

MONTGOMERY PARK STREETCAR EXTENSION LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

Date: June 6, 2025
Department: Planning, Development and Research
Meeting Date: June 24, 2025
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Presenters: Alex Oreschak, Senior Transportation Planner, Metro and Mauricio LeClerc, Area Planning and Project Development Manager, PBOT

Length: 30 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

The purpose of this item is to provide an update to Metro Council about the Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension Project, including key project benefits, public engagement process and findings, Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) elements and project funding strategy.

Later this year, JPACT and Metro Council will consider endorsing the LPA for this project and subsequently for amendment in the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan.

ACTION REQUESTED

No action requested at this meeting. Staff will return in July 2025 to request that Metro Council approve Resolution No. 25-5505, For the Purpose of Endorsing the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The 2023 RTP and the 2018 Regional Transit Strategy identify the Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension as a priority investment on the financially constrained project list.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

Staff is seeking guidance on whether Metro Council needs other information on the LPA and this project before staff return for an endorsement of the LPA (by resolution) in July.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends Metro Council endorse the LPA in July 2025.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

How is this related to Metro's Strategic Framework or Core Mission?

The project would implement regional priorities articulated in the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan. Corridor planning is central to Metro's core mission to expand transportation options and improve public transit service throughout the region.

How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals?

The project will provide public benefits that promote equity and help support opportunities for underserved communities.

How does this advance Metro's climate action goals?

The project will implement adopted local and regional land use plans by implementing policies from the Regional Transportation Plan, which helps to implement the 2040 Growth Concept and the Regional Framework Plan. The project will also make transit more convenient, frequent, accessible and affordable, improving the travel experience for riders on the Portland Streetcar.

Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback

Public input and partner endorsements demonstrate support for this LPA. There were two opponents to the adoption of the Montgomery Park Area Plan:

- The Northwest Industrial Business Association opposed the adoption of the Montgomery Park Area Plan (MPAP) because of impacts to what was industrial land and potential impacts to low-barrier-to-entry middle wage jobs. The MPAP worked to address this by limiting land use changes to the area of greatest potential change and tying the development in the area to on-site middle-wage jobs in a variety of fields (target requirements with a fee charged if not met as agreed in the adopted Public Benefits Agreement).
- The Northwest District Neighborhood Association (NWDA) did not outright oppose the project, but opposed the adoption of the overall Montgomery Park Area Plan because they felt the plan did not respond effectively enough to neighborhood input or concerns. The NWDA was critical to the MPAP's process, having representation on the Project Working Group and being part of dozens of conversations over the course of the planning process. A key issue with the project itself for the NWDA is the final alignment; while members varied in their perspective on the best route, there was concern expressed around parking and traffic impacts (which the project and plan sought to address by working to maintain as much parking as possible in the project area and minimizing the number of stations on 23rd Ave).

Extensive technical analysis was conducted to understand the benefits and tradeoffs of different LPA components. The analysis was shared with community members for feedback. Public engagement has been extensive and coordinated with outreach for the Montgomery Park Area Plan, which aims to transition the area from a somewhat underutilized industrial and employment-focused district into a mixed-use employment district that will support both job growth and housing development. More information on public engagement for the project can be found on the Montgomery Park Area Plan website: <https://www.portland.gov/bps/planning/mp2h/mpap-recommended-draft>.

Legal Antecedents

Federal laws and actions

- National Environmental Policy Act
- Clean Air Act, as amended [42 U.S.C. 7401 and 23 U.S.C. 109(j)], as amended]
- U.S. EPA transportation conformity rules (40 CFR, parts 51 and 93)
- Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act), signed into law in 2015
- Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), signed into law in 2021
- FTA Small Starts Process

State laws and actions

- Statewide Planning Goals
- Oregon Transportation Planning Rules (OAR Chapter 660, Division 12)
- Oregon Transportation Plan and implementing modal plans, including the Oregon Public Transportation Plan Oregon Administrative Rules for Transportation Conformity, (OAR Chapter 340, Division 252)
- Oregon Clean Air Act State Implementation Plan (SIP), amended in January 2021

Metro Council Actions

- Resolution No. 09-4025 (For the Purpose of Adopting the Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan Screened Corridor Map and Evaluation Criteria), adopted by the Metro Council on February 12, 2009.
- Resolution No. 09-4052 (For the Purpose of Accepting the Regional High Capacity Transit System Tiers and Corridors, System Expansion Policy Framework and Policy Amendments), adopted by the Metro Council on July 9, 2009.
- Ordinance No. 10-1241B (For the Purpose of Amending the 2004 Regional Transportation Plan to Comply with State Law; To Add the Regional Transportation Systems Management and Operations Action Plan, the Regional Freight Plan and the High Capacity Transit System Plan; To Amend the Regional Transportation Functional Plan and Add it to the Metro Code; To Amend the Regional Framework Plan; And to Amend the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan), adopted by the Metro Council on June 10, 2010
- Ordinance No. 14-1346B (For the Purpose of Adopting the Climate Smart Communities Strategy and Amending the Regional Framework Plan to Comply with State Law), adopted by the Metro Council on December 18, 2014.
- Resolution No. 18-4892 (For the Purpose of Adopting the Regional Transit Strategy and Replacing the 2009 Regional High Capacity Transit System Plan), adopted by the Metro Council on December 6, 2018. Ordinance No. 23-1496 (For the purpose of Amending the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) to Comply with Federal and State Law and Amending the Regional Framework Plan), adopted by the Metro Council on November 30, 2023.
- Resolution No. 23-5348 (For the Purpose of Adopting the 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy), adopted by the Metro Council on November 30, 2023.
- Ordinance No. 25-1522 (For the Purpose of Amending the Industrial and Other Employment Areas Map of Title 4 of the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan for the Montgomery Park Area of the City of Portland), adopted by the Metro Council on January 16, 2025.

