



600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736

# Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) agenda

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Thursday, September 21, 2023

7:30 AM

<https://zoom.us/j/91720995437> (Webinar  
ID: 917 2099 5437) or 877-853-5257 (Toll  
Free)

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## 1. Call To Order, Declaration of a Quorum & Introductions (7:30 AM)

This meeting will be held electronically. You can join the meeting on your computer or other device by using this link: <https://zoom.us/j/91720995437> or by calling +1 917 2099 5437 or 888 475 4499 (toll free).

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## 2. Public Communication on Agenda Items (7:35 AM)

Written comments should be submitted electronically by mailing [legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov). Written comments received by 4:00 pm on the Wednesday before the meeting will be provided to the committee prior to the meeting.

Those wishing to testify orally are encouraged to sign up in advance by either: (a) contacting the legislative coordinator by phone at 503-813-7591 and providing your name and the item on which you

wish to testify; or (b) registering by email by sending your name and the item on which you wish to testify to [legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov). Those requesting to comment during the meeting can do so by using the "Raise Hand" feature in Zoom or emailing the legislative coordinator at [legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:legislativecoordinator@oregonmetro.gov). Individuals will have three minutes to testify unless otherwise stated at the meeting.

## 3. Updates from the JPACT Chair (7:40 AM)

## 4. Consent Agenda (7:45 AM)

4.1 Consideration of the July 20, 2023 JPACT Minutes

[COM](#)  
[23-0733](#)

Attachments: [072023 JPACT Minutes](#)

## 5. Information/Discussion Items (7:50 AM)

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5.1 Better Bus Update [COM](#)  
[23-0725](#)

Presenter(s): Kelly Betteridge, Metro  
Cara Belcher, TriMet

Attachments: [JPACT Worksheet](#)

5.2 2023 Regional Transportation Plan: Overview of Public [COM](#)  
Comment, Key Topics to Address and Next Steps for [23-0727](#)  
Finalizing the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy  
for Adoption

Presenter(s): Kim Ellis (she/her), Metro

Attachments: [JPACT Worksheet](#)  
[Attachment 1](#)  
[Attachment 2](#)  
[Attachment 3](#)

6. Updates from JPACT Members (9:20 AM)

7. Adjourn (9:30 AM)

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ការគោរពសិទ្ធិពលរដ្ឋរបស់ ១ សំរាប់ព័ត៌មានអំពីកម្មវិធីសិទ្ធិពលរដ្ឋរបស់ Metro ឬដើម្បីទទួលបានការបណ្តឹងរើសអើងសូមទូរស័ព្ទទៅកាន់ [www.oregonmetro.gov/civilrights](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/civilrights)។  
បើលោកអ្នកត្រូវការអ្នកបកប្រែភាសានៅពេលអង្គប្រជុំសាធារណៈ សូមទូរស័ព្ទមកលេខ 503-797-1700 (ម៉ោង 8 ព្រឹកដល់ម៉ោង 5 ល្ងាច ថ្ងៃច័ន្ទ) ប្រាំពីរថ្ងៃ មុនថ្ងៃប្រជុំដើម្បីអាចឱ្យអ្នកបកប្រែមកម្តងម្កាល់សំរាប់លោកអ្នក ។

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# 2023 JPACT Work Program

*As of 9/12/2023*

*Items in italics are tentative*

<p><b>September 21, 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Better Bus update (Kelly Betteridge, 10 min)</li><li>• 2023 Regional Transportation Plan: Overview of Public Comment, Key Topics to Address and Next Steps for Finalizing the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy for Adoption (Kim Ellis (she/her), Metro)</li></ul>	<p><b>October 19, 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>OTC Letter (action) (Ted Leybold, 10 min)</i></li><li>• <i>2023 RTP ordinance introduction (Kim Ellis)</i></li><li>• <i>HCT Plan resolution introduction (Ally Holmqvist)</i></li><li>• 82<sup>nd</sup> avenue transit plan (Elizabeth M'ros-Ohara)</li></ul>
<p><b>November 16, 2023</b> - Hybrid</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2023 RTP (<b>action</b>)</li><li>• High-Capacity Transit Plan (<b>action</b>)</li></ul>	<p><b>December 14, 2023</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Safety Update (Lake McTighe (she/they), Metro)</i></li><li>• WMIS Update</li><li>• Sunrise corridor visioning project update</li><li>• I-5 Interstate Bridge Replacement Program Update (IBR): SDEIS</li></ul>

**4.1 Consideration of the July 20, 2023 JPACT Minutes (7:45 AM)**

*Consent Agenda*

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation  
Thursday, September 21, 2023



600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736  
oregonmetro.gov

JOINT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION (JPACT)

Meeting Minutes

July 20, 2023

Metro Regional Center, Council Chamber

MEMBERS PRESENT

Juan Carlos González  
Christine Lewis  
Travis Stovall  
Paul Savas  
Nafisa Fai  
Carley Francis  
Anne McEnerny-Ogle  
Mingus Mapps  
Sam Desue  
Joe Buck  
Curtis Robinhold  
Susheela Jayapal  
Ali Mirzakhilili

AFFILIATION

Metro Council  
Metro Council  
Cities of Multnomah County  
Clackamas County  
Washington County  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
City of Vancouver  
City of Portland  
TriMet  
Cities of Clackamas County  
Port of Portland  
Multnomah County  
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

MEMBERS EXCUSED

Rian Windsheimer  
Steve Callaway  
Shawn Donaghy  
Ashton Simpson

AFFILIATION

Oregon Department of Transportation  
Cities of Washington County  
C-Tran  
Metro Council

ALTERNATES PRESENT

Chris Ford  
Jef Dalin  
Brett Sherman  
JC Vannatta  
Scott Patterson  
Scott Langer

AFFILIATION

Oregon Department of Transportation  
Cities of Washington County  
Cities of Clackamas County  
TriMet  
C-Tran  
Washington State Department of  
Transportation

OTHERS PRESENT: Carmen Merlo, Miles Pengilly, Derek Bradley, Erin Doyle, Taylor Steenblock, Shannon Carney, Mat Dolata, Dwight Brashear, Mary Baumgardner, Jessica Pelz, Nathan Sykes, Mark Ottenad, Brenda Bartlett, Sara Ryan, Sara Wright, Monica Krueger, Jean Senechal Biggs, Will Farley, Greg Leo, Jaimie Lorenzini, Sarah Paulus, Dave R., Isiah Jackman, Stephen Roberts, Sarah Iannarone, Kyle Hauger, Karen Buehrig, Jeff Owen, John Charles, Shoshana Cohen, Tara O'Brien, Jamie Stasny, Ari Del Rosario, Ethan Rohrbach, Jeff Gudman, Gerik Kransky, Michaela Barton, Derek Bradley, Allison Boyd, Kate Hawkins, Eric Hesse, Tom Markgraf, Sandy Glantz, Jess Zdeb, Mike Bezner, Laurie Lebowsky-Young, Mike McCarthy, Katherine Kelly, Chris Smith, Cody Field

STAFF: Connor Ayers, Jeff Kain, Andrea Pastor, Sebrina Owens-Wilson, Carrie MacLaren, Andre Bealer, Anneliese Koehler, Tim Collins, Tom Kloster, Eryn Kehe, Michelle Bellia, Catherine Ciarlo, Summer Blackhorse, Ted Leybold, Lisa Hunrichs, Eduardo Ramos, Grace Cho, Victor Sin, Marielle Bossio, Eliot Rose, Malu Wilkinson, Jaye Cromwell, Kim Ellis, Ally Holmqvist, John Mermin

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND DECLARATION OF A QUORUM**

JPACT Chair Juan Carlos Gonzalez (he/him) called the meeting to order at 7:30 am.

Chair Gonzalez called the role and declared a quorum.

**2. PUBLIC COMMUNICATION ON AGENDA ITEMS**

There was no public testimony.

Metro Staff Connor Ayers noted that a written testimony was submitted past the submission deadline, noting that this document will be included in the JPACT follow-up email.

**3. UPDATES FROM THE CHAIR**

Metro Planning and Development Department Director Catherine Ciarlo (she/her) shared the names and ages of traffic victims during the month of June:

Clark Jakob Soden, 62, Larry Valdez, 22, Adrian Gama, 22, Lorn A. Thompson, 47, Lorenzo Porter, 58, Cordell Dylan Tate, 23, Adrian Trujillo, 26, Jennifer Leigh Parise, 40, Travis Philmlee Jr., 26, and four unidentified victims.

Having no further updates to provide, Chair Gonzalez moved to the next agenda item.

**4. CONSENT AGENDA**

Chair Gonzalez noted that there are two items on the consent agenda, Resolution No. 23-5335 For the Purpose of Adopting the 2024-2027 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), and Consideration of the June 15, 2023 JPACT minutes.

**MOTION:** City of Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnerny-Ogle moved to approve the consent agenda seconded by TriMet General Manager Sam Desue.

**ACTION:** With all in favor, consent agenda passed.

**5. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS**

**5.1 Legislative Update**

Chair Gonzalez introduced Metro Staff Anneliese Koehler (she/her), Washington County Staff Erin Doyle, Multnomah County Staff Taylor Steenblock, Clackamas County Staff Chris Lyons, TriMet Staff Miles Pengilly, Port of Portland Staff Carmen Merlo, and City of Portland Staff Derek Bradley.

Koehler briefly spoke about the latest legislative session, noting that each presenter will speak about a certain legislative topic or issue. Merlo provided information on the I-5 Bridge Replacement Project. Doyle explained the legislative efforts to address issues concerning urban arterial roads. Steenblock commented on developments to the Earthquake Ready Burnside Bridge Project. Lyons discussed the current state of tolling in the legislature. Bradley explained House Bill 3014 (HB3014), which would allow Oregon school districts to use up to 5% of their transportation grant on alternative transportation investments. Pengilly remarked on the possibility of a 2025 transportation package.

Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas discussed accountability measures for the allocation of gas tax dollars. He briefly commented on alternative funding methods in lieu of declining gas tax revenues.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Air Quality Administrator Ali Mirzakhilili questioned if there is another state or jurisdiction that we can look to for a model of how to address declining gas tax revenues.

Pengilly discussed the viability of road user charges to replace these lost funds. He noted that this issue will continue to be discussed in the legislature in future sessions. Steenblock added that Oregon's lack of a sales tax limits the state's flexibility in generating revenue.

Multnomah County Commissioner Susheela Jayapal thanked the presenters for their work and highlighted the importance of centering regional success.

Seeing no further discussion, Chair Gonzalez moved onto the next agenda item.

## **5.2 Regional Freight Delay and Commodities Movement Study: Draft Findings**

Chair Gonzalez introduced Metro staff Tim Collins (he/him).

Metro staff Tom Kloster provided context for the presentation, detailing the growth of the freight industry and commenting on its importance to the region's economy.

Collins explained the scope and objectives of the study, noting that the findings of the study will be used to make recommendations for future freight policy. He discussed the impact of e-commerce on the transportation system, the effect of COVID-19 on deliveries, and other related trends in the industry. He noted that the study will be completed in Fall of 2023 and that the final report with findings will be presented to JPACT as a part of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) adoption process.

Commissioner Savas requested clarification on the dollar amounts of goods delivered using I-5 and I-205.

Collins explained that the model is able to differentiate between shipping trucks that are delivering goods to the region and those that are merely passing through.

Commissioner Savas questioned the trend of fewer commerce shipping through the port in stead of more trucking and freight shipping.

Collins noted that the model does not currently include rail mode as a factor, then highlighting that container

services at the port have been increasing. Port of Portland Executive Director Curtis Robinhold confirmed this increase in container services, as well as remarking that most truck movement is not connected to Terminal 6 at the port.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Region 1 Policy and Development Manager Chris Ford requested clarification on how much time will be available to consider the results of this study and incorporate them into the RTP.

Metro staff Tom Kloster noted that a draft findings report for this study will be available in mid-August, and that they will be reviewed by TPAC and JPACT in September.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle highlighted the quantity of goods going over the I-5 bridge daily.

Mirzakhali, discussing the utilization of dark stores as warehouse spaces, asked staff how they intent to balance competing interests between maximizing these opportunities and other factors.

Kloster remarked that the results of this study, and the policy recommendations that will follow it, will have sweeping effects on other sectors outside of transportation. Collins clarified that while dark stores offer a unique opportunity for growth, that they will be weighed against relevant land use discussions before being widely implemented.

Robinhold shared his comments from the chat, stating that the importance of Terminal 6 is connecting Oregon manufacturers to foreign trade. He then discussed a new logistics development for the Port of Portland in Gresham that centers the needs of the community while also expanding economic development.

Seeing no further discussion, Chair Gonzalez moved onto the next agenda item.

### **5.3 TOD Update**

Chair Gonzalez introduced Metro staff Eryn Kehe (she/her) and Andrea Pastor (she/her).

*Key elements of the presentation and member discussion included:*

The presentation overviewed the Transit Oriented Development Program, focusing on the program's strategic plan and policy recommendations. Pastor provided several examples of transit-oriented communities around the metropolitan area, explaining how the developments serve to boost housing affordability and transit access. Staff then discussed engagement efforts surrounding this program with community members, as well as stakeholders. Key components of the strategic plan were examined, primarily project outcomes, requirements, and timelines.

Commissioner Savas expressed concerns that investments like this may result in displacement. He questioned if there is a specific percentage of low-income housing units compared to the total housing pool that would minimize displacement. He then remarked on the importance of home ownership in building wealth, asking staff if there is any plans to have ownership incorporated into these developments.

Pastor explained that this project aims to fund projects that may not be eligible for other sources of funding.

She stated that they are targeting an affordability requirement that 50% of units would be affordable at 80% of the area's median income (AMI). As for home ownership, Pastor detailed that the program has attempted to incorporate home ownership models into the project's scope and that they will continue to examine this opportunity.

Commissioner Savas questioned if TOD housing developments are viewed as entire project areas or just the properties themselves.

Kehe clarified that the project's acquisition program allows for the purchasing and holding of property before a transit investment is made, allowing staff to have more control over the future direction of the area.

Mayor McEnery-Ogle informed the committee of the Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA), which could serve as an additional funding source for this project.

Mirzakhilili questioned what the budget for the program is.

Pastor stated that the TOD program has a budget of \$3.5 million dollars annually.

Seeing no further discussion on the topic, Chair Gonzalez moved to the next agenda item.

#### **5.4 Construction Careers Pathways Program (C2P2) Update**

Chair Gonzalez introduced Metro staff Sebrina Owens-Wilson (she/her) and Andre Bealer (he/him).

*Key elements of the presentation and member discussion included:*

Owens-Wilson began the presentation by providing a comprehensive overview of the C2P2 program, detailing the project's desired outcomes, partner agencies, and background. Bealer discussed the implementation roadmap for the project. The presentation concluded with staff highlighting the next steps for the C2P2 program.

City of Lake Oswego Mayor Joe Buck questioned the capacity of the apprenticeship programs, asking how they have changed over the past decade.

Bealer remarked that the first year of funding for C2P2 will serve to find a baseline for capacity, which will then be expanded upon in subsequent years. Owens-Wilson clarified that through workforce agreements staff has added new standards for the union apprenticeship selection process.

Metro Councilor Christine Lewis spoke to the importance of pre-apprenticeship. She suggested that the anti-bullying and harassment components of the C2P2 should be implemented more widely on all Metro public investment worksites.

TriMet General Manager Sam Desue shared his excitement and dedication to this project.

City of Gresham Mayor Travis Stovall remarked that we should be trying to build out an infrastructure of assistance that allows diverse companies to compete for construction bids.

Commissioner Savas recognized the importance of trade schools in providing options for low-income communities to find high paying work.

Mirzakhali stated that he would like to work with staff to integrate similar strategies in the C2P2 program to create a stronger pipeline for diverse workforces into other industries.

Seeing no further discussion on the topic, Chair Gonzalez moved onto the next agenda item.

**6. UPDATES FROM JPACT MEMBERS**

Carly Tabert alerted the committee that the roadway to Seattle will be limited to two lanes from August to September.

**7. ADJORN**

Chair Gonzalez adjourned the meeting at 9:21 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,



Jeffrey Kain  
Recording Secretary

**ATTACHMENTS TO THE PUBLIC RECORD FOR THE MEETING OF JULY 20, 2023**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>DOCUMENT TYPE</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>DOCUMENT NO.</b>
3.0	Presentation	07/20/2023	Fatal Crash Slide	072023-01
5.2	Presentation	07/20/2023	JPACT Freight Presentation	072023-02
5.3	Presentation	07/20/2023	2024-2027 MTIP – Overview of Adoption Draft	072023-03
5.4	Presentation	07/20/2023	C2P2 Presentation	072023-04
	Testimony	07/20/2023	Sharon Nasset Testimony	072023-05
	Email	07/20/2023	2023 RTP Public Comment Period Email	072023-06

**5.1 Better Bus Update (7:50 AM)**

*Information/Discussion Item*

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation  
Thursday, September 21, 2023

# JPACT Worksheet

**Agenda Item Title:** Better Bus Program Update

**Presenters:** Kelly Betteridge, Investment Areas Manager, Metro; Cara Belcher, Senior Project Manager, TriMet

**Contact for this worksheet/presentation:** Alex Oreschak, Senior Transportation Planner, Metro

## **Purpose/Objective**

- Provide an overview of the Better Bus program, including results from the Enhanced Transit Concepts (ETC) Pilot Program
- Introduce the proposed project identification process and upcoming jurisdictional workshops
- Ask JPACT members to consider how Better Bus projects could be incorporated into other planned projects in their jurisdictions
- NO ACTION WILL BE TAKEN AT THIS MEETING

## **Outcome**

JPACT will be briefed about Better Bus program, including the performance of the prior ETC program and completed projects, and informed about recent and upcoming jurisdictional outreach for the Better Bus program.

## **What has changed since JPACT last considered this issue/item?**

Metro and TriMet have initiated the Better Bus program, which continues the basic concepts of ETC with some modifications and will invest \$10M in design and construction funding. The Better Bus program is a data-driven approach to planning and designing transit priority projects, and builds on existing partnerships between Metro, TriMet and local jurisdictions to implement them.

Over the past two months, Metro and TriMet have been meeting with local jurisdictions to introduce the program and learn about potential issues and project opportunities from partners. In October, Metro and TriMet will be holding workshops with local jurisdiction staff to share data analysis results and work together to identify promising project locations. This will be followed by a Call for Partnerships in late October/early November 2023.

## **What packet material do you plan to include?**

No materials.

**5.2 2023 Regional Transportation Plan: Overview of Public Comment, Key Topics to Address and Next Steps for Finalizing the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy for Adoption (8:00 AM)**

*Information/Discussion Items*

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation  
Thursday, September 21, 2023

# JPACT 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 Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) 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**

JPACT 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 JPACT 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) to prepare policy questions and options for JPACT discussion and feedback in October and November. JPACT will be asked to make a recommendation to the Metro Council on adoption of the 2023 RTP and HCT Strategy at the November 16 meeting.

## **Background and context**

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. 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 21 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 the JPACT and the Metro Council in November. A schedule of remaining discussions and actions is attached in **Attachment 1**.

### **What has changed since JPACT 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.<sup>1</sup>

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](http://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 450.316\(b\)](#) and [23 CFR 450.324\(f\)\(10\)](#). Metro convened 20 participants in two

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<sup>1</sup> 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>

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 is 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 investments (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 and November meetings.

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.

## **STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING JPACT 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.

For more information about the update, visit [oregonmetro.gov/rtp](https://oregonmetro.gov/rtp).

### /Attachments

1. Schedule of Key Dates for Finalizing the 2023 RTP and 2023 HCT Strategy for Adoption (8/29/23)
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)



# 2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

## Key Dates for Finalizing the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and 2023 High Capacity Transit Strategy for Adoption

September to November 2023

Dates are subject to change.



Key Milestone
 Metro Council decision on JPACT action and MPAC recommendation

Note: Under Federal law, the current Regional Transportation Plan expires on Dec. 6, 2023.

September	9/1	TPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DISCUSSION:</b> Overview of draft adoption legislation and update on draft Metro staff recommended actions in response to public comments</li> </ul>
	9/12	Metro Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DISCUSSION:</b> Process update and feedback on draft RTP policies and implementation chapter (Ch. 8)</li> </ul>
	9/13	TPAC Workshop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DISCUSSION:</b> Discuss draft Metro staff recommended actions in response to public comments received</li> <li>Review policy topics for JPACT discussion</li> </ul>
	9/20	MTAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DISCUSSION:</b> Draft adoption legislation</li> <li>Discuss draft Metro staff recommended actions in response to public comments received</li> <li>Review policy topics for MPAC discussion</li> </ul>
	9/21	JPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DISCUSSION:</b> Overview of adoption package (Ordinance, Resolution &amp; Exhibits), public comments received and policy topics identified for JPACT discussion</li> <li>Feedback on draft Ch.8 (Implementation)</li> </ul>
	9/27	MPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>DISCUSSION:</b> Overview of adoption package (Ordinance, Resolution &amp; Exhibits), public comments received and policy topics identified for MPAC discussion</li> <li>Feedback on draft Ch.8 (Implementation)</li> </ul>

	9/28	Metro Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Public hearing (first evidentiary hearing/first read)</b> on Ordinance 23-1496</li> </ul>
<b>October</b>	10/6	TPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Discuss draft Metro staff recommended actions in response to public comments and identify draft recommended actions for JPACT discussion</li> </ul>
	10/10	<i>Metro Council</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Discuss draft recommended actions in response to public comments (focus on topics identified by Council for discussion)</li> </ul>
	10/18	MTAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION: Make final recommendation to MPAC</b> on adoption of 2023 RTP (Ordinance 23-1496) and 2023 HCT Strategy (Resolution No. 23-5348), and recommended actions in response to public comments</li> </ul>
	10/19	JPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DISCUSSION:</b> Discuss draft recommended actions in response to public comments (focus on topics identified by TPAC for JPACT discussion)</li> </ul>
	10/25	MPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION: Make final recommendation to Metro Council</b> on adoption of 2023 RTP (Ordinance 23-1496) and 2023 HCT Strategy (Resolution No. 23-5348), and recommended actions in response to public comments</li> </ul>
<b>November</b>	11/3	TPAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION: Make final recommendation to JPACT</b> on adoption of 2023 RTP (Ordinance 23-1496) and 2023 HCT Strategy (Resolution No. 23-5348), and recommended actions in response to public comments</li> </ul>
	11/7	<i>Metro Council</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>DISCUSSION: <i>Discuss MPAC recommendation and TPAC recommendation to JPACT on adoption of 2023 RTP (Ordinance 23-1496) and 2023 HCT Strategy (Resolution No. 23-5348), and recommended actions in response to public comments</i></b></li> </ul>
	11/16	JPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION: Make final recommendation to Metro Council</b> on adoption of 2023 RTP (Ordinance 23-1496) and 2023 HCT Strategy (Resolution No. 23-5348), and recommended actions in response to public comments</li> </ul>
	11/30	Metro Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>ACTION: Public hearing and consider final action</b> on adoption of 2023 RTP (Ordinance 23-1496) and 2023 HCT Strategy (Resolution No. 23-5348), and recommended actions in response to public comments</li> </ul>



2023 Regional Transportation Plan

***Working draft***

# Public comment report

*A summary of comments received during the final comment period for the development of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan from July 10 to Aug. 25, 2023.*

September 2023



## **Metro respects civil rights**

Metro fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 that requires that no person be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination on the basis of race, color or national origin under any program or activity for which Metro receives federal financial assistance.

