

MPAC Worksheet

Agenda Item Title: 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP): Overview of Public Comment, Key Topics to Address and Next Steps for Finalizing the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy for Adoption

Presenters: Kim Ellis, RTP Project Manager (she/her)

Contact for this worksheet/presentation: Kim Ellis, kim.ellis@oregonmetro.gov

Purpose/Objective

This is an opportunity for the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) to begin discussion of the feedback received on the public review draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and 2023 High Capacity Transit (HCT) Strategy. Staff will also preview five key topics identified for further policy discussion as the RTP is finalized for consideration by JPACT and the Metro Council.

Outcome

MPAC members discuss and provide feedback on these questions:

- Do you have questions about the major themes heard during the final public comment period?
- Do you have questions or feedback about the key topics identified for MPAC discussion?
- Do you have questions about the next steps for finalizing the 2023 RTP and HCT Strategy for adoption?

Staff will work with the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) and the Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) to prepare policy questions and options for MPAC discussion and feedback in October. MPAC will be asked to make a recommendation to the Metro Council on adoption of the 2023 RTP and HCT Strategy at the October 25 meeting.

Background and context

A major update to the [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (RTP) has been underway since Fall 2021. Under federal law, the next update is due by Dec. 6, 2023, when the current plan expires. Providing continued compliance with federal planning regulations ensures continued federal transportation funding eligibility for projects and programs in the region. The region's High Capacity Transit Strategy is also being updated as part of the RTP update. The RTP is the state- and federally-required long-range transportation plan for the Portland metropolitan area.

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 27 meeting, staff will present an update on the RTP timeline and decision process, major high-level themes from the public comments received, and key topics and concerns identified by Metro staff for more in-depth policy discussion as the plan is finalized for consideration by MPAC in October, and JPACT and the Metro Council in November. A schedule of remaining discussions and actions is attached in **Attachment 1**.

What has changed since MPAC last considered this issue/item?

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. The public comment period built on the significant engagement and feedback received throughout the update to the RTP.¹

Engagement activities conducted during the comment period 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 on-line comment form** – 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 250 people and agencies submitted more than 300 comments through an online comment forum. The survey results and comments submitted through the on-line comment form are included in the draft public comment report.
- **Letters and emails** – The public was invited to submit letters and emails. Metro received more than 50 emails and 40 letters from community members, community-based organizations, advocacy groups, business associations, public agencies and elected officials. The emails and letters are included in the draft public comment report.
- **Public hearing** – The Metro Council held a public hearing on July 27, 2023. Thirteen community members testified at the hearing. The closed caption transcript of hearing testimony is included in the draft 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](#)

¹ Summary reports of engagement activities conducted to date can be found on the project website at: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/2023-regional-transportation-plan/engagement>

[450.316\(b\)](#) and [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)\(10\)](#). Metro convened 20 participants in two separate consultation meetings on August 17 and 22. Summaries of the consultation meetings are included in the draft public comment report.

- **Draft Public Comment Report.** Metro staff have prepared a [working draft Public Comment Report](#) and [Appendices to the comment report](#) that summarizes key themes and 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. Additional analysis will be added as the report is finalized. The draft public comment report and appendices are provided in **Attachment 2**.

Next Steps for Responding to Public Comments Received

Metro staff are drafting recommended actions to respond to comments received and identified key concerns that warrant more in-depth discussion by TPAC and MTAC on September 13 and September 20, respectively, and during subsequent meetings. 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, and 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 – project mix and timing
 - Pricing policy application to toll projects
 - Increasing regional transportation investment (funding)
 - Climate tools and analysis
 - Mobility policy implementation

A summary of key concerns raised for each discussion topic is provided in **Attachment 3**. 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 Metro Council, JPACT and MPAC at their September meetings. Potential recommended actions will be brought forward for discussion at the October 25 meeting as part of MPAC finalizing the committee’s recommendation to the Metro Council. MPAC may choose to make recommendations to Metro Council on any or all of the discussion topics.

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. MPAC will be requested to make recommendations to Metro Council on the consent items as a package without further discussion.

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.

Strategic context and framing for MPAC 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.

MPAC advises and makes recommendations to the Metro Council on growth management and land use issues, including the RTP, at the policy level. In this role, MPAC has engaged in the development of the 2023 RTP and 2023 HCT Strategy throughout the process and will be asked to make a recommendation to the Metro Council on adoption of both in October.

What packet material do you plan to include?

1. Schedule of Key Dates for Finalizing the 2023 RTP and 2023 HCT Strategy for Adoption (9/14/23)
2. Working Draft Public Comment Report and Appendices (9/7/23)
3. Summary of Proposed Discussion Topics on Key Concerns with 2023 RTP (9/7/23)
4. Draft Ordinance No. 23-1496 (and Exhibit A)
5. Draft Resolution No. 23-5348 (and Exhibit A)