

Memo



Metro

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Date: Thursday, May 7, 2026
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and Interested Parties
From: Marne Duke, Senior Regional Planner
Subject: Regional Vanpool Action Plan

JPACT is scheduled to consider action on the Regional Vanpool Action Plan in October 2026. Metro staff prepared this memo for JPACT members to introduce the project and provide background information on the Action Plan, a summary of the draft near-term actions, and an overview of the engagement timeline and final steps in the project.

Background

Vanpooling is an underutilized opportunity to advance Metro and Regional Transportation Plan goals. Specifically, vanpooling can support Goal 2 of the RTP: to increase the proportion of trips made by walking, biking, shared rides and use of transit. Additionally, both the Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy and the Community Connectors Transit Study describe vanpooling as a cost-effective solution that connects people in low-density areas to jobs and serves off-peak travel needs.

Designated as a form of public transit by the Federal Transit Administration, vanpooling is noted for its ability to provide a flexible option where fixed-route transit is impractical or unavailable. Vanpool programs also support equity objectives by providing affordable, accessible options for low-income households and workers without cars.

For over a decade, the Metro region has lacked a formal regional vanpool program. To address gaps in vanpooling throughout the state, ODOT has designated over \$3 million for employer vanpool programming and subsidies. They have awarded a contract to a vendor who will provide full-service vanpooling with priorities for spending subsidies in the Metro region, as well as communities in transit underserved areas and specific audiences, such as shift, hospitality and health care workers.

To capitalize on this opportunity, Metro has developed a draft Regional Vanpool Action Plan informed by a Technical Working Group, stakeholder interviews, TPAC workshop and an employer focus group. Metro will conduct a 30-day public comment period on the draft action plan in July to gather additional input. TPAC, JPACT and Metro Council are scheduled to consider action on the plan this fall.

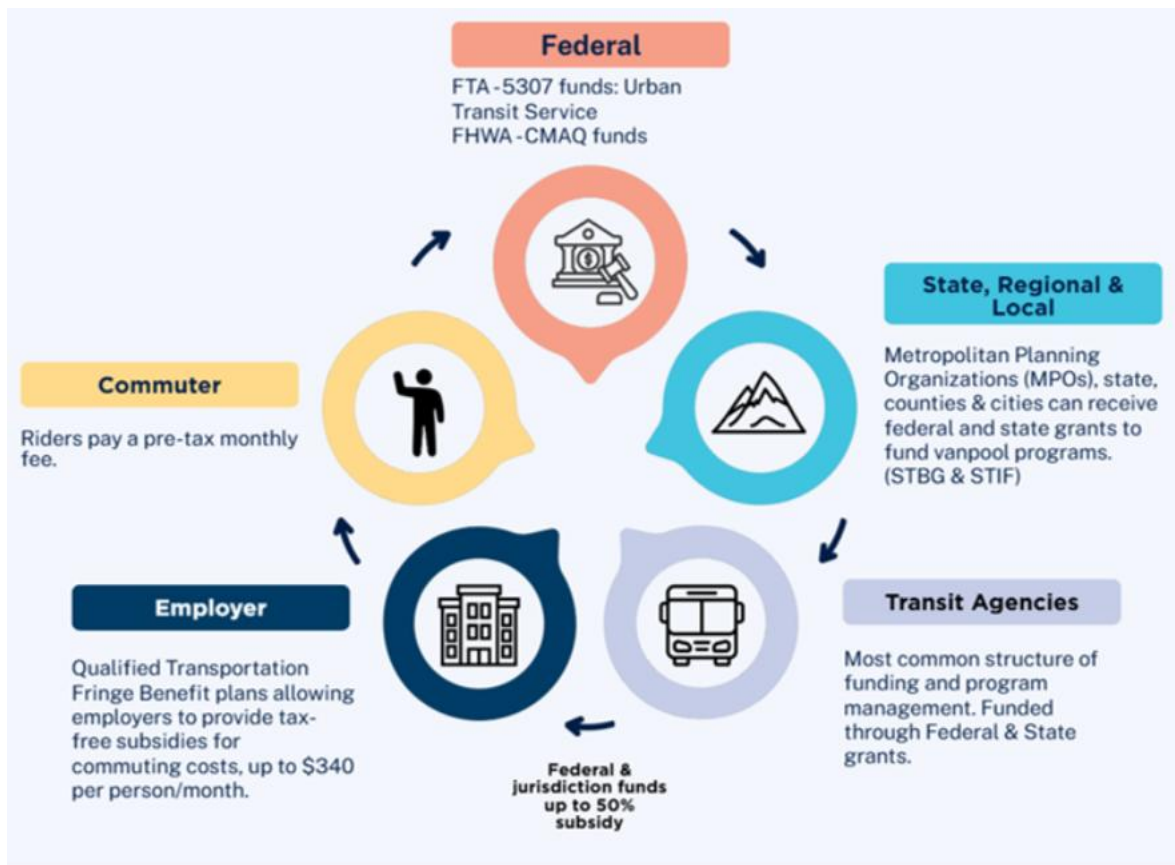
What Is Vanpooling?