Metro fully complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act that requires that no otherwise qualified individual with a disability be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination solely by reason of their disability under any program or activity for which Metro receives federal financial assistance.

If any person believes they have been discriminated against regarding the receipt of benefits or services because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, they have the right to file a complaint with Metro. For information on Metro's civil rights program, or to obtain a discrimination complaint form, visit [oregonmetro.gov/civilrights](http://oregonmetro.gov/civilrights) or call 503-797-1536.

Metro provides services or accommodations upon request to persons with disabilities and people who need an interpreter at public meetings. If you need a sign language interpreter, communication aid or language assistance, call 503-797-1700 or TDD/TTY 503-797-1804 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays) 5 business days before the meeting. All Metro meetings are wheelchair accessible. For up-to-date public transportation information, visit TriMet's website at [trimet.org](http://trimet.org).

Metro is the federally mandated metropolitan planning organization designated by the governor to develop an overall transportation plan and to allocate federal funds for the region.

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) is a 17-member committee that provides a forum for elected officials and representatives of agencies involved in transportation to evaluate transportation needs in the region and to make recommendations to the Metro Council. The established decision-making process assures a well-balanced regional transportation system and involves local elected officials directly in decisions that help the Metro Council develop regional transportation policies, including allocating transportation funds. JPACT serves as the MPO board for the region in a unique partnership that requires joint action with the Metro Council on all MPO decisions.

Project web site: [oregonmetro.gov/rtp](http://oregonmetro.gov/rtp)

The preparation of this report was financed in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration

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## **Appendices**

Appendix A. Online Survey Public Comment Report

Appendix B. Email Comments on Public Review Draft and Strategies through

Appendix C. Letters submitted on Public Review Draft and Strategies through

Appendix D. Voicemails submitted on Public Review Draft and Strategies through

Appendix E. Written and closed caption transcript of RTP Public Hearing (7/27/23)

Appendix F. Consultation meeting summaries

Appendix G. Online comments submitted

Appendix H. Public Comment Index

## INTRODUCTION

Our region's economic prosperity and quality of life depend on a transportation system that provides every person and business with access to safe, reliable, healthy and affordable ways to get around. The Regional Transportation Plan provides a shared vision and investment strategy that guides investments for all forms of travel to keep people connected and commerce moving throughout the Portland metropolitan region. The plan is updated every five years to stay ahead of future growth and address trends and challenges facing the region.

The greater Portland region continues to grow and change, requiring new and expanded transportation options while maintaining the system of today. One-half million new residents are expected to live in the Portland region by 2045 – about half from growing families. Communities are becoming more racially and culturally diverse, and the aging population is growing. People are shopping and working in new ways that will require different transportation solutions.

The region is facing urgent global and regional challenges. Climate change is happening faster than predicted and the transportation system is not fully prepared for the expected Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. Technological changes in transportation, communication and other areas are radically altering our daily lives. The impacts of climate change, generations of systemic racism, economic inequities and the pandemic have made clear the need for action. Systemic inequities mean that communities have not equally benefited from public policy and investments, and our changing climate and the pandemic has exacerbated many disparities experienced by Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) communities, people with low income, women and other marginalized populations. Safety, housing affordability, homelessness and public health and economic disparities have been intensified by the global pandemic and continue to be of concern. As the greater Portland region continues to emerge from the disruptions of the pandemic and respond to other urgent trends and challenges, this RTP provides an opportunity for all levels of government, community members and businesses to work together to deliver a better transportation future.

This report summarizes the comments received for the final comment period held from July 10, 2023 through Aug. 25, 2023. Comments received will guide refinements to the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan for consideration by the Metro Policy Advisory Committee, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and the Metro Council.

## PUBLIC COMMENT OVERVIEW

From July 10 to Aug. 25, 2023, Metro held a 45-day public comment period on the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and High Capacity Transit Strategy. The feedback received through the public comment period builds on the input received through public engagement since fall 2021, when Metro started engaging local, regional and state agencies, Tribes and the public to update the RTP.

During the public comment period, Metro invited comments and feedback from members of the public, community and business organizations, regional advisory committees, agency partners and policymakers. There were a variety of resources available to review and platforms to provide feedback and comments:

- **Public review draft materials:** The public review drafts of the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy and their appendices were posted on the 2023 RTP webpage at [oregonmetro.gov/rtp](https://oregonmetro.gov/rtp). Supplemental materials were also posted to the webpage to provide interactive and accessible versions of these documents. Those materials included executive summaries of the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy and an interactive map and project list of the RTP investment priorities.
- **Online survey:** An online survey provided brief overviews of key elements of the 2023 RTP, including the project list, new and updated policies and High Capacity Transit Strategy priorities. The survey invited feedback on whether these key elements of the plan will move the greater Portland's transportation system in the right direction. They survey also provided opportunities for open-ended feedback. Nearly 700 people responded to the online survey.
- **Comment platforms:** There were several ways for people to provide specific comments and suggested changes to the plan, including an online comment form, email, letter and voicemail. More than 50 emails and 20 letters were received proposing specific changes to the draft RTP and strategies. The final public comment report documents all comments received.
- **Public hearing:** The Metro Council held a public hearing on July 27, 2023 and received testimony from 13 people on a range of topics. The closed caption transcript of hearing testimony is provided in Appendix E.
- **Consultation meetings:** Metro staff invited federal, state and local resource, land management and regulatory agencies to consult on the public review draft 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy in accordance with [23 CFR 450.316](#). Metro convened two separate consultation meetings on Aug. 17 (resource agencies) and Aug. 22 (federal and state agencies). These consultation activities built on consultations with agencies earlier in the 2023 RTP process. Summaries of consultation meetings held during public comment are included in Appendix F.

### Snapshot of participation

*(Comment counts are subject to change as comments continue to be processed by staff.)*

- **663 online survey participants** providing more than **500** comments
- **40** letters sent in by local jurisdictions, community-based organizations, business and community members
- **More than 50** emails
- **20** community members provide in-person or written testimony at the public hearing on July 27, 2023.
- **306** comments submitted through the **online comment form**

Throughout the 2023 RTP update, Metro invited consultation with the seven Tribes to inform Metro's 2023 update to the Regional Transportation Plan and staff and representatives from multiple Tribes engaged formally and informally. No formal consultation meetings were held with Tribes during the public comment period. Metro's Tribal Liaison engaged with Tribes informally during this time.

- **Notifications and notices:** Public notices of the comment period were provided to local neighborhood involvement and community outreach offices at jurisdictions across the region. Notices were published in newspapers across the region and on the Metro website. Metro also posted to social media throughout the public comment period. Notifications were sent to the RTP interested persons list (2,772 people) in addition to Metro's four regional advisory committees and their respective interested parties. Partner agencies and organizations engaged throughout the RTP update also posted the public comment opportunity.

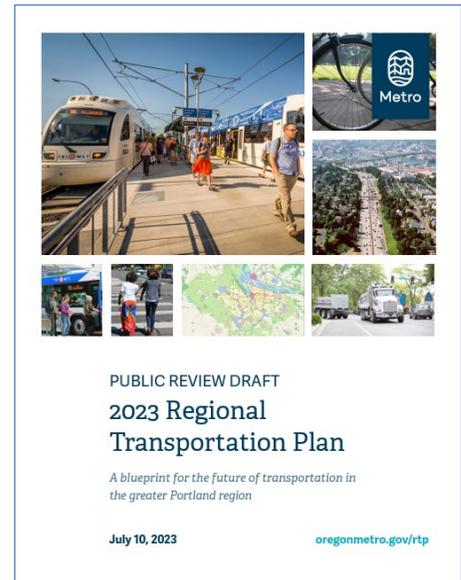
DRAFT

## ONLINE SURVEY SUMMARY

During the public comment survey, an online survey collected public feedback on the investments and policies in the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High-Capacity Transit Strategy. There were 663 survey participants.<sup>1</sup> A summary of the survey follows, and a complete report of the survey is included in Appendix A.

The survey included introduced the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and included questions across five topic areas:

1. Priority types of transportation investments
2. High-capacity transit priorities
3. New and updated guiding policies: pricing and mobility policies
4. Moving forward together: feedback on what the region should work on in the next five years.
5. Demographic information



Survey respondents were asked to select the county where they live. This question was optional, and 283 survey participants responded. This summary includes results cross-tabulated by county of respondents.

**Table 1: Survey participation by county**

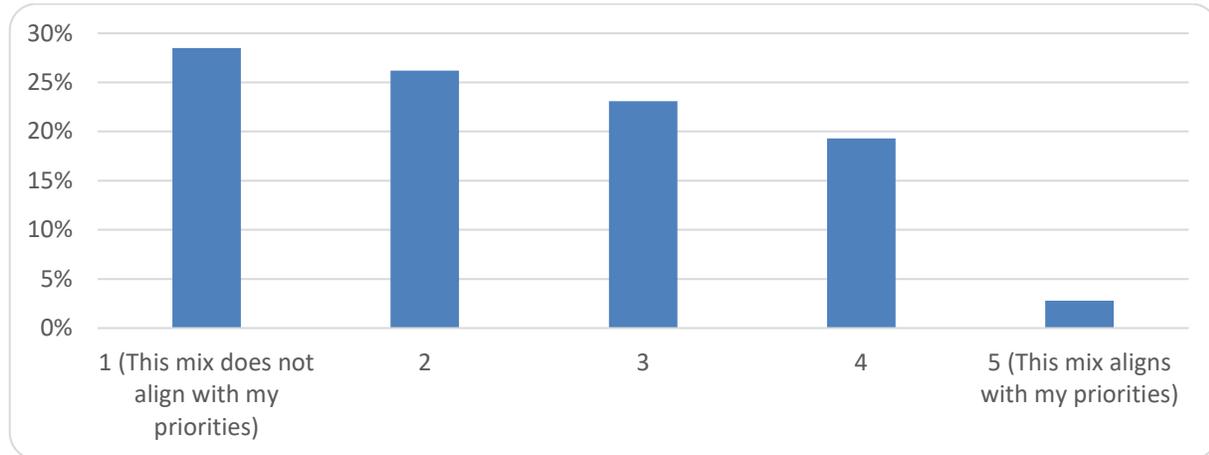
	<b>Number of survey respondents who provided their county</b>	<b>Percent of survey respondents who provided their county</b>	<b>Percent of population within the MPA in each county</b>
<i>Clackamas</i>	35	12%	18%
<i>Multnomah</i>	194	69%	48%
<i>Washington</i>	47	17%	34%
<i>Clark</i>	2	0.7%	
<i>Other – write in</i>	5	2%	

### 1. Priority transportation investments

The survey displayed the estimated costs of the RTP constrained list of capital projects by investment category and asked: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well does the mix of investment in the draft project list match your priorities? There were 389 respondents to this question. The most frequent response was 1 (28.5% of participants). The median score for this question was 3.

<sup>1</sup> This survey is an engagement tool for collecting feedback from the public; it is not intended to express a scientific, statistically valid representation of all of the region’s residents.

**Figure 1: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well does the mix of investment in the draft project list match your priorities? (All responses)**



- Among Clackamas County participants (35), most people indicated that the mix of investments aligns with their priorities. The most frequently selected score was 4 (34.3% of respondents).
- Among Multnomah County participants (194), most people indicated that the mix of investments does not align with their priorities. The most frequently selected score was 1 (32.3% of respondents). Among
- Washington County participants (47), most people indicated that the mix of investments does not align with their priorities (scores of 1 or 2) but there were relatively more scores of 3 and 4 than among Multnomah County participants. The most frequently selected score among Washington County participants was 3 (26.7% of respondents).

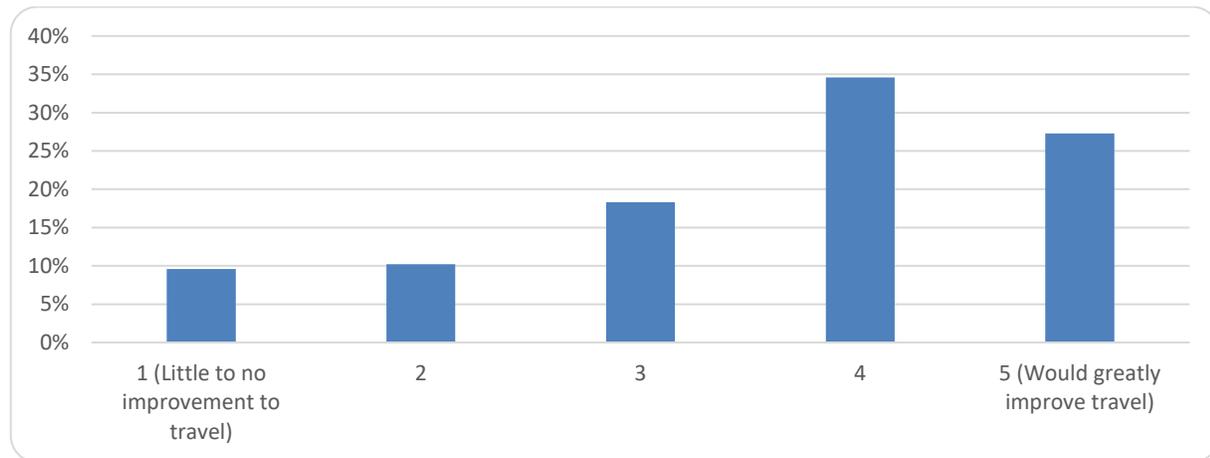
Participants were invited to share open-ended comments about their transportation investment priorities. Responses are included in Appendix A.

## 2. High capacity transit strategy

The survey displayed the High Capacity Transit Strategy Vision and asked: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the priorities for high capacity transit will improve travel in the greater Portland region? There were 344 responses to this question. The most frequently response to this question was a score of 4 (34.6%) and the second most frequently given response was a five (27.3%) indicating that most survey participants felt that the prioritized list of high capacity transit projects would improve travel throughout the region.



**Figure 2: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the priorities for high capacity transit will improve travel in the greater Portland region? (All responses)**



- Among Clackamas County participants (33), most people indicated priorities for high capacity transit will improve travel in the region. The most frequently selected score was 4 (33.3% of respondents).
- Among Multnomah County participants (188 responses), most people indicated priorities for high capacity transit will improve travel in the region. The most frequently selected score was 4 (35.1% of respondents).
- Among Washington County participants (46), the most frequently selected score was also 4 (34.8% of respondents). However, the next most frequently selected response was 3 (26.1% of respondents).

The survey provided information about the priority corridors in the High Capacity Transit Strategy, noting that tier 1 high capacity transit projects have been identified locally and regionally as priorities and asked: of the corridors identified in tiers 2-4 for high capacity transit investments, what corridors are most important to you and your community? (Select up to three.) The top three projects that received the highest response were:

- Central City Tunnel (36.7% of all participants)
- St. Johns to Milwaukie via Cesar Chavez (30.8% of all participants)
- Beaverton – Tigard – Lake Oswego – Milwaukie – Clackamas Town Center (18.4% of all participants)

Participant scoring of the high capacity transit corridors varied slightly between counties, but generally participants across counties prioritized the same corridors, with some variation Washington County's highest rated corridor was Beaverton - Tigard - Tualatin - Oregon City (40.5%) and Clackamas County's second highest rated corridor was Park Ave MAX Station to Oregon City in the vicinity of McLoughlin (41.9%).

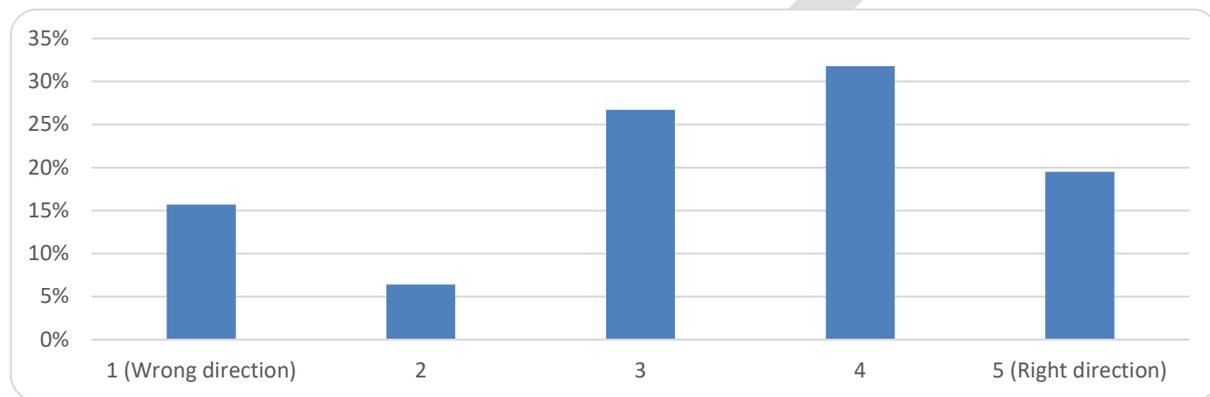
Participants were invited to share open-ended comments about what decision-makers should consider while the High Capacity Strategy is implemented. Responses are included in Appendix A.

### 3. Guiding policies

The survey provided an overview of the new and updated policies in the 2023 RTP, including the pricing policies and mobility policies, and asked: on a scale of one to five, how well these policies guide the region's transportation system in the right direction?

There were 236 responses to the question about the pricing policies. The median score for this question was 3, indicating there is generally support for the pricing policies included in the 2023 RTP.

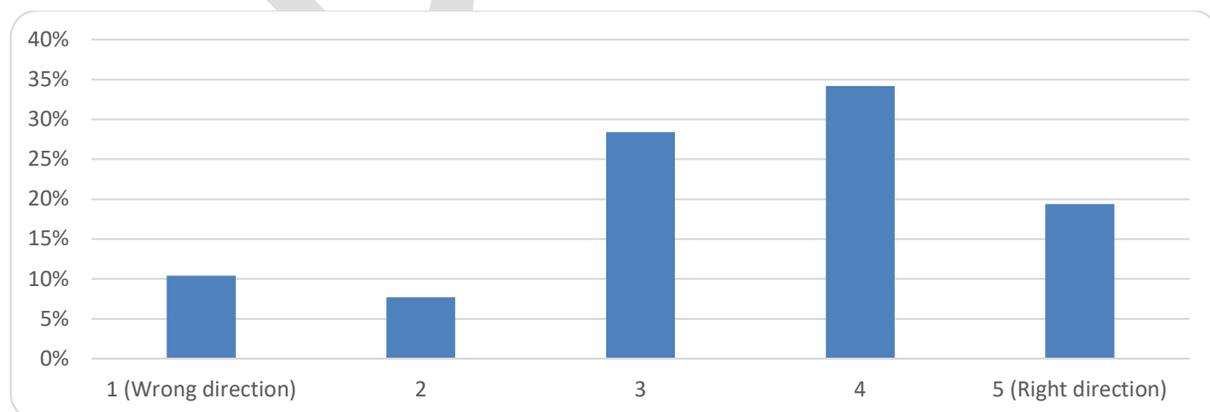
**Figure 3: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the pricing policies guide the region's transportation system in the right direction? (All responses)**



- Among Clackamas County participants (29), the most frequently selected score was 4 (27.6% of respondents).
- Among Multnomah County participants (149), the most frequently selected score was 4 (35.6% of respondents).
- Among Washington County participants (35), the most frequently selected score was 3 (28.6% of respondents).

There were 222 responses to the question about the mobility policies. The **median score was 4**.

**Figure 4: On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think the mobility policies guide the region's transportation system in the right direction? (All responses)**



- Among Clackamas County participants (29), the most frequently selected score was 5 (27.6% of respondents).
- Among Multnomah County participants (138), the most frequently selected score was 4 (34.3% of respondents).
- Among Washington County participants (35), the most frequently selected score was 3 (28.6% of respondents).

Survey participants were asked if there is anything that cities, counties, Metro, transit providers, and the state should consider as the policies are being implemented. Responses are included in Appendix A.

#### 4. Moving Forward Together

Survey participants were asked to share their thoughts about the future of transportation in greater Portland by responding to two open-ended questions. Most frequently mentioned topics are summarized below. A more extensive analysis of responses and the complete list of survey responses is included in Appendix A.

The first question in this section asked: What's one big idea you have for improving greater Portland's transportation system? (242 responses) **The second question in this section asked:** *with decision-makers about transportation in greater Portland. (250 responses). Among the responses to these two questions, the top themes were the same.*

**Transit** (163) **service** (66) and **transit infrastructure** (68) were most frequently mentioned in comments. Most often, participants expressed a desire to see investments in transit frequency, longer operating hours, fewer transfers across the system, and overall improvements to network **connectivity** (23). Other participants described a need for better transit infrastructure including expansion of transit priority lanes, transit stop improvements like better lighting, trash cans, or seating.

*"Pedestrian and bicycle safety should be the greatest priorities. There is too much emphasis on moving vehicles, while pedestrian deaths are increasing."*

*"More express services (that skip stops) along existing lines (both rail and bus)."*

*"Increased frequency across all public modes of transportation and minimum connection times."*

*"I am a single disabled parent with a young child, and every time we take public transportation there is some incident that makes us feel unsafe. Help us feel safe in our city again make Portland the city that everyone used to love. Fix our safety concerns."*

Active Transportation (114) was mentioned by participants. Commenters frequently mentioned a need to shift mode choice to biking and walking, prioritize project implementation and funding for active transportation infrastructure and craft policies to better address the needs and safety of active transportation users. Several participants also acknowledged the connection between investing in active transportation and addressing climate change (48).

*“Getting rid of all roadway expansions, increasing access to sidewalks and bike lanes and putting some type of local tolling in place to properly price access to the public right of way so these projects can be implemented more quickly.”*

*“We need to adjust the entire transportation system to provide for greater reliance on active transportation, remote work, online shopping, and safer public transit.”*

*“Keep pushing bikes, walking, and transit”*

*“Be radical in prioritizing non-drive along modes! Transit, walking, and biking should be the easiest, most efficient, and most attractive options. We need radical investment to shift away from the discouraging trend that is having significant impacts on quality of life in the region.”*

*“We are in a climate and affordability crisis. All modes that help alleviate these issues (walking/biking/transit) should be receiving our support and investment.”*

Safety was a frequently mentioned theme with 100 comments. Several survey respondents mentioned a lack of perceived safety on transit as the primary reason for not using that mode. Many commenters raised concerns about the safety of biking and walking on existing infrastructure. Homelessness around transit stops and mixed-use trails was often cited as a barrier for using those modes. Several comments expressed a need to prioritize safety for vulnerable road users, in underserved communities, and for historically marginalized groups.

*“Safety! I want to feel safe in any and all modes of transportation, and I do not.”*

*“The main reason myself and many others I know don't use transit in Portland is because of safety concerns, and discomfort with so many homeless people sleeping or hanging out at the stations and on transit.”*

*“Pedestrian and bicycle safety should be the greatest priorities. There is too much emphasis on moving vehicles, while pedestrian deaths are increasing.”*

## EMAILS AND LETTERS

Almost 100 letters and emails were received suggesting recommendations to the policy chapters, project lists and more general comments on the plan and supporting strategies. All emails and letters received are included in Appendix B. Of these comments, all substantive comments are under consideration by Metro staff and amendments will be recommended, when feasible, to address the comments and edits provided. Comments about specific projects will be shared with the sponsoring agencies.

