



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

Community Connector Transit Study

September 2024

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Introduction

Transit is a vital component of the region's transportation system and it is key to achieving the region's goals for land use, mobility, equity and climate. This study is designed to explore viable first and last mile services that will provide more connections for more people to access the existing transit system.

Robust agency and community engagement are critical to the success of this project. This study will be guided by ongoing feedback to ensure it addresses regional and community needs.

The project is structured to build incrementally, with each phase informed by community input. This public engagement plan identifies a mix of in-person and virtual engagement activities to gather diverse perspectives and feedback from advisory committees, business and community organizations, the public and other interested parties.

Metro project staff are coordinating with Metro's Tribal Affairs Program staff to understand how tribes, as sovereign nations, may want to be involved in the Community Connector Transit project.

Engagement goals and objectives

The public engagement goals for this project are focused on ensuring inclusive and meaningful participation from a diverse range of community members, particularly those who have historically been underrepresented in planning processes. Key goals include:

1. **Review relevant engagement feedback:** Conduct a literature review of past feedback related to transit priorities from around the region to assess how to expand and deepen engagement.
2. **Process equity:** Prioritize engagement with underserved and vulnerable groups to ensure their feedback is considered in the planning process. This includes conducting interviews with key nonprofits and community members early in the project to gather input.
3. **Early and deliberate engagement with community-based organizations (CBOs) and transportation advocacy non-profits:** Strengthen existing and building new partnerships with underrepresented communities by engaging CBOs and transportation advocacy organizations at the start of the project and organization. This includes understanding how best to collaborate and achieve engagement goals, recognizing their limited resources and busy schedules.
4. **Business engagement:** Conduct outreach and interviews to gather insights, addressing shared concerns, and exploring opportunities for mutual benefit, ensuring businesses are part of shaping solutions in tandem with the broader community.
5. **Coordination with ongoing outreach processes:** Work with Metro, TriMet, and other regional partners to align engagement efforts with existing outreach activities, maximizing efficiency and reducing logistical burdens.

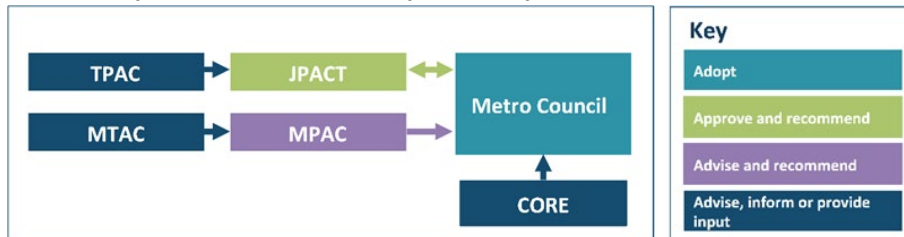
- 6. **Clear Communication:** Ensure that all communications with partners and the community are clear and effective, facilitating collaboration and supporting shared recommendations, including communicating beyond the end of this project to report back to participants how input was incorporated into the study.

Engagement approach

Engagement for community connector transit study will be guided [by Metro’s Public Engagement Guide](#). This community engagement plan utilizes the [Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#) to define the level of engagement for each participant group. Transparency about how each participant group can impact the project is essential for building relationships and trust. The process will employ community engagement activities that inform, consult or involve people and communicate participant input to project collaborators and decision-makers.

Regular updates and feedback collection: Through meetings and workshops with standing committees, the project will continuously gather input and refine strategies based on feedback. Metro will provide periodic updates and seek feedback from key standing advisory and coordinating committees to ensure continuous input and alignment with the project goals. These committees include (with more information about each committee and their role in the study provided in the next section):

- Metro Advisory Committees, as part of an existing agency decision-making framework of community, technical and policy advisory bodies:



- Community Connector Study Transit Working Group (TWG)
- Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington County Coordinating Committees
- Clackamas County’s Small Transit Providers
- TriMet’s Transit Equity Advisory Committee
- TriMet’s Committee on Accessible Transportation
- Chambers of Commerce and Business Organizations

Focus groups and interviews: To gather in-depth feedback from specific community groups and interested parties, the team will conduct focus groups and/or small group interviews to obtain detailed insights and address specific concerns related to transit policies and services, including:

- Partnering with business and economic organizations to discuss transit needs and impacts.

- Engaging key nonprofits, community members, and parks patrons to gather their perspectives and experiences. These events could be a mix of in-person or internet-based events to ensure they are broadly accessible.

