



Metro

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Meeting minutes

Meeting: JPACT
Date/time: Thursday, March 19, 2026
Place: Zoom

Video and audio recording of the meeting can be found at <https://oregonmetro.legistar.com>

Chair Gonzalez confirmed quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:30AM.

Attendees

Multnomah County Commissioner Vince Jones-Dixon
Washington County Commissioner Fai
Clackamas County Commissioner Savas
City of Gresham Mayor Travis Stovall
City of Cornelius Mayor Jeff Dalin
City of Lake Oswego Mayor Joe Buck
ODOT, Ryan Windsheimer
TriMet, JC Vannatta
Port of Portland, Dan Eisenbeis
DEQ, Ali Mirzakhali
Metro Councilor Christin Lewis
Metro Councilor Ashton Simpson
Washington County Department of Transportation, Devin Reck

Absent

Multnomah County Commissioner Shannon Singleton
TriMet, Sam Desue
Port of Portland, Curtis Robinhold
C-Tran Leann Caver

Guest

City of Vancouver, Katherine Kelly

Public Communications

There was no public communication.

Updates from the Chair

Metro staff Anthony Cabadas provided the Fatal Crash Report.

Gonzalez noted the memo in the agenda packet regarding the Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy Review. JPACT will take action on the Strategy in April.

Gonzalez noted Metro's Annual Compliance Report in the agenda packet.

CONSENT AGENDA

Gonzalez noted that we are amending the MTIP to cancel construction of two transportation projects in our region. This change is necessary because the federal government is rescinding nearly 14 million dollars in Bridge Investment Program grants and 38 million dollars in Neighborhood Access and Equity grant funds. He knows everyone at JPACT table understands the negative impact this has on our region. Our region simply does not have the funding necessary to meet our transportation needs, let alone the aspirations we hold for our cities and the communities we serve. He lamented the current administration continues to make this challenge even more difficult.

Resolution no. 26-5569 For The Purpose Of Adding, Amending, Or Canceling Two Projects To The 2024-27 MTIP To Meet Federal Project Delivery Requirements

Consideration of the January 15, 2026 JPACT minutes

Motion: Stovall

Second: Simpson

Action: Motion passed

INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS

2027-30 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) Public Review Draft Summary and Public Hearing

Metro staff Grace Morris provided a presentation on the 2027-30 Metropolitan Improvement Program.

Gonzalez opened up a public hearing on the 2027-30 Metropolitan Improvement Program.

There was no public comment. Gonzalez closed the public hearing.

State Legislative Session Recap

JPACT received a presentation from a panel of government affairs staff from around the region: Anneliese Koehler, Metro; Carly Slyvia-Gabrielson, Washington County; Tom Powers, Multnomah County; Lindsey Tenes, TriMet; and Derek Bradley, Portland

Buck referenced one of the slides that mentioned a swap of federal funds for state funds to help close part of that budget gap, but he noted that a couple of projects in the MTIP were canceled because those federal grants were pulled. Then he pointed out there is this public draft to sign, but we haven't had any discussion about the public draft of the 2027-2030 MTIP,

which he understands is primarily funded with federal dollars. He asked for a general sense of what that federal funding picture looks like. So, with the swap to state funds — what exactly was that federal money? What was it originally obligated to, and how much are we talking about? And then, could you also give us a sense of how much of our funding landscape is at risk, specifically in relation to the MTIP, how much of this funding is solid and how much is uncertain?

Staff responded that level of detail will require some additional analysis, but that the funds that they were considering for the redirect were unobligated.

Windsheimer weighed in that part of that was the \$91 million dollars that was redirected out of projects. Six million of it was redirected from highway 58 project that was not feasible, so they canceled that project, and those funds went away. And then \$85 million was state funds from projects that had been replaced by federal funds that ODOT was using redistribution funds to move over. So that's a large portion of redistribution funds to cover projects that had state funds on them, and then using those state funds in order to fund the agency.

