

SAFE STREETS FOR ALL (SS4A) UPDATE

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Department: Planning, Research and Development
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Length: 45 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

Reducing serious traffic crashes and improving pedestrian safety in the region requires leadership, coordination, collaboration, difficult decisions and trade-offs. While the Portland region has one of the lowest traffic death rates of any metropolitan area in the US, fatality and serious injuries from crashes continue to increase, especially for low income and people of color, moving in the wrong direction from adopted targets. Reversing this trend, which is also seen at the state and national levels, will likely take years of concerted effort and shifts in practice to double down on the factors that we know lead to serious crashes. Metro is initiating a two-year federally funded Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Program to build on and advance regional efforts for safer streets, especially for pedestrians. The SS4A program is an opportunity for Metro and jurisdictional and community partners to engage more deeply on transportation safety over the next few years.

A new Metro report, *Safe Streets for All: A transportation safety update to JPACT and the Metro Council*, provides a starting place to discuss opportunities for the Metro Council, working with JPACT and other partners, to advance safety.

ACTION REQUESTED

Provide feedback on the information and approach in the *Safe Streets for All: A transportation safety update to JPACT and the Metro Council*.

Discuss the Council's approach to elevate safety and make progress on identified policy outcomes over the next two years.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Council's feedback will inform the work plan for the SS4A Program which implements regional safety and equity policies in the 2023 RTP to make progress on the following policy outcomes:

- Fatal and serious injury crash rates decline and are ultimately eliminated.
- Traffic safety increases for all modes of travel.
- The Safe System Approach is used in transportation planning, projects and programs.

- Traffic speeds are managed for safety to reduce likelihood of death and serious injury.
- Safety for all modes is a key consideration in all transportation projects.
- Investments are prioritized for roadways with the highest risk and highest injury.
- Safety investments are prioritized to improve equity and safety for vulnerable roadway users.
- Low-cost, effective treatments are applied without waiting for larger, more expensive and complex projects.
- Safety is a key consideration when defining system adequacy or deficiency.

The work plan includes engaging and coordinating with jurisdictional partners to increase awareness and understanding to the safe system approach, identifying policy and legislative changes, developing data and analysis tools, and safe system solutions to implement regional safety policies and goals in the 2023 RTP.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Where does the Council see, or would like to see, opportunities to advance regional safety policy outcomes in the upcoming year?
- What opportunities does the Council see, or would like to see, to engage other leaders in the region to strengthen coalitions for safety?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

There are no policy options to consider currently. Staff have heard from Council a desire to make better progress on regional safety targets and policy outcomes. Staff will develop an SS4A engagement strategy integrating Council input from this work session, and input from other stakeholders. The engagement strategy will suggest options for the Council to elevate and advance regional safety policy outcomes through various forums.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

Staff recommends that Council highlight safety in upcoming transportation policy and funding discussions, asking how/if safety will be improved and who will benefit. Staff will provide additional recommendations as the SS4A Program engagement strategy is developed in coordination with the JPACT work plan and funding discussions.

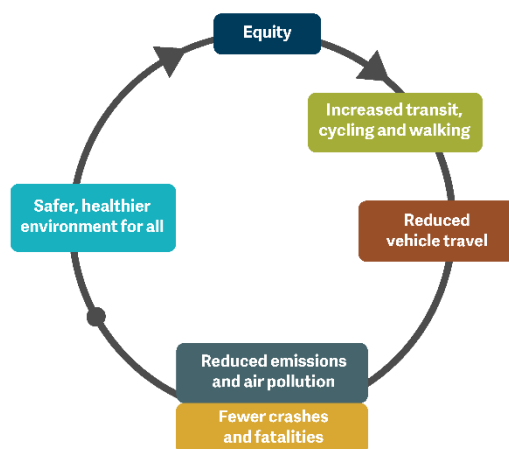
STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Metro has been working with regional partners to develop data driven safety strategies for over a decade. This history provides a solid foundation from which to engage partners more deeply on safety topics, including the Safe System approach and prioritization of strategies. While most jurisdictional and community partners are concerned about traffic safety and agree that “more needs to be done” there can be disagreement about what needs to be done. For example, some partners see expansion of throughway capacity and limiting access for people walking as biking as a solution, while others see slowing speeds and prioritizing walking, bicycling and transit over driving as a solution, while even others believe that behavior change is the most important strategy. Part of the SS4A Program

engagement strategy will be focused on finding common ground and shared understanding and engaging partners in a deep dive of strategies and solutions to understand the most effective and affordable solutions that also help address equity and climate issues.

There are three more cycles of the SS4A federal grant (2024, 2025, 2026) with opportunity for additional funding for planning and capital projects. Metro may wish to take the lead on developing a regional implementation grant based on the outcomes of the SS4A Program work.

