



Public and stakeholder engagement and consultation summary

High Capacity Transit Strategy Update
2023 Regional Transportation Plan

DRAFT April 2023

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INTRODUCTION

This report provides a high-level summary of the public and stakeholder engagement and consultation that was conducted to support the High Capacity Transit (HCT) Strategy Update for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The project team organized or participated in dozens of outreach activities, and the feedback from these activities was used to shape and refine the HCT Strategy Update. This summary lists these outreach activities, outlines the groups of community members, stakeholders, and regional leaders that were involved, and summarizes the salient points of feedback received through the planning process.

HCT is a key element of the 2040 Growth Concept, a long-range plan adopted by the Metro Council in 1995. As a part of the 2023 RTP, the HCT Strategy will identify priority areas for investments that would provide the most benefit to the most people.

Public and stakeholder outreach for the HCT Strategy Update was closely coordinated with the overall planning and engagement for the 2023 RTP process.

Outreach for the HCT Strategy Update was built on a foundation of recent public and stakeholder outreach initiatives, including the 2009 HCT Plan, the 2018 Regional Transit Strategy, and the 2023 RTP Phase 1 scoping conversations, among others. The project team considered this feedback and engagement when deciding how to tailor outreach efforts for this Strategy Update.

Engagement Goals

HCT engagement goals were the same as those for the broader 2023 RTP planning process, and are as follows:

- Learn about the transportation needs and priorities of communities across greater Portland.
- Reflect the priorities identified through community engagement and prioritize the input provided by communities of color, the disability community and communities with limited English proficiency, in the elements of the 2023 RTP that guide investment decisions.
- Build support for and momentum to achieve community-driven objectives and build public trust in Metro's transportation planning process.
- Strengthen existing and build new partnerships with local, regional, state and federal governments, Tribes, business and community leaders, academic institutions and historically underrepresented communities including Black, Indigenous and people of color, people with disabilities, people with low incomes and people with limited English proficiency, as well as youth and older adults for sustained involvement in decision-making.

The public engagement process was organized by four major milestones, which aligned with the development phases of the HCT Strategy Update. These milestones are described here, and detailed further below:

- **Milestone 1** focused on the policy framework for HCT and reflected on changes since developing the 2018 RTP.
- **Milestone 2** refined the network vision and discussed corridor readiness factors.
- **Milestone 3** reviewed the corridor prioritization, organized by “tiers,” and evaluated whether the corridors meet the readiness factors.
- **Milestone 4** will gather feedback on the Draft HCT Strategy.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

Feedback through the engagement and consultation process spanned a variety of topics, including general requests for service improvements, suggestions for improving access to transit, and interest in prioritizing specific corridors. However, several overarching themes emerged through the process. These include the desire to:

- **Improve regional HCT connections without routing through downtown Portland.** Demand to travel to the city center has been waning with the reduction in commuter traffic and the growth of other regional centers. Instead, people want to travel between regional centers directly, without passing through downtown Portland.
- **Improve safety and security while accessing and using the transit system.** Responses frequently mentioned concern for personal safety while riding transit, waiting at transit stops, and when traveling on streets and sidewalks to access transit stops.
- **Locate transit corridors and stops convenient for accessing job centers.** Responses affirmed that HCT access to employment opportunities is good for both employers and employees, improving access to talent and jobs.
- **Improve existing transit service.** Faster and more frequent service along existing routes would make transit more attractive to potential riders.
- **Align HCT investments with future tolling.** Feedback suggested HCT could provide an alternative to driving tolled routes, and could be a tool to mitigate traffic diversion.
- **Define clearly what HCT includes and HCT's objectives.** The public may not always understand what “high capacity transit” means or what it includes. A clear definition will help with planning efforts, and understanding its objectives will better frame the priority corridors.