## PUBLIC HEARING - JULY 27, 2023

A public hearing on the public review draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy was held at a Metro Council meeting on Thursday July 27, 2023 at the Metro Regional Center and online. The closed caption transcript of hearing testimony is included in Appendix E of the final comment report. Twenty people testified in-person or through written testimony on a range of topics, including:

- Highlighting the region’s traffic safety crises with record pedestrian deaths and advocating for prioritizing safety.
- Highlighting the climate crisis and emphasizing the need to reduce vehicle miles traveled to meet climate goals. There’s a need to adjust assumptions in climate modeling to reflect actual trends in vehicles and fleet.
- Support for policies in chapter 3 of the Regional Transportation Plan, with an emphasis on the need to align investment priorities with policies and implement the policies in the plan. Redefine chapter 8 to be an actionable plan that addresses concerns.
- Concerns related to equity, including the need to prioritize investments in communities of color and low-income communities that are most impacted by traffic crashes and most in need of travel options.
- Concerns about gentrification and the need for the RTP to invest in anti-displacement.
- Improve metrics that measure the RTP’s impact on equity.
- Concerns about the limitations of transit, not being fast or reliable enough.
- Parking, including both support for reducing parking to meet climate goals and criticism of reduced parking requirements near affordable housing in transit oriented development.
- The region urgently needs to funding for transportation; look to the 2025 legislative package to align 2027 RTP.
- Support for pricing that is reinvested in transit, walking and biking and not widening freeways. Consider region-wide mitigations for pricing impacts to low-income communities so every city does not need to reinvent the wheel on how to mitigate impacts.
- Three of the written testimonies were in support of Frog Ferry as a desirable alternative to driving that would increase community connection and resilience.
- One written testimony endorsed the No More Freeways comments on the Regional Transportation Plan.

## CONSULTATION MEETINGS

Metro staff invited 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](#). Metro convened a consultation meeting for resource agencies on Aug. 17 and a consultation meeting for state and federal agencies on Aug. 22. These meetings were the third round in a series of consultation meetings that Metro hosted with state, federal, local and resource agencies throughout the 2023 RTP update. Twenty staff from various agencies participated in the consultation meetings. Summaries of consultation meetings held during the public comment period are included Appendix F. Key themes and comments heard during the consultation meetings are summarized below.

Metro also invited consultation with the seven Tribes to inform Metro's 2023 update to the Regional Transportation Plan. In alphabetical order, these Tribes included: Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, Cowlitz Indian Tribe, and the Nez Perce Tribe. Metro's Tribal Affairs Program staff submitted a comment that provides an overview of the priorities, concerns, themes, and requests identified through tribal consultation and engagement with participating Tribes during the 2023 RTP process.

### **Aug. 17, 2023 consultation meeting**

Metro hosted a consultation meeting on Aug. 17, focused on the 2023 RTP's environmentally focused policies and Environmental Assessment. The following agencies attended the Aug. 17 consultation meeting: City of Portland Bureau of Environmental Services (BES), Clean Water Services (CWS), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Metro Parks & Nature and Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife (ODFW). Key topics from the discussion included:

- Consideration for emerging tools, data and policies related to habitat conservation and mitigation being developed by partner agencies.
- Early consideration for environmental impacts in transportation planning processes is increasingly important with new NEPA timelines.
- Early coordination with local agencies can help leverage transportation projects to implement other agencies' needed infrastructure updates.

### **Aug. 22, 2023 consultation meeting**

Metro hosted a consultation meeting on Aug. 22, focused on discussing and receiving comments on the Public Review Draft of 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and process. The following agencies attended the Aug. 22 consultation meeting: Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Transportation Administration (FTA), Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SWRTC), City of Wilsonville South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) and TriMet. Key discussion topics included:

- Updated requirements under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.
- Appreciation for Metro's collaborative and transparent 2023 Regional Transportation Plan process.

- An interest from agency staff in supporting the work outlined in chapter 8 of the 2023 RTP, acknowledging that there is a significant amount of urgent work to do, especially related to local funding needs and an update of 2040.

## ONLINE COMMENT FORM

An online comment form was available for people who wanted to suggest specific changes or edits to the text of the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy. Members of the public, transportation agencies and organizations used the comment form to provide comments, feedback and suggested edits to the Public Review Draft Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy.

There were ## commenters who provided their names. These comments are attached to this report, along with comments received by email, mail and voicemail. Of these comments, all substantive comments are under consideration by Metro staff and amendments will be recommended, when feasible, to address the comments and edits provided. Comments about specific projects have been shared with the sponsoring agencies. An additional ## people submitted comments using the online comment form and did not provide their names.

Of the comments received through the online comment form, most were submitted by community members or organizations. Of the 307 comments, 75 were submitted by ODOT staff and one by the City of Tualatin. City staff comments are not included in the following summary.

The following section summarizes the top reoccurring themes from online comment form submissions. Many comments included multiple topics. For example, many of the project specific comments were supporting or encouraging faster implementation of walking and biking investments. Some of the comment opposing freeway projects or road capacity also supported increased transit investments.

- Projects (92 comments)
- Support for transit investments (77 comments)
- Support for walking/biking investments (53 comments)
- Opposition to freeway projects and added road capacity (39 comments)

Additional recurring comments included concerns about climate change (17 comments) personal safety in public space and on transit (11 comments) and traffic safety concerns (14 comments). There were six (6) comments that called for increased investment in road maintenance and four (4) comments that supported increased capacity for cars.

### **Support for transit investment was the most frequently mentioned theme among the comments. (76 comments)**

More than 55 comments suggested that the greater Portland region needs more transit. Some of these comments were in support of specific transit projects and others called for investing in transit generally. Additionally, 23 comments voiced the need for improved transit service.

*A Max Green Line Extension to Oregon City or near to the Clackamas Community Collage would be nice. It's really tough just trying to get to Oregon City and getting out of Oregon City like before Midnight is a pain. The only thing reliable in and out of Oregon City are just the buses and most of the buses there don't run very often at late nights. – Tim Roth, Portland*

*I want to make a comment upon how slow it is for me to get from Beaverton to SE Portland. It takes*

*about 2 hours with Public Transportation and I think that is why people choose cars over taking public transportation. If there is anyway that could be looked upon that will be great.* – Lei Lei Win, Portland, African Youth Community Organization

*I live in Cornelius and plan to continue living there for some time. I drive to work right now but would likely switch back to taking Trimet if you were to build the blue line (or some MAX extension) out to Cornelius/Forest Grove area.* – No name provided.

**Support for investing in walking and bicycling. (53 comments) Many of these comments were in support of specific bicycle and pedestrian projects.**

*“I don’t have time to read through all those plans to say that decent reliable transportation should be a right to everyone. Cars are destroying the planet and killing pedestrians and drivers alike. Transportation in the city of Portland should be more reliable and easy than taking a car.”* – John Peterman

*“I would like to see more % invested in bike and walk infrastructure. I rely on Portland’s bike and walk infrastructure every day and would be able to have a higher quality of life if it were improved.”* – Addie Olson

**Opposition to adding capacity to freeways was mentioned in 28 comments. There were also a handful of comments that generally opposed investing in car infrastructure (11 comments).**

*“We need to stop blindly investing in increased car capacity. It is a never ending cycle that will consume our limited resources, exclude our most vulnerable, and decreases the livability of our communities. Cars have a place but we have enough infrastructure to support that place. We now need to focus on reducing car trips where possible to release the pressure on our existing system and build out other modes equitably. Focusing on bike, ped, and transit in the next facade is going to pay dividends in the long run.”* - Nic Westendorf, Portland

*“This [Interstate Bridge Replacement Project] is exactly what the Portland area does not need. Providing more capacity for SOVs traveling through the city is a recipe for lowering the quality of life for a large part of Portland’s citizens. In essence, that is the history of I-5. - Many of the goals of this project can be met much better via a different modes/route.”* – Sean Pliska, Portland

*“Why are we spending 975 million dollars on the antiquated idea that auxiliary lanes and shoulders reduce traffic congestion? The highway cover is a nice idea, but discouraging car travel is the easiest way to combat congestion on the interstate. Think of how much that money could do for improving public transit, which is a much more climate conscious and equitable solution to the problem of traffic on highways.”* – Amythest Lee, Portland

**Address climate change (16 comments). Many of these comments also voiced opposition for projects that add car capacity and/or these comments voiced support for investments in transit and walking and biking.**

*How is it that we're spending SO LITTLE on high impact climate strategies?? 32% for 2030 and 26% for 2045?? That is unacceptable to me for the metro transit system - transportation account for 30% of all GHG emissions, and the metro council is fully supporting the dirtiest mode of transportation*

*(cars) with HALF of our capital investment going towards car-based infrastructure (page 34). – Christian Bayless, Hillsboro*

*As an advocate for Lloyd, for climate, and for a densely livable Portland, I am fundamentally opposed to freeway expansion of any type, especially as it relates to the Lloyd, Lower Albina, and other historically black neighborhoods. I am for capping and reconnecting, however, a freeway widening project and capping/covering should not be included in the same conversation, especially as we have an extremely small window of time to tackle emissions and decarbonization goals. – Kristin Leiber, Lloyd EcoDistrict, Portland*

**Traffic safety concerns were woven throughout a range of comments, with references to unsafe driver behavior and/or the need for enforcement. (14 comments)**

*“By emphasizing pedestrian and bicycle safety in the most appropriate areas and fostering meaningful collaboration, Metro can play a pivotal role in reshaping transportation projects for the benefit of all community members, especially those who have long been overlooked.” - Community Cycling Center, Andando en Bicicletas Caminando (ABC)*

*“Install ITS and CCTV cameras (project Barbour Blvd ITS)” – Noor Sakawadin, Oregon Somali Bravaness Community*

**There was also a handful of comments that referenced not feeling safe in public spaces and/or on transit. (11 comments)**

*“Pre-pandemic I was a regular bus rider 5-days a week to downtown portland. Post-pandemic, I have not ridden the bus once. I still commute to downtown, but not on the bus.... I do not feel safe walking to or waiting for a bus near my office. the current system needs to be maintained and made safe before any additional regional transportation plans are made....” – No name provided, Vancouver*

**There were several comments that supported adding more capacity for cars. (6 comments)**

*“Build new roads! Maintain existing roads! Stop deliberately making life difficult for drivers! Gas tax pay for transportation!” – No name provided*

*“Please support private car infrastructure. Public transit is too slow and dangerous.” – Mike Pederson, Vancouver*

## NOTICES AND NOTIFICATIONS

Public notices of the comment period were provided to local neighborhood involvement and community outreach offices at jurisdictions across the region. Notices were published in the Portland Tribune, Clackamas Review, Hillsboro News Times, Forest Grove News Times, Valley Times News, Beaverton Valley Times, El Latino de Hoy and The Asian Reporter and on the Metro website. Metro also posted to social media throughout the public comment period.

Notifications were sent to the RTP interested persons list (nearly 2,772 people) in addition to Metro's four regional advisory committees, Metro Council, their respective interested parties and the Metro Public Engagement Review Committee. Partner agencies and community and business organizations engaged throughout the RTP update posted notifications of the comment period through social media and e-newsletters and other methods to inform their members and interested parties of the comment opportunity.



### Promotion of the public comment period

Metro promoted the public comment period through the website, newsfeeds, Metro's transportation interested parties email list, technical and policy advisory and interested parties lists, social media and by requesting distribution by community involvement offices at jurisdictions across the greater Portland region:

- City of Beaverton
- City of Forest Grove
- City of Gresham
- City of Happy Valley
- City of Hillsboro
- City of Lake Oswego
- City of Milwaukie
- City of Oregon City
- City of Portland
- City of Tigard
- City of Tualatin
- City of West Linn
- City of Wilsonville
- Clackamas County
- Washington County
- Multnomah County

Metro also sent notices to community based and other organizational partners, through individual relationships built through ongoing partnerships and other engagement activities, asking them to distribute to their organization and constituencies.

- 1000 Friends of Oregon

- AARP
- Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
- Audubon
- Beyond Black
- Bike Loud
- Centro Cultural
- Climate Solutions
- Coalition of Communities of Color
- Community Cycling Center
- Disabilities Rights Oregon
- Division Midway Alliance
- East Portland Action Plan
- Forward Together Action
- Getting There Together
- Go Lloyd (TMA)
- Hacienda Community Development Corporation
- Immigrant & Refugee Community Organization
- Imagine Black
- Intertwine Alliance
- Join PDX
- League of Women Voters
- Momentum Alliance
- Metropolitan Alliance for Workforce Equity
- Native American Youth and Family Center
- Next Up
- OPAL
- Oregon Futures Lab
- Oregon Environmental Council
- Oregon Just Transition
- Oregon League of Conservation Voters
- Oregon Walks
- Ride Connection
- Street Roots
- Street Smart
- Sunrise Movement PDX
- The Street Trust
- Urban Greenspace Institute
- Urban League of Portland
- Verde
- Washington County Ignite
- Westside Transportation Alliance
- Youth Collective - The Cen

## NEXT STEPS

Later this fall, MPAC and JPACT will recommend action on the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy to the Metro Council. Metro Council will consider final action on the 2023 RTP and High Capacity Transit Strategy on Nov. 30, 2023.

Figure 5. Timeline for 2023 Regional Transportation Plan update



If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we’ve already crossed paths.

So, hello. We’re Metro – nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.  
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September 2023

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**PUBLIC REVIEW DRAFT**

**2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN**

# **Public Comment Report**

# **Appendices**

September 6, 2023

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Appendix A. Online Survey Public Comment Report

Appendix B. Email Comments on Public Review Draft and Strategies through 8/25/23

Appendix C. Letters submitted on Public Review Draft and Strategies through 8/25/23

Appendix D. Voicemails submitted on Public Review Draft and Strategies through 8/25/23

Appendix E. Written and closed caption transcript of RTP Public Hearing (7/27/23)

Appendix F. Consultation Meeting Summaries

Appendix G. Online Comments submitted on Public Review Draft and Strategies through 8/25/23

Appendix H. Public Comment Index

DISCUSSION DRAFT  
9/13/23

**Key Policy Topics to Address for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan**

This document summarizes five topics identified by Metro staff for more in-depth policy discussion by the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the Metro Council. For each topic, a summary of key concerns raised during the public comment period is provided. Potential recommended actions will be developed to serve as a starting point for discussion in October and November. The potential recommended actions are anticipated to reflect a combination of potential technical and policy recommendations.

**Discussion Topic 1- Investment Emphasis – Project Mix and Timing**

Key concerns	Potential recommended actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Too much emphasis on throughway investment relative to other investments.</li> <li>2. Not enough transit service relative to throughway investment levels, particularly in the near-term.</li> <li>3. Not enough emphasis on completing gaps in active transportation network relative to throughway investment levels, particularly in the near-term.</li> <li>4. Not enough emphasis on addressing the safety needs of urban arterials relative to throughway investment levels, particularly in the near-term.</li> <li>5. Not enough emphasis on reducing climate pollution relative to throughway investment levels, particularly in the near-term.</li> </ol>	<p><i>To be developed pending further discussion.</i></p>

DISCUSSION DRAFT  
9/13/23

**Discussion Topic 2 – RTP Pricing Policy Application to Toll Projects**

Key concerns	Potential recommended actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Concern about whether future MTIP amendments to advance ODOT tolling program projects will be subject to the RTP pricing policies and actions.</li> <li>2. Toll project analysis has been insufficient to understand the impacts of potential diversion from tolling on traffic and safety on the local system.               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. It is unclear how much diversion from tolling is actually occurring and how much is local travel that should be using local system versus long distance travel that should be using throughways.</li> <li>b. Concern for the potential for more fatal and serious injury crashes on urban arterials due to diversion of throughway travel on arterial streets that are already high injury corridors. This information is needed to identify potential mitigation projects.</li> <li>c. Need to recognize that diversion is highly dependent on local conditions (e.g., I-205 in West Linn vs. in East Portland) and therefore must be addressed at the mobility corridor level.</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. Concern that ODOT has not demonstrated how tolling projects in the RTP (e.g., I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project) will help meet state and regional climate and safety goals and GHG reduction targets.</li> </ol>	<p><i>To be developed pending further discussion.</i></p>

DISCUSSION DRAFT  
9/13/23

**Discussion Topic 3 - Increasing regional transportation investments**

Key concerns	Potential recommended actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inadequate funding to meet the region’s currently identified needs and RTP goals; the gas tax continues to fall behind in the near-term and not viable in long-term, yet it is unclear whether new revenues such as congestion pricing, VMT/road user fee will fill this gap.</li> <li>There is not regional agreement on how to prioritize existing or new funding.</li> </ol>	<p><i>To be developed pending further discussion.</i></p>

**Discussion Topic 4 - Mobility Policy Implementation**

Key concerns	Potential recommended actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concerns about how (measures and processes) and when the Regional Mobility Policy must be implemented through Transportation System Plans and local comprehensive plan amendments (land use decisions).</li> </ol>	<p><i>To be developed pending further discussion.</i></p>

DISCUSSION DRAFT  
9/13/23

**Discussion Topic 5 - Climate Tools and Analysis**

Key concerns	Potential recommended actions
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Concern that the RTP climate analysis and Climate Smart Strategy did not meaningfully inform RTP investment priorities, as indicated by the high level of investment in freeway projects relative to investment in transit, biking and walking projects.</li> <li>2. Concern that key Statewide Transportation Strategy (STS) assumptions provided by the state for the RTP climate analysis are lagging, in particular new road user charges, vehicle fleet mix, share of electric vehicles, and vehicle fleet turnover. Commenters noted several specific areas where the documentation is inadequate or fails to describe how state policies and programs will reverse trends that currently appear to be moving in the wrong direction and driving an increase in carbon emissions.</li> <li>3. Concern that Metro and the State are using VisionEval for climate analysis in the STS, STIP and RTP, whereas MOVES, the federally-approved emissions analysis tool, is being used for emissions analysis of major projects in the NEPA process.</li> </ol>	<p><i>To be developed pending further discussion.</i></p>

Materials following this page were distributed at the meeting.

## August fatal traffic crash report for Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties\*

Frederick Kortlever, 90 and Erez Mayer, 50, driving, Highway 26, near milepost 52, Washington, 8/15

Braden Josiah Lungren, 20, walking, SE Foster Road near Happy Valley, Clackamas, 8/11

Mark Hendrickson, 48, bicycling, Timberline Highway, Clackamas, 8/5

Glen Terrence Dante, 33, motorcycling, 16700 block of SE Stark St, Gresham, Multnomah, 8/3

*\*ODOT initial fatal crash  
report as of 9/14//23 – all  
information is preliminary  
and subject to change*





TRI MET



Metro

# Better Bus Program

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT)

September 21, 2023



# Regional Transit Strategy

- Frequent
- **Convenient**
- Accessible
- Affordable



2018 Regional Transportation Plan

## Regional Transit Strategy

*A strategy for providing better transit service in the greater Portland region*

December 6, 2018

[oregonmetro.gov/transit](http://oregonmetro.gov/transit)

# What is Better Bus?

- Formerly known as Enhanced Transit Concepts (ETC).
- A data-driven approach to planning and designing transit priority projects throughout the TriMet service district.
- Address speed, reliability, comfort, and convenience
- **A partnership between Metro, TriMet, and local jurisdictions** to make bus travel more effective and more attractive.
- Approximately **\$10 million** to be invested in design and construction



# Examples of Transit Priority Tools

- Dedicated bus lanes
- Business access and transit (BAT) lanes (or bus and turn lanes)
- Pro-time (peak period only) transit lanes
- Queue jumps / right-turn only except bus
- Transit signal priority and signal improvements
- Transit-only apertures
- Improved multi-modal interactions – bikes/peds/bus
- Bus stop consolidation
- Curb extensions at stops for in lane bus operation
- Far-side bus stop placement



ZICLA Platform on SE Hawthorne. Source: TriMet



Curb extension at NW 21st and NW Pettygrove Source: Google



PBOT

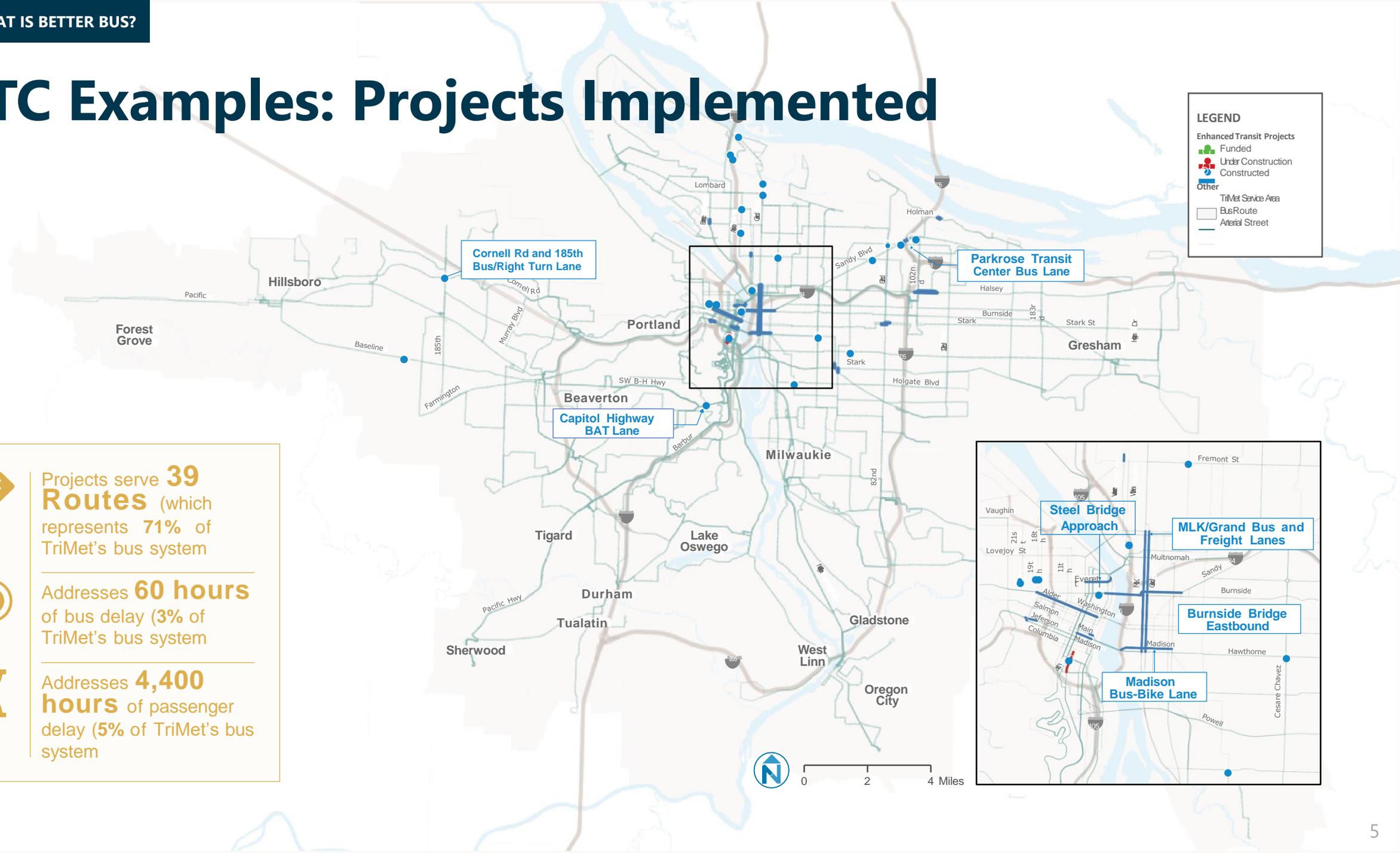
Transit only aperture. Source: PBOT

# ETC Examples: Projects Implemented

**LEGEND**

- Enhanced Transit Projects
  - Funded (Green square)
  - Under Construction (Red square)
  - Constructed (Blue square)
- Other
  - TriMet Service Area (Light blue area)
  - Bus Route (Grey line)
  - Arterial Street (Blue line)

-  Projects serve **39 Routes** (which represents **71%** of TriMet's bus system)
-  Addresses **60 hours** of bus delay (**3%** of TriMet's bus system)
-  Addresses **4,400 hours** of passenger delay (**5%** of TriMet's bus system)



# Achievements

## Burnside Bridge Bus-Only Lane



- Eastbound bus-only lane was added in November 2019
- Serves three bus lines
- Carries 16 buses per hour during afternoon rush
- Reduced travel time by 2 minutes

## SW Madison Bus & Bike Lane



- SW Madison carries 26 buses and hundreds of bikes onto the Hawthorne Bridge during the afternoon rush hour
- Dedicated bus and bike lane implemented in May 2019
- Reduced travel time by approximately 40 seconds per trip.

