

STAFF REPORT

2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (RTP): NEXT STEPS FOR FINALIZING THE 2023 RTP AND 2023 HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT (HCT) STRATEGY FOR ADOPTION

Date: September 1, 2023

Department: Planning, Development & Research

Meeting Date: September 12, 2023

Prepared by: Kim Ellis,
kim.ellis@oregonmetro.gov

Presenters:

- Catherine Ciarlo, Director, Planning, Development and Research Department
- Kim Ellis, RTP Project Manager
- Molly Cooney-Mesker, Senior community engagement specialist

Length: 45 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

A major update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) has been underway since Fall 2021 and must be completed by Dec. 6, 2023 when the current plan expires. The region's High Capacity Transit Strategy is also being updated as part of the RTP update. Since Fall 2021, Metro Council and staff have extensively engaged with policymakers, jurisdictional staff, federally recognized tribes, transportation agencies, community-based organizations and business groups, businesses, and members of the public to update the region's vision, goals and policies for the transportation system and understand the region's transportation trends, needs and priorities for investment.

The process is now in the final adoption phase. At the September 12 work session, staff will present an update on the RTP timeline and decision process, high-level themes from the public comments received, and key concerns identified by Metro staff for more in-depth policy discussion as the plan is finalized for consideration by the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the Metro Council in November.

OVERVIEW OF FINAL ADOPTION PHASE

As directed by Resolution No. 23-5343, a final 45-day public comment period was held from Monday, July 10 to Friday, August 25, 2023. Engagement activities included:

- **Notifications and notices** – Public notices of the comment period were provided to local neighborhood involvement and community outreach offices and community planning organizations in Washington County. Notices were published in Portland Tribune, Clackamas Review, Hillsboro News Times, Forest Grove News Times, Valley Times News, Beaverton Valley Times, El Latino de Hoy, The Asian Reporter and on the Metro website. Notifications were sent to the RTP interested persons list (nearly 2,772 people) in addition to Metro's four regional advisory committees and their respective interested parties. Partner agencies and community and business organizations engaged throughout the RTP update posted notifications of the comment period

through E-newsletters, social media and other methods to inform their members and interested parties of the comment opportunity.

- **On-line survey and public review draft materials** – An on-line survey, an interactive map and interactive project list, and public review drafts of the 2023 RTP, project lists, appendices and High Capacity Transit Strategy were posted on the 2023 RTP web page at www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp. Members of the public, regional advisory committees, partner agencies and other interested parties were invited to comment on the draft materials. More than 660 people responded to the on-line survey and more than 300 people and agencies submitted comments through an online comment forum. Comments were also received by email, letters and phone. Copies of all comments received will be included in the final public comment report.
- **Public hearing** – The Metro Council held a public hearing on July 27, 2023. Representatives of nine organizations testified at the hearing, A closed caption transcript of hearing testimony will be included in the final public comment report.
- **Consultation** – Metro staff invited federally-recognized Tribes and several federal, state and local resource, wildlife, land management and regulatory agencies to consult on the public review draft RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy in accordance with [23 CFR 450.316\(b\)](#) and [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)\(10\)](#). Metro convened two separate consultation meetings on August 17 and 22.

OVERVIEW OF FINAL STEPS IN THE PROCESS

A summary of final steps in the process follows.

Preparing a Draft Public Comment Report. Metro staff are preparing a Draft Public Comment Report that includes the online survey results, online feedback and copies of all emails, letters, and transcriptions of voicemails received during the formal comment period as well as consultation meeting summaries and transcriptions of verbal testimony provided during the public hearing. The draft public comment report will be available on September 6 and provided to Metro Councilors in advance of the September 12 work session.

Summarizing and Responding to Public Comments Received. In addition, Metro staff are drafting recommended actions to respond to substantive comments received. The recommended actions will include amendments to the public review draft RTP and HCT Strategy, recommendations for no change with an explanation as to why no change is recommended, or recommendations for future work. Draft Metro staff recommendations will be brought forward for consideration in two parts:

1. **Summary of Comments Received and Recommended Actions Identified for Further Discussion** – *aka Discussion Items for Consideration* – These Metro staff recommendations, and the public comments they respond to, raise important policy considerations that warrant further policy discussion by MPAC, JPACT and the Metro Council. The five discussion topics identified by Metro staff are:
 - Investment emphasis
 - Pricing policy application to toll projects
 - Increasing regional transportation investments (funding)
 - Mobility policy implementation

- Climate tools and analysis

TPAC and MTAC will begin discussion of these items at their September 13 and September 20 meetings. An overview of these topics will be provided to MPAC, and JPACT at their September meetings. Metro Council will have an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback on these topics at future work sessions.

