

# Memo



**Metro**

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Date: Monday, November 5, 2018  
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and interested parties  
From: Jamie Snook, Principal Planner, Metro  
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Subject: Enhanced Transit Concept Pilot Program update

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## **Purpose**

The purpose of this presentation to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) is to provide an overview and update on the development of the Regional Enhanced Transit Concept (ETC) pilot program.

Each year a large portion of our region's resources go into transit service hours. Increasingly, resources are needed keep up transit schedules due to congestion. As our region grows and congestion increases, the need to connect people to their jobs, homes and daily activities is becoming more challenging. Any additional delay or unreliability of the bus system limits access to places by transit within a reasonable travel time and makes transit less desirable travel options.

One way to potentially increase transit times and maximize service revenue is to invest in Enhanced Transit projects within the right-of-way. Enhanced Transit encompasses a range investments comprised of capital and operational treatments that improve transit capacity, reliability, and travel time. Enhanced Transit is intended to be flexible and context-sensitive during design and implementation.

Over the course of the last year, Metro worked closely with TriMet to launch a new Enhanced Transit concept program. The response by agency partners in the Metro region was overwhelming, and demonstrated the need and interest in designing, building and investing in more Enhanced Transit projects in the future. Metro and TriMet are currently working with partners to advance some of the region's first Enhanced Transit projects to show proof-of-concept and build public support.

## **Action Requested**

There is no formal action requested. Staff will provide an update on the progress of the Regional ETC pilot program

## **Background**

At the October 19, 2017 JPACT meeting, the committee voted to approve an increase in a multi-year commitment of Regional Flexible Funds for the Years 2019–34 to fund the Division Transit Project, the Southwest Corridor Transit Project, Arterial Bottleneck Projects, Active Transportation Projects and Enhanced Transit Projects. Per direction by JPACT, the program is utilizing bond proceed revenues of \$5 million to support the "Enhanced Transit" program. The goal of the Enhanced Transit concept pilot program is to fund design of capital improvements that provide increased transit speed, reliability and/or capacity. ETC projects are intended to be relatively low-cost to construct, and be deployed quickly. While the regional funds are used to design a pipeline of regional ETC projects, the intent is for local jurisdictions to deliver and fund the projects after they are designed.

With the passing of House Bill 2017 (HB2017, Keep Oregon Moving, the Oregon State Legislature made significant investments in transportation, particularly to expand and improve transit service. HB2017 includes a new employee payroll tax administered through the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF). TriMet convened HB2017 Transit Advisory Committee to advise and assist in the development of the Tri-County Public Transportation Improvement Plan identifying priorities and funding allocations for approval by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC).

Through this extensive engagement, the Metro area's HB 2017 Transit Advisory Committee recently voted for Tri-Met to allocate an additional \$10M over the next four years to help fund the capital portion of the ETC projects. TriMet will work with ETC project sponsor jurisdictions regarding how the HB2017 funding is used, with a focus on projects that leverage additional funding, provide the greatest benefit and can be built quickly.

### **Program Development**

Through the TGM grant-funded Enhanced Transit Corridors Plan, TriMet and the City of Portland developed a toolbox of transit speed, reliability and/or capacity improvements that could be applied throughout the system.

Metro and TriMet are building off the City of Portland's Enhanced Transit Corridor Planning work with the implementation of the ETC pilot program, which is allocating \$5 million in regional funds to projects throughout the Frequent Service network that are currently experiencing transit delay and reliability concerns.

The ETC work program developed a policy framework and criteria to identify candidate projects. Candidate projects were identified by a Technical Advisory Committee and work is underway to scope the design process and determine a timeline for implementation and construction.

The goals of the ETC pilot program are to:

- Improve transit reliability, speed, and capacity through hotspot bottleneck locations in congested corridors and throughout the region through moderate capital and operational investments from both local jurisdictions and transit agencies.
- Identify, design and build a set of Enhanced Transit projects, either as hotspot bottlenecks or across whole congested corridors or, in partnership with local jurisdictions and facility owners where improvements are most needed and can be deployed quickly to produce immediate results.
- Develop a pipeline of Enhanced Transit projects so they are ready to advance for to construction as funding is identified.



"The greatest barriers to the use of public transportation are time and reliability. If people can't count on transit to get them there at a specific time, they're not going to use it."