## 185th Ave and Cornell Road



- Partnership with Washington County
- Delays for two bus lines
- Right turn except bus at intersection, new painted bus and bike lanes approaching bus stops
- Constructed August 2020

# Proposed Better Bus Methodology

- Review entire TriMet system
  - Excluding Transit Mall, Tilikum Crossing, Division Transit, Park & Rides, Transit Centers
- Focus on areas of highest delay
- Group segments by line/geographically
- Conduct detailed assessment
  - Equity
  - Existing policies/projects
  - High-level traffic analysis
  - Contextual review



# Outreach to Date

- Meetings with 19 jurisdictions
  - Additional 4 jurisdictions in September
- TPAC on September 1
- Opportunity for project staff to hear about local issues and priorities, learn more from local partners



# What We've Heard

- Jurisdictions shared areas of known delay
- Jurisdictions eager to use data analysis to find additional locations and identify treatments
- Several opportunities for partnership:
  - Underway/upcoming capital projects
  - TSP updates
  - New street designs, anticipated construction and project development that could increase transit demand
- Interest in how Better Bus construction funds will be allocated
- Desire for greater coverage or frequency to attract ridership
- Need for safety improvements & amenities at bus stops
- Interest in public engagement on projects

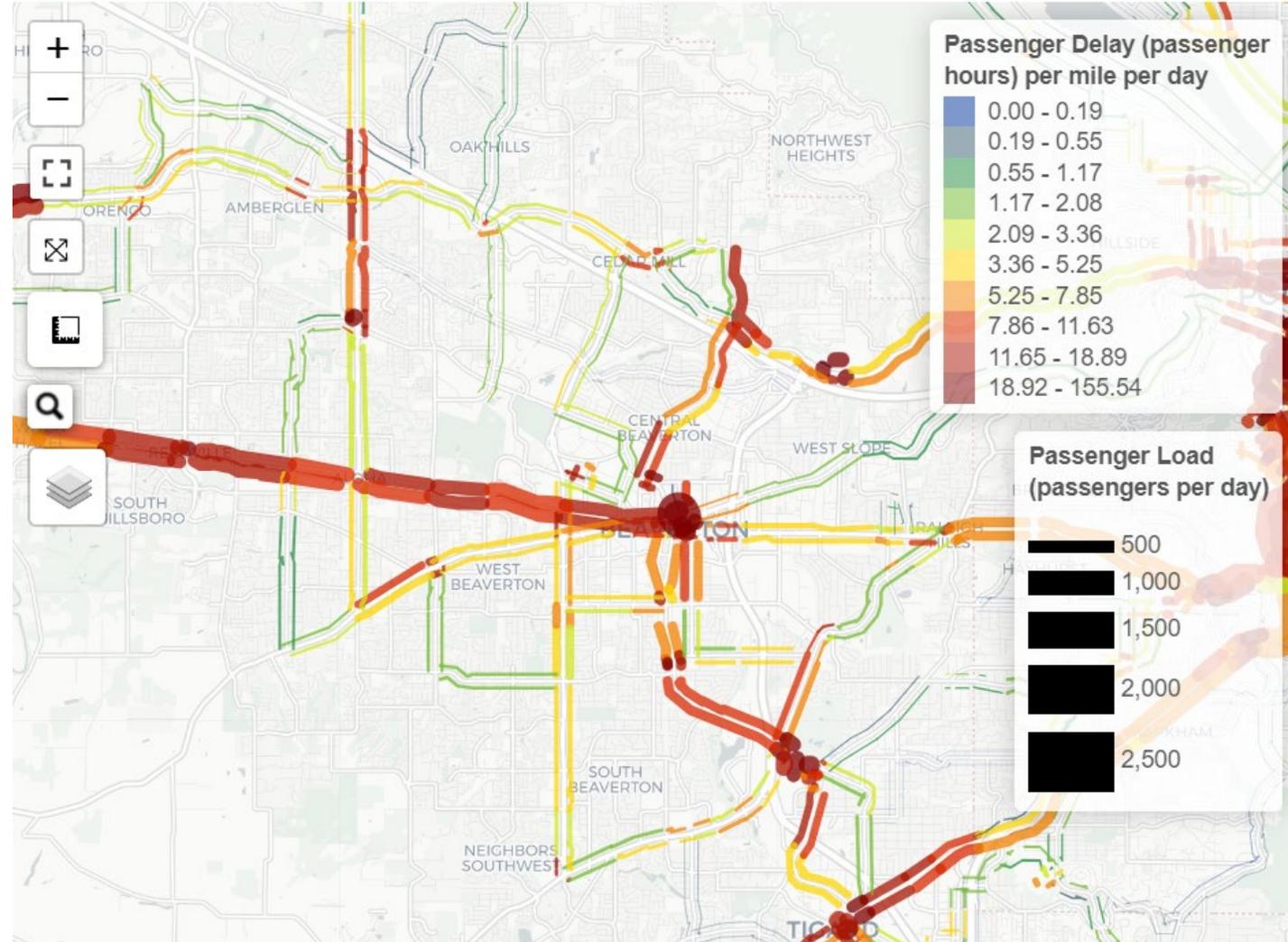


# Schedule

<b>August 2023</b>	<b>September 2023</b>	<b>October 2023</b>	<b>October/ November 2023</b>	<b>December 2023 – April 2024</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Data-based exploration of project locations and opportunities</li><li>• Initial engagement with stakeholders and jurisdictions</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Detailed review of potential project locations systemwide to understand equity, policy, geographic distribution, and other factors</li><li>• Preparation for workshops</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workshops to do a deeper dive into promising project locations</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Call for partnerships open (mid-to late-October)</li><li>• Project evaluation</li><li>• Project selection</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial project development</li><li>• Up to 15% design</li><li>• Preparation for project-specific task orders</li><li>• Additional stakeholder engagement</li></ul>

# Workshops Goals

- Reiterate the goals of the Better Bus program
- Talk about potential project locations
  - From Phase 1 (ETC), CIPs, jurisdictional outreach, data analysis
- Identify locations with most promise
- Brainstorm potential treatments (applying the Better Bus Toolbox)
- Prepare jurisdictions for the application process



# Thank You!



TRI  MET



Metro

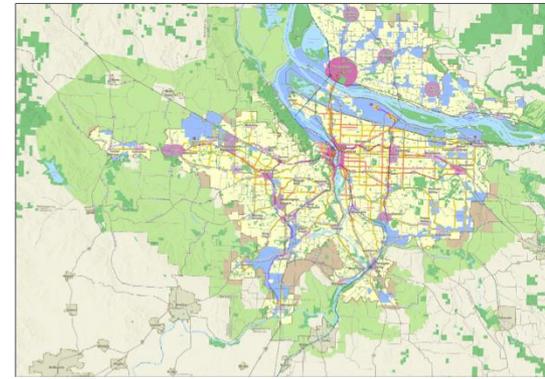


# 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Final Steps to Adoption

JPACT

September 21, 2023

*Kim Ellis, RTP Project Manager*

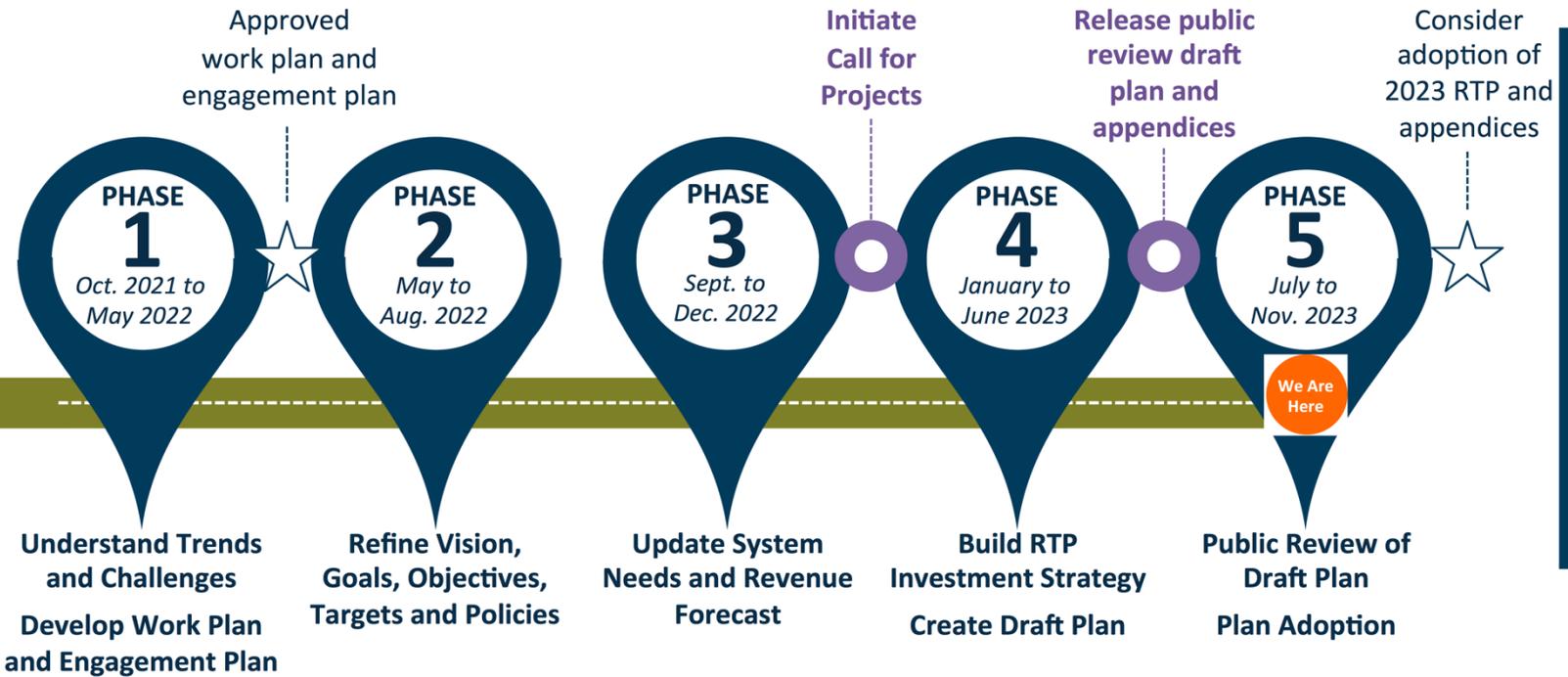


# Outcomes for today

- Update on timeline and decision process
- Overview of public comments and major themes
- Preview process for recommendations on key policy topics



# Timeline for the 2023 RTP update



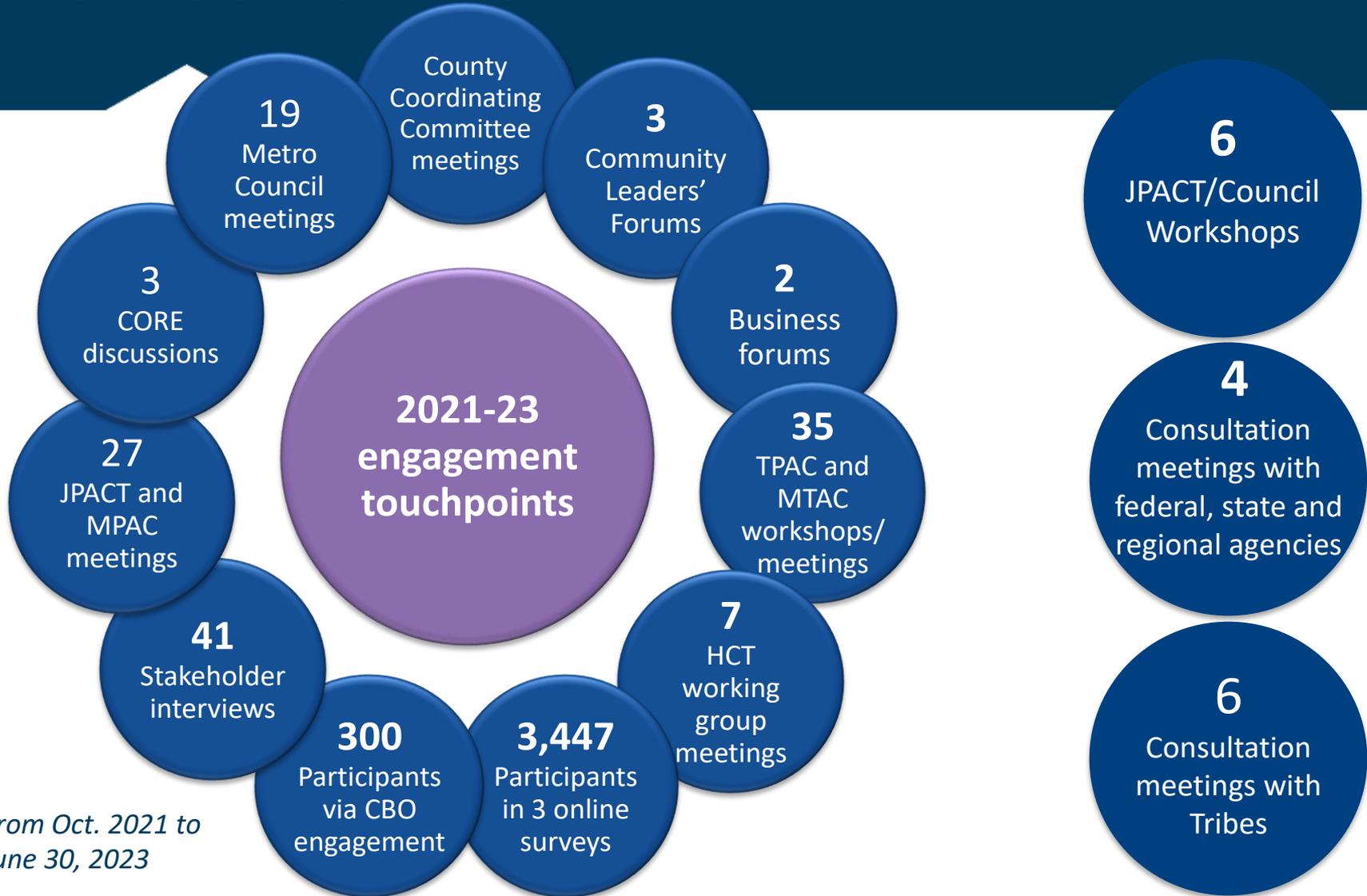
ENGAGEMENT

IMPLEMENTATION & MONITORING

Key Milestone

Metro Council decision on JPACT action and MPAC recommendation

# Meaningful, ongoing engagement since Fall 2021



*From Oct. 2021 to June 30, 2023*

# Snapshot of final comment period

*July 10 to August 25, 2023*

**663** online survey participants

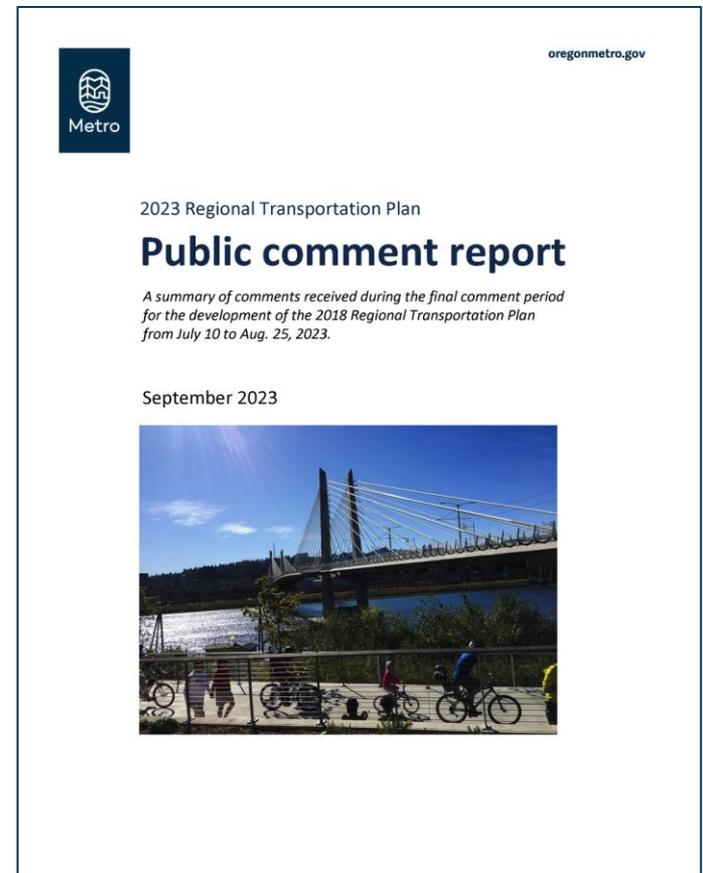
**307** comments submitted  
through online comment form

**52** emails

**40** letters

**20** participants in 2 consultation  
meetings

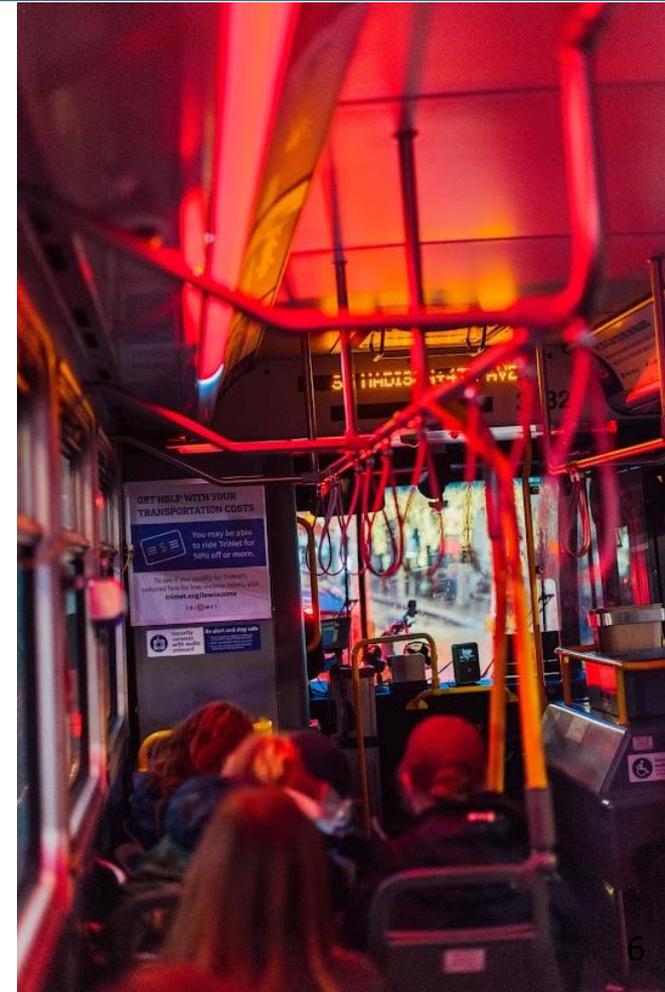
**13** community members  
testified at the public hearing



# Major themes

*July 10 to August 25, 2023*

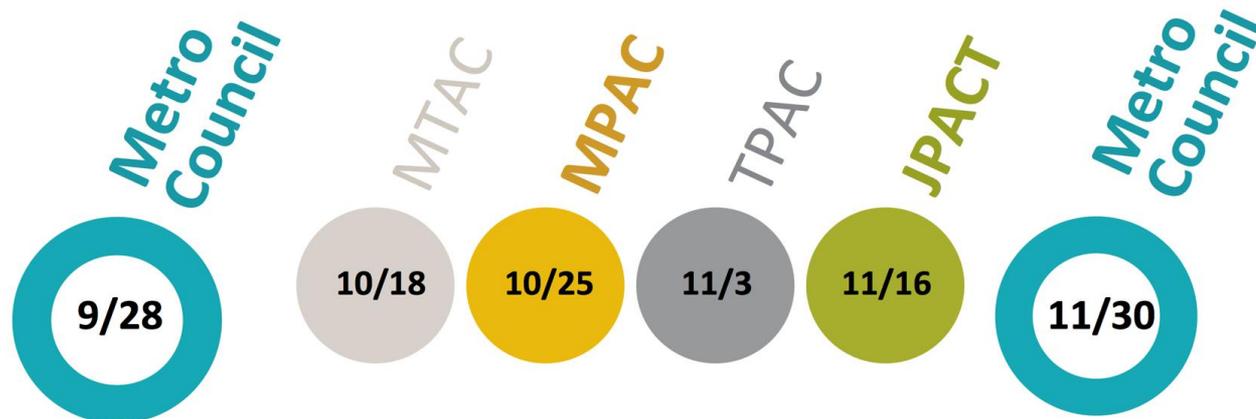
- Invest more in transit, walking and biking
- Better address safety and climate
- Accountability to ensure policies are implemented and that priorities align with policies
- Project-specific feedback



# Moving toward RTP adoption

Metro staff summarizing and drafting recommendations to respond to comments in two buckets:

- **Key policy topics to address** – focus of final discussions
- **Consent items** – less substantive actions to be considered for approval by Consent



# Key policy topics to address in this RTP cycle and beyond

1. Investment emphasis – project mix and timing
2. Application of pricing policy to toll projects
3. Increasing regional transportation funding
4. Climate tools and analysis
5. Mobility policy implementation



# Policy Topic 1

## Investment emphasis – project mix and timing

- Project list adjustments in the 2023 RTP (feasibility and impact)
- Project list development for 2028 RTP
  - Policy guidance for project sponsors
  - Process changes for RTP updates

## Policy Topic 2

# Pricing policy application to toll projects

- Ensure the NEPA processes underway follow through on ODOT commitments
- Apply pricing policy moving forward in future JPACT and Metro Council decisions on toll projects

## Policy Topic 3

# Increasing funding for transportation investments

- Actions between now and the next RTP update to bring more funding for transportation into the region
  - Annual JPACT work program for 2024
  - State level funding discussions
  - Federal funding opportunities
  - Regional/local funding strategies

## Policy Topic 4

# Climate tools and analysis

- Opportunities to improve policy and investment decisions that impact climate
- Opportunities to improve evaluation and modeling tools to assess the climate impacts of transportation investments

# Policy Topic 5

## Mobility policy implementation

- Broad support for regional policy that shifts from a focus on congestion to one that prioritizes access, efficiency, equity, safety, reliability, and travel options
- Ensure work is completed with local and state partners before implementation:
  - Develop approach and guidance for use of Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) per capita as a measure to inform land use decisions
  - Clarify land use decisions where the mobility policy applies
  - Develop guidance for measuring multimodal system completeness
  - Review speed threshold for throughways with traffic signals

# Discussion and feedback to Metro staff and TPAC on these policy topics

1. Investment emphasis – project mix and timing
2. Application of pricing policy to toll projects
3. Increasing regional transportation funding
4. Climate tools and analysis
5. Mobility policy implementation

# Learn more about the **Regional Transportation Plan** at:



**Metro**

**Kim Ellis, AICP**

RTP Project Manager

[kim.ellis@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:kim.ellis@oregonmetro.gov)

**[oregonmetro.gov](http://oregonmetro.gov)**

KEVIN L. MANNIX  
STATE REPRESENTATIVE  
DISTRICT 21



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

August 25, 2023

*Submitted via email to:*

Lynn Peterson, President, and Metro Council  
Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Chair, and JPACT  
c/o Metro Planning  
Ally Holmqvist, Senior Transportation Planner  
600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland OR 97232

*lynn.peterson@oregonmetro.gov*  
*juancarlos.gonzalez@oregonmetro.gov*  
*transportation@oregonmetro.gov*  
*ally.holmqvist@oregonmetro.gov*  
*Rep.CourtneyNeron@oregonlegislature.gov*  
*Sen.AaronWoods@oregonlegislature.gov*

**RE: Comment on the Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy: Study of North Willamette Valley WES Extension from Portland Metro Region to Salem/Keizer Metro Area**

Dear President Peterson, Chair Gonzalez, and members of the Metro Council and JPACT:

An informal group of us (Commuter Rail Team), are developing plans to establish a commuter line which extends south from Wilsonville through Woodburn and Keizer to Salem. The route would be an extension of the existing Westside Express Service line which connects Beaverton and Wilsonville. Additionally, we also envision a connecting line extending directly into Portland itself.

