

Regional Framework for Highway Jurisdictional Transfer

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ISSUE STATEMENT

In Oregon, and specifically in the Portland metropolitan region, ownership patterns of streets, roads and highways reflect historical patterns but do not necessarily reflect current transportation uses, land use and development patterns. This long-recognized issue creates challenges to maintaining and implementing capital improvements. These facilities are identified in the RTP as key multimodal travel corridors and are strongly correlated with high fatality and serious injury rates. In December the Metro Council adopted the 2018 Regional transportation Plan (RTP), which calls out the need for a Jurisdictional Transfer Assessment as near-term planning work needed to advance implementation of the Plan.

At this work session, staff will present the timeline and proposed next steps for the assessment process.

ACTION REQUESTED

No formal action requested at this work session. This is the kick-off of the Jurisdictional Assessment Process. Staff will keep the Metro Council updated and provide an opportunity for input at key-decision points throughout the year-long project.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The Metro Council has previously adopted the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and prioritized four outcomes for subsequent implementation:

- a. **Equity** – reduce disparities and barriers faced by communities of color and other historically marginalized communities
- b. **Safety** – reduce fatal and severe injury crashes, particularly focusing on the High Crash Corridor network
- c. **Climate Change** – expand transit and active transportation networks, and leverage emerging technology to meet Climate Smart Strategy goals
- d. **Congestion Relief (mobility)** – manage congestion and travel demand through low-cost, high value solutions

The Jurisdictional Transfer Assessment Program was identified in the Regional Transportation Process as a necessary step to helping our region meet their equity, safety and multi-modal goals. As part of the assessment process, Metro will be assessing corridors based on:

- Asset condition (maintenance)
- Safety
- Pedestrian network
- Transit network

The assessment will be used to prioritize corridors and it will also be used as a basis for the cost methodology.

POLICY QUESTION(S)

- Are equity, safety and multi-modal mobility the right policy outcomes for this effort?
- From a policy perspective, do you agree with Metro staff on the assessment factors?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Later in the process, Metro staff will be coming back to Metro Council with some options to consider.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

No recommendations at this time. We will be back to Metro Council with recommendations over the course of the next year.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The issue of “orphan highways” has been a problem with no solution in our region for over 20 years. Decades of de-investment in roadways that were once highways has led to the degradation of the roads, and a disregard for the communities who live along the candidates for jurisdictional transfer.

This issue became evident during the 2018 RTP process, wherein local jurisdictions submitted over \$800 M of projects on the constrained list for the RTP, and ODOT submitted none. In other words, it was clear that the local communities are willing to invest in these roadways because they function more like local roads, and less like state roads. After significant debate at JPACT in the summer of 2018, Metro and ODOT proposed a process for moving forward: the Jurisdictional Transfer Assessment Process.

The project has multiple goals: 1) identify regional priorities for funding for transfers, 2) have an agreed-upon cost methodology, and 3) an understanding of best practices for these transfers. Once regional priorities are identified and costs are determined, the region will be better poised to discuss funding for jurisdictional transfer, whether it is a part of the T2020 process or a state legislative conversation.

BACKGROUND

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan identifies the need and a process for completing several jurisdictional transfers in the Metro region for older, state-owned facilities that have lost their statewide function over time to urbanization and now function as urban arterial streets (e.g. 82nd Avenue in Portland). Most of these routes have been bypassed by modern, limited access freeways (e.g. I-205) that replace their statewide travel function. In recognition of this transition, the state has adopted policies to promote the jurisdictional transfer of these older routes to city or county ownership.

Most of these roadways have a backlog of pavement maintenance as well as gaps or deficiencies in basic urban pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Funding for near- or long-term investments has not been identified by the state or local jurisdictions. Furthermore, there is no agreement in the region on which roads are the highest priorities when it comes to what to transfer, when, and at what cost. For this reason, these transfers will take time to accomplish on a case-by-case basis.

Through this project Metro will hire a contractor to help project partners identify roadways that are good candidates for transfer of ownership (e.g. from the State to a County or City), expected cost ranges to fund improvements and potential funding sources and timelines. The final report is expected to describe points of regional consensus as well as the priorities held by individual partners. A final recommendation memo will describe best practices for jurisdictional transfer in our region, which will be included in the technical appendix of the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan.

ATTACHMENTS

- Timeline for the project
- Is legislation required for Council action? ☒ Yes ☐ No
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? ☐ Yes ☒ No
- What other materials are you presenting today?

PowerPoint presentation