injuries and 39 fatalities on TV Highway between 2007 and 2018, an average of 18 serious injuries and 3 deaths per year.<sup>2</sup> Seventy-two percent of those fatalities were people either walking or bicycling. TV Highway has inadequate multimodal and transit infrastructure, which creates safety concerns as well as barriers to access.

Approximately 29 percent of TV Highway lacks sidewalks, and approximately 32 percent of bike lanes are missing or substandard along the highway.<sup>3</sup> Many of the Line 57 bus stops lack landing pads, lighting, shelters, and protected crossings. Between 2007 and 2018, 53 percent of all pedestrian serious injuries and fatalities on TV Highway occurred within 100 feet of a transit stop, which highlights the importance of access and safety improvements for pedestrians near transit stations.<sup>4</sup>

### **Transit speed and reliability**

Transit travel time on the Line 57 is nearly double that of auto travel time, which impacts existing transit riders, limits the attractiveness for new riders, and hinders access to destinations along the corridor.<sup>5</sup> This transit delay is primarily caused by congestion and delay at signalized intersection, and will only get worse as traffic continues to grow over time. Substandard bus stops also result in slower boarding procedures and longer dwell times, which account for approximately 13 percent of average runtimes on the Line 57, contributing to overall transit delay.<sup>6</sup> Unreliability is also a top reason for riders to be dissatisfied with their Line 57 trips.<sup>7</sup> Improving transit travel time and reliability within the corridor would provide an attractive alternative to driving, which could free up roadway capacity for other vehicles in the corridor, including freight and other commercial vehicles within this designated freight corridor.

### **Transit-dependent communities**

The TV Highway corridor has relatively high concentrations of people who rely on transit and therefore need safe, efficient, and reliable transit to access community resources, jobs, and educational opportunities. In comparison to both the region and Washington County, communities in the corridor have higher concentrations of low-income households, people of color, people with limited English language proficiency, and youth. Eighty-three percent of the corridor study area is in an equity focus area as defined by the 2018 RTP, and all of TV Highway is bordered on at least one side by an equity focus area.<sup>8</sup> The Line 57 bus ranks tenth in the TriMet system in terms of providing access to communities of concern, jobs, affordable housing, and social services.<sup>9</sup> The

route has a relatively high share of riders who speak Spanish, identify as people of color, do not have a car available, and have a low household income.<sup>10</sup>

## APPROACH

The project will seek funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), specifically from FTA's Section 5309 Capital Investment Grants Program. To qualify for this funding, the project will proceed using FTA's definition of a corridor-based bus rapid transit Small Starts project. Because the project will seek federal funding, it must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act.

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### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Based on fatal and severe injury crashes from 2010 to 2014 on the 8-mile stretch of TV Highway between SW Cedar Hills Boulevard in Beaverton and SE 10th Avenue in Hillsboro.
- <sup>2</sup> Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) crash data (based on the portion of TV Highway (OR 8) and associated roadways following the general route of the Line 57 bus).
- <sup>3</sup> TV Highway Project Development – Project Needs and Evaluation Methodology, 2019.
- <sup>4</sup> ODOT crash data (same geographic extent as above).
- <sup>5</sup> TV Highway Project Development – Project Needs and Evaluation Methodology, 2019.
- <sup>6</sup> TV Highway Project Development – Project Needs and Evaluation Methodology, 2019.
- <sup>7</sup> Based on responses to a fall 2021 survey of Line 57 riders.
- <sup>8</sup> Equity focus areas are Census tracts where the rate of people of color, people with low income (i.e., incomes equal to or less than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level), or people with limited English proficiency is greater than the regional average and double the density of one or more of these populations. The corridor study area includes a 0.5-mile buffer on either side of the Line 57 route.
- <sup>9</sup> TriMet, 2017.
- <sup>10</sup> Based on responses to a fall 2021 survey of Line 57 riders. Of the respondents who answered each question, 34 percent completed the survey in Spanish, 52 percent identified as people of color (based on race and ethnicity questions), 64 percent reported incomes below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (based on household size), and 70 percent do not have a car, motorcycle, or truck available to use.