STAKEHOLDERS

Metro partnered with standing committees throughout the process, including:

Agency Partners

- City of Portland
- Clackamas County
- C-TRAN
- Multnomah County
- Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
- Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
- South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART)
- TriMet
- Washington County

Partner Jurisdictional Staff

- Clackamas Transportation Advisory Committee (CTAC)
- East Multnomah County Transportation Committee Technical Advisory Committee (EMCTC TAC)
- Metro Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC)
- Transportation Policy Advisory Committee (TPAC)
- TriMet Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT)
- Washington County Coordinating Committee Transportation Advisory Committee (WCCC TAC)

Partner Elected Officials

- Clackamas County Coordinating Committee (C-4)
- Washington County Coordinating Committee (WCCC)
- East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC)
- Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT)
- Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC)

Stakeholder Advisory Committees

- Active Transportation Return on Investment (ATROI)
- TriMet's Committee on Accessible Transportation (CAT)
- TriMet's Transit Equity Advisory Committee (TEAC)

Included representatives from:

- Africa House
- Join PDX

- APANO
- Asian Family Center (a project of IRCO)
- Bus Riders Unite!
- Central City Concern
- Centro Cultural
- Clackamas Community College
- Clackamas Workforce Partnership
- Immigrant and Refugee Community Organization (IRCO)
- Latino Network
- Milwaukie High School
- Multnomah County Youth Commission
- Oregon Food Bank
- Portland Community College
- The Street Trust
- TriMet

STRATEGIES

The project team consulted a broad spectrum of community members through various activities, as listed in Table 1. When practical, outreach for the HCT Strategy Update was integrated with activities for the 2023 RTP, including events, meetings, and surveys. At other times, outreach for the HCT Strategy Update was focused solely on HCT to target feedback related to the HCT vision.

Table 1. Public and Stakeholder Engagement Overview

Activity	Events
Online Surveys	1 Survey as part of an RTP survey (summer 2022). 1 HCT online open house and survey (winter 2022-2023).
Focus Groups and Forums	2 Meetings with RTP Community Leaders Forum and Westside Multimodal Improvement Study Business Forum (joint events). 2 Meetings with Clackamas County Small Transit Providers. 2 Meetings with TriMet's CAT. 2 Meetings with TriMet's TEAC. 2 Agency Lessons Learned Focus Groups (one on Division Transit Project with Metro/TriMet and one on the Vine with C-TRAN). 1 Business Focus Group <i>with representatives from the Gresham Chamber of Commerce, Tigard Chamber of Commerce, and Westside Economic Alliance.</i> 1 Small Business Focus Group with ATROI. 1 Meeting with Washington County Chamber of Commerce.

Activity	Events
Public Tabling Events with TriMet's <i>Forward Together</i>	5 Events in Multnomah County: Rosewood Initiative (2 events), PCC Cascade, St. Philip Neri, and Fairview City Hall.
	2 Events in Clackamas County: CCC Harmony (2 events).
	3 Events in Washington County: Shute Park Library, Washington County Conference Center, and Muslim Educational Trust.
Advisory Committee Meetings	6 HCT Working Group <i>convened with stakeholders from around the region, including Clackamas County, Multnomah County, Washington County, Portland Bureau of Transportation, TriMet, Portland Streetcar, C-TRAN, Oregon Department of Transportation, Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SW RTC), and Metro.</i>
	5 Meetings with WCCC.
	4 Meetings with CTAC.
	4 Meetings with EMCTC
	4 Meetings with EMCTC TAC.
	4 Meetings with JPACT.
	4 Meetings with TPAC.
	4 Meetings with WCCC TAC.
	3 Meetings with C-4.
	3 Meetings with Metro Council Work Sessions.
	3 Meetings with MPAC.
	3 Meetings with MTAC.

MILESTONE 1: FRAMEWORK

In Milestone 1, the project team introduced the HCT Strategy Update to the public, stakeholders, and leaders in the region. Outreach focused on shaping the HCT policy framework and considering regional transportation changes related to HCT since developing the 2018 RTP. Feedback was used to help shape the HCT policy framework.

Milestone 1 Feedback Summary

Feedback from Milestone 1 highlighted a desire to strengthen the transit network with HCT connections between regional centers. Suggestions included growing the network to serve areas of expected growth and prioritizing equity areas with BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) communities. Feedback indicated the importance of making HCT accessible to people with mobility impairments and of providing pedestrian and biking connections to HCT stops. Safety and security were mentioned multiple times as a perceived barrier to transit use.