Online engagement for members of public: Written and graphic information and storytelling to build awareness and understanding through Metro’s website, social media and transportation interested parties’ lists.

Transit provider workshops: Workshops, co-convened with each county, will facilitate dialogue between transit providers and other participants, will focus on collaborative solutions and strategies.

Community events: To encourage broad community involvement, the team will host inclusive events strategically chosen to represent geographical diversity across the tri-county region, ensuring a wide range of community voices are heard. These events could be a mix of in-person or internet-based events to ensure they are accessible to the community and could include locations like affordable housing.

The project may offer compensation to meeting participants on a case-by-case basis consistent with Metro’s current community compensation policies. Generally, compensation will not be offered to standing meeting participants but may be offered to community-based organizations or individuals to recognize culturally specific expertise, leadership and services experience that Metro cannot provide.

Engagement activities

Engagement activities in this work plan are aimed to achieve the primary goal of gathering feedback from people and groups with a diverse range of experiences and perspectives. The [Spectrum of Community Engagement to Ownership](#) model identifies five levels of community engagement for increased efficiency in decision-making and solutions implementation. These levels are ordered as follows by increasing impact on decision-making: (0) ignore; (1) inform; (2) consult; (3) involve; (4) collaborate; and (5) defer to. For this effort, engagement strategies will primarily inform, consult and involve the public. This engagement will range from providing the community with information to ensuring community needs and assets are integrated into process and informing planning.

Group	Level of engagement (i)	Activity and purpose	Representation, roles and responsibilities
TWG	Consult	A series of meetings anticipated over the course of the project; feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	<p>Agency staff engaged in discussions about transit strategies and their implementation for the Community Connector Transit Study.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise Metro staff on study and task approaches, milestone deliverables and engagement strategies to reflect agency and local expertise in the items brought forward to the Metro advisory committees. Guide the project, provide expert feedback, and act as a sounding board for ideas. <p>See charter in Attachment A for more detail.</p>
Regional and intercity transit providers	Consult	Workshops in each county at major project milestones; feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	Small transit provider staff representing transit agency interests to provide insights on the operations impact of transit policies and services.
Clackamas County's STP	Consult	Meet at major project milestones;	

Group	Level of engagement (i)	Activity and purpose	Representation, roles and responsibilities
		discuss operational challenges and coordination with larger transit networks; feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	
County coordinating committees	Consult	Up to 5 meetings anticipated over the course of the project; feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	Local agency staff coordinating to address land use and transportation planning issues within their respective county.
TPAC and MTAC	Collaborate	6 meetings each anticipated over the course of the project; feedback given to staff, JPACT and MPAC	Community and business representatives and local agency staff discussing and evaluating land use and transportation policy options and provide technical support to Metro's policy committees JPACT and MPAC, respectively.
JPACT and MPAC	Defer to/Collaborate	5 meetings each anticipated over the course of the project; feedback given to staff and Council	<p><u>JPACT</u>: Regional leaders making recommendations to the Metro Council on transportation needs in the region.</p> <p><u>MPAC</u>: Regional leaders advising Metro Council on growth management and land use issues in the region.</p>
CORE	Collaborate	1-2 meetings anticipated at major project milestones; feedback given to staff and Council	Community members advising Metro Council on strategies to advance racial equity.

Group	Level of engagement (i)	Activity and purpose	Representation, roles and responsibilities
TriMet's TEAC	Inform and Consult	Meet at major milestones in Tasks 5 through 7; ensure that transit policies and services are equitable, addressing the needs of underserved and marginalized communities; feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	Community members providing insights on equitable transit solutions and addresses disparities in transit access.
TriMet's CAT	Inform and Consult	Meet at project milestones; focus on improving accessibility within transit services and ensure that the needs of individuals with disabilities are met; feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	Community members concentrating on accessibility issues and solutions for people with disabilities.
Chambers of commerce, business organizations and employers	Inform and Involve	Meet at project milestones and/or small group interviews; focus on improving transit access for businesses and ensure that the needs of employees are met (i.e., shift workers); feedback given to staff, advisory committees and Council	<p>Business representatives coordinating to address unique area business needs, challenges and opportunities who will provide insights on the economic impact of transit policies and services.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Discuss the transit system's impact on local businesses and the economy. ● Share insights on how first and last mile services can improve business operations, employee commutes, and customer access. ● Work with regional transit providers and stakeholders to ensure that transit