All the above is in the preliminary development stage. Much work still needs to be done. The beauty of this is that the West side rail system is already in place, and we already have a modern freight rail line that runs from Wilsonville to Salem, exactly where we want to put a commuter line.

This line will not compete with other commuter rail systems. This will be more of a local access line for intermediate service.

This system will reduce traffic on I5 and will include substantial siding development so we can maximize predictable schedules. We want to prioritize the needs of the underrepresented, underserved, and economically disadvantaged members of our community. Access to reliable and efficient transportation is a cornerstone of economic opportunity and social equity.

By providing a dependable and affordable transportation option, we can bridge the gap between various parts of our cities and connect residents to vital employment centers, education opportunities, and essential services.

Additionally, by promoting the use of public transportation, we can reduce individual reliance on personal vehicles, resulting in lower carbon emissions and a positive impact on our environment.

A large segment of Oregon's population would be served by this commuter rail line. Oregon needs to initiate the planning and development of this commuter rail line, but we realize we will need to see substantial federal funding to see implementation of rail line plan. Dialogue between planners will be advantageous in this stage.

The City of Wilsonville and their public-transit agency South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) submitted a letter on August 18, 2023, that outlined their proposed changes to the draft plan you have made available for public comment. Our Commuter Rail Team supports these recommendations.

I welcome your support for this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kent L. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'K' and 'H'.



# City of Tualatin

[www.tualatinoregon.gov](http://www.tualatinoregon.gov)

August 24, 2023

Metro Planning  
600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232  
*Via Email*

## **RE: Regional Transportation Plan Comments from the City of Tualatin**

Metro Councilors and Staff,

On behalf of the Tualatin City Council and staff we respectfully submit Tualatin's comments on the Draft Regional Transportation Plan. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important regional plan.

We appreciate the amount of work involved in preparing a plan update of this nature and recognize the need to move quickly to adopt this Regional Transportation Plan Update before the federal deadline. We support the basic goals of the proposed Regional Transportation Plan: good, reliable options for all modes, a safe system, equitable transportation, a thriving economy, and climate action and resilience, and are eager to work with Metro, ODOT, and our partners around the region towards these goals. However, while we are thankful for all of the effort to develop this RTP, we see areas where the proposed RTP could pull our region away from these goals and are concerned with some of the policy proposals, analysis choices, and basic philosophies forming the RTP. Our concerns include:

**Tolling:** The RTP assumes tolling is implemented on all of I-5 and I-205 through the Oregon Metro area with the revenue primarily going to transit or other 'alternative' transportation programs. These are consequential policy decisions that must be transparently considered by the entire community. Tolling will result in increased diversion of freeway traffic onto Arterials and Collectors (including those we manage), which is in turn likely to increase incidents of fatal and serious-injury crashes, increase conflicts with pedestrians and cyclists, result in additional congestion, GHG emissions, and air-quality impacts to marginalized populations, and overall, will be a negative impact to the livability of our community. Tualatin has been actively engaged in the tolling discussions and will continue to be; given that, we are very concerned that the RTP commits the region to tolling and use of the funds without a robust dialogue with engaged partners.

**Regional Mobility Policy:** The RTP includes a policy that defines an average travel speed of 35 mph as adequate on freeways and 20 mph as adequate for throughways (with signals, etc.). The proposed policy says that a roadway is functioning adequately if its speeds fall below these standards for no more than an average of 4 hours per day (typically the busiest 4 hours). The result is that these critical roadways become non-functional during the four hours that we need them the most. This increases GHG emissions (stop-and-go or diverted traffic has several times the GHG

emissions of flowing freeway traffic) impacting on our roadways and quality of life as drivers wanting to use the freeway instead cut through our city. Staff estimates significant safety impact from this diversion: if half of the traffic using the freeways finds them non-functional (due to reduced capacity in a congested state) as allowed by this policy, and instead uses Arterials where they have six times the fatal/serious-injury crash rate, the result would be an average of more than one additional fatal or serious-injury crash per week. This seems to be antithetical to the stated goal of a safe system. We respectfully put forward that this part of the Regional Mobility should be revised to keep the standards in effect for the whole day.

In particular, I-5 through the cities of Tualatin and Wilsonville is severely congested for much of the day, resulting in thousands of vehicles each day using roads like Boones Ferry Road and 65<sup>th</sup> Avenue to divert around this congestion. This diverted traffic has safety and livability impacts in Tualatin and the communities around us; it was confounding to see the analysis results indicate that this is not a problem. We respectfully ask that the RTP acknowledge the recurrent traffic congestion on I-5 through Tualatin and Wilsonville and include projects such as an auxiliary lane between the Wilsonville interchanges and an auxiliary lane through the North Wilsonville interchange and improvements to facilitate southbound traffic from Boones Ferry Road entering I-5.

**Equity:** The symbol used to denote the equity vision (bike, bus and pedestrian but no car) seems to reflect an underlying assumption that equity populations are more focused on biking, walking, or transit. Our experience here in Tualatin reveals a much more mixed bag. Many, if not the majority drive to their jobs and essential needs, often commuting to multiple work sites or jobs each day. They are disproportionately affected by congestion and safety issues stemming from congestion on major roadways, and would be disproportionately affected by tolls. We agree with and support the equity goals; however we are concerned that a number of the proposed policies in this Draft RTP would have consequences that would work against those same goals by increasing the time and the expense to get to jobs, school, medical care and other essential services for our equity populations.

**Regional Equity:** Many of the policies and planning decisions made in developing this Draft RTP have the net effect of bringing more services and funding to the central part of the region at the expense of the suburban areas near the edges of the region. Examples of this include requiring suburban drivers to pay tolls funding transit service and/or walk/bike projects in the central city area. Another example is travel and transit modeling that only considers trips within the region and doesn't consider the trips into/out of the region. Modeling of that nature disproportionately affects cities like Tualatin where more of these trips go through, thereby underestimating the need for travel and transit improvements in Tualatin. Another example is the safety analysis leading to the Regional High Injury Corridors and Intersections map that considered injuries for people walking and biking but didn't consider the same level of injury for people in motor vehicles, leading to more representation (and thus analysis and funding) for areas like the central city with higher walking and biking.

**Climate Action Analysis:** Tualatin agrees with and supports the vision of taking action to reduce the region's effect on climate change by reducing carbon emissions and other pollution, and we support efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) in the transportation realm. It is our understanding that in development of the RTP a decision was made to not use actual carbon emissions, or close proxies like fuel consumption or even vehicle-hours traveled (VHT), all of which could easily be modeled. If modeling was based on GHG emissions, fuel consumption, or VHT, it would model factors like stop-and-go traffic emitting many times more GHG per VMT than free-flowing traffic, or that traffic moving on freeways emit far less GHG per VMT than traffic on Arterials

and local streets. This results in some 'climate action' policies that will increase carbon emissions and other pollution rather than help achieve the overall goal.

In addition, the decision was made to use home-based vehicle-miles-traveled, which only considers home-based trips starting (and ending) within the region. There are several consequences of that decision: 1) it leaves out many of the trips in the region, particularly trips affecting suburban areas like Tualatin; 2) it misses the people who have moved outside the region and then commute into the region for work, shopping, or entertainment, increasing overall VMT; and 3) it misses the many companies relocating their headquarters outside the region that then need to drive more in the region for jobsites, deliveries, etc. All of that resulting in 'climate action' policies that have the unintended consequences of increasing carbon emissions and other pollution.

The climate analysis also seems to ignore the ongoing and future shift in efficiency of the vehicle fleet from its current mix to cleaner vehicles (such as electric) in the future. Many drivers have already chosen to reduce their emissions by driving electric rather than internal combustion vehicles, and many more are anticipated to do so in future years. We believe this fleet shift should be considered in modeling whether this region meets the emissions reduction goals such as in the Transportation Planning Rule. We respectfully request that the climate analysis be revised to show this shift and how it affects the climate goals.

**Land Use/Transportation Connection:** The Draft RTP seems to miss important aspects of the connection between land use planning and transportation planning. A person's transportation mode choice is symptomatic of their context, i.e., where they are, the trip they need to make, and their destination. With much of the region having been built in a car-centric way, it is not practical to tell a person to just not drive when they have to go several miles to work, pick up groceries, and get the kids from day care, particularly in the many parts of the region, such as Tualatin, with little to no transit service. While the Region seems to be taking the approach that if traffic gets bad enough people will shift to walking/biking/transit, that shift is not practical for many trips in much of the region. If we expect people to use modes other than driving, they need to have key destinations nearby and/or transit service that goes where they want to go frequently enough that they can depend on it.

It is our observation that much of the new development is occurring in areas, like Urban Growth Boundary expansion areas, near the urban fringe with little to no transit service. Many of these areas are a good distance away from essentials like living-wage jobs and grocery stores, causing people to travel long distances, usually by car. While these areas are being built with densities that could support transit, there is typically no transit service when the homes become occupied, so people become set in driving habits, reducing the potential ridership to justify transit service under traditional metrics. RTP policies that make it more difficult for these residents to drive seem to hurt these residents and the region. If these areas are designed with residences, living-wage jobs, and other essentials in close proximity and adequate transit service from the beginning, new residents would be more likely to develop patterns of walking, biking, and transit ridership.

**Thriving Economy - Future Development:** Tualatin is fully supportive of the RTP goal of a Thriving Economy. We are grateful for the many employers who have made the choice to locate their operations in the Portland region and the hundreds of thousands of living-wage jobs and economic resources they have brought to the region. As companies evolve, new companies emerge, and some older companies fade away, it is critical for our Region to be place companies want to be. Our educated and creative population, natural beauty, and proximity to key transportation corridors

draw businesses to our region, but the prospective employer needs to find suitable land and must be able to navigate the approval process. In most cases, this means the land needs to be planned for that type of development. The Regional Mobility Policy stating that plans must not increase VMT per capita would be problematic for these plans because a large employer (such as a new chip fab) would draw workers from all over the region which would increase VMT per capita. We respectfully request that the RTP policies be reviewed and revised to not keep large employers out of the region.

**High Capacity Transit Strategy:** The proposed High-Capacity Transit Strategy was based on modeling that does not consider trips into or out of the region, and thus underestimates the demand and need for transit in the Tualatin area and similar communities near the edges of the region. In particular, this results in a lower 'tier' for the Hwy 99W corridor and essentially missed the I-5 corridor. Several thousand employees in Tualatin commute from outside the Metro region, and we would estimate similar percentages for similar cities. If good transit service met these commuters on Hwy 99W near Sherwood or on I-5 near Wilsonville, they could enjoy riding transit to employers in Portland, Hillsboro, Tualatin, and the rest of the region while the region would significantly reduce overall VMT and resulting emissions. We are confident that if all trips are considered, the Hwy 99W and I-5 corridors would more than justify being Tier 2 corridors; we respectfully request that the RTP be revised to show them as Tier 2 corridors.

In conclusion, Tualatin supports the goals of transportation system safety, equity, greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction, and mobility for all, and we are eager to work with Metro, ODOT, and our partners around the region towards these goals. We are thankful for the opportunity to make comments on the draft RTP, and respectfully request that Metro consider our comments that we believe will have supportable positive results for the Region.

Sincerely,



Frank Bubenik  
Mayor, City of Tualatin  
On behalf of the Tualatin City Council



**Date:** August 15, 2023

**To:** Metro RTP Public Comment [transportation@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:transportation@oregonmetro.gov)

**Copy:** Metro Council by email  
JPACT by email

**From:** Chris Smith, No More Freeways  
Joe Cortright, No More Freeways  
Aaron Brown, No More Freeways

**Subject: No More Freeways' Comments on 2023 RTP Public Review Draft**

*“Some highway engineers have a mentality ... that would run an eight-lane freeway through the Taj Mahal. That is our problem.”*

*– Oregon Governor Tom McCall, 1970*

No More Freeways appreciates the enormous effort, technical skill and public outreach that has gone into developing the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Public (RTP) Review draft. We also appreciate the effort to develop new directions in pricing policy and mobility policy.

**Metro is Planning to Fail to meet our necessary climate and safety improvements.**

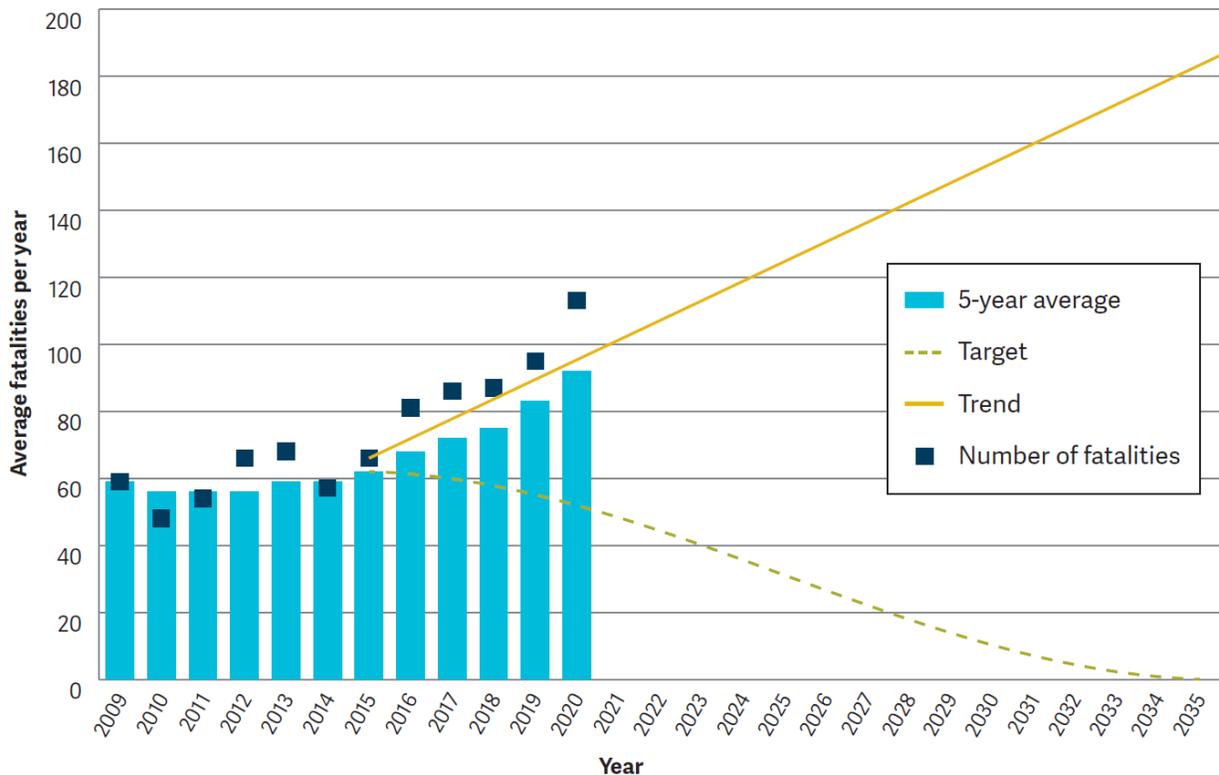
Nonetheless our review concludes that the old paradigm of prioritizing private automobiles, generally supported as much or more by State of Oregon policies than Metro policies, continues to drive our transportation system in the wrong direction. We appreciate the fact that the RTP honestly concludes that we fail to achieve regional goals in three critical areas: Safety, Climate and Mode Split. The failure on Climate is much worse than the plan indicates because it relies on a fictional model of vehicle fleet characteristics provided by the state, which is clearly belied by real world data.

In our comments we will specifically address these three failure areas and will comment on the new pricing and mobility policies as well as the issue of vehicle size, which we believe is a critical area for new policy, even though Metro currently lacks legislative authority in this area.



## Safety Failure

We cannot describe this issue more starkly than Figure 4.10 does:



Chapter 4 documents how this is a critical equity issue on a number of dimensions, including race and housing status. We don't disagree that the causes are complex, but would call out specifically the alarming trends in vehicle size and weight, which we believe is an issue Metro must pursue (see policy discussion below).

But we must call out the conflicting pattern of investments. ODOT's Rose Quarter freeway expansion (\$1.9B) is billed as a "safety and operations" project, but there have been no fatalities there for over a decade. A region in which billions of dollars were applied to our high crash corridors instead of to adding freeway lanes would be a much safer region. While we appreciate the investments in jurisdictional transfer like outer Powell and 82nd Avenue the pace of efforts to address these corridors must be radically accelerated. It's our region's most vulnerable residents who suffer from this gravely significant misallocation of funds, and the Metro Council and JPACT have an opportunity to rectify this injustice by directing more revenue into safety projects by removing multibillion dollar freeway expansions from our plans.



We also acknowledge that there are “cultural” issues around the safety issue. We were very disappointed to recently hear a Portland Police Bureau leader admit publicly that the Bureau messaged to the community that they would not enforce traffic laws as a ploy to seek larger budgets.<sup>1</sup> We hope Metro leaders will use their bully pulpit to address cultural factors that are making our public realm less safe.

Finally on this topic, we’d like to call out a ray of hope, Multnomah County’s direction to view traffic safety as a public health issue.<sup>2</sup>

### **Climate Failure**

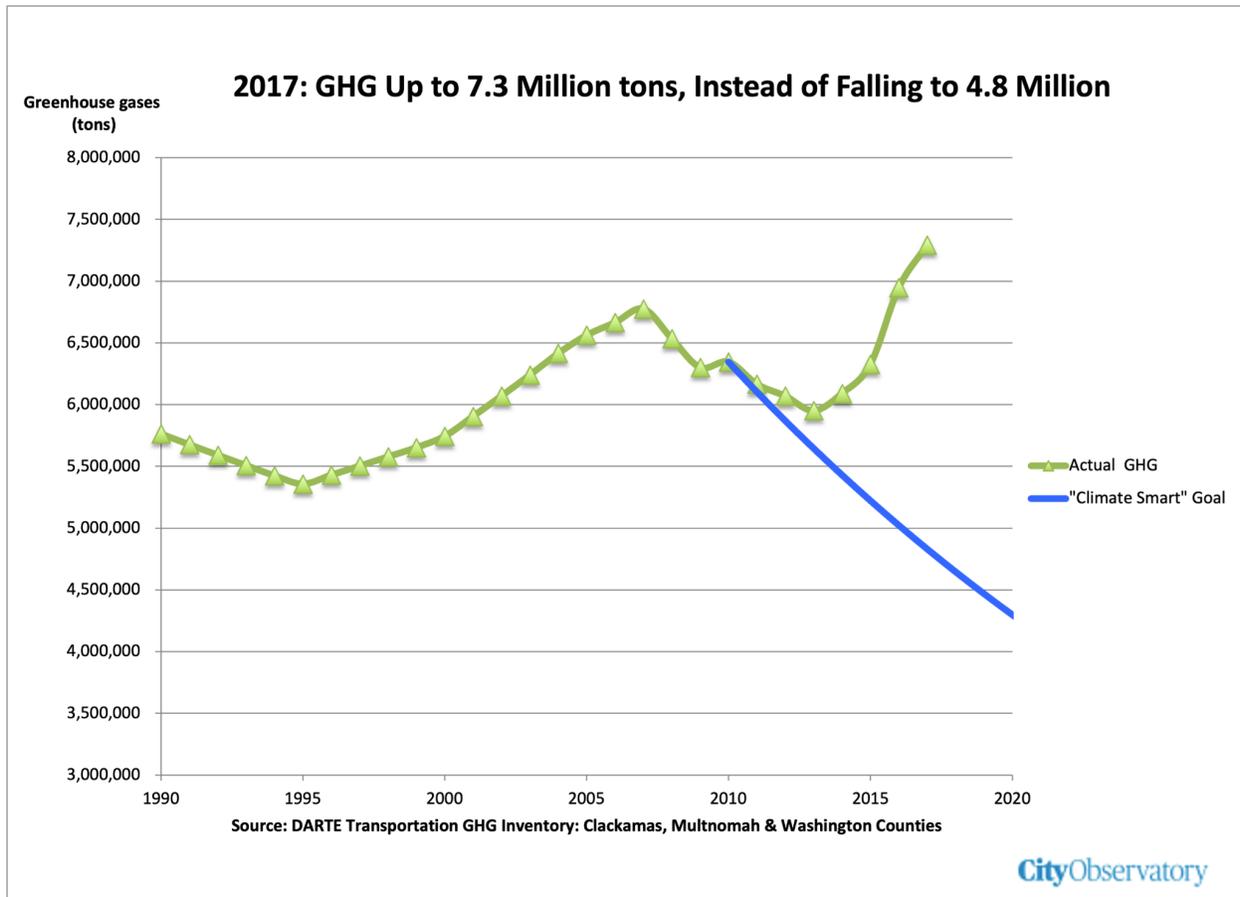
The RTP and the Climate Smart Strategy that forms the basis for the RTP climate policy take ownership of a relatively narrow slice of transportation contributions to Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions: the amount of vehicle travel per person (VMT per capita). Even with this limited responsibility, the plan still predicts that we will fail to meet these goals (Table 3 of Appendix J) with the combination of this RTP and other adopted plans.