Access to and from the Transit System

- Stakeholders emphasized how streets, transit stations, and transit vehicles need to be more accessible for people in wheelchairs. Station elevators are often broken, making the station inaccessible to someone using a wheelchair. Improve maintenance with existing elevators and provide ramps instead or to supplement elevators.
- Stakeholders suggested educating the community and Metro employees about disability and accessibility issues.
- Community members expressed concern about the existing biking and pedestrian connections to transit.
- Stakeholders expressed desire to improve transit connections at the ends of transit lines by connecting to other transit providers or to transit hubs.
- Stakeholders suggested improving amenities at transit stops toward the ends of transit lines to make them more comfortable for people who may be waiting a while.

Environmental Impacts

- Stakeholders and regional leaders were interested in using HCT to help meet the requirements for Climate Friendly Equitable Communities.
- Stakeholders were concerned about transit's negative impacts to air quality and the climate crisis.

HCT Network

- Regional leaders and stakeholders expressed a desire to connect regional centers without going through downtown Portland.
- Stakeholders suggested growing the transit network to support where people are traveling now and where the region is expected to grow, with a focus on areas zoned for mixed use.
- Stakeholders recommended prioritizing equity areas and areas with BIPOC communities.
- Regional leaders expressed a desire to improve WES Commuter Rail service as an HCT corridor and to extend it to Salem.
- Regional leaders expressed a desire to extend HCT along I-205 to Tigard Triangle, Wilsonville, and Tualatin.
- Regional leaders suggested using bus-on-shoulder (or light rail on ODOT right of way) to make connections on highways. They suggested pursuing funding from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) and considering how it could align with congestion pricing.
- Stakeholders suggested considering effects from tolling when defining corridors.
- Stakeholders suggested connecting with Clark County.

- Stakeholders suggested creating an express light rail line to downtown Portland.
- Regional leaders mentioned that Powell Boulevard was not an attractive corridor because it had already been studied for HCT and was passed over.

Planning for HCT Investments

- Regional leaders recommended using this process to position for FTA funding.
- Stakeholders recommended focusing on outcomes as opposed to a specific mode.
- Stakeholders recommended coordinating with concurrent projects, such as the Westside Multimodal Improvements Study and the Climate Smart Strategy.
- Stakeholders suggested Metro incorporate restorative justice and BIPOC leaders in the planning process.

Transit Service

- Regional leaders and the public expressed desire for faster transit service. The public also expressed desire for improved frequency. Survey results revealed that travel time is the primary factor for deciding which transportation mode the public chooses for a given trip.
- Regional leaders suggested improving transit service to destinations as well as improving service in the outer areas of the region.
- Stakeholders expressed a desire for improving night and evening service to help employees get to and from late shifts.
- Stakeholders suggested that this would be a good time to improve transit to entice people back after COVID.
- Feedback was mixed on how to prioritize service improvements. Public comments suggested improving service on existing routes or corridors, while regional leaders emphasized prioritizing new routes where none currently exist.

Transportation and Safety Concerns

- Regional leaders and the public expressed concern about safety and security on transit.
- The public also expressed concern about safety and security while walking or biking.
- The public and stakeholders expressed concern about regional traffic congestion.
- Stakeholders suggested improving curb management to help local businesses. They suggested establishing dedicated loading zones and dedicated parking for mobile businesses and local residents.
- Stakeholders expressed frustration about the cost of transit.

Milestone 1 Engagement Activities

Activities for Milestone 1 were conducted from June through October 2022.