Group	Level of engagement (i)	Activity and purpose	Representation, roles and responsibilities
			<p>services support economic growth and accessibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Suggest strategies for improving transit services to better connect businesses with the broader community, promoting economic development.
Community based organizations and housing organizations	Involve and consult	Focus groups and/or small group interviews with community members focusing on a diverse range of needs, particularly those of marginalized groups	<p>Advocate for and represent the needs of underserved and vulnerable communities in transit planning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide detailed input on community needs and transit challenges. ● Prioritize the inclusion of historically underrepresented groups in discussions about transit improvements. ● Provide insights during early project phases to help shape engagement strategies that effectively reach diverse populations. ● Offer ongoing input on how to ensure transit solutions are inclusive and address the specific needs of marginalized communities.
Members of the public	Inform and involve	Outreach and informational materials via Metro website and social media; online surveys providing opportunities	Provide feedback on transit needs and solutions through focus groups, public hearings, community events, and online

Group	Level of engagement (i)	Activity and purpose	Representation, roles and responsibilities
		<p>for input, in-person tabling in partnership with TriMet service planning outreach and/or local events; focus groups and/or small group interviews with a focus on key needs such as those for people living in affordable housing and parks patrons</p>	<p>platforms, ensuring diverse community voices are reflected in the planning process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Share insights on transit needs and accessibility. ● Ensure broad participation and input on transit solutions. ● Contribute feedback via Metro’s website, social media, and surveys. ● Review project updates and respond to promotional materials, ensuring diverse community voices are heard.

Community groups and interested parties

The following list includes organizations who the project team Community Connector Transit Study will invite to participate in this project. The list is not exhaustive and will be revised based on feedback received throughout the process. Age-Friendly Portland

- AARP
- APANO
- Business chambers, such as Greater Portland Chamber, Oregon City Chamber, Tigard Chamber of Commerce
- Centro Cultural
- Coalition of Communities of Color:
- Disability Rights Oregon
- Hacienda CDC
- IRCO
- Native American Youth and Family Center (NAYA)
- Next Up
- Oregon Walks
- Portland Transportation Ambassadors
- Proud Ground
- REACH CDC
- Rosewood Initiative
- Sabin CDC
- Safe Routes to School Portland
- Self Enhancement, Inc.
- Street Roots
- The Street Trust
- Transportation Management Associations (TMAs), such as Westside Transportation Alliance, Explore Washington Park and Columbia Corridor Association, Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Center
- TriMet Riders Club
- Unite Oregon
- Urban League of Portland
- Verde

Communication materials and channels

To effectively engage with community members and connect with them where they are, the project will employ a range of communication channels and materials. These will be carefully crafted to ensure broad accessibility and foster meaningful participation. Information will be disseminated virtually and in-person to ensure the communication remains accessible. The materials will encompass:

1. **Agendas and meeting packets:** For each meeting and workshop, detailing objectives, topics, and background information.
2. **Visual aids and presentations:** Graphics, maps, and infographics for illustrating trends and policy considerations.
3. **Communication Materials:** Including visual aids like posters, and fact sheets, postcards, and key messages.
4. **Event, focus group, interview summaries and feedback reports:** Including major themes, takeaways, and transcribed comments from meetings and events.
5. **Community-based organization Partnerships:** Leveraging the networks and channels of CBOs to amplify outreach efforts and engage with all communities, particularly those who are underrepresented.
6. **Public outreach campaigns:** Broad communication strategies across multiple media channels (e.g., earned, social, website, MetroNews), providing updates and opportunities for involvement to ensure that the general public is informed and has the opportunity to participate.
7. **In-person tabling:** Meeting community members where they already are to engage in one-on-one and small group discussions to better understand needs.
8. **Feedback Log and Response Mechanism:** A system will be established to compile and track public comments and responses. This log will help ensure that all feedback is addressed and incorporated into the project.

Project Timeline

Figure 1 illustrates the project timeline by task and identifies key engagement touchpoints. Table 2 below describes the major public engagement milestones, timing, and the proposed general engagement approach and methods for each.

