

REGIONAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY: TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT MEASURE CORRIDOR PRIORITIZATION

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Prepared by: Craig Beebe, x1584,
craig.beebe@oregonmetro.gov

Department: GAPD

Presenters: Tyler Frisbee,
tyler.frisbee@oregonmetro.gov;
Andy Shaw, andy.shaw@oregonmetro.gov
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ISSUE STATEMENT

It is fundamental to greater Portland's 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. Since March, the Transportation Funding Task Force has met repeatedly to discuss the Metro Council's direction on a potential transportation investment measure, identify shared values and develop recommendations on potential prioritization of investment corridors for the measure. At this work session, staff will present the Task Force's corridor prioritization recommendations and key themes from recent community engagement. Staff will seek Council direction on moving forward with project development and evaluation in these corridors.

ACTION REQUESTED

Direction on Council's prioritization of potential investment corridors, to begin community-led evaluation of potential projects over the summer.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The Metro Council has previously indicated its desire that a regional measure:

- Be truly regional, delivering benefits to community members, businesses and travelers throughout greater Portland's counties, cities and communities
- Advance racial equity through the measure's development and implementation
- Reduce climate emissions and support projects, programs, and policies that will advance Metro's Climate Smart Strategy
- Support investments that make it safer and easier to use a variety of transportation options that serve people's needs getting around, including driving, taking transit, bicycling, walking and rolling
- Align with the policies adopted in the Regional Transportation Plan
- Advance the Southwest Corridor light rail project, delivering a congestion-proof transit option to one of the region's busiest and fastest-growing travel corridors
- Bring together a wide coalition of interests and partners, as well as community members, to support a broad, bold package of investments in the region's future

POLICY QUESTION

- Which priority corridors should proceed into project development, evaluation and identification for a potential investment measure?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

The Transportation Funding Task Force is expected to make a corridor prioritization recommendation to the Metro Council at its May 29 meeting. The Task Force's recommendations will be shared via memo to the Metro Council soon after that meeting, and attached to this staff report as soon as possible.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

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 depend on roads, buses, trains and streets that work for many kinds of people and many kinds of trips – from commuting and moving goods to running errands and visiting friends.

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 people travel. 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.

The passage of the regional affordable housing bond in November demonstrates greater Portland voters' eagerness to work together to address the critical issues we face. The council is now working with jurisdictional partners, housing providers and the community to create needed affordable homes through the bond. The Metro Council also plans to refer a parks and nature bond renewal to voters in 2019 to carry Metro's work protecting and connecting nature and people into a new decade. 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

In December 2018, the Metro Council adopted a significant Regional Transportation Plan update, following years of engagement that included over 19,000 touch points with community members, community and business leaders, and regional partners. Through the extensive engagement that shaped the plan, Metro heard clear desires from community members 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 needs a new vision for serving people's transportation needs.

At two work sessions in January, the Metro Council provided guidance 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 transportation corridors where investment could help advance these outcomes as a starting point for further discussion, engagement and prioritization. The council also approved a charge to provide direction for the Regional Transportation Funding Task Force, whose membership includes perspectives from around the region and the ways we use the transportation system.

By the date of this work session, the Task Force, co-chaired by Multnomah County Commissioner Jessica Vega Pederson and Washington County Commissioner Pam Treece, will have met seven times since its membership was confirmed by the Metro Council in February.

Staff provided an update on the Task Force's work at the Metro Council's April 2 work session. The Task Force has reviewed Metro Council direction and policy applying to the regional investment measure, including Metro's racial equity and climate strategies and the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan. They have identified key values to advance in the measure, building on the direction received from the Metro Council. They have proposed additional corridors for consideration, reviewed staff evaluations of corridors' potential to advance key values, and completed an evaluation exercise identifying their individual corridor priorities. Finally, after reviewing an assessment of corridor investment readiness and opportunities, the Task Force has discussed recommendations for prioritizing corridors into several tiers to guide further development of the investment measure.

Also during the spring, Regional Investment Strategy staff worked together to conduct coordinated, focused engagement around the three arms of the Regional Investment Strategy, including transportation, affordable housing, and parks and nature. These activities included community forums, culturally-specific discussion groups led by community partners, and a community leaders forum bringing together many kinds of expertise and experience into a shared conversation of the region's challenges and how potential investments can help address them. Staff also released a transportation investment survey that as of this writing has received more than 2,000 responses, each sharing unique experiences of getting around the region and what could make it better.

On June 4, staff will present community engagement themes and the Task Force's corridor prioritization recommendations to the Metro Council for discussion and direction. Staff will explicitly seek Council's direction on the top tier of potential corridors to proceed into further project development and evaluation over the summer.

Project feedback activities this summer will focus on three local investment teams of eight to ten community members from each county. These teams, with membership identified through consultation with the Metro Council, Task Force co-chairs, local partners and

community advocates, will begin meeting in June to review potential investments, and provide feedback on those potential investments by September. These evaluations will be provided to the Task Force to assist in its deliberations of short- and long-term project investments in each high-priority corridor for possible inclusion in the investment measure. The Task Force is expected to provide a project recommendation to the Metro Council this fall.

During the summer, Metro will also continue to work with community partners to foster dialogue and conversation about options throughout the region, particularly among communities of color and other historically marginalized groups. Meanwhile, the Task Force will consider potential region-wide programs to fund transportation improvements serving communities beyond the priority corridors identified for the measure.

The Metro Council will continue to direct staff in future iterative policy discussions, including direction on options for investments, programs, oversight and implementation of the measure. The Metro Council could consider referring a measure to voters in spring 2020.

- Is legislation required for Council action? **Yes**
- If yes, is draft legislation attached? **No**