- June 30 – HCT Working Group #1
- July 6 – EMCTC TAC
- July 7 – WCCC TAC
- July 13 – TPAC Intro and Overview
- July 18 – EMCTC
- July 20 – MTAC Intro and Overview
- July 26 – Metro Council Intro and Overview
- August 4 – Presentation to C-4 TAC
- August 10 – ATROI Small Business Study Listening Session
A listening session to assess the transportation needs of BIPOC business owners and business leaders as a follow-up to the ATROI Study conducted in the spring of 2021. Seventeen participants attended the two-hour session to share concerns and suggestions regarding accessibility, public transit, and other issues that affect their ability to do business.
- August 15 – Presentation to WCCC
- August 16 – HCT Working Group #2
- August 18 – JPACT Intro & Overview
- August 24 – MPAC Intro & Overview
- September and October - RTP Public Survey 2
An online survey for the RTP open from September 7 through October 17, 2022. Questions in the survey helped inform the HCT Strategy Update, including questions about transportation needs and priority investment. The survey was available in 5 languages (English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Simplified Chinese, and Russian) and collected input from 1,191 participants.

MILESTONE 2: VISION

In Milestone 2, the project team shared the draft vision for the HCT Strategy Update. Outreach focused on refining this vision and better understanding what factors make a corridor ready for an HCT investment. Feedback was used to shape the initial tiers of corridors, which were later shared in Milestone 3.

Milestone 2 Feedback Summary

Stakeholders, the public, and elected officials often had similar ideas for the HCT vision. Many expressed a desire to expand the transit service area, with a particular focus on more connections in Washington and Clackamas counties. People suggested connecting HCT investments to better serve equity populations and target employment hubs. Many were

interested in how HCT investments might relate to future tolling. The vision for HCT generally centered around an expanded network that provided faster trips to job centers while strengthening existing connections.

Access to and from the Transit System

- The business community and stakeholders from Clackamas County suggested that shuttles could provide first- and last-mile transit connections.
- The business community raised concerns about congestion slowing drivers and creating problems for private shuttles that transport employees to work.

Economic Considerations

- The business community, stakeholders, and elected officials expressed a desire to locate transit stops near job centers.
- Members of the public and business community mentioned that many people have security concerns on transit, which has led to business losses near the MAX.
- The business community mentioned that transit does not meet the needs of some job fields, such as construction, where workers need to carry tools.
- Stakeholders noted how HCT could act as a lever for future development and potentially aid in reaching the 2040 Growth Concept.
- A stakeholder stated that economic opportunity should be more fully reflected in HCT policies and objectives.

HCT Network

- Elected officials, stakeholders, and the public asked for stronger north-south connections in Washington County and Clackamas County.
- Elected officials, stakeholders, and the public suggested expanding the transit service area to provide more people with the option to take transit.
- Elected officials wanted HCT corridor investments to be balanced through the three counties in the region.
- Stakeholders are interested in aligning HCT with future tolling.
- Stakeholders expressed interest in investing in HCT connections, including:
 - To Montgomery Park.
 - Along NE MLK Jr. Boulevard.
 - Along NE Halsey Street.
 - WES Commuter Rail.
 - To Lents.
 - Between Hillsboro and Wilsonville.
 - Within East Portland and Gresham.
- The public expressed desire for better connections between rail systems, particularly the Yellow Line and Red Line, and the Green Line and Orange Line.

Planning for HCT Investments

- Stakeholders and elected officials emphasized the need to support people with mobility challenges and People of Color in the planning and implementation process.
- Stakeholders emphasized that the HCT definition and objectives should be clear, and that people should know why HCT is needed in a particular corridor.
- Stakeholders mentioned the importance of partnering with cities early to improve collaboration and the quality of the future investment.
- A stakeholder mentioned that it was important to plan for continued transit service during the construction of HCT projects.

Transit Service

- The public and stakeholders expressed desire for faster transit speeds and suggested investing in prioritization, such as dedicated lanes, signal priority, bus-on-shoulder, and queue jumping.
- The public and stakeholders were interested in grade separation of transit to provide faster connections, including a tunnel through downtown.
- The public and stakeholders called for further investment in commuter rail.
- The business community and stakeholders raised concerns about insufficient frequency during non-peak hours.
- The business community mentioned interest in having more one- or two-seat rides to reduce transfers and increase ease of access to large campus sites for employees.
- A stakeholder wanted to measure HCT investments to see how they could improve current transit.

