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Metro

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Date: Thursday, May 2, 2019
To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation members and interested parties
From: Andy Shaw, Government Affairs Director
Tyler Frisbee, Transportation Policy Manager
Subject: Regional Transportation Funding Measure Update

Everybody in greater Portland deserves safe and reliable ways to get to work, school, and other destinations, and back home again. However and wherever we travel, we all need roads, buses, trains and streets that work for everyone. Greater Portland is growing quickly, with more than two thousand new residents each month. It's fundamental to our future to have a variety of safe, affordable, and reliable options for people to get where they need to go – whether they are driving, riding a bus or train, biking or walking.

Metro has been working since early 2018 to lay the foundation of a collaborative, comprehensive investment plan that makes getting around safer, faster and more affordable for everyone. The Metro Council has directed that this plan include investments throughout the region, supporting the many ways residents travel today and in the future. The council has been clear that this work must place advancing racial equity and addressing climate change at its core. The council also seeks to engage a wide range of community members, partners and leaders to identify smart solutions supported by a broad coalition.

As greater Portland faces the future, a regional transportation investment measure in 2020 could represent a significant opportunity to connect priorities and make meaningful, strategic investments that improve lives and increase opportunities throughout the region.

Background and Metro Council direction

In December 2018, JPACT and the Metro Council adopted a significant Regional Transportation Plan update, following years of engagement that included over 19,000 touch points with residents, community and business leaders, and regional partners. Through the extensive engagement that shaped the plan, Metro heard clear desires from residents for safe, smart, reliable and affordable transportation options for everyone and every type of trip.

Built around key values of equity, climate, safety, and congestion relief, the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan recognizes that a growing and changing region demands a new vision for serving people's transportation needs.

The themes of this engagement and vision have led directly to the key outcomes and values driving a potential 2020 transportation funding measure.

In January, the Metro Council provided direction on key outcomes, principles and the structure of a potential transportation investment measure that could help advance this vision. The Metro Council also identified several dozen potential key travel corridors where investment could help advance these outcomes as a starting point for further discussion, engagement and prioritization. Finally, the Metro Council approved a charge to provide direction for a Regional Transportation Funding Task Force.

Task Force

The Metro Council is ultimately responsible for what could be referred to the region's voters in 2020, but its decision-making is closely informed by community engagement and the recommendations of a Transportation Funding Task Force with nearly three dozen leaders representing perspectives and communities throughout the region.

The Task Force, appointed by the Metro Council President and co-chaired by Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson and Washington County Commissioner Pam Treece, has met five times since its appointment to identify shared values and discuss key travel corridors where investment could advance these values and the Metro Council's direction.

In April, Metro staff presented a high-level evaluation of the potential of investment in 75 travel corridors to advance the Task Force's values. Task Force members were asked to complete an online exercise in which they applied this evaluation as well as their personal knowledge and experience to identify potential investment corridors they would include in a measure. On April 24, the Task Force reviewed the results of this exercise and the degree to which the corridors that emerged as being of most interest would advance their values if included for investment in a measure.

The Task Force has meetings scheduled for May 15 and 29, in which members are expected to further discuss corridor prioritization and readiness, and reach a recommendation to the Metro Council regarding which corridors should be prioritized for consideration. The Metro Council will provide corridor prioritization direction in early June, initiating a new phase of community engagement and project identification and assessment that will last through the summer.

At JPACT's May 16 meeting, Metro staff will share the Metro Council's measure direction and the Task Force's identified values and corridors of interest, themes of recent community engagement, and next steps for developing the potential funding measure. Staff looks forward to answering JPACT members' questions about the process moving forward.