2. **Summary of Comments Received and Recommended Actions for Consideration on a “consent basis”** – *aka Consent Items for Consideration* – These Metro staff recommendations address technical edits, fine-tuning, clarifications and/or substantive changes identified through the public review process for consideration on a “consent basis” without further discussion. Members of Metro’s technical committees may request discussion of any of these consent items at their meetings in September and October. MPAC, JPACT and Metro Council will be requested to take action on these recommendations without discussion as part of their respective final action. However, policymakers may request discussion of individual consent items prior to or as part of their final action.

Legislative hearings – The Metro Council is scheduled to hold a legislative hearing on the RTP on September 28, 2023. Comments on the HCT Strategy may also be provided at the hearing. A final hearing and Metro Council action on the RTP and HCT Strategy is scheduled for November 30, 2023.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

- What questions does Council have for Metro staff?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

No policy questions or options have been developed for Council discussion on September 12. Staff will prepare policy questions and options for Council discussion and feedback at future work sessions and meetings.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

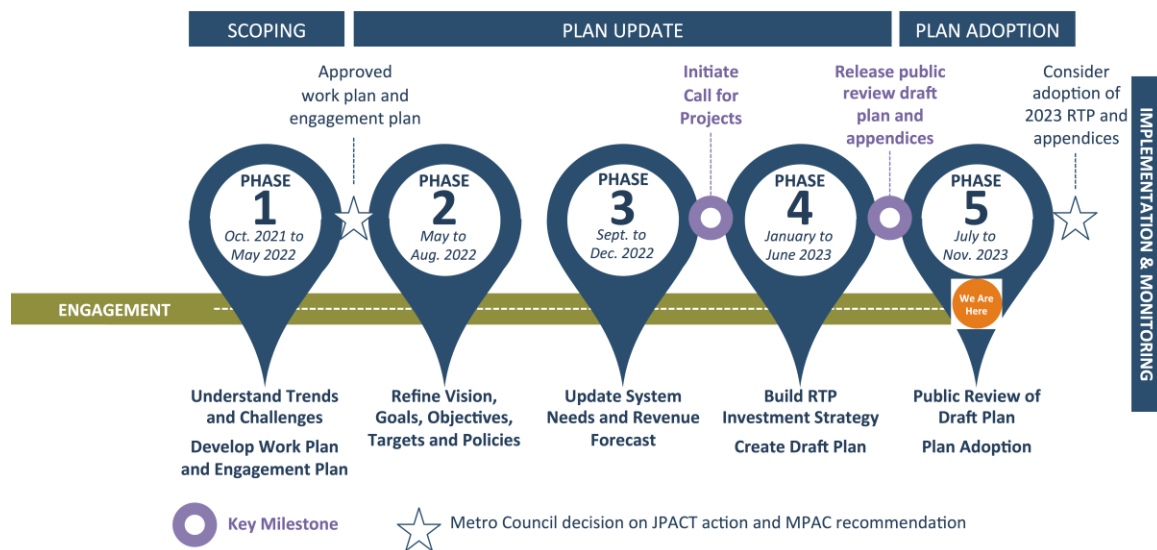
The [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (RTP) is the state- and federally-required long-range transportation plan for the greater Portland region. The greater Portland region’s economic prosperity and quality of life depend on a transportation system that provides every person and business in the region with equitable access to safe, reliable, climate-friendly and affordable travel options. The RTP is the blueprint for transportation in our region and a key tool for implementing the region’s [2040 Growth Concept](#) and [Climate Smart Strategy](#). Together, these plans will help ensure that greater Portland thrives by connecting people to their jobs, families, schools and other important destinations and by allowing business and industry to create jobs and move goods to market.

Metro is the regional government responsible for regional land use and transportation planning under state law and the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Portland metropolitan area. Metro is the only regional government agency in

the U.S. whose governing body is directly elected by voters. Metro is governed by a council president elected region-wide and six councilors elected by district. The Metro Council provides leadership from a regional perspective, focusing on issues that cross local boundaries and require collaborative solutions. As the federally designated MPO, Metro is responsible for leading and coordinating updates to the RTP every five years. Metro is also responsible for developing a regional transportation system plan (TSP), consistent with the Regional Framework Plan, statewide planning goals, the Oregon Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), the Metropolitan Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets Rule, the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), and by extension state modal plans. As a result, the RTP serves as both the Federal metropolitan transportation plan and the regional TSP for the region.

The timeline for the RTP update is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Timeline for the 2023 RTP Update



The plan update must be completed by Dec. 6, 2023 when the current plan expires. A schedule of remaining discussions and actions is attached for reference.

/Attachment

- Schedule of Key Dates for Finalizing the 2023 RTP and 2023 HCT Strategy for Adoption