But by only looking at VMT per capita, the plan ignores the fact that the underlying vehicle fleet (the state’s responsibility under Climate Smart) is completely unreflective of the reality of vehicle size, fuel consumption and age. Our colleagues at City Observatory have charted this based on DARTE GHG inventories:

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<sup>1</sup> Portland Police Bureau officer admits traffic enforcement messaging was politically motivated  
<https://bikeportland.org/2023/08/08/portland-police-bureau-officer-admits-no-traffic-enforcement-messaging-was-politically-motivated-377939>

<sup>2</sup> Public Health Data Report: Traffic Crash Deaths in Multnomah County  
[https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Revised\\_Final\\_MultCo%20traffic%20deaths%202020\\_2021.pdf](https://multco-web7-psh-files-usw2.s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/Revised_Final_MultCo%20traffic%20deaths%202020_2021.pdf)



When it adopted its Climate Smart Strategy in 2014, (and again in the 2018 RTP, and yet again in the draft 2023 RTP), Metro promised to update its modeling to reflect actual progress in reducing vehicle GHG emissions, and to adjust its policies accordingly. The GHG analysis contained in the RTP shows just the opposite: The RTP ignores the increase in Portland area transportation greenhouse gasses over the past five to ten years, and also relies on assumptions about vehicle age and fleet composition that are exactly opposite of recent trends: today's vehicle fleet (and tomorrow's) is vastly older, larger and dirtier than assumed in the RTP modeling.

Nothing in the RTP prioritizes the spending of the region's scarce and limited resources on those investments that will produce the greatest reductions in greenhouse gasses. The RTP lacks any project-based GHG emission criteria. In essence, Metro says the GHG policy only applies to the overall *plan*, not the individual *projects*. As long as Metro can (based on obviously erroneous ODOT modeling) claim that the plan is on track to meet comply with the



LCDC rule, (which by the way doesn't do enough to get to the state's 75% GHG reduction by 2050 goal), then the RTP is "good" from a climate perspective.

What the RTP does do, in contrast, is prioritize projects that improve vehicle speeds (i.e. the standard that no throughway should have speeds of less than 35 MPH for four hours per day). The RTP says that if these projects do increase GHG, that there will be mitigation. But as we know, ODOT regularly claims that its freeway widening projects don't increase VMT or GHG (in spite of science to the contrary), so no mitigation is actually required. This policy of allowing projects that increase VMT and GHGs, and then spending even more to mitigate these emissions increases adds insult to injury, because we'll spend our limited resources on projects that increase GHG emissions, and then spend even more money on "mitigating" those increased emissions, instead of reducing the current level of GHGs.

### **Mode Split Failure**

Chapter 7 makes it clear that the region's ambitious mode split goals will not be met with the pattern of investment in this RTP. Only a major shift in investment strategy can achieve our mode split goals. Of course mode split is only a means to the goal of a safer and more sustainable transportation system. While we strongly support additional investment in transit we note that building out the region's active transportation network would be the single most cost-effective investment we could make.

### **Pricing Policy**

There is much to like in the policies outlined in Section 3.2.5 and in the research conducted by Metro in recent years that helped formulate this policy. A few notes on the policy:

- We are curious that table 3-3 omits mention of parking pricing since it lives at the intersection of policies that effectively drive our regional priorities and which can be implemented by the local governments within the region.
- The callout box on p. 3-46 notes the potential constitutional limitations on how revenues from roadway pricing might be used but fails to note a strategy that could be used to offset this: swapping pricing revenues with Federal dollars - now often spent on uses allowed to the Highway Trust Fund - but allowed to be used much more flexibly. Such a swap could greatly advance transit and active transportation efforts.



Our major criticism of the pricing policy is that it is not being applied rigorously to project selection. The inclusion of ODOT's I-205 and RMPP tolling projects would appear to fly in the face of major components of policy 3.2.5:

- “Revenues collected through pricing programs should be reinvested in a manner that helps meet state, regional and local goals related to reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and congestion while improving mobility and safety.”
- “Revenue should not be reinvested solely for single occupancy vehicles but should be invested to improve the entire multimodal transportation system.”

RMPP and I-205 both appear to be motivated in large part to fund further freeway expansions. Starting tolling in other corridors like I-84 or Highway 26 with strong transit alternatives would be more equitable and more likely to shift travel to modes that align with regional goals.

We would also note the strong diversion concerns being expressed in relation to the I-205 tolling project and point out that a VMT fee would be a stronger program that would alleviate many diversion concerns.

## **Mobility Policy**

We are ecstatic to see the end of LOS, but question whether we have selected the right set of replacement measures. System completion is a useful measure for our transit and active transportation systems, but throughway vehicle throughput is likely to reinforce existing unproductive investment patterns. We are disappointed to see that there is no “people throughput” measure and especially that there is not a focus on accessibility to jobs, education and other sources of opportunity rather than simply on mobility. Accessibility measures would better reflect the combination of Metro’s planning responsibility for both land use and transportation.

## **The Missing Policy - Vehicle Size and Weight**

One common element links the failures in both safety and climate - the arms race for larger and larger vehicles driven by fear-based marketing. This arms race benefits the profits of the automobile industry but is devastating to our communities and the health of our planet.

Electrification actually makes this issue worse as batteries increase the weight of these large vehicles. The full life cycle carbon footprint of a heavy electric vehicle can actually be greater than that of an internal combustion sedan.



We understand that this is a national failure, but that does not mean we cannot begin to address it locally. A variable VMT fee or registration fee based on vehicle height and weight would be an important signal and economic inducement to consumers to consider more reasonable vehicles.

We understand that Metro and local jurisdictions currently lack legislative authority to implement this, but Metro should add this to its legislative agenda for both 2024 and critically for the major transportation package anticipated for the 2025 session.

Creatively structuring such fees as a privilege tax for operating an oversized vehicle in an urban environment could be a potential path around Highway Trust Fund limitations on revenue use. Even failing that, these revenues could contribute to addressing the issues on our high crash corridors.

## **Conclusion**

If the elected officials who comprise the Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation are serious about reducing carbon emissions and traffic fatalities, we have to make a plan. The RTP as currently proposed is a plan to fail to deliver to Oregonians the safer, healthier, more equitable, and climate-smart transportation that our region deserves. The policy recommendations provided above, coupled with the direction expressed by our advocacy peers at Verde, 1000 Friends of Oregon and the Street Trust, are necessary paradigmatic changes for any local government interested in not just talking about climate action but actually delivering on it. With heat waves continuing to pose significant health threats to our community and ever growing fires, floods, droughts and storms becoming ubiquitous around the planet, it is beyond time for our regional government to demonstrate bold leadership and make a new plan that does not sentence current and future generations to planetary havoc.

This review of the Regional Transportation Plan also provides an opportunity to remind the local elected officials of the opportunities that await to raise revenue for transportation projects in the 2025 legislative session. By all accounts, legislators are gearing up to propose a substantial investment in new infrastructure - with your leadership and lobbying, we can collectively push legislators to demand prioritization of investment in traffic safety and climate that will allow the best parts of the RTP to not just stay lines on a map but in fact be implemented, executed and built. No More Freeways and our robust membership are eager to support any local elected officials eager to collaborate on efforts to ensure the state invests in the transportation system we deserve.

**Climate leaders don't widen freeways. Climate leaders don't keep plans to widen them, either.** We hope the Metro Council will demonstrate in action the climate and traffic safety



leadership that they use in rhetoric by adopting these aggressive and necessary changes to the Regional Transportation Plan.



# BIKELOUD

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**RE** Active Transportation Spending Discrepancy in the RTP

**Date** August 25, 2023

**To** Council President Lynn Peterson, Councilor Ashton Simpson, Councilor Christine Lewis, Councilor Gerritt Rosenthal, Councilor Juan Carlos González, Councilor Mary Nolan, Councilor Duncan Hwang

Dear Metro President and Councilors,

BikeLoud, Portland's bicycle advocacy non-profit, deeply appreciates your "blueprint for the future", the [2023 Metro Regional Transportation Plan Public Review Draft](#) (RTP). Everyone at Metro should be proud of the cohesive and comprehensive vision it lays out.

However, during our review, we grew concerned. **The dollar amounts allocated to active transportation in the RTP don't appear to correspond to your stated priorities.**

The RTP makes it very clear that investment priority must center on active transportation. We are puzzled by the budget ([Table 5.4](#)) that inexplicably allocates 50% of total spending to motor vehicles, in the form of *Throughways, Roads and Bridges*, the *IBR*, and maintenance, and only puts 4.5% into the active transportation budget, to be split between walking and bicycling.

Walking and biking have historically been underfunded. This long-term RTP is an opportunity to redress that inequity. **Can you explain why, for every \$1 spent on sidewalks, or on fixing gaps in the bike network, \$25 will be spent on motor vehicles?**

This imbalance is concerning when the other 570 pages of the RTP so expertly articulate why we must do the opposite – prioritize investment in active transportation and connections to transit. **Why does Metro not want to align its own investment dollars with the priorities, goals, and vision in its RTP?**

To help BikeLoud better understand the spending discrepancy in the RTP, **we respectfully request a meeting** with any councilor(s) available to discuss your budget priorities.

Thank you so much,  
BikeLoud Board of Directors

Dear Metro and JPACT officials,

I am writing to ask that you adopt the policy positions submitted by No More Freeways. Your current Regional Transportation Plan fails to the climate crisis as well as the rising number of traffic fatalities on Portland's streets, and that is unacceptable. We need bold action on climate change like investments in reducing driving, and abundant accessible public transportation. We need investments in traffic safety. We don't need more freeways. Please support the plan put forward by No More Freeways today and give Portland something it actually needs.

Sincerely,  
Jessi Presley-Grusin

Hello Metro/JPACT members -

Long story short, we need bold action on climate from our elected leaders. We cannot maintain the status quo with small incremental changes that will do nothing to avert the impending disaster that is climate change. We need to radically reorient our regional transportation system away from driving as the default mode and shift immediately to prioritizing safe active transportation networks and reliable mass transit options. 40% of Oregon's carbon emissions come from transportation!! That is the low hanging fruit that needs to be cut, immediately.

The RTP wildly underestimates the amount of carbon pollution that will come from driving without significant, immediate changes to our transportation system. We need the Regional Transportation Plan to adopt more aggressive plans to reduce driving and invest in the most cost-effective initiatives to reduce carbon emissions – walkable communities and abundant public transit. The RTP must divert money away from ODOT's freeway expansions and towards community street initiatives. Expanding road capacity for driving knowing what we know about the massive cuts needed in GHG emissions are the definition of insanity. The RTP also needs to invest in traffic safety, please demand that ODOT prioritize investing in orphan highways instead of freeway expansions.

Please show true leadership and deliver our region and the people in it the transportation vision that we deserve - for generations to come. Our future literally depends on it.

Best regards,  
Joe Vasicek  
11010 SW Eschman Way  
Tigard, OR 97223



August 21, 2023

*Submitted via email to:*

Lynn Peterson, President, and Metro Council  
Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Chair, and JPACT  
c/o Metro Planning  
Ally Holmqvist, Senior Transportation Planner  
600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland OR 97232

*lynn.peterson@oregonmetro.gov*  
*juancarlos.gonzalez@oregonmetro.gov*  
*transportation@oregonmetro.gov*  
*ally.holmqvist@oregonmetro.gov*

**RE: Comment on the Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy: *Study of North Willamette Valley WES Extension from Portland Metro Region to Salem/Keizer Metro Area***

Dear President Peterson, Chair Gonzalez, and members of the Metro Council and JPACT:

The City of Wilsonville and our public-transit agency South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) appreciate the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan and High Capacity Transit Strategy.

**In particular, Wilsonville/SMART seek to raise the profile and priority of the draft RTP's High Capacity Transit Strategy in terms of the Westside Express Service (WES) Commuter Rail potential service extension.** Currently, the draft 2023 RTP lists potential WES extension as part of the inter-city transit system in the plan that is a distinct classification (or "layer") in the network map and therefore ***not*** part of the High Capacity Transit Strategy (based on the transit spectrum: inter-city rail, high capacity transit, frequent bus, regional bus and local bus).

The inter-city rail system includes other connection considerations such as Portland to Astoria, Portland to Newberg and Portland to Eugene. As far as priority within the inter-city network, the 2023 RTP does note: "When developing inter-regional rail service, this corridor alignment [WES extension] should take priority for improving passenger rail service between Eugene and Portland in the nearer-term future."

**We recommend that Metro classify the potential extension of WES *not as* "inter-city" rail system; rather, we recommend a special classification of "inter MPO TMA" or MPO TMA to MPO TMA.** That is, high-capacity transit that connects two Metropolitan Planning Organizations Transportation Management Areas. An MPO TMA encompasses an area larger than a city; rather an MPO is usually a collection of cities, especially in a smaller state like

Oregon. An MPO is a federally mandated body for any urban area over 50,000 in population that directs the flow of federal transportation funding to the Transportation Management Area.

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) acts as the Policy Board for the Portland Metro MPO TMA that requires Metro Council concurrence. The Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS), operated by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, is the designated MPO for the Salem-Keizer area.

**Our understanding is that WES was originally planned to connect the two MPO TMAs—Portland Metro and Salem/Keizer Metro—as opposed to connecting several cities within the Portland MPO TMA.** In this sense, the current operation of WES may be aptly classified as an “inter-city” transit system. And while the proposed extension of WES from Wilsonville to Salem could in microcosm appear as “inter-city” transit, the reality is that this extension would actually connect the Portland MPO TMA with the Salem/Keizer MPO TMA.

**By connecting only relatively close-by each other suburban cities within the Portland MPO TMA, some observers believe that WES was doomed to failure from the start in terms of meeting ridership targets.** No other commuter rail system in the United States connects two suburbs of a city; all other commuter rail systems connect suburbs to major cities’ downtowns; or in other words, connecting the location of where many workers live to where they are employed.

**Over the past decade, the economic reality is that Salem/Keizer and the North Willamette Valley has become a key component of the Portland metro area “laborshed”; that is, the Salem/Keizer/North Willamette Valley region provides a substantial portion of the Portland metro area workforce – which commutes to jobs in Portland from Salem/Keizer/North Willamette Valley.** During the past 10 years, nearly every major corporate headquarters has relocated from Salem to a city in the greater Portland metro area; the corporate employees, however, by and large still reside in Salem/Keizer area and commute to work in the Portland metro region via roads and especially I-5. Thus, we have seen the I-5 Boone Bridge bottleneck become an even greater impediment to mobility with greatly increased traffic congestion both northbound (from North Willamette Valley to Portland Metro) in the AM commute and southbound in the PM commute.

**By creating a new classification of “inter MPO TMA” high-capacity transit, Metro would be able to greatly raise the profile and importance of studying a potential extension of WES that connects Portland MPO TMA with Salem/Keizer MPO TMA.** This kind of designation could improve the ability of the region and state to leverage federal funds for the study and any improvements for new service that may be recommended.

**During the 2023 legislative session, the Oregon Legislative Assembly considered House Bill 2662, “Relating to a study on extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem.”** With bi-partisan sponsorship by Representatives Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), Khanh Pham (D-Outer SE Portland), Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer) and Senator Aaron Woods (D-Wilsonville), HB 2662 unanimously passed out of the Joint Transportation Committee and was referred to the Joint Committee On Ways and Means.

**The amended version of HB 2662-A would create a multi-jurisdictional task force composed of state legislators, local governments, transit agencies and railroad interests to study extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer.** The bill called for the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force to report back to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations. However, while the bill had no fiscal impact to the state or controversy, HB 2662-A died along with hundreds of other bills that both chambers were unable to consider timely during the session.

**HB 2662 enjoyed considerable support, including from:**

- The North Willamette Valley cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn.
- Portland & Western Railroad, operator of WES.
- Salem Mass Transit District (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit), Tri-Met, Woodburn Transit and Yamhill County Transit.
- American Planning Association (OAPA) Oregon Chapter, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA), Rail Passengers Association (RPA) and The Street Trust.
- Oregon state legislators, including Representatives Tracy Cramer (R-Woodburn), Jeff Helfrich (R-Hood River), Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer), Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), Senator Chris Gorsek (D-Gresham) and Aaron Woods (D-Wilsonville).

See attached documents and testimonies in support of HB 2662; see also <https://olis.oregonlegislature.gov/liz/2023R1/Measures/Overview/HB2662>.

Former Northwest Portland legislator Representative Mitch Greenlick (now deceased) sponsored several WES extension study bills from 2013 to 2019 that Wilsonville and SMART supported: HB 2338 (2013), HB 2553 (2015) and HB 2219 (2019) all would have created a “Task Force on Extending the Westside Express Service Commuter Line to Salem.”

**During the June 2023 JPACT trip to Washington, D.C., representatives of the Offices of Congresswoman Salinas, whose district WES extension would serve, and Senators Wyden and Merkley all expressed interest in a study for the extension of WES high-capacity transit service from the Portland MPO TMA to the Salem/Keizer MPO TMA.**

Although the City of Wilsonville’s South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency and Salem Area Mass Transit District share the Monday through Friday commuter “1X Express” bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem, as traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen, commuters could welcome a public-transit alternative unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion.

**As ODOT undertakes the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) for tolling all lanes of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region from the I-5 Boone Bridge to the Interstate Bridge, issues of impacts to low-income populations of tolls to North Willamette Valley commuters will surface.** To-date, most of ODOT’s RMPP outreach has been to Portland-area communities. The lack of sufficient alternative, public-transit commute options along I-5 from Salem/Keizer area to the Portland area makes a non-highway mobility option more attractive.

**Additionally, major new traffic-generators along I-5 south of Wilsonville are projected to increase traffic on the South Metro/North Willamette Valley portion of I-5.** For example, a new 3.6-million-square-foot Amazon warehouse in Woodburn—the largest in Oregon—under construction that opens in 2024 is to be served by hundreds of delivery trucks and with anticipated employment of over 1,500 workers. Additionally, over 800 new residential units are now under construction in Woodburn.

The proposed study of extending WES commuter-rail service would also engage local transit agencies in addition to TriMet to include SMART, Salem Area Mass Transit District, Woodburn Transit and Yamhill Transit that would provide bus connections to the WES rail stops in Wilsonville, Woodburn, Donald, Keizer and Salem. **The transit agencies would be charged to develop “last-mile” connections from WES station stops to each of the communities that they serve, providing a key connection link to high-capacity WES transit.** Both Salem Area Mass Transit and SMART would be in a position to redeploy bus assets from the 1X I-5 Salem-Wilsonville run to providing higher-quality last-mile connections from WES to residential home or employment destinations.

**Utilizing the old Oregon Electric Line right-of-way now licensed by Portland and Western Railroad provides the opportunity for a reliable transit-commute solution independent of I-5 highway traffic conditions.** Extension of WES would provide a reliable car-free commute option for the North Willamette Valley/South Metro I-5 Corridor that also provides more highway capacity for trucks and the timely movement of freight.

Even before WES began operating, regional planners and mid-Willamette Valley public officials talked about possible expansion of the proposed WES line. An April 2010 study by the Oregon Department of Transportation's Rail Division estimated that it would cost between \$327 million and \$387 million (in 2008 dollars) to extend commuter rail service to Salem, and an estimated \$5-\$7 million each year to operate the expanded rail line between Wilsonville and Salem, according to the ODOT report. Most of the construction costs for possible expansion included in the ODOT report involved improving existing tracks and bridges between Wilsonville and Salem, and building stations in Woodburn, Keizer and Salem.

The route north of Salem would follow the tracks of the old Oregon Electric Railway, which began operating more than 100 years ago and included 122 miles of track across the northern part of the state, from Gresham to Forest Grove, and from Portland to Eugene. Between 1908 and May 1933, Oregon Electric trains carried passengers up and down the Willamette Valley every day. Sections of TriMet's MAX Blue Line follow Oregon Electric rights of way.

Today, many of the Oregon Electric routes are used by freight trains. Amtrak's Empire Builder, Coast Starlight and Cascades trains run on some of the track from California to the Canadian border. Amtrak is working with state rail planners on possible expansion of its daily rail service through the Willamette Valley.

**The Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments—a voluntary association of over 40 local governments that include Marion, Polk, and Yamhill counties, 32 cities, 7 special districts, and the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde—is now planning to launch in September 2023 the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail WES Extension Work Group to advance the principles outlined in HB 2662.** Participants are to include all of the active supporters of HB 2662, and will include invitations to Metro and TriMet.

In totality, connecting the Portland Metro MPO TMA and Salem/Keizer MPO TMA with high-capacity WES commuter-rail transit service would provide Portland and North Willamette Valley commuters, seniors and others with a valuable public transportation mobility option while reducing vehicle miles traveled and consequent greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville, operator of South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART)

cc: Clackamas County Coordinating Committee  
Washington County Coordinating Committee  
Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments  
Representative Courtney Neron  
Representative Kevin Mannix  
Senator Aaron Woods

Enc: *One-Pager Summary* — Support HB 2662-A – Task Force to Study Connecting Portland Metro-Area WES Commuter Train to Salem/Keizer Metro, Extending from Wilsonville to Salem

*Background Information* — HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session): ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet’s WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

*Testimonies regarding HB 2662:*

- *Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn*
- *Transit agencies:* Salem Mass Transit District (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Tri-Met
- *Organizations:* American Planning Association Oregon Chapter (OAPA), Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA), Rail Passengers Association (RPA) and The Street Trust
- *Oregon state legislators:* Representative Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville); Representatives Tracy Cramer (R-Woodburn), Jeff Helfrich (R-Hood River), Kevin Mannix (R-Keizer), Courtney Neron (D-Wilsonville), Senator Chris Gorsek (D-Gresham) and Senator Aaron Woods (D-Wilsonville)

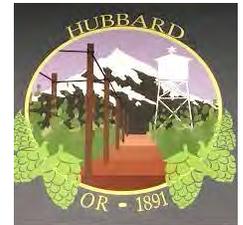
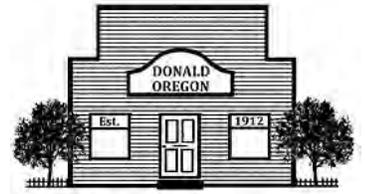
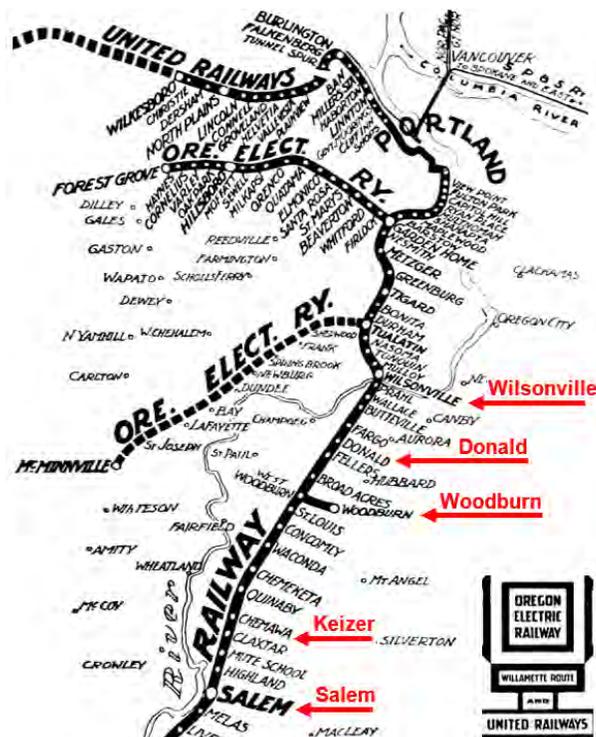
*Legislative documents* — HB 2662A-Engrossed (2023 Regular Session); HB 2662 A Staff Measure Summary (SMS); Fiscal Impact of Proposed Legislation

# Support HB 2662-A – Task Force to Study Connecting Portland Metro-Area WES Commuter Train to Salem/Keizer Metro, Extending from Wilsonville to Salem

Passed unanimously by the Joint Transportation Committee on May 18, 2023, HB 2662-A is a bipartisan bill to create a multi-jurisdictional task force composed of state legislators, local governments, transit agencies and railroad interests to study extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer. The bill calls for the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force to report back to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations.