Savas began by noting that his comments would be broad, explaining that he has been trying to communicate with residents, businesses, and other transportation stakeholders during what he described as a tumultuous couple of years surrounding the transportation package. He emphasized that the situation has been anything but clear to many people. Throughout last year's legislative session, he said there had been hope—at least from his perspective—that there would be agreement on what the household impacts of the 2025 package would have been had it passed. He acknowledged that everyone wants stable transportation funding and that the system is a complex web of different sources. He pointed out that the region has significant organizational infrastructure—Metro, the larger cities, and Clackamas County all have staff working on specific efforts like the MTIP within Metro boundaries. But just outside those boundaries, in the broader commute shed, that level of infrastructure doesn't exist. Those areas rely heavily on the state or on Region 1 ACT processes. As a result, he said, there are clear disparities: rural areas that are part of the region's active commute shed are not receiving the same level of attention or investment coordination. He set transit aside for the moment but underscored the broader point. Savas stressed that all of the different funding streams and needs must be recognized, but also that some areas simply do not have adequate funding. He argued that the region needs to find a better way to communicate with the public. By "we," he clarified, he meant everyone involved—Metro, the counties, the state, and all other partners. He said the public needs clearer information about what is in a transportation package and what the household impacts would be. The complexity of the system makes it difficult to explain not only how a package or project is funded, but even where the dollars originate. He concluded by urging that future discussions or future transportation packages include more mindful, coordinated communication so the public receives an accurate narrative rather than no narrative at all. He then yielded back to the Chair.

Gonzalez thanked the Commissioner for the comments, emphasizing that messaging and coalition-building are critically important. He noted that this is a challenging period, one in

which many Oregonians are struggling to trust local government and to believe in what it can deliver. He said he feels that reality deeply and expressed appreciation for the Commissioner's leadership on the issue. He added that he looks forward to working together to improve communication and public confidence.

Vannatta began by responding to Commissioner Savas's comments, saying he agreed completely and believed he was "spot on." He added that, in addition to the communication challenges he raised, the region also needs to do a better job highlighting the value that transportation investments bring to communities—something she feels is often overlooked. He noted that the transportation package has created a confusing and difficult environment, with uncertainty about its future and what it may ultimately include. He emphasized that, when the region began discussing transit funding, local leaders stood together with transit agencies across the state. While TriMet is facing a structural deficit and preparing for a 10 percent service reduction, he pointed out that Rogue Valley in Southern Oregon has had to cut 40 percent of its transit service, despite serving large rural areas with significant needs. Vannatta stressed that this is not just a TriMet problem—it is a statewide transit problem. With 35 percent of TriMet riders being transit-dependent, he warned that service cuts could leave many people without any transportation options, which he said is precisely the moment when the region cannot afford to abandon them. He urged everyone at the table to continue advocating for transit and to keep communicating with lawmakers about its importance. He closed by saying that their support is still needed and should not be forgotten as the region navigates what she described as a "quagmire."

Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update

IBR staff Carley Francis, Brent Baker, and Alan Keizur provided the presentation.

Savas thanked Carly for her presentation and acknowledged the additional staff who contributed to the discussion. He noted that the CFAR Metro Subcommittee had discussed the project the previous day, and he appreciated the extra information provided at the meeting. He emphasized that Clackamas County has held long-standing concerns—dating back more than 20 years—about traffic diversion onto I-205 and the fact that the infrastructure expected to absorb that increased demand has never fully materialized. While progress is being made on the bridge, he said the region is still contending with a six-mile bottleneck that remains unresolved. Savas expressed concern that the project's funding gap has grown significantly without a clear solution. Reflecting on the tolling discussions from a few years earlier, he noted that there is a point of diminishing returns: as congestion worsens, the value proposition for drivers—whether to stay on one freeway, divert, or pay a toll—shifts. With only two freeway options, I-5 and I-205, he questioned whether drivers would even be able to reach their destinations in a reasonable time once I-205 becomes fully congested. He reiterated that diversion onto I-205 has long caused spillover traffic into local roads in areas such as Oak Grove, Gladstone, West Linn, Stafford, and Wilsonville. Vehicles that should be on the freeway, he said, are instead using neighborhood streets, creating significant safety concerns. He stressed that while Clackamas County supports the need for major infrastructure investments—including the Interstate Bridge and the Rose Quarter project—it remains troubling that no

solution has been identified to address these longstanding impacts.

Savas closed by raising the central question: with a funding gap now appearing to be in the range of seven to eight billion dollars, how does the region plan to address it? He asked whether there is any realistic path forward for closing that gap.

Staff responded by thanking Commissioner Savas and explaining that their primary focus in closing the funding gap is on the initial phase of work. They noted that the team is currently conducting toll analysis to determine whether toll revenue could help fund that first phase, while simultaneously identifying cost-saving opportunities within the program to see whether overall expenses can be reduced. They emphasized that they cannot submit an initial finance plan unless the projected costs and available budget align and ensuring that alignment is their immediate priority. Staff went on to explain that completing the broader first phase—extending light rail across the river—will require additional discussions. Those include ongoing conversations with the federal government about the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) process and how it may evolve, as well as potential discussions with state leaders. They noted that the governors are active partners in pursuing these efforts, and that completing this phase will involve sustained engagement. They added that phasing megaprojects is a standard approach, and the funding gaps that appear in the early 2030s allow some time to work toward solutions. Completing the full five-mile corridor is envisioned over a roughly 20-year horizon, providing additional time to secure funding. Staff concluded by saying they will continue working with federal partners, state partners, and other stakeholders to pursue funding sources and build the advocacy needed to close those gaps.

