



# Designing livable streets and trails

## Healthy communities through better design

*Livable streets support the economic, social and environmental health of our region. Metro is working with local, regional and state partners to update regional transportation design guidance that supports performance-based design.*

We all have a stake in how our transportation network is designed. From the delivery truck driver to the high school student bicycling to class, the mother driving her kids to swim lessons and the office worker running to catch the bus, how we get there matters.

As the region continues to grow, designing a transportation system that is livable will help us grow in a healthy, prosperous and equitable way. Livable streets and trails:

- improve safety for all modes of travel and reduce fatal and severe crashes
- provide efficient and reliable travel options to make it easier to drive less, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect clean air and water
- support economic prosperity
- enhance personal security and support healthy, active lifestyles
- support regional equity goals
- support efficient urban landscapes and vibrant communities
- provide a sense of place and identity
- protect and enhance the natural environment and habitat
- promote resiliency.

### What are “livable streets?”

Livability in transportation is designing our transportation system to help achieve broader regional and community goals. Livable streets trails are “context sensitive” integrating with nearby land uses to minimize congestion, encourage walking, biking and transit and ensure the wellbeing of wildlife.



Creating livable streets and trails is a way to achieve safer and healthier communities, improve access to jobs, school, nature and services, cleaner air and water, economic prosperity and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

### What is included in the update?

Metro’s designing livable streets and trails project updates and develops new design guidelines and resources for our regional transportation network:

- Current guidelines – *Creating Livable Streets, Green Streets, and Trees for Green Streets* –are being updated and combined into one resource.
- New regional multi-use path and trail design guidelines are being developed.
- Current guidelines on *Wildlife Crossings* and *Green Trails* will not be updated, but are referenced in the updated guidelines.
- Resources such as a visual library and case studies will be available on an updated webpage.
- Forums and workshops will highlight key topics in street, stormwater and multi-use path design in the region and throughout the world.

The final design guidance will provide a performance-based policy framework, a toolbox of design elements, visualizations and schematics illustrating design elements in context.

## Why now?

The current design guideline handbooks to build safe and healthy streets were last updated in 2002. Since that time, many transportation policies have been updated and our understanding of transportation design has evolved through practice and research:

- Regional transportation policy has evolved with the adoption of an outcomes-based planning framework.
- Regional freight, safety and active transportation plans and the 2014 Climate Smart Strategy include recommended changes and updates.
- The role of livable streets to help address traffic congestion and improve safety and mobility options for all modes is better understood.
- National research and efforts related to street design have continued to expand, especially for bikeway, roundabout and intersection designs.
- Addressing regional challenges, such as a growing aging population, increasing diversity, demand for safe routes to school, the high rate of fatal pedestrian crashes, climate change and decreasing mobility for buses require creative and up-to-date street design solutions.

After 15 years, it is time to update these guidelines to reflect changes in policy, priorities and best practices.

## Next steps

A regional work group comprising agency staff, technical experts, practitioners, community members, public health representatives and advocates is guiding the update of the design guidelines. Metro technical and advisory committees will also provide input. Ultimately, the project will recommend additional policy updates in the Regional Transportation Plan.

Phase 1 of the project has been completed, resulting in an annotated outline that describes what will be included in the updated design guidelines. Currently underway, phase 2 of the project will develop the content. The final design guidelines are anticipated to be completed by summer 2019.

**Find out how to be involved – and more – at [oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/ updating-street-design-guidance](http://oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/ updating-street-design-guidance)**