Figure 1. Project Timeline

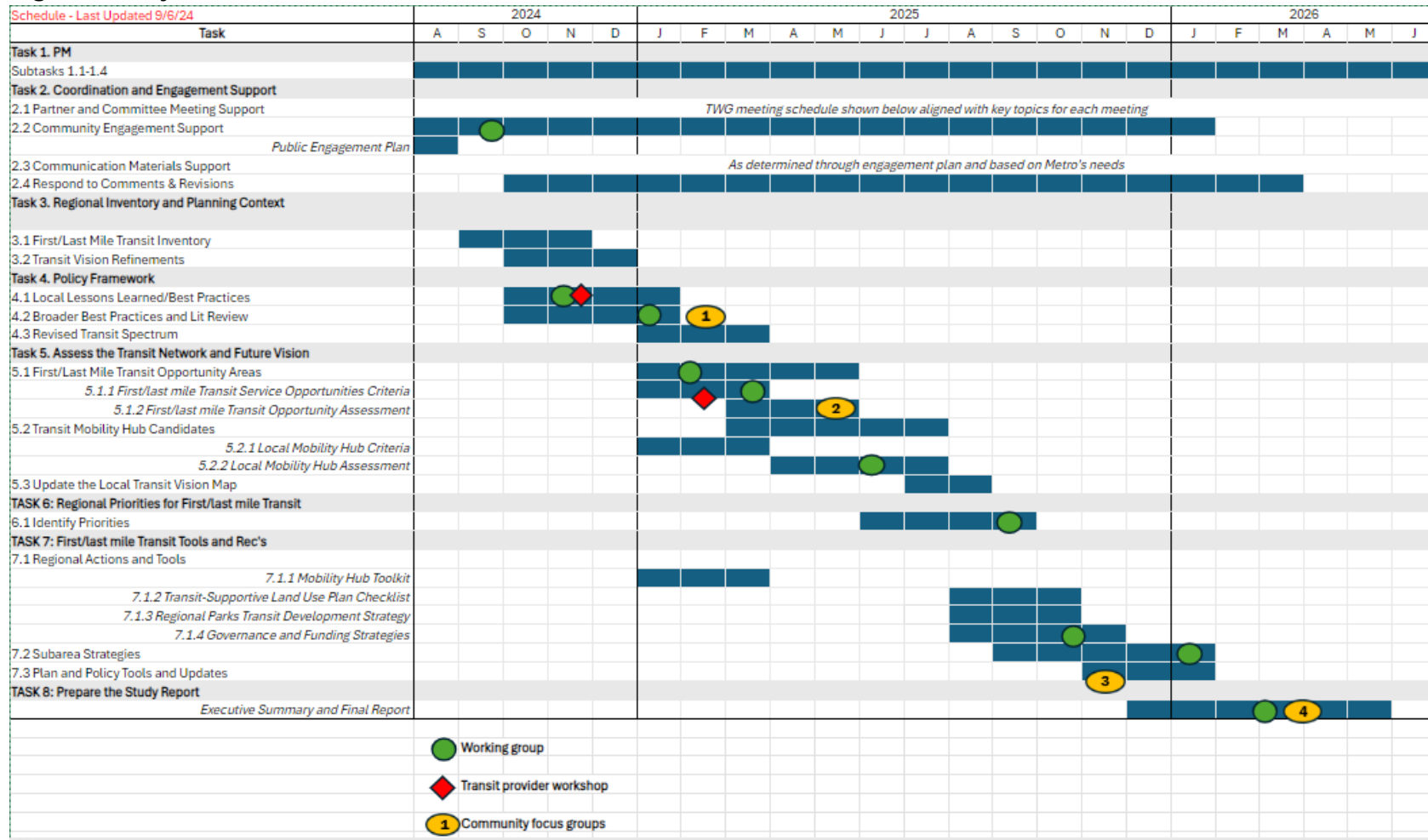


Table 2. Engagement Milestones

Milestone	#1 Context and Policy Framework	#2 First/last Mile Opportunities and Vision	Priorities, Tools and Actions	Report
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage advisory committees Transit provider workshops Past feedback Summary Report Online survey Fact sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage advisory committees Transit provider workshops Community and business focus groups and interviews Community event outreach Online survey Fact sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage advisory committees Community and business focus groups and interviews Community event outreach Online survey Fact sheets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage advisory committees Study Engagement Summary Report Online review link Review invitations by email Fact sheets
Key Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What lessons have we learned from early implementation? What role should community connectors play in the region? Where are there existing gaps and current challenges or opportunities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How can the vision capture the specific needs of communities in the region? How can the vision address the needs of equity communities? What is most important to consider when identifying priorities? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the tiered corridors represent the right priorities for the region? Will these prioritized corridors meet the needs of equity communities and advance other regional goals, such as reducing the region’s climate impacts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did we get it right? What needs to change? Is there anything else we should consider to set us up to implement the Vision? What should we look at more closely for areas of future study?
Timing	Sept – Dec 2024	Jan – June 2025	Oct – Dec 2025	March – May 2026