Buck thanked staff for the presentation and raised a question about tolling. He noted that during previous regional and statewide discussions about the broader tolling program—not the one currently under consideration—they learned that the cost of collecting tolls, administering the system, and bonding against toll revenue was extraordinarily high. He asked staff to speak to how those costs factor into the \$1.25 billion figure being discussed.

Staff responded by noting that some of the detailed information might need to be provided in a follow-up, as the analysis behind the tolling assumptions is extensive. They emphasized that the revenue analysis for the program is designed to ensure that all lender requirements are met and that the facility can be properly operated and maintained over time. Core considerations include operations and maintenance needs, as well as toll collection costs. They explained that the current assumptions rely on using Washington State's existing tolling system, which is already operational. While toll collection costs are always a significant factor, staff noted that this program is expected to add a substantial number of transactions to the system. That increased volume could help reduce per-transaction collection costs by spreading them across a larger user base. Another project staff member added that more detailed information will be available once the Level 3 toll, traffic, and revenue study is completed. They reiterated that economies of scale are real and meaningful in this context. They also highlighted that tolling would create a sustainable funding source for the bridge's long-term operations and maintenance, reducing reliance on state highway budgets. Staff noted that all scenarios currently under consideration by the two commissions include a low-income toll discount

program. While toll collection costs are material, they stressed that tolling provides a durable revenue stream that can support capital repair and replacement needs, ensuring the bridge remains strong and fully maintained into the future.

Mirzakhilili asked staff to confirm his understanding of the project's budget shortfall. He wanted to know whether the shortfall was based on the project's current cost estimate or on the risk-inflated cost estimate.

Staff responded that the shortfall is based on the risk-inflated figures. They explained that both the \$7.65 billion estimate and the \$5.9 billion estimate include the same components: a base cost, an assessment of risk associated with that base cost, and escalation to account for when the dollars will actually be spent. All of those elements—such as volatility in steel prices and the likelihood and cost impact of those fluctuations—are built into the estimates.

Mirzakhilili then asked whether a separate conversation about contingency would be necessary if inflation or other cost pressures increased.

Staff explained that the current cost figures reflect a 70 percent confidence level—meaning there is a 70 percent likelihood that the project will come in at or below those amounts. They noted that both governors have been explicit in directing the program to actively and aggressively manage risks, which is already a core part of the team's responsibilities. That ongoing risk-management work is intended to help keep costs down over time and maintain that 70-percent-confidence target.

They emphasized that risk and escalation are already built into the cost estimates. This approach replaces the traditional method of applying a standard contingency percentage based solely on design progress—for example, adding a fixed contingency at 30 percent design without detailed risk information. Instead, the CBIT process incorporates a more rigorous, detailed assessment of risks and a specific evaluation of escalation, making it a more precise substitute for conventional contingency practices.

Savas asked whether the projected \$1.25 billion in toll revenue would be collected over a 10-year period, a 30-year period, or some other timeframe. He said he was looking for a general sense of how long it would take to generate that amount.

Staff explained that the state treasury offices evaluate the toll revenue stream and determine how much borrowing that revenue could support. They emphasized that the specifics often depend on the type of financing and the lender involved. They recalled that during the Columbia River Crossing project, repayment periods of 30, 35, and even 40 years were considered, illustrating the range of possibilities.

They added that borrowing can occur through traditional financing mechanisms as well as through federal programs such as TIFIA, which can enhance a project's ability to leverage funds. Staff confirmed that the current analysis is examining 30-year bonds and up to 35-year TIFIA loans. They noted that final results will not be available for some time.

Gonzalez offered closing comments, noting that he had already shared many of these points with the project team but wanted to reiterate them publicly. He emphasized three priorities that are especially important to him and to Metro. First, he underscored the essential role of the transit component—specifically light rail—in the project. He acknowledged that the current core project phase ends the line in Vancouver rather than extending it to the next segment, and he expressed concern about whether that configuration would meet Federal Transit Administration expectations. Given the \$100 million already awarded for the broader transit vision, he said he intends to track this issue closely and asked to be kept updated, stressing that transit remains a critical element of the overall project. Second, Gonzalez highlighted the importance of jobs and economic opportunity. With WSDOT now leading major portions of the work—including large-scale contracting and management of multi-billion-dollar scopes—he said it is essential that clear language, policies, and commitments be in place to ensure Oregonians have access to jobs on this generational project. Supporting Oregon families through these employment opportunities, he said, is a top priority. Third, he raised concerns about Oregon’s broader transportation system needs. He noted that council members, mayors, and regional partners continue to ask how the state will fund major corridors such as the Sunrise Corridor, TV Highway, and 82nd Avenue—especially when the I-5 Bridge project is so large and resource-intensive. He emphasized the need for a clear strategy for building out the full system Oregonians expect, linking this point to earlier discussions about the legislative affairs agenda and the importance of communicating transparently with the public about how these investments will be made.