Local Jurisdiction Actions

- The Portland City Council adopted Ordinance No. 192000 to adopt the Montgomery Park Area Plan including amendments to the Comprehensive Plan, Comprehensive Plan Map, Zoning Map, Zoning Code, Citywide Design Guidelines, and related amendments to the Guild's Lake Industrial Sanctuary and Northwest District plans (amend Code Title 33)
- The Portland City Council adopted Resolution No. 37692 to adopt the Locally Preferred Alternative for the Montgomery Park Transit Project

- The Portland City Council adopted Ordinance No. 192001 to authorize Agreement between the City, Portland Streetcar Inc, and 1535-A1 LLC for public benefits related to the Montgomery Park Area Plan

Anticipated Effects

Approval of this resolution will allow project staff to continue working with City of Portland and TriMet on the project to:

- Amend the 2023 RTP to reflect the LPA and a high-level funding plan
- Pursue federal funding
- Complete federally-required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation
- Refine design and costing
- Support the implementation and construction of the project
- Open the streetcar extension in 2030

The project is currently listed in the 2023 RTP. However, the 2023 RTP needs to be amended to reflect the LPA defining the mode, route, and general station locations and a high-level funding plan. The next steps and timeline for that future action include:

- Metro staff will coordinate to prepare amendments to the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan to reflect the Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension LPA, as well as the TV Highway and 82nd Avenue LPAs.
- An RTP amendment is necessary to be eligible for federal funding and action.
- The RTP amendment will require a recommendation from MPAC and adoption by JPACT and Metro Council. The amendment may include the following as needed to reflect the LPA:
 - Amendments to Chapter 3 Transit Network Map
 - Amendments to the Appendix A: Constrained priorities project list
 - Amendments to Appendix W: Status of Current Major Projects
 - Amendments to Appendix V: Future corridor refinement planning
 - Create a new appendix: Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension Locally Preferred Alternative
 - Updates to reflect the RTP funding strategy or any other chapter components, if applicable
- The amendment will be accompanied by findings that demonstrate consistency with:
 - RTP goals, objections, and policies
 - Metro's Public Engagement Guide
 - Federal fiscal constraint requirements
 - Statewide planning goals
- Proposed RTP amendment schedule:
 - Fall 2025: Public comment period
 - Fall/Winter 2025: Review/discuss amendment and public comment at MTAC, TPAC, MPAC, JPACT, Metro Council
 - Spring 2026: Seek adoption of RTP amendment

Financial Implications (current year and ongoing)

Adoption of this resolution has no budget impact. There will be future costs associated with implementation of the project. These costs will be shared by local, regional, state and federal partners.

BACKGROUND

The project will support dense, equitable transit-oriented development west of US-30 between NW Nicolai and NW Vaughn streets, where predominantly vacant, low-density industrial land recently underwent land use changes to employment- and housing-focused mixed uses. The project will also support several indirect public benefits for the area, including new affordable housing, new middle-wage jobs onsite, a new public park, affordable commercial opportunities, and the commemoration of York—enslaved member of the Lewis and Clark Expedition who was critical to its success—through public art; these ancillary benefits are captured in a Public Benefits Agreement (PBA) between the City of Portland, property owners in the area, and Portland Streetcar, Inc.

In addition to spurring transit-oriented development, the project is intended to serve as a critical single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trip demand mitigation tool as the area redevelops over time. As such, it also includes improvements to the pedestrian and bicycle network to support non-driving options within, to, from, and through the new district.

The Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension has been identified by the region as a top priority for transit investment. It is called out in multiple adopted plans including the 2009 Metro Regional High Capacity Transit System (HCT) Plan, the 2018 Regional Transit Strategy, the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and the 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy, which designates the Montgomery Park Streetcar Extension as a Tier 1: near-term HCT corridor, the highest priority for HCT investment in our region.

Project outcomes identified in the RTP are improved travel connecting with the existing streetcar network, as well as necessary safety and accessibility improvements, including rehabilitation of NW 23rd Avenue and new multimodal street connections on NW Roosevelt Street, NW Wilson Street, and NW 26th Avenue. This project also supports land use changes and housing development, including new affordable housing units, as identified in the Montgomery Park Area Plan, which was also adopted by Portland City Council in December 2024.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Montgomery Park Transit Project Recommended Locally Preferred Alternative