

# Memo



**Metro**

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Date: December 6, 2018  
To: Metro Council  
Cc: Elissa Gertler, Ted Leybold  
From: Margi Bradway, Deputy Director of Planning and Development  
Dan Kaempff, Principal Transportation Planner  
Subject: 2022-24 Regional Flexible Funds Allocation – Recommendation to the 2019 Metro Council

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This memo is intended to reflect input received from the Metro Council in 2018 regarding the 2022-24 Regional Flexible Funds Allocation (RFFA) and to provide information and advice to the Metro Council regarding the decision they will make in 2019 on the RFFA policy framework.

## **Background**

During the summer of 2018, staff conducted a series of meetings with individual Council members to discuss and receive their initial input on policy direction regarding the upcoming RFFA. These meetings consisted of an overview of the 2019-21 RFFA process and outcomes, as well as discussion of the current Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) process and the policy direction emerging from that process. At a Council Work Session held on September 6, staff briefed Council on the timeline and process for the 2022-24 RFFA and reviewed the existing RFFA policy framework. At that time, Council President Hughes deferred to take an official Council action on the 2022-24 RFFA policy framework. He also recommended that this Council advise the future Metro Council who will make the final RFFA allocation decisions in 2019. At the work session, Council discussed what input relative to the RFFA they might wish to communicate to the subsequent Council.

Based on their discussion, staff has compiled the following four primary points that the current Metro Council wants to convey to the incoming Council for their review and consideration:

### **1. The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) should serve as the policy framework for the 2022-24 RFFA.**

After three years of extensive input from the public, community and business leaders and jurisdictional partners, the 2018 RTP will be considered for adoption by the Metro Council on December 6, 2018. As required under federal law, previous RFFA policy frameworks have been aligned closely with RTP goals and objectives. In this cycle, the timing of Council's RTP adoption aligns perfectly with the beginning of a new RFFA allocation process.

Development of the 2018 RTP was shaped by extensive public and stakeholder engagement, analysis and discussion among policymakers of the region's key priorities – transportation equity with a focus on race and income, safety, Climate Smart Strategy implementation, travel options and addressing congestion. The RTP's goals serve as the broad direction and expectation of what each investment in the system should aim to achieve, but additional focus and attention should be paid to the RTP policy priorities.

As such, these priorities should be the focus of investments the region makes using Regional Flexible Funds to advance implementation of the RTP investment strategy. Furthermore, this approach is affirmed by federal regulations that require consistency between the RTP and federal investments in the region.

**2. The priorities identified in the 2018 RTP should serve as guidance in investing Regional Flexible Funds:**

- i. **Equity**– eliminate transportation-related disparities and barriers experienced by historically marginalized communities, particularly communities of color and people with low income
- ii. **Safety** – eliminate fatal and severe injury crashes for all modes of travel, with a focus on high injury corridors
- iii. **Climate** – make investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions and advance implementation of the Climate Smart Strategy
- iv. **Congestion Relief** – help people and goods reach their destinations safely, reliably and efficiently by investing in travel information, technologies, travel options<sup>1</sup>, and other strategies to manage use and optimize performance of the transportation system

**3. Keep the existing two-step RFFA Framework.**

The existing two-step RFFA framework supports investment in these policy objectives. Step 1 supports regional-scale investments in project development, transit capital, demand and system management, transit-oriented development and regional planning. Step 2 invests in local communities by investing project development and capital projects. This long-standing approach of appropriating RFFA funds has proven to be a winning formula: balancing the need for of regional, strategic investments in Step 1 with local, community-driven investments in Step 2.

**4. Keep the 75/25 Split in Step 2.**

Since a 2011 decision by JPACT and Metro Council, Step 2 funding for local capital projects have been divided between these two target areas with 75 percent of the available funds designated for active transportation projects and the remaining 25 percent for freight mobility projects. Council supports continuation of these target areas in recognition of their importance in achieving RTP policy goals and objectives. Given that Regional Flexible Funds represent less than 3 percent of all funds in the Metro area, Metro Council believes this approach appropriately applies funds to projects that are not funded with other means. The 75/25 split also supports and implements the outcomes identified in the 2019 RTP, including equity, mitigating climate change, safety and congestion relief.

The Metro Council recognizes that the new Metro Council will deliberate and discuss their policy position regarding the RFFA when their term begins next January. This memo is offered with the intent to be helpful and share the current Metro Council’s collective experience in assisting their successors’ deliberations and decisions.

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<sup>1</sup> “Travel options” means to expand transit service frequency, reliability and coverage, and complete biking and walking network gaps to reduce drive alone trips and vehicle miles traveled.