Gonzalez closed by stressing the significance of the upcoming decision. By July 1, JPACT and the Metro Council must adopt this phase of work—not only to unlock roughly half a billion dollars, but also to program the first tranche of construction and move the project forward. He noted that the region has only a few months to engage in meaningful conversations and initiate this core project work. He said he feels the weight of the moment and the responsibility to steward public resources while finally advancing a bridge project that is vital to the country and the bi-state region. He thanked the group for the opportunity to share his thoughts and expressed appreciation to Carly and her team for their substantial efforts.

2028 Regional Transportation Plan Work Plan: Scoping Kick-off

Metro staff Kim Ellis and André Lightsey-Walker provided the presentation.

Savas thanked the Chair and reflected on the discussion that took place during the adoption of the last RTP. He said that at the time, he had tried to better understand the metrics used to measure success in meeting federally mandated climate goals, and he intends to continue raising those questions. He explained that he remained uneasy with the RTP, which is why he did not support it in its current form. In particular, he questioned the heavy reliance on reducing vehicle miles traveled as a primary strategy for meeting climate targets. He noted that this emphasis appears to conflict with the ongoing transition to electric vehicles and other alternative fuels, such as hydrogen, which could become more widely available over the next several decades. Savas pointed out that the region’s population is expected to grow significantly, and he does not see how optimistic VMT-reduction assumptions account for the

increasing adoption of cleaner vehicles. Even if every vehicle were electric or powered by clean energy, he argued, the region would still need roadway capacity to move people efficiently. At the same time, he noted that transit ridership and transit funding are on a downward trajectory, making the assumptions even less realistic in his view. He said he hopes to gain a clearer understanding of the upcoming work over the next few months and asked staff to share any information that could help him better evaluate the assumptions. He concluded by reiterating that this issue had been a major sticking point for him and expressed hope that the region can set goals that are both achievable and aligned with federal standards, rather than goals that look good on paper but are not realistic.

Metro staff thanked Commissioner Savas for his remarks and affirmed that the agency is focused on setting goals that are both realistic and achievable. Staff emphasized they are committed to ensuring the plan reflects practical, attainable outcomes. They added that while VMT reduction is one of the plan's targets, electric vehicles do not eliminate all externalities associated with driving. Even if greenhouse gas emissions decline as EV adoption increases, staff noted that other impacts—such as traffic violence and safety concerns—remain tied to total vehicle miles traveled. For that reason, they explained, VMT reduction continues to offer benefits beyond emissions and will remain an important consideration throughout the RTP process.

Savas thanked staff and said he hoped to engage in a policy discussion. He explained that he was trying to reconcile the region's expectations around technology adoption and transition with the broader policy environment. He noted that the current federal administration has rolled back clean-air standards, reduced funding for emissions-reduction programs, and slowed support for technological transitions. As a result, he said, the adoption of new technologies appears to be slowing, even though that may change in the future. Savas added that one of the major issues the 2028 RTP must confront is the assumption—embedded in the 2023 RTP—that the region would be much further along in implementing congestion pricing or other congestion-management tools. He observed that the collapse of the tolling effort and the I-205 project significantly affected the region's appetite and capacity to advance those conversations. In his view, the new RTP sits at a crossroads: if those policy assumptions are removed, both federally and locally, the region must grapple with what that actually means for its goals and strategies. He said he believed staff were trying to surface these big questions in their presentation, and he wanted to offer his thoughts to help shape the discussion. He closed by expressing appreciation for the effort to make sense of the moment the region is in, hoping his comments would be received in that spirit.

Jones-Dixon stated that the county appears supportive of the outlined priorities, particularly those related to public engagement. He emphasized that safety, attention to high-injury corridors, operations and maintenance, and resiliency are key priorities for the county. He added that the first bullet point in the presentation effectively captures those concerns.