Milestone 2 Engagement Activities

Activities for Milestone 2 were conducted from September 2022 through February 2023.

- September 27 – HCT Working Group #3
- October 4 – EMCTC TAC
- October 6 – WCCC TAC
- October 13 – HCT Working Group #3.5: Vision Workshop
- October 17 – EMCTC
- October 18 – Portland Community College Cascade Tabling
- October 19 – C-4
- October 19 – Rosewood Initiative Tabling
- October 19 – TPAC/MTAC Policy Framework and Vision
- October 20 – Shute Park Library Tabling

- October 24 – Clackamas County
- October 24 – WCCC PC
- October 26 – Clackamas Community College Harmony Tabling
- October 26 – MPAC Policy Framework and Vision
- October 27 – JPACT/Council Policy Framework and Vision Workshop Feedback
- November 8 – TEAC
- November 9 – Division Transit Project Focus Group
- November 10 – The Vine Focus Group
- November 17 – HCT Working Group 3.5 Vision Review Session
- November 30 – Clackamas County Small Transit Providers Meeting
- February 13, 2023 – Business Roundtable

MILESTONE 3: CORRIDOR TIERS

In Milestone 3, the project team shared the draft prioritization of corridors to the public, stakeholders, and leaders in the region. The prioritization organized HCT corridors in four “tiers,” as follows:

- Tier 1: near-term corridors.
- Tier 2: next-phase corridors.
- Tier 3: developing corridors.
- Tier 4: vision corridors.

Feedback was used to refine corridor priorities and finalize tiers.

Milestone 3 Feedback Summary

Feedback from Milestone 3 was largely centered on corridor prioritization and refining the corridor alignments. Stakeholders and community members also suggested other improvements that would make transit a more viable transportation option, such as improved security, service, and amenities. Public input was largely supportive of the HCT vision, with a majority of survey respondents indicating they would use HCT more often if the vision were implemented.

Access to and from the Transit System

- Stakeholders emphasized how transit vehicles need to be more accessible, particularly articulated buses: not all ramps can be deployed for all-door boarding, these buses cannot accommodate courtesy stops during inclement weather, and they have reduced functionality for mobility devices.

- Community members suggested using wheel guides at bus stops to make it easier for buses to stop at a consistent location at the edge of the platform.
- Community members expressed a desire for improved pedestrian connections to transit.
- Stakeholders expressed concerns about sidewalk obstructions from people experiencing houselessness.

Amenities

- Community members expressed interest in amenities, such as better lighting, better ticket vending, real-time traveler information, better shelters, and more seating options for single riders.

Economic Considerations

- Regional leaders recommended talking to business leaders and thinking about density and jobs.
- Stakeholders recommended focusing on workforce development, especially with young workers who need transit to get from their schools to their jobs.

Equity

- Regional leaders expressed a desire for more north-south connections to improve options for underserved community members.
- Stakeholders mentioned that honored citizens can have difficulty finding priority seating.

HCT Prioritization

- Regional leaders suggested elevating the priority of certain corridors, especially:
 - OR 99W corridor.
 - WES Commuter Rail corridor.
- Regional leaders and stakeholders expressed support for the Southwest Corridor.
- Regional leaders and community members expressed desire for prioritizing HCT investments in WES Commuter Rail and for HCT improvements along 82nd Avenue.
- Youth community members prioritized locations and routes to improve transit connections, including:
 - Along 82nd Avenue.
 - To Clackamas Town Center.
 - Downtown Portland to Rockwood/Gresham.
 - Along Killingsworth Street.

- Public survey feedback indicated the Central City Tunnel, Interstate Bridge MAX, and Southwest Corridor as the top three HCT priorities for respondents.