- **Increasing population** of Portland metro and North Willamette Valley region needs mobility options, especially for commuters and seniors, many who require transportation for jobs and medical appointments.
- **I-5 traffic congestion continues to worsen** and prospective ODOT tolling of I-205 and I-5 in Portland metro area requires a reliable public-transit alternative unaffected by highway traffic congestion.
- **Additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support** for high-capacity WES commuter rail service connecting METRO and SKATS—two federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—that can increase ridership.
- **Transit commuting and shopping option supports economic-development efforts** of North Willamette Valley communities.
- **Use of former Oregon Electric Railway line**, now owned by Portland & Western Railroad which supports the WES extension study, that operated 1908 – 1933.

- **HB 2662-A is supported** by the Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn; Salem Mass Transit (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Yamhill County Transit; and P & W Railroad.



**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:**  
 Greg Leo at 503-804-6391  
[greg@theleocompany.com](mailto:greg@theleocompany.com)

## [HB 2662 \(2023 Regular Legislative Session\)](#)

### **ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer**



#### **ISSUE:**

Although the City of Wilsonville's South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency and Salem Area Mass Transit District share the Monday through Friday commuter "1X Express" bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem, as traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen, commuters could welcome a public-transit alternative unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion.

Additionally, as ODOT undertakes the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) for tolling all of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region, issues of impacts to low-income populations of tolls to North Willamette Valley commuters will surface; to-date, most of ODOT's outreach has been to Portland-area communities. The lack of sufficient alternative, public-transit commute options along I-5 from Salem/Keizer area to the Portland area makes a non-highway mobility option more attractive.

**To date, the City Councils of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn and the Salem-Keizer Mass Transit District board have voted in support of the ODOT study of extending WES as a high-capacity transit option.** Major new traffic-generators along I-5 south of Wilsonville that projected to increase traffic on the South Metro/North Willamette Valley portion of I-5 are now underway:

- a new 3.6-million-square-foot Amazon warehouse in Woodburn under construction that is to be served by hundreds of delivery trucks and with anticipated employment of approximately 1,500 workers set to open in 2023;
- a new 180,000-square-foot Siletz Tribe Casino/Hotel entertainment complex is planned in North Salem/Keizer area with 1,473 direct jobs at the casino-hotel complex, where a vast majority of patrons are anticipated to come from the Portland metro region traveling I-5, resulting in over 7,800 new weekday trips.

**FOR MORE INFO, CONTACT:  
City of Wilsonville / South Metro  
Area Regional Transit (SMART)**

- Mark Ottenad, Public/  
Government Affairs Director  
503-570-1505;  
[ottenad@ci.wilsonville.or.us](mailto:ottenad@ci.wilsonville.or.us)
- Greg Leo, Public Affairs  
Consultant, The Leo Co.  
503-804-6391;  
[greg@theleocompany.com](mailto:greg@theleocompany.com)

## HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session)

ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

Long-term population projections indicate that the Portland Metro / North Willamette Valley region will continue to be one of Oregon's fastest-growing areas.

The old Oregon Electric Railway, a 122-mile passenger rail line between Portland and Eugene, was an interurban railroad that operated from 1908 to 1933. The rail line passes through Wilsonville and has a dedicated right-of-way that is not affected by traffic congestion on the highway or local roads, allowing the provision of reliable public-transit service no matter the roadway traffic conditions.

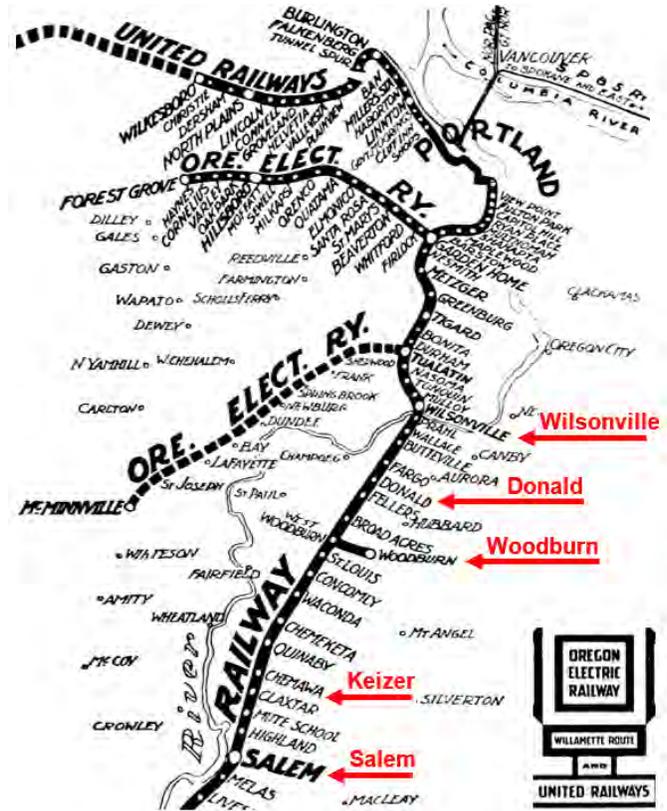


TriMet's Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train began

service in 2009, with stops along the 14.7-mile run at the transit centers of Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin and Wilsonville. WES runs Monday through Friday during the morning and evening commute "rush hours." WES operates on a portion of the old Oregon Electric Railway now owned by Portland and Western Railroad.

### The Legislative Concept

House Bill 2662, co-sponsored by Representative Courtney Neron (HD 26) and Senator Aaron Woods (SD 13), was pre-session filed for the 2023 regular legislative session. The bill directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Transportation Division, Rail Operations & Statewide Multimodal Network Unit — in conjunction with WES sponsor TriMet and WES train operator Portland &



## **HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session)**

ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

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Western Railroad — to study and document the various costs, benefits and operational issues of extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville to Salem, with potential stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer. The bill calls for ODOT to report back to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations.

Similar legislation was proposed unsuccessfully over multiple legislative sessions by the late Rep. Mitch Greenlick of Portland:

- [HB 2338 \(2013\)](#), [HB 2553 \(2015\)](#), and [HB 2219 \(2019\)](#): Creates Task Force on Extending the Westside Express Service Commuter Line to Salem

Each of these bills would have created large task forces composed of legislators, community leaders along the route and transit/transportation agency representatives. When provided the opportunity, the City of Wilsonville presented testimony in support of the proposed legislation.

A 2010 limited study by ODOT of extending WES from Wilsonville to Salem was conducted that reviewed preliminary issues, but did not engage local city governments and transit agencies.

Rather than set-up a large task force that involves considerable effort on behalf of many parties as prior legislative efforts attempted, the proposed legislation sponsors a technical study led by ODOT Public Transportation Division in conjunction with WES sponsor TriMet and WES operator Portland & Western Railroad. The technical study would review the specific operational and locational issues for extending and operating WES on the old Oregon Electric Railway to provide inter-city passenger-rail service for commuters of the North Willamette Valley and South Metro Region using the existing WES trains and Oregon Electric Line/Portland & Western railroad tracks.

**Consultants hired by ODOT would be directed to engage with the City Managers' Offices** of cities to be potentially served by the WES service extension—including Wilsonville, Donald, Woodburn, Keizer and Salem—in order to better understand local-access and other related issues.

**The study would also engage local transit agencies** in addition to TriMet to include SMART, Salem-Keizer Mass Transit District and Woodburn Transit that would provide bus connections to the WES rail stops in Wilsonville, Woodburn, Donald, Keizer and Salem. The transit agencies would be charged to develop “last-mile” connections from WES station stops to each of the communities that they serve.

## **HB 2662 (2023 Regular Legislative Session)**

ODOT Public Transportation Division Study of TriMet's WES Commuter Train North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem, with Stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer

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The legislation calls for ODOT to present the results of the WES North Willamette Valley Extension from Wilsonville to Salem Study to the legislature during September 2024 legislative days prior to the 2025 legislative session. Depending on the results of the study, the legislature may wish at that time to convene a larger task force composed of multiple interests to further advance potential WES extension planning efforts. In order to fund the study, a general fund or other appropriation is required, with a recommended allocation of \$500,000.

### **Background Information**

The 2018 Portland Metro Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) recommends extending WES commuter-rail service from the Portland metro region—including Beaverton, Tigard, Tualatin and Wilsonville—to Salem/Keizer with a stop in Woodburn. Original WES plans called for the high-capacity WES train to connect the federally-designated Portland Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) area with the Salem MPO in order to provide greater ridership potential and access to additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funding for mass transit that connects the transportation management areas of the MPOs.

Utilizing the old Oregon Electric Line right-of-way now licensed by Portland and Western Railroad provides the opportunity for a reliable transit-commute solution independent of I-5 highway traffic conditions. Extension of WES would provide a reliable car-free commute option for the North Willamette Valley/South Metro I-5 Corridor that also provides more highway capacity for trucks and the timely movement of freight.

Through a \$10 million grant under Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program, ODOT Public Transportation Division conducted a nine-year-long rail feasibility study between Portland and Eugene for Amtrak train use. In 2021 FRA selected Alternative 1 for the Oregon Passenger Rail alignment that follows the existing Amtrak Cascades passenger rail route and can accommodate increased passenger rail services by improving track, signal and communication infrastructure.

The ODOT *Oregon Rail Plan* of 2020 notes issues with WES, but does not provide any detailed study or recommendations. As noted above, ODOT conducted a limited study in 2010 of extending WES that reviewed preliminary issues, but did not engage local city governments and transit agencies.

Submitter: Stuart Rodgers  
On Behalf Of: Mayor Brian Asher  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB2662

February 21, 2023

Joint Transportation Committee  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453

RE: Aurora City Council Votes in Favor of WES Extension Study (HB 2662)

Attention: Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Committee Members,

This is to notify the Co-Chairs of the Joint Transportation Committee of a Majority Aurora City Council support (3-1) for House Bill 2662 to study the viability of the extension of the Westside Express Service as a long-term solution and alternative to increasing traffic on the I-5 corridor. Also, given increasing pressure on State Highway 99E, Ehlen Road, and other arterial roads, providing access to and through Aurora and the North Marion County region, the City of Aurora determines it of importance to support a study of mass transit options.

Please accept this letter among others committed to investing in the future of our transportation and transit infrastructure.

Thank you,  
Mayor Brian Asher

City of Aurora  
21420 Main Street  
Aurora, OR 97002

Office: 503-678-1283

Submitter: Eric Underwood  
On Behalf Of: Mayor Rick Olmsted and Donald City Council  
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation  
Measure: HB2662

RE: Support of WES to Salem Extension Study Bill

On behalf of the Donald City Council, I would like to convey full support of HB 2662 which would commission study relating to the feasibility of extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem. Donald joins the other communities on this proposed line expansion in wanting to study the need and usefulness of this service. We see many benefits of an extension of Westside Express Service, not to mention greater mobility options for the Donald community.

The City of Donald requests that the Joint Committee on Transportation move HB 2662 forward with a "do pass" recommendation.

Sincerely,  
Eric Underwood, MPA  
City Manager  
City of Donald  
Office: 503-678-5543

# CITY OF HUBBARD

3720 2nd Street • P.O. Box 380      Hubbard, Oregon 97032

503-981-9633 Fax: 503-981-8743  
www.cityofhubbard.org



February 21, 2023

Hubbard City Council  
Mayor Charles Rostocil

Attention Co-Chairs of the Joint Committee on Transportation

Regarding: HB 2662

The City Council of Hubbard has voted to support HB 2662, a study on the feasibility of expanding the WES service from Wilsonville to Salem. The support for this effort can be linked to the following goals the Hubbard City Council would like to address:

- Help relieve the congestion on the I5 corridor between 217 and past Woodburn during peak commuting hours.
- Help relieve the congestion along the 551 cutoff and 99E during peak commuting hours. Congestion along 99E in Canby, Aurora, Hubbard, and Woodburn has become extremely congested.
- Provide alternative transportation options for those unable to afford future tolling along I5.
- Provide alternative transportation options for individuals and families that cannot afford private transportation.
- Help expand mass transit to a rural community.

The desire of the Hubbard City Council would be to have HB 2662 define a plan to expand mass transit to the rural communities via WES (and a yet-to-be-defined last mile connection to Canby, Aurora, and Hubbard), and tax impacts to our rural communities (the cost for this effort).

Kind Regards

**Charles Rostocil**  
Mayor of Hubbard  
[Charles.Rostocil@gmail.com](mailto:Charles.Rostocil@gmail.com)  
503.951.3448



# City of Keizer

Phone: (503) 390-3700 • Fax: (503) 393-9437  
930 Chemawa Rd. N.E. • P.O. Box 21000 • Keizer, OR 97307-1000

Mayor Cathy Clark

Councilor Laura Reid

Council President Shaney Starr

Councilor Kyle Juran

Councilor Soraida Cross

Councilor Robert Husseman

Councilor Dan Kohler

February 7, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Fellow Committee Members,

At its regularly scheduled meeting on February 6, 2023 the Keizer City Council received testimony and unanimously voted to support HB 2662 which would commission a study about the feasibility of extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem. Keizer joins the other communities on this proposed line expansion in wanting to study the practicality of this service extension.

We believe this study is congruent with Oregon's values by investing in mass transit. Our hope is that this service expansion would provide Oregonians with additional choices for living and how more choices on how to get themselves to their places of employment and recreational opportunities. This service has the potential to impact housing choice, transportation congestion, and green house emission goals.

Keizer is well positioned to receive this service with the commuter line already available at Cherriots regional bus transfer station on the north side of the Salem Keizer metropolitan statistical area. The City of Keizer requests that the Committee pass HB 2662 with a do pass recommendation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Cathy Clark

CC: Sen. Brian Boquist, Rep. Shelly Boshart Davis, Sen. Lyn Findley, Sen. Lew Frederick, Sen. Aaron Woods, Rep Paul Evans, Rep. Jeffrey Helfrich, Rep. Kevin Mannix, Rep. Nancy Nathanson, Rep. Khanh Pham, Sen. Kim Thatcher, Rep. Courtney Neron, Sen. Aaron Woods

**“Pride, Spirit and Volunteerism”**



**Testimony by City of Wilsonville Mayor Julie Fitzgerald Supporting HB 2662:**

***Legislation Provides Opportunity to Improve I-5 Commuting Between Portland Metro Area–North Willamette Valley With Reliable High-Capacity Transit Option***

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 21, 2023, before  
the Joint Committee On Transportation

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

I am testifying in strong support of HB 2662, which sponsors an ODOT study of extending TriMet’s WES commuter train from Wilsonville to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer — growing communities aspiring to improve transportation options.

The City of Wilsonville operates the South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) agency, which collaborates with the Salem Area Mass Transit District to share the Monday through Friday commuter “1X Express” bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem. SMART buses also meet each WES train to provide the last-mile connection to employers.

**As traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen**, commuters, shoppers and those with medical appointments would welcome a public-transit alternative unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion. **As a commuter train, WES is unimpeded by highway traffic congestion**, offering the potential for a reliable transportation option that connects to major metro areas.

As ODOT undertakes the I-205 Toll Project and Regional Mobility Pricing Project (RMPP) for tolling all of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region, equity issues of impacts to low-income populations of tolls to North Willamette Valley commuters are of concern. **The lack of sufficient reliable, public-transit commute options along I-5 from Salem/Keizer to Portland area makes a non-highway mobility option more attractive.**

The City understands that both the WES study and potential extension provide the state an opportunity to leverage federal transit funds for commuter service connecting Portland METRO and Salem-Keizer SKATS—two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—and that can increase WES ridership.

The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2662. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Fitzgerald". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville



May 9, 2023

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon Legislative Assembly

*Sen.LewFrederick@oregonlegislature.gov*  
*Rep.SusanMcLain@oregonlegislature.gov*  
*patrick.h.brennan@oregonlegislature.gov*

**RE: May 11 Work Session on HB 2662-4 — Volunteer task force to study extension of Westside Express Service (WES) high-capacity commuter transit train from Portland Metro Region to Salem/Keizer Metro Area**

Co-Chairs Frederick and McLain and Members of the Committee:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Joint Committee on Transportation advance HB 2662-4 to the floor of each chamber for vote.

The -4 amended bill creates a volunteer, multi-jurisdictional task force composed of state legislators, local governments, transit agencies and railroad interests to study extending the current rush-hour-only Portland metro Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles in the North Willamette Valley to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer.

The increasing population of the Portland metro and North Willamette Valley region requires mobility options, especially for commuters and seniors, many of whom require transportation for jobs and medical appointments. Intensifying traffic congestion on I-5 and prospective ODOT tolling of I-205 and I-5 in the Portland metro area demands a reliable public-transit alternative unaffected by highway congestion. Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support for high-capacity WES commuter rail service connecting METRO and SKATS—two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—can greatly increase ridership.

**HB 2662-4 is supported by the Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn; Salem Mass Transit (“Cherriots”), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Yamhill County Transit. The City appreciates your consideration and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2662-4. Thank you.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Julie Fitzgerald".

Julie Fitzgerald, Mayor  
City of Wilsonville, operator of South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART)



February 21, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Salem, OR 97301

**RE: Letter in Support of HB 2662 in 2023 State Legislative Session:  
ODOT Study of Extending WES Commuter Train from Wilsonville to Salem**

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Committee Members:

The Woodburn City Council supports Representative Courtney Neron and Senator Aaron Woods to pre-session file HB 2662. This proposed legislation would fund an Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Public Transportation Division study of extending TriMet's Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train into the North Willamette Valley from Wilsonville to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn, and Keizer.

The old Oregon Electric Railway, a 122-mile state-operated rail line between Portland and Eugene that passes through Salem, has a dedicated right-of-way that is not affected by traffic congestion on I-5 or other roads, thereby allowing the provision of reliable public-transit service no matter the roadway traffic conditions. WES operates on a portion of the old Oregon Electric Railway now owned by Portland and Western Railroad.

A significant portion of Salem-area residents commute to the Portland metro area, and vice-versa. As a city located mid-way between Salem and Portland located on I-5, Woodburn is well versed in workforce issues with some 80% of our residents commuting to work on I-5.

With both increasing population and traffic congestion, along with potential tolling of I-5 and I-205 in the Portland metro region, our commuting residents and their employers could benefit from a study regarding the costs and benefits of providing a public transit option for commuting between the Salem metropolitan area and the greater Portland metro area.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Frank J. Lonergan". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Frank Lonergan, Mayor  
City of Woodburn

February 21, 2023

Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE, Room 453

### **Cherriots Urges Support for HB 2662**

Dear Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain and Fellow Committee Members:

Salem Area Mass Transit District, locally known as Cherriots, provides fixed route transit and paratransit services within the Salem-Keizer urban growth boundary. In addition, the District operates commuter services to Wilsonville and provides Cherriots Regional service to rural communities in Marion and Polk counties like Stayton & Dallas. SAMTD co-operates the 1X Wilsonville/Salem Express, which is utilized by commuters between the Portland-metro area and Oregon's capital city.

At its January 26, 2023, meeting the Salem Area Mass Transit District voted unanimously to support HB 2662, which would commission a feasibility study for extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem.

We believe that as traffic congestion on the South Portland Metro and North Willamette Valley I-5 corridor continues to worsen, commuters would benefit from a public transit option unaffected by ever increasing highway traffic congestion.

In 2013, the District opened the Keizer Transit Center adjacent to the Portland and Western rail line in the City of Keizer as part of the greater Keizer Station shopping complex. The District chose this location with the intent that this transit center could be modified and a rail platform built allowing an ideal commuter rail stop in Keizer. The District would then provide feeder service to and from the transit center serving the commuter rail line in order to provide first mile/last mile connector service. The District is also committed to providing first mile/last mile connector service at the Salem rail station.

The Salem Area Mass Transit District Board of Directors requests that the Committee pass HB 2662 with a "do pass" recommendation.

If there is additional information you need, please do not hesitate to contact the District's General Manager Allan Pollock. He can be contacted at (503) 361-2550 or [allan.pollock@cherriots.org](mailto:allan.pollock@cherriots.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ian Davidson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "I" and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ian Davidson  
President, Board of Directors



**Testimony by SMART Director Dwight Brashear Supporting HB 2662:**

***Outcomes of Proposed Legislation Could Allow SMART and Other Transit Agencies to Increase Local Area Coverage and Improve 'Last-Mile' Connections***

Scheduled for public hearing on Feb. 21, 2023, before  
the Joint Committee On Transportation

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and Members of the Committee:

As the administrator of the Portland metro-area's other Federal Transit Administration (FTA)-designated Urban Area Transit Operator, I am testifying in strong support of HB 2662.

South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) is an agency of the City of Wilsonville, and was formed over 30 years ago in order to provide increased transit service for business employers' commuting employees, as well as to provide a mobility option for seniors, youth and low-income populations. Additionally, public transit helps to remove single-occupancy vehicles from our highways, thereby providing more roadway capacity for the timely movement of freight essential to our economy.

SMART collaborates with the Salem Area Mass Transit District to share the Monday through Friday commuter "1X Express" bus route on I-5 between Wilsonville and Salem. SMART buses also meet each TriMet WES train to provide the 'last-mile' connection to employers, as well as connections to Salem and Canby.

If WES continued onto Salem, SMART and other transit agencies would be in a position to redeploy assets to provide more local-area service, as well as improved 'last-mile' connections between train stops and major local destinations.

Investing to improve public transit is a smart economic-development strategy recognized by local governments. A study by the American Public Transportation Association found that every \$1 invested in transit generates \$5 in economic return.

SMART appreciates your consideration of this testimony and urges a Do-Pass vote on HB 2662. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dwight Brashear". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dwight Brashear, SMART Director

February 21, 2023

Representative Susan McLain and Senator Chris Gorsek  
Joint Committee on Transportation  
Oregon State Legislature  
900 Court St. NE  
Salem, OR 97301

**Re: HB 2662**

Co-Chair McLain, Co-Chair Gorsek and Members of the Committee:

TriMet is Oregon’s largest transit provider, serving more than 1.6 million people across our 533-square mile service territory. Our service includes 80 bus lines, 1 Frequent Express bus rapid transit line, 5 MAX light rail lines, our LIFT paratransit service, and the WES commuter rail line. TriMet is neutral on HB 2662, but we have several clarifications and requests that we would like to put on the record.