Mirzakhilili said he wished he shared Commissioner Savas's optimism about a rapid transition to electric vehicles. He noted that current federal policy trends point in the opposite direction,

with rollbacks of standards that could reverse recent gains in air quality. He explained that the region has been able to maintain attainment largely because cleaner vehicle technologies have offset increases in VMT, but that progress is now at risk. He pointed out that the federal government recently reduced projected fuel-efficiency standards from 55 miles per gallon to 33 miles per gallon, meaning future vehicles will not be required to be as efficient as previously assumed in regional plans. He added that federal agencies have also proposed vacating climate-related vehicle standards, which would increase both climate-related emissions and other pollutants. Mirzakhilili said he is concerned that these changes could jeopardize the region's ability to maintain attainment of the ozone standard, potentially forcing a return to transportation conformity requirements. Turning to the policy priorities presented, he said he appreciated the Council's work but was unsure how to interpret the bullet point about "communicating realistically about climate and our ability to meet climate goals." He said the language did not read as a clear commitment to climate action and seemed instead to suggest simply informing the public whether the region will or will not meet its goals. He said he would have preferred a firmer statement of intent.

Windsheimer said he would keep his comments brief. He emphasized that safety remains one of his highest priorities and appreciated seeing it continue to be elevated in the RTP priorities. He also supported strengthening the economic focus, noting that access is important, but timeliness and reliability are equally critical when discussing trade. He connected this point to Commissioner Savas's comments about system capacity and also acknowledged Chair Gonzalez's remarks about the need for honest policy conversations. Windsheimer stressed that the region must be willing to openly discuss the trade-offs involved in meeting both climate and financial objectives. He said these challenges are difficult and cannot be addressed solely at the committee table—they must be communicated clearly to the public. He noted that recent funding discussions have shown a need to better educate the public about the costs associated with achieving regional goals, and that there is currently limited willingness to pay for the necessary investments. He added that without public support for congestion pricing or for broader transportation funding, the region will not be able to meet its objectives. He concluded by saying that the RTP must realistically account for these public attitudes and constraints as the region moves forward.

Fai said she would keep her comments brief. She stated that Washington County agrees with the goals outlined—safety, equity, mobility, climate, and a thriving economy—and also supports the Metro Council's stated priorities. She then raised several questions for staff. First, she noted that during the adoption of the 2023 RTP, regional leaders committed to advancing climate-analysis tools, implementing the adopted regional mobility policy, and refining the project-evaluation process before the next update. She asked when that work would be completed and how it would be incorporated into the RTP update work plan. Her second question concerned engagement. She observed that the work plan does not include much detail about how or when technical staff and partner agencies will be involved. She asked how the Metro RTP team plans to engage local jurisdictions and other partners throughout the project phase. Finally, Fai offered a comment related to technical coordination. She suggested that one avenue would be for the Metro RTP team to work closely with county staff through

the County Coordinating Committee's technical staff committee. However, she emphasized that Metro should involve technical staff directly in work-group functions—not only as observers. She suggested that forming a technical staff subcommittee might be appropriate. Fai concluded by acknowledging the limited time remaining in the meeting and asked that staff bring these questions back and provide written responses at the next meeting.

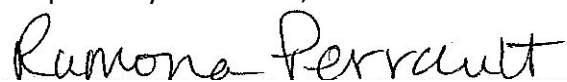
Metro staff agreed to follow up with Commissioner Fai. They asked Fai to send the written comments and they will get a response to her.

Dalin said that the cities in Washington County are largely aligned on the priorities; the real challenge lies in determining *how* to achieve them. He emphasized the need to use analytical tools—similar to those used in past planning cycles—to evaluate scenarios and understand the impacts of different policy choices. In his view, the region must clearly understand which levers it is pulling and what effects those choices will have. He closed by stressing that the work must focus on what is done *for* communities, not what is done *to* them, underscoring the importance of centering community benefit in every decision.

Gonzalez added that the work ahead must be done *for* and *with* the community. He then moved to close the meeting and offered a brief comment he had intended to make earlier. He noted that the previous Friday had been Metro Council President Lynn Peterson's last day at Metro. She has joined the City of Lake Oswego as its new interim city manager, and he offered congratulations to Mayor Buck on her appointment. Gonzalez explained that the Metro Council would be meeting later that day to begin discussing the process for filling the vacancy. The Council has 90 days to do so, and the meeting would include conversation about the conditions and timeline for that process. He emphasized that this represents a significant change at Metro since the committee last met and wanted to formally acknowledge it. He added that the region is very happy for Peterson, excited for her new role, and grateful for her many contributions to Metro and the broader region. Gonzalez then adjourned the meeting, expressing sincere appreciation to all participants for engaging in an important discussion.

Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 9:31 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ramona Perrault". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ramona Perrault, Engagement Committee Legislative Advisor