Vanpooling is a form of shared mobility where a group of typically five to seven participants share a van for commuting to work, with at least 80% of the vehicle miles traveled dedicated to work trips. The vanpool driver(s) is a volunteer with a valid driver's license who is in the group that is using the van for transportation to/from work. Vanpools are considered a form of transit and eligible for federal and state funding when they are open to the public, ADA accessible, and facilitated through a public agency such as a transit authority or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). Vanpool riders are often supported through subsidies, which cover a

portion of the vanpool costs, such as leasing, fuel, insurance, and maintenance. These subsidies may be provided under federal and state transit funding programs. Some employers provide a partial subsidy for participating in a public vanpool.

Vanpooling is identified as one of the region’s transit service types, but it is distinct from shuttles and carpooling. Shuttles are a fixed-route service operated by an organization or transit agency, typically with larger vehicles and set stops. It serves broader groups without requiring rider coordination and is less personalized than vanpooling. While vanpooling and carpooling are both common forms of shared mobility used by commuters, vanpools must have at least five regular participants and use a dedicated leased or provided van. Unlike carpools, vanpools are eligible for federal or state subsidies and are subject to reporting requirements.

Vanpool Funding Opportunities



Public vanpool programs relies on a mix of funding sources, including federal, state, regional, and local grants, employer contributions, and participant fees (see above illustration). Federal programs such as FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Grants and FHWA’s Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) grants and Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds often provide seed money for capital and operating costs, while state programs like ODOT’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) grants supplement these efforts. Transit agencies typically administer subsidies, which reduce rider

costs to that similar to other public transit fares and employers may offer commuter benefits or direct subsidies. Vanpools that receive federal transit funds are required to report their vehicle revenue miles to the National Transit Database (NTD) for future federal allocations.

Draft Action Plan Objectives and Strategies

Through a stakeholder engagement process, the Regional Vanpool Action Plan identifies three program objectives to advance vanpooling in the region:

- The greater Portland region will have a robust vanpool program that has reliable funding to sustain programming and subsidies.
- Vanpool is established as a key component of regional partners' plans and programming.
- Commuters and employers in the Metro region are aware that vanpooling is a convenient and affordable travel option and commute benefit offering.

The Regional Vanpool Action Plan also includes strategies developed in collaboration with the Technical Working Group to achieve the three program objectives. Strategies presented are near-term, focusing on the next 1-3 years, and aim to best capitalize on the period when ODOT will be facilitating vanpooling in the region.

Project Phases & Next Steps

Phase I, which began in the fall of 2025 and was completed in April 2026, involved a comprehensive assessment of vanpooling in the region, including best practices research, regional and state history and current state, and opportunities and barriers. Initial stakeholder engagement informed the project's draft Regional Vanpool Action Plan objectives, strategies, and actions.

Phase II, which began in April 2026, aims to introduce and begin initial actions presented in the draft Regional Vanpool Action Plan to partners and regional stakeholders to prepare for the launch of the ODOT managed vanpool program in the region, expected in the fall of 2026.

Engagement and activities for Phase II will include:

- A 30-day public comment period from July 1-30 on the draft action plan and general attitudes and preferences on vanpooling.
- A regional vanpool kick-off meeting with ODOT, RTO Commute Program partners and other interested parties
- Presentations to County Coordinating Committees, County Coordinating Committee Technical Advisory Committees, and business-centered organizations, such as Chambers and Economic Development Councils.
- Presentations of the draft Regional Vanpool Action Plan to TPAC, JPACT and Metro Council.

Table 1 lists past and future engagement activities to develop the Regional Vanpool Action Plan and anticipated dates for TPAC, JPACT and Council to consider action on the plan.

Table 1: Regional Vanpool Action Plan Timeline

Regional Vanpool Action Plan Activities	Date
Technical Work Group Meeting #1	Sept. 22, 2025
Technical Work Group Meeting #2	Nov. 6, 2025
TPAC Workshop	Dec. 15, 2025
Technical Work Group Meeting #3	Feb. 2, 2026
Technical Work Group Meeting #4	March 31, 2026
TPAC presentation	May 1, 2026
JPACT memo	May 7, 2026
County Coordinating Committees and County Coordinating Committee Technical Advisory Committees, community/business organizations	April-September 2026
Public Comment period	July 1-30, 2026
TPAC presentation	September 11, 2026
JPACT presentation	September 17, 2026
Metro Council presentation	Late September 2026*
TPAC action	October 2, 2026
JPACT action	October 15, 2026
Metro Council action	Late October/Early November 2026*

**Date to be confirmed.*