—Adria Decker Dismuke, Milwaukie resident

### **Potential Universe of ETC projects**

In November and December of 2017, Metro and TriMet worked with regional partners to identify the universe of potential ETC. A quantitative approach was conducted that honed the list of locations based on those within the regional frequent service transit network. The entire regional transit network was then divided into time point segments and evaluated based on reliability, dwell time and ridership per mile. Based on this evaluation, segments were scored and narrowed based on having the worst reliability concerns, longest dwell times and highest ridership. These segments were discussed further in a series of ETC workshops with our jurisdictional partners.

***Regional ETC Workshops***

In January 2018, Metro and TriMet held a Table Setting Workshop which included all interested jurisdictional partners to discuss:

- Regional ETC program goals, process and timeline
- Benefits of faster and more reliable transit
- Overview of ETC Tools and their applicability in various contexts
- Data-based criteria for developing proposed universe of projects
- Local and national examples of implementing the ETC tools

From January through April, 2018, Metro and TriMet conducted 14 ETC workshops with jurisdictions throughout the region. These workshops were designed to assess the applicability of the various ETC tools in the specific locations identified in each jurisdiction, with the intent of informing what project elements could be appropriate to advance towards design and implementation. Based on take-aways from workshop(s), local jurisdictions identify their project priorities and which projects they would be willing to fund and implement.

TriMet and Metro hired a design consultant team which will be responsible for developing the design drawings for the ETC program projects.

***Request for Interest (RFI)***

In May, 2018, Metro released a Request for Interest (RFI) to regional partners that participated in the ETC workshops to advance ETC projects that could be built quickly while improving transit speed and reliability along our frequent service network. The intent of the pilot program, is to provide technical design services to identify ETC improvements that could be built in the next two years, as well as, develop a pipeline of future ETC projects.

The RFI opened in May and closed in June of 2018. Local jurisdictions, from across the region, that submitted an ETC proposal included:

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|---------------------|---|
| • City of Beaverton | • Multnomah County (in partnership with City of Portland) |
| • City of Hillsboro | • Washington County                                       |
| • City of Portland  | • ODOT  |
| • Clackamas County  |   |

There were a total 38 ETC proposals (49 individual projects) submitted through this process. Projects submitted to the RFI were screened based on the minimum award requirements:

- Projects must be on an existing or future frequent service transit line;
- Projects must have been through the Metro/TriMet led Regional ETC Workshops or some other local or regional planning process;
- Projects must demonstrate that they will improve transit speed and reliability;
- Projects must be included in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan; and
- Projects must have the support from the local agency's director or elected official.

## **Program Implementation**

There was an overwhelmingly positive response to the RFI, however, with the limited funding available, we are not able to provide design services to all the projects submitted, which is estimated at approximately \$15M or more. As previously mentioned, the goals of the ETC pilot program is to design and projects that improve transit speed and reliability which can be built by local jurisdictions in the in the near term and to develop a pipeline of ETC projects to build in the longer term.

Projects submitted through the RFI, were assessed based on the program goals, the ability to implement within two years, the ability for the improvements to solve transit speed and reliability issues, and the availability of potential funding. Based on this screening projects were separated into three categories:

1. Design to Issue for Construction (IFC)
2. Concept to 15% Design
3. Future pipeline projects

Projects within the “Design to IFC” category are projects that scored high through the screening process and had the greatest potential to move forward to construction in the near term (two years or less). Through the Regional ETC pilot program, Metro and TriMet will provide design services to move 13 projects.

Projects within the “Concept to 15% Design” category are projects that scored high through the screening process but were less likely to move as quickly or needed more concept design work and traffic analysis before moving forward. Through the Regional ETC pilot program, Metro and TriMet will provide design services up to 15% design.

All other projects submitted through the RFI are considered future ETC projects. These projects were identified as potential ETC projects through the initial universe of potential ETC locations and were considered through the workshops, however, they didn’t score as high in the RFI evaluation.

## **Next Steps**

As our region continues to grow, the need to find innovative ways to provide mobility will also increase. Metro and TriMet’s process highlighted the interest in investing in enhanced transit. The project concepts put forward in the ETC program should still be considered for future funding or integrated into future roadway projects. ETC improvements can also lead to larger investments that help define and improve corridors around the region.