- **How is this related to Metro’s Strategic Framework or Core Mission?**
Consistent with the Strategic Framework, the SS4A Program centers equity and reducing the disproportionate impact of traffic crashes on people with low income and communities of color, especially Black and Native American peoples. Actions should not exacerbate or contribute to disparities by making the transportation system more dangerous for any group of people.
- **How does this advance Metro’s racial equity goals?**
The SS4A Program is guided by and implements regional safety and equity goals in the 2023 RTP. Improving transportation safety for people that have been systemically and disproportionately negatively impacted by traffic crashes will improve access to opportunities and improve mobility.
- **How does this advance Metro’s climate action goals?**
Improving roadway safety, especially for people accessing mass transit by foot and bicycle, is a linchpin in the positive cycle of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from motor-vehicles, as illustrated in the diagram below.



Metro

- **Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback**
Metro has worked with regional partners for over a decade to develop data driven safety strategies, identifying safety projects and countermeasures in the RTP and in local transportation plans. Roadway safety is consistently a top concern heard from communities. Communities also express support for improving safety, especially for people walking and bicycling. However, more work is needed to reach agreement on

a strategic approach to make roadways safer. Decision makers, businesses and communities may oppose effective and known safety interventions, such as medians, roundabouts, daylighting intersections, protected turns, leading pedestrian intervals, road diets, reduced travel speeds, transit prioritization, separated bicycle facilities, enhanced pedestrian crossings, etc. if these treatments might lead to slower vehicle travel speeds or congestion. The work of the SS4A Program will be used to inform the 2028 update of the RTP.

- **Explicit list of stakeholder groups and individuals who have been involved in policy development.**

Most recently the stakeholder groups and individuals involved in the development of the 2023 RTP have been involved in regional safety and equity policy development, as outlined in the [2023 RTP Engagement and Outreach Summary](#). Additionally, Metro convened safety work groups to develop the original policies. Those stakeholders and process are described in Section 1.4 of the [2018 Regional Transportation Safety Strategy](#). Prior to that, Metro convened regional partners to develop the [2012 Regional Transportation Safety Plan](#).

- **Legal Antecedents**

- 23 U.S.C. §150 specifies national goal areas for the Federal-Aid Highway Program, including safety and security.
- RESOLUTION NO. 18-4894, For the Purpose of Adopting the 2018 Regional Transportation Safety Strategy
- RESOLUTION NO. 23-1496, For the Purpose of Amending the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan to Comply with Federal and State Law and Amending the Regional Framework Plan

BACKGROUND

For over a decade, Metro has played an important role coordinating and convening partners and developing regional safety policies, data, and analysis to improve roadway safety. The Metro Council is recognized nationally for adopting ambitious regional safety goals and policies and serving as a role model for other regional governments and MPOs.

For context, a brief history of safety programing and key updates is described here:

- Metro develops [2012 Regional Transportation Safety Plan](#) with regional partners and working group. The plan is not adopted.
- Metro develops the [2018 Regional Transportation Safety Strategy](#) (RTSS) with regional partners and safety working group. The plan is adopted by JPACT and the Metro Council. The 2018 RTP reflects new safety policies and goals from the 2018 RTSS.
- Metro reports on progress with the [2019 traffic fatalities and serious injuries annual performance report](#) and the [2-Year Progress Report of the Regional Transportation Safety Strategy](#)

- Metro Council adopts [regional street design guidelines](#) with a Vision Zero focus in 2019.
- Metro hosts a [forum and charette on performance-based street design](#) in 2019.
- Metro hosts [regional safety forums](#) in 2021 and 2022.
- Metro Council and JPACT adopt the [2023 Regional Transportation Plan](#) with regional safety and equity policies. These policies were refined but remain consistent with the 2018 RTP.
- Metro receives a Federal Safe Streets for All (SS4A) grant in 2023, to build on and advance regional efforts for safer streets, especially for pedestrians. Metro is administering half of the grant funds to Washington County, the City of Tigard, and Multnomah County and the cities of East Multnomah County as they develop Transportation Safety Action Plans. The SS4A program funding provides an opportunity for Metro and jurisdictional and community partners to engage more deeply on transportation safety over the next two years.

As the SS4A Program gets underway, Metro will be developing more in-depth and nuanced safety analysis. Using the *Safe Streets for All: A transportation safety update to JPACT and the Metro Council* report as a starting place, Metro is seeking guidance and input from the Metro Council and Metro's technical and policy committees and other partners on what analysis and information will increase understanding of safety challenges and solutions, and what strategies should be pursued to effectively advance safety.

ATTACHMENTS

- Is legislation required for Council action? No
- What other materials are you presenting today? [Safe Streets for All: A transportation safety update to JPACT and the Metro Council report](#)