HCT Network

- Regional leaders, stakeholders, and community members expressed desire for a light rail extension to Forest Grove.
- Regional leaders expressed interest in tolling, and specifically how HCT could align with tolling and expected traffic diversion.
- Regional leaders discussed transit improvements along Sunnyside Road and in Happy Valley.
- Community members expressed interest in improving regional HCT connections. Examples include:
 - A MAX line loop connecting all three counties.
 - Through Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and wider Clackamas.
 - Through Tigard, Tualatin, and Wilsonville.
 - More direct bus connections to Cully and Gresham.
 - Adding an express connection to Forest Grove.
 - Through Milwaukie, Oak Grove, and wider Clackamas.
 - Through Tigard, Tualatin, and Wilsonville.
- Stakeholders expressed interest in improved transit access to recreational facilities, medical facilities, and retirement communities.
- Stakeholders recommended connecting HCT with future housing trends and plans.
- Public survey results indicate strong support for the HCT vision, with 70 percent of respondents stating they would use the HCT network “somewhat” or “much” more often if the network looked like the planned vision.

Transit Service

- Regional leaders expressed an interest in other transit modes, such as shuttle service. They mentioned adding a shuttle service on the OR 99E corridor, as an example.
- Community members expressed desire for more frequent transit service and more FX2 buses.
- Stakeholders emphasized not removing regular transit as rapid transit is implemented.
- Stakeholders would like to evaluate how effective the Division Transit project improvements have been.
- Stakeholders expressed concerns with at-grade rail crossings for HCT, which can create reliability issues, and suggested a tunnel or car-free streets to improve HCT speeds.

- Community members expressed an interest in roadway improvements to bus lines to allow buses to more easily share the road with cars.
- Stakeholders suggested limiting MAX stops between Hillsboro and Sunset Transit Center to improve time travels.

Safety and Security

- Community members and stakeholders expressed concerns about safety and security. Community members mentioned safety and security is a significant barrier to young people taking transit.
- Community members expressed personal safety concerns eastbound from Hollywood Transit Center.
- Community members encouraged Metro to convene jurisdictions to improve roadway safety.

Planning for HCT Investments

- Regional leaders and stakeholders expressed interest in funding and emphasized being grant-ready.
- Stakeholders were interested in the assumptions used for modeling.
- Stakeholders recommended involving the Halsey business community in the small business focus group.
- Community members suggested Metro reach out to Sandy Area Metro (SAM) and the community in Sandy.
- Stakeholders shared concerns about funding transportation infrastructure.

Milestone 3 Engagement Activities

Activities for Milestone 3 were conducted from November 2022 through February 2023.

- November 16, 2022 – TriMet CAT
- November 23, 2022 – HCT Working Group #4
- December 8, 2022 – TriMet CAT
- January 4, 2023 – EMCTC TAC
- January 5, 2023 – C-4 TAC
- January 5, 2023 – WCCC TAC
- January 9, 2023 – WCCC
- January 10, 2023 – TEAC
- January 11, 2023 – TPAC Workshop
- January 18, 2023 – C-4

- January 18, 2023 – MTAC
- January 18, 2023 – St. Philip Neri Tabling
- January 19, 2023 – Rosewood Initiative Tabling
- January 24, 2023 – Clackamas Community College Harmony Tabling
- January 25, 2023 – Washington Street Conference Center Tabling
- January 26, 2023 – Fairview City Hall Tabling
- January 30, 2023 – Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- January 31, 2023 – Verde Adult Focus Group
- February 2, 2023 – Verde Youth Focus Group
- February 2, 2023 – Business Focus Group
- January through March 2023 – HCT Online Open House and Survey
A public online open house and survey specifically for HCT was open from January 17 through March 15, 2023. The online open house shared the HCT vision and priorities. The survey asked participants if they supported the vision and what they would like to prioritize. The online open house was viewed over 800 times and the survey collected 354 responses.

MILESTONE 4: DRAFT STRATEGY UPDATE

In Milestone 4, the project team shared the Draft HCT Strategy Update along with the Draft 2023 RTP.

Milestone 4 Feedback Summary

[PLACEHOLDER FOR FEEDBACK FROM MILESTONE 4]

Milestone 4 Engagement Activities

[PLACEHOLDER FOR ACTIVITIES FROM MILESTONE 4]