

MPAC Worksheet

Agenda Item Title: Community Connector Transit Study: Overview and Introduction

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Purpose/Objective

This memorandum introduces the Community Connector Transit (CCT) Study to support a discussion that will help shape the work and engagement plans, develop the planning context, policy framework, and identify considerations for re-envisioning local transit.

Action Requested/Outcome

Staff is seeking MPAC's feedback on: 1) the work plan approach and anticipated outcomes, 2) the developing engagement strategy and 3) key elements and policy considerations to address.

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

In conversations during the recent 2023 RTP update, policymakers, partners, and community members expressed concern about areas of the region that still lack access to the regional transit network today and even in the future, but where opportunities may exist to connect to jobs and other essential destinations. Key takeaways (for more detail see Attachment 5) included:

- Explore expanding service, particularly to dense, growing areas and town centers and community hubs in suburban communities and the Metro region urban edges.
- Connect more neighborhoods to essential destinations, including first- and last- mile frequent transit connections, to expand access to transit.
- Make more connections with community hubs in Washington and Clackamas counties.
- Prioritize needs of marginalized communities and reducing climate impact.
- Look for opportunities to fill gaps in transit service to places like major employers and job centers, schools, health care services and regional destination parks.
- Provide transportation hubs at key connections and at the ends of transit lines to improve transfers, including across agencies and modes. Make them safe and comfortable by integrating amenities and community benefits.
- Work with partners early to improve collaboration and coordinate investment strategies to create more seamless systems, improve implementation, and be competitive for funding. Provide tools to support future partnership and implementation.

A future study was identified in Chapter 8 of the 2023 RTP to address this feedback, forming the basis of this work. The CCT Study kicked off at the end of August with work done to: establish and initiate the project management team and partner working group; draft a work plan, schedule, and engagement strategy; begin public and stakeholder engagement; and gather key planning context.

The Community Connector Transit Study

Community connector transit can unlock more transportation access in the region and make transportation more equitable. This type of transit includes smaller, more nimble modes like shuttles, para-transit, microtransit, vanpools and other last mile transportation services that are not local fixed route bus service (see Attachment 1). It often is more flexible than a bus – from going off-route to pick up or drop off riders to being by-request whenever needed (like Uber or Lyft). This flexibility can also help people travel to light rail or frequent bus routes that may stop a mile or more away from their home or destination.

[This study](#) will build on recent transit planning efforts to explore community connector transit opportunities and determine the role this type of transit could play providing a service coverage solution as part of the transit vision (see Attachment 2). The CCT study will develop a strategy that sets a path forward for successfully achieving that vision toward supporting regional goals and provide a roadmap for leveraging and funding the identified opportunities. Key to this work will be leveraging and bringing together work done by Metro and local partners to date.

The study is being led by a project management team with staff from Metro’s Planning, Research and Development; Investment Areas and Land Use and Development departments. The team will meet regularly with a Transit Working Group that includes partner representatives from SMART, Ride Connection, Clackamas County, Multnomah County, Washington County, TriMet, City of Portland, ODOT, C-TRAN and Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council to share work and solicit feedback. The first of ten anticipated meetings for the working group took place on October 1, 2024. Regional and inter-regional transit providers will also engage through workshops.

The CCT Study starts in Fall 2024 will be updated in four key phases, ending in Spring 2026. Staff will return to the working group, County coordinating committees, and Metro advisory committees and Council for input to inform each key study milestone (see Attachments 3 and 5 for more detail). As this study will inform the RTP, the timeline for this work aligns with scoping for the 2028 update anticipated to begin as early as late 2025.

Figure 1. Study Timeline and Milestones



What packet material do you plan to include?

1. Transit 101 Fact Sheet
2. Fact Sheet #1: About the Community Connector Transit Study
3. CCT Study Workplan
4. CCT Study Engagement Plan
5. Past Transit Engagement Feedback Summary