Under TriMet’s charter, we cannot operate transit service outside of our service territory, and while we do operate WES, heavy passenger rail is not one of our core competencies as a transit agency. We recommend creating a state-chartered public corporation or some form of rail authority to extend and operate the WES line between Wilsonville and Salem, as TriMet is not the appropriate entity to oversee that project or operate that service.

House Bill 2662 calls for ODOT, in collaboration with TriMet, to study issues related to extending WES including increasing the frequency and hours of service. We currently only run WES on weekdays during the morning and afternoon rush hours, with trains every 45 minutes. Part of the reason for those limited service hours is that we lease the tracks that WES uses from Portland Western Railroad. Under the terms of our lease agreement, we are only allowed to run WES on their tracks during those windows of time on weekdays.

The frequency of WES service is also limited because WES ridership is low and the operations and maintenance costs for heavy commuter rail are high. TriMet has some concerns about the opportunity cost of being directed to increase WES service as a component of extending the service to Salem. Our plans for our limited funds include expanding our bus service with a focus on low-income, high ridership areas, continuing our transition to a zero-emission bus fleet, and a new bus rapid transit line on 82nd Avenue. We want to make sure that pressure to increase TriMet’s investment in WES would not result in less funding for these other priorities.

If the state does move forward with extending WES to Salem, TriMet would support having the rail authority or other entity that operates the extension take over the operation of the existing WES line from Beaverton to Wilsonville as well. We believe that WES service would run more smoothly if the entire line is operated by a single entity. Relatedly, since TriMet currently operates WES under a 50-year lease agreement with Portland Western Railroad, we think that exploring the mechanics of transferring that lease to a rail authority or other entity is an important part of study proposed by HB 2662.

TriMet supports expanding the high-capacity transportation options available to Oregonians, and we would be happy to consult with ODOT on study that incorporates these considerations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Miles Pengilly', written over a light gray rectangular background.

Miles Pengilly  
State Government Affairs Manager  
TriMet



American Planning Association  
Oregon Chapter

*Creating Great Communities for All*

February 21, 2023

Joint Committee On Transportation  
Senator Chris Gorsek, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
Senator Brian Boquist, Co-Vice-Chair  
Representative Shelly Boshart Davis, Co-Vice-Chair

RE: Testimony from the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) in Support of House Bill 2662

Dear Co Chair Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Davis, and Members of the Committee:

The Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association (OAPA) appreciates the opportunity to provide comments in support of HB 2662 related to extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem.

OAPA is a nonprofit professional membership organization of over 800 planners and those who work with planning in formulating and implementing development and conservation policies at the state and local level. OAPA works to create sustainable and vibrant Oregon communities through professional development, advocacy for sound planning, providing resources to meet the challenges of growth and change, and embracing and promoting diversity, inclusion and equity.

Our support of HB 2662 stems from the OAPA priority policy that “Oregon Needs To Act Now To Confront Climate Change”. We know that climate change impacts every Oregonian. Oregon is experiencing rising temperatures and extreme heat; drought; extreme precipitation and flooding; wildfires; rising sea levels; vegetation changes; ocean acidification; and slope stability. All over the state these events are impacting homes and businesses; economies; public infrastructure; and public health.

“The rail network, for both passengers and freight, produces lower GHG emissions than roadway and air transportation, which means that shifting trips from road and air to rail in markets where it makes sense can reduce overall transportation emissions” (Federal Railroad Administration - [railroads.dot.gov](https://www.railroads.dot.gov)).

OAPA supports legislation, such as HB 2622, to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through increased equitable access to sustainable and reliable transit including commuter and passenger rail.

OAPA recognizes the importance, as described in the American Planning Association [Climate Policy Guide](#) (Dec. 2020) of strategically investing in all transit options, including rapid bus transit, self-propelled light rail, streetcars, commuter trains, and heavy rail systems to suit the specific needs of each part

of the region. We would ask this this be a premise of HB 2622.

OAPA also asks that HB 2622 address two critical issues raised by the Federal Railroad Administration - [railroads.dot.gov](http://railroads.dot.gov)):

1. "Rail's reliance on diesel fuel leaves a large challenge in reducing GHG emissions from the rail industry. Transforming railroad power to clean and renewable fuels is critical in responsibly protecting the environment. Shifting the propulsion and general operation of locomotives from traditional energy to sustainable fuel sources will be beneficial to the health of the rail industry and our planet."
2. "The rail industry is vulnerable to climate-related weather events and must address the issue of infrastructure resiliency. [Rail] investments should be built to withstand the effects of climate change. Adverse conditions, such as excessive heat, flooding, sea-level rise, tornadoes, hurricanes, and wildfires are exacerbated by climate change and threaten the safety and reliability of the rail network."

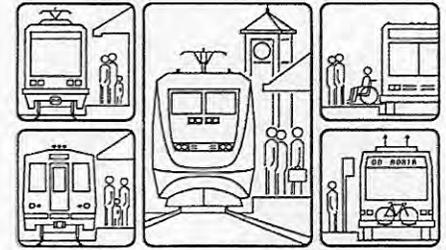
Again, we thank you for the opportunity to express OAPA's support of HB 2622.

Sincerely,



**Aaron Ray, AICP** ([he/him/his](#)) <[president@oregonapa.org](mailto:president@oregonapa.org)>

President, Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association  
*Relevant Resources, Better Planners, Exceptional Communities*



**House Bill 2662 – Testimony in Support.  
Presented in person at the Hearing on  
February 21, 2023**

The Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA) supports passage of House Bill 2662 to study extending the WES commuter rail service to Salem. This proposed service would offer many social and economic benefits to the region. Here are some of the reasons to approve HB 2662:

1. As I-5 becomes more congested the train becomes an attractive option to driving. Rail infrastructure comes at a lower cost than building urban freeway lanes to add capacity. Once upgraded, it is easy to add rail capacity with longer trains and additional trains.
2. Addresses equity issues by providing mobility options for low income, disabled, students and others unable to drive and/or own a motor vehicle.
3. Takes advantage of latent capacity by upgrading existing infrastructure without negatively impacting the tax base.
4. Provides access to jobs along the route. Gives businesses a larger region for workforce growth.
5. Connects with local transit linking Marion, Polk, Lincoln and Yamhill counties for better regional access.
6. Train travel is psychologically more attractive than riding buses. People who will not ride a bus will choose to go by train. They will even ride a bus to connect to the train, thus generating more patronage on the connecting bus lines. There will be a significant increase in ridership over the current 1X Bus operated by Cherriots and SMART.
7. It will reduce travel time by eliminating the bus/train transfer at Wilsonville and I-5 congestion.
8. Safety issues will be addressed with infrastructure improvements and more public education. Areas in Salem like Front Street and the Northeast district need to receive special attention.
9. Parking is not required for people arriving by transit. This reduces the employee and guest parking requirements for businesses and public agencies, providing citizen access to the State Capitol and other government offices.
10. Tourism is an overlooked benefit of rail transit. Recreational riders will spend money with local businesses and restaurants.
11. Freight trains will operate more efficiently and safely using the upgraded track and signal system.
12. Supports development of the Port of Willamette freight transload facility at Brooks.

If there are concerns about Tri-Met extending to Salem with WES, this doesn't have to happen. WES is operated by the Portland & Western Railroad under a contract with Tri-Met. The extension to Salem could be under a separate contract with Cherriots and/or SMART or even a new state agency to operate the entire system.

As a passenger transportation/tourism professional with over 50 years of management experience in the industry, I urge passage of this legislation.

Robert E. Krebs, AORTA, Immediate Past President  
Former: Cherriots' Board Director, ODOT Passenger Rail Coordinator and Oregon  
Business Owner

As a council representative for Oregon, to the national rail-advocacy organization Rail Passengers Association (RPA), I am testifying in support of **HB 2662**, which requires the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to study extending Portland's Westside Express Service (WES) train to Salem and increasing its frequency. RPA's goals include improving and expanding conventional intercity passenger train service, increasing connectivity among all forms of transportation, and improving safety for rail passengers.

This extension of WES service, if implemented, would fulfill all three of those goals. Extending the route would increase the area the train serves, and would connect with local public transit services along the route, most notably Cherriots, Salem's public transit. And when new routes are added, ridership on connecting routes also goes up.

Residents of Portland frequently travel to Salem, and vice versa, and most of this travel occurs on busy highway Interstate 5, creating traffic congestion and delays and increasing the risk of high-speed crashes when traffic is flowing freely. Train travel along this route would be safer, faster, and more environmentally friendly, as rail is the most fuel-efficient form of transportation.

Furthermore, experience has shown that when additional frequencies are added to existing routes, revenues rise faster than costs, showing that in the long run, this extension would actually reduce the cost of running this service, saving taxpayer money.

I urge the Oregon legislature to pass this bill as a first step toward implementing expanded service for WES.



2/21/2023

To: Joint Committee on Transportation

Re: In Favor Testimony - HB 2662 Study Extending WES to Salem

Dear Senators and Representatives,

The Street Trust is a membership advocacy organization representing street users from across Greater Portland, Oregon. We advocate to break the political gridlock to address unsafe and incomplete public streets that threaten lives and livelihoods, and to win policy and investments that save lives, reduce barriers, and expand mobility and opportunities to the people and neighborhoods our current system neglects.

We support HB 2662, which would spend \$500,000 studying the extension of WES Commuter Rail from Wilsonville to Salem; however, it is imperative that this study centrally consider:

- **Equity impacts on priority communities across the greater Portland metro** including communities of color, people with limited English proficiency, youth, transit-dependent people and people with limited vehicle access, residents of affordable housing units, people with low incomes, seniors, people with disabilities, people with low & medium wage jobs, and people working in essential retail/human/social services jobs
- **Climate impacts, greenhouse gas pollution, and air quality impacts** on the greater Portland metro and beyond

Thank you for your continued leadership on improving transportation for Oregonians.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Iannarone  
Executive Director, The Street Trust  
sarah@thestreettrust.org

**COURTNEY NERON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
DISTRICT 26



## **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

### **Testimony in Support of HB 2662**

February 21, 2023

Co-Chairs Gorsek and McLain, Vice-Chairs Boquist and Boshart Davis, and members of the Joint Committee on Transportation,

For the record, I am Courtney Neron, State Representative for House District 26, here today in support of HB 2662. I want to co-sponsors, Senator Woods and Representative Pham, as well as the leadership of the City of Wilsonville for their partnership in bringing this rail bill forward.

The cities that I represent in the outer SW Portland Metro Region are among the fastest growing communities in the state. As our region grows and changes, we know we need to be proactive and thoughtful about identifying and investing in public transportation solutions. With this bill we have the opportunity to study an additional option for commuters that can help to mitigate increased congestion and carbon emissions. I also want to highlight the growing local economy with major companies like the Amazon warehouse in Woodburn. New developments bring new job opportunities but they also increase pressure on our roads, which is why it is so important for us to research potential transportation alternatives.

HB 2662 requires the Oregon Department of Transportation to study the extension of the Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from Wilsonville to Salem with stops in Donald, Woodburn, and Keizer in collaboration with TriMET and the Portland Western Railroad.

With Oregonians returning to in-person work, employers struggling to find enough workers, increasing costs of living, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions needed, we need to consider multimodal transportation solutions that connect Oregonians with the economic opportunities offered by our local employers. This study will focus on one option available to achieve our goals.

Thank you for considering my testimony in support of HB 2662. I urge your support and swift passage of the bill.

Sincerely,

Rep Courtney Neron

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

House District 26  
Wilsonville, including the Charbonneau district, King City, Sherwood,  
Tigard/Bull Mountain, and Parrett Mountain

**KEVIN MANNIX**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 21**



**COURTNEY NERON**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 26**

**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

June 20, 2023

Speaker Dan Rayfield  
President Rob Wagner  
Co-Chair Elizabeth Steiner  
Co-Chair Tawna Sanchez  
Members of the Joint Committee on Ways and Means

**RE: Please pass HB 2662 A - A Legislative Policy Office Task Force to Study Commuter Rail Service in the Northern Willamette Valley**

Dear Co-Chairs Steiner and Sanchez and members of the Joint Ways and Means Committee:

The Chief Sponsors of this bill carefully reworked the bill from a Study to a Task Force to create minimal fiscal cost. The Legislative Policy Office Task Force approach allows us to research the operations and governance issues with a bipartisan, bicameral approach. HB 2662-4 allows the identification and discussion of issues related to establishing commuter rail in the Willamette Valley between Beaverton, Wilsonville and Salem.

The Legislative Policy Office Task Force comprised of transit districts and cities, including TriMet and Portland & Western Railroad, to document the costs, benefits and operational issues of extending the current rush-hour-only Westside Express Service (WES) commuter train from the current southern terminus in Wilsonville for 31 miles to Salem, with stops in Donald, Woodburn and Keizer. There is minimal cost to this Legislative Task Force.

The amended bill calls for the Task Force to report to the legislature in 2024 with study findings and recommendations for extending commuter rail service in underserved communities in the Northern Willamette Valley. Below are additional points that highlights the need for HB 2662 -4:

- The increasing population of the Portland metro and North Willamette Valley region needs mobility options, especially for commuters and seniors, who require transportation for jobs and medical appointments.
- I-5 traffic congestion continues to worsen, and prospective ODOT tolling of I-205 and I-5 in the Portland metro area requires a reliable public-transit alternative unaffected by highway traffic congestion.
- Additional Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support for high-capacity WES commuter service connecting METRO and SKATS—two Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)—that can increase ridership.

- Transit commuting and employment options support North Willamette Valley communities' economic and housing development efforts.
- The commuter rail on an existing rail line helps Oregon meet its 2035 Climate goals.
- HB 2662-4 is supported by the Cities of Aurora, Donald, Hubbard, Keizer, Salem, Wilsonville and Woodburn; Salem Mass Transit ("Cherriots"), SMART (South Metro Area Regional Transit) and Yamhill County Transit.

In the closing days of this Legislative session, please act to authorize this LPRO Task Force so that the Cities and Transit Districts who have advocated for this bill can start collaborating on commuter rail planning for the Northern Willamette Valley.

Sincerely,



Representative Kevin Mannix



Representative Courtney Neron



Representative Jeff Helfrich



Senator Gorsek



Representative Tracy Cramer



Senator Woods

# A-Engrossed House Bill 2662

Ordered by the House May 18  
Including House Amendments dated May 18

Sponsored by Representatives NERON, MANNIX; Representative PHAM K, Senator WOODS (at the request of City of Wilsonville) (Presession filed.)

## SUMMARY

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

*[Requires Department of Transportation, in collaboration with Tri-Met and Portland & Western Railroad to study extending Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem. Directs department to submit findings to interim committees of Legislative Assembly related to transportation not later than September 15, 2024.]*

*[Appropriates moneys from General Fund to Department of Transportation for study.]*

**Establishes Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force.**

**Sunsets January 2, 2025.**

Declares emergency, effective *[July 1, 2023]* on passage.

## A BILL FOR AN ACT

1  
2 Relating to a study on extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem; and de-  
3 claring an emergency.

4 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

5 **SECTION 1. (1) The Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force is established.**

6 **(2) The task force consists of 18 members appointed as follows:**

7 **(a) The President of the Senate shall appoint two members from among members of the**  
8 **Senate, one of whom is registered with the largest political party in this state and one of**  
9 **whom is registered with the second largest political party in this state.**

10 **(b) The Speaker of the House of Representatives shall appoint two members from among**  
11 **members of the House of Representatives, one of whom is registered with the largest poli-**  
12 **tical party in this state and one of whom is registered with the second largest political party**  
13 **in this state.**

14 **(c) The Governor shall appoint:**

15 **(A) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Aurora city council;**

16 **(B) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Donald city council;**

17 **(C) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Hubbard city council;**

18 **(D) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Keizer city council;**

19 **(E) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Salem city council;**

20 **(F) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Wilsonville city**  
21 **council;**

22 **(G) One member chosen from a list of persons recommended by the Woodburn city**  
23 **council;**

24 **(H) One member who represents the Salem Area Mass Transit District;**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted. New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 (I) One member who represents South Metro Area Regional Transit;

2 (J) One member who represents Woodburn Transit Service;

3 (K) One member who represents Yamhill County Transit;

4 (L) One member who represents Portland & Western Railroad;

5 (M) One member who represents the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates;

6 and

7 (N) One member who represents the Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of  
8 Oregon.

9 (3) The task force shall:

10 (a) Study extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem, including in-  
11 creasing the frequency and hours of service and establishing a new entity to administer the  
12 rail service; and

13 (b) Identify opportunities to apply for funding under the federal Infrastructure Invest-  
14 ment and Jobs Act (P.L. 117-58) or other federal funding programs.

15 (4) A majority of the voting members of the task force constitutes a quorum for the  
16 transaction of business.

17 (5) Official action by the task force requires the approval of a majority of the voting  
18 members of the task force.

19 (6) The task force shall elect one of its members to serve as chairperson and another to  
20 serve as vice chairperson. The vice chairperson may act as chairperson in the absence of the  
21 chairperson.

22 (7) If there is a vacancy for any cause, the appointing authority shall make an appoint-  
23 ment to become immediately effective.

24 (8) The task force shall meet at times and places specified by the call of the chairperson  
25 or of a majority of the voting members of the task force.

26 (9) The task force may adopt rules necessary for the operation of the task force.

27 (10) The task force shall submit a report in the manner provided by ORS 192.245, and  
28 may include recommendations for legislation, to an interim committee of the Legislative  
29 Assembly related to transportation no later than September 15, 2024.

30 (11) The Legislative Policy and Research Director shall provide staff support to the task  
31 force.

32 (12) Members of the Legislative Assembly appointed to the task force are nonvoting  
33 members of the task force and may act in an advisory capacity only.

34 (13) Members of the task force who are not members of the Legislative Assembly are not  
35 entitled to compensation or reimbursement for expenses and serve as volunteers on the task  
36 force.

37 (14) All agencies of state government, as defined in ORS 174.111, are directed to assist  
38 the task force in the performance of the duties of the task force and, to the extent permitted  
39 by laws relating to confidentiality, to furnish information and advice the members of the task  
40 force consider necessary to perform their duties.

41 **SECTION 2.** Section 1 of this 2023 Act is repealed on January 2, 2025.

42 **SECTION 3.** This 2023 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public  
43 peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2023 Act takes effect  
44 on its passage.

**HB 2662 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**

**Joint Committee On Transportation**

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**Action Date:** 05/11/23

**Action:** Do pass with amendments and be referred to Ways and Means. (Printed A-Eng.)

**House Vote**

**Yeas:** 7 - Boshart Davis, Evans, Helfrich, Mannix, McLain, Nathanson, Pham K

**Senate Vote**

**Yeas:** 3 - Frederick, President Wagner, Woods

**Abs:** 2 - Boquist, Findley

**Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued

**Revenue:** No revenue impact

**Prepared By:** Patrick Brennan, LPRO Analyst

**Meeting Dates:** 2/21, 5/11

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**WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:**

Establishes the Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force, consisting of 18 members appointed by the Speaker, Senate President, and Governor. Directs Task Force to study extending Westside Express Service commuter rail line to Salem, frequency and hours of service, establishing a new entity to administer the rail service, and opportunities to apply for funding through federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. Designates Legislative Policy and Research Office as staff support for Task Force. Directs Task Force to submit report to Legislative Assembly by September 15, 2024. Sunsets January 2, 2025. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**ISSUES DISCUSSED:**

- Role of rail transportation in reducing carbon emissions
- Role of rail transportation in reducing traffic congestion
- Potential connections of extended Westside Express Service (WES) line
- Which entity should operate an extended WES service
- Need to ensure ability to continue to operate freight rail if on shared corridor
- Potential economic impact

**EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:**

Replaces the measure.

**BACKGROUND:**

TriMet is Oregon's largest provider of public transportation services, operating over 80 bus lines, five light rail lines, paratransit services, and one commuter rail line. The Westside Express Service (WES), inaugurated in February 2009, connects the Beaverton Transit Center to the Wilsonville Transit Center. The WES operates on freight tracks owned by the Portland & Western Railroad, and makes 10 trips north and south each weekday, roughly every 45 minutes. The WES service includes three intermediate stops and provides connections to the South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) system in Wilsonville, the Yamhill County Transit Area system in Tigard, and Salem-Keizer Area Mass Transit District, also known as Cherriots, via express bus from Wilsonville to Salem.

House Bill 2662 A creates an 18-member Task Force on Willamette Valley Commuter Rail to study and make recommendations on the potential to extend the WES commuter rail service to Salem.

## FISCAL IMPACT OF PROPOSED LEGISLATION

Measure: HB 2662 - A

82nd Oregon Legislative Assembly – 2023 Regular Session

Legislative Fiscal Office

*Only Impacts on Original or Engrossed Versions are Considered Official*

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Prepared by: Haylee Morse-Miller  
Reviewed by: Amanda Beitel, Tom MacDonald  
Date: May 15, 2023

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### Measure Description:

Creates Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force.

### Government Unit(s) Affected:

Legislative Assembly, Task Force/Committee/Workgroup, Legislative Policy and Research Office, Cities

### Summary of Fiscal Impact:

Costs related to the measure may require budgetary action - See analysis.

### Analysis:

HB 2662 - A creates the 18-member Willamette Valley Commuter Rail Task Force which is to study extending the Westside Express Service commuter line to Salem, including increasing the frequency and hours of service and establishing a new entity to administer the rail service; and to identify opportunities to apply for funding under the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act or other federal funding programs. The task force is to submit a report to the interim committee of the Legislative Assembly related to transportation by September 15, 2024. The bill directs the Legislative Policy and Research Office to provide staff support for the task force. The bill declares an emergency and takes effect on passage, and the task force sunsets on January 2, 2025.

### Legislative Policy and Research Office

The bill requires the Legislative Policy and Research Office (LPRO) to provide staff support to the task force. LPRO assumes a minimal fiscal impact with existing staff to provide support to this task force. Assuming monthly meetings over 12 months, this will require one Senior Legislative Analyst, one Research Analyst, and one Committee Assistant all assigned part-time to the task force (0.25 FTE), at a total cost of \$257,533 using existing General Fund resources. Although LPRO's current service level budget supports interim committees and task forces, if the work required by this task force, or if the cumulative enactment of other legislation with interim committees and task forces exceeds expenditure levels beyond those assumed in the 2023-25 budget, additional General Fund resources may be required.

This fiscal impact statement assumes that the work required of LPRO to assist the task force with the study is limited to work that can be performed using existing staff. However, LPRO notes that if any public outreach and engagement work is required, there may be additional costs related to this measure.

### Legislative Assembly

The bill is also expected to have a minimal impact on the Legislative Assembly. Four members of the task force will be legislative members who are entitled to per diem and travel reimbursement. Meetings are set by the chairperson so it is unknown how often the task force would meet; however, assuming that the task force meets nine times, the estimated per diem and travel reimbursement costs will total \$10,100. This amount includes the Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) tax, assumes the per diem remains at \$157 per day, and estimates an average mileage of 171 miles at the current rate of \$0.655 per mile. This estimate could change based on the number of meetings held. The task force would not incur additional costs to the Legislative Assembly budget if the meetings are held at the Capitol building during the Legislative Session, or Task Force or Legislative Days.

Although the 2023-25 Legislative Assembly budget contains funds allocated for interim committees and task forces, if the work required by this task force, or if the cumulative enactment of other legislation with interim committees and task forces exceeds expenditure levels beyond those assumed in the 2023-25 budget, additional General Fund resources may be required.

Other entities

There is no fiscal impact for cities.