

METRO COUNCIL

Work Session Worksheet

PRESENTATION DATE: April 11, 2017

LENGTH: 30 minutes

PRESENTATION TITLE: Regional Transit Strategy draft policy framework and vision

DEPARTMENT: Planning and Development

PRESENTER(S): Elissa Gertler, Jamie Snook, (jamie.snook@oregonmetro.gov)

WORK SESSION PURPOSE & DESIRED OUTCOMES

- **Purpose:** Provide Council with an opportunity to discuss 1) transit related policies for the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update; 2) key elements to be included in the regional transit vision; and 3) the approach to updating the High Capacity Transit (HCT) Plan and System Expansion Policy.
- **Outcome:** Council provides input to staff regarding changes to transit related policies in the 2018 RTP update, key elements associated with the regional transit vision and the approach to updating the System Expansion Policy.

TOPIC BACKGROUND & FRAMING THE WORK SESSION DISCUSSION

This is a critical time to consider how transit fits into our larger regional goals. The Climate Smart Strategy, adopted in 2014, provided clear direction to invest more in our transit system in order to meet regional goals and objectives related to sustainability and carbon emissions. Current growth rates will require us to expand transit service in order to provide people with transportation options and minimize congestion. Significant and coordinated investment is needed to continue to provide equivalent service as our region grows; increasing service and access will require dedicated funding, policies, and coordination from all jurisdictions. Transit also helps the region meet its equity and access goals as it is a primary mode of transportation for people with disabilities and youth, providing them with a way to get to work, school, and attain access to daily needs. Investments in transit should increase access, provide more transportation options for residents and workers, improve air quality, and reduce peak hour congestion.

Building off of the Climate Smart Strategy, the Regional Transit Strategy (RTS) will provide the region with a transit vision and policy framework for capital investments and operational improvements. The RTS is being developed in coordination with the Future of Transit vision developed by TriMet through its Service Enhancement Plans, the South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) Master Plan and future service improvement increases by other transit agencies, and is intended to provide a regional framework for integrating their service plans, regional plans and commitments, local priorities, and regional funding capacity.

The RTS also includes updating the Regional High Capacity Transit (HCT) System Plan and the Transit System Expansion Policy, adopted in 2010. By coordinating these efforts, the RTS will provide as a guide for investing in the region's transit service, capital investments and transit supportive elements. The plan will provide local and regional partners with a blueprint for prioritizing transit and transit-supportive improvements that support the regional transit vision. While the HCT System Plan focused on identifying the next light rail line, this strategy clarifies regional policy towards all levels of transit, from traditional bus service to bus rapid transit to

streetcar to high capacity transit. All of these transit types are built on policy goals which we hope to incorporate into the RTS.

The 2009 HCT System Plan identified the top two transit priorities to pursue: the Southwest Corridor Transit Project and the Powell-Division Transit Project. With both of these projects moving forward towards the environmental review and project development phases, we are at a critical point in time to line up what is the next major investment. An updated transit system expansion policy is key to prioritizing what comes next.

The last time the Metro Council was briefed on this topic, we were just kicking the process off. Now we are working with our regional partners to define our shared transit investment strategy.

QUESTIONS FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

1. We are proposing to update the current transit related RTP policies to include the transit vision to make transit more frequent, convenient, accessible and affordable for everyone. Is the Metro Council comfortable with these goals as establishing our policy framework?
2. Since 2009 when the HCT System Plan was adopted, there have been several changes to how we categorize some of the potential transit corridors. Is the Metro Council comfortable with the changes to the I-5 bridge crossing, Lake Oswego to Portland, Gresham to Damascus, Southwest Corridor and Powell Division lines?
3. Enhanced Transit is a way of grouping a suite of potential transit improvements underneath an overall policy framework. This framework is grounded in joint cooperation between the local governments and the transit provider. Are you comfortable with this framework and the policy goal of implementing localized and corridor-wide transit improvements quickly, that it represents?
4. As we are building consensus on the policy framework and vision, we are starting the conversation regarding how to prioritize regional capital investments in transit. Does the Metro Council have specific ideas regarding criteria that we should explore as we go through this process?

PACKET MATERIALS

- Would legislation be required for Council action ☐ Yes ☒ Not at this time

Materials

- Regional Transit Strategy draft policy framework and vision memorandum and attachments (*March 2017*)
- Regional Transit Strategy Fact Sheet (fall 2016/winter 2017)