

REGIONAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY: TRANSPORTATION INVESTMENT MEASURE

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Departments: GAPD, Planning & Development

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Length: 60 min.

ISSUE STATEMENT

People across the Portland area are looking for answers to a growing traffic and transportation safety crisis. The Metro Council has directed staff to work with community and partners on a potential 2020 transportation investment measure to improve the quality of life in our communities through a balanced regional package of bus, light rail and roadway improvements that address safety and traffic on some of the most congested and dangerous corridors in our region.

At this work session, staff will provide an overview of a preliminary staff recommendation for potential project investments in 13 Tier 1 corridors that were identified by the Metro Council with Transportation Funding Task Force input in June. Staff will answer Council questions on how the recommendation was created and the potential outcomes it could advance, as well as what happens next with the Task Force.

ACTION REQUESTED

None requested at this work session. Council will be asked to provide direction on projects to continue developing in Tier 1 corridors at a work session in January, after the Transportation Funding Task Force considers its recommendations in December.

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

The Metro Council has consistently directed that a potential measure advance the Regional Transportation Plan, Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, and Climate Smart Strategy; engage diverse partners and community members; and leverage regional and local investments in affordable housing and parks and nature.

The Metro Council approved specific policy outcomes for the potential transportation measure and appointed a Transportation Funding Task Force in early 2019.

In order to advance its desired policy outcomes, the Council has directed staff to develop a measure that focuses investments in key regional travel corridors and also includes regionwide investment programs to spread benefits throughout the region.

POLICY QUESTION

For today: Does Council have questions on how the staff recommendation was developed or the outcomes it could advance?

In January: What potential projects in Tier 1 corridors should move forward for further project development and continued consideration for inclusion in a potential measure?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Following a summer of in-depth engagement with community-based Local Investment Teams and project development with jurisdictional partners, Metro staff released a preliminary Tier 1 corridor projects and regionwide programs recommendation to the Transportation Funding Task Force on Oct. 18, 2019.

In creating these recommendations, Metro staff considered a number of factors, including:

- Metro Council outcomes for the Transportation Measure
- Task Force outcomes for the Transportation Measure
- Local Investment Team input
- Regional and local plans
- Analysis of transit opportunities on corridor
- Agency staff knowledge of readiness and opportunity
- Metro staff review of consistency with Regional Transportation Plan principles
- Expected scale of potential revenue
- Feasibility of delivering projects within the near future

The Task Force discussed staff's recommendations at its Oct. 30 meeting. The Task Force and will continue discussing the recommendation and possible amendments into November and December. Staff expect a Tier 1 project recommendation from the Task Force by the end of 2019, for Council consideration in early 2020.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Greater Portland is growing quickly. 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 directed that this work must place advancing racial equity and addressing climate change at its core. The council has also directed staff to engage a wide range of community members, partners and leaders to identify smart solutions supported by a broad coalition.

Greater Portland voters' decisive approval of the regional affordable housing bond in 2019 and Parks and Nature bond renewal this month demonstrates their eagerness to address

the critical issues we face across the region. The Metro Council is now working with jurisdictional partners, housing providers and the community to create needed affordable homes through the bond, and will soon begin a refinement process for implementing the new parks and nature bond. As greater Portland faces the future, a regional transportation measure in 2020 represents a significant opportunity to continue connecting these priorities to make meaningful, strategic investments that improve lives and increase opportunities throughout the region.

BACKGROUND

In December 2018, the Metro Council adopted a Regional Transportation Plan update, following years of engagement that included more than 19,000 touchpoints 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. The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan is therefore built on key values of equity, climate, safety, and congestion relief.

At work sessions in January 2019, the Metro Council provided guidance on key outcomes, principles and the structure of a potential investment measure to help advance these values. The council also approved a charge for a diverse and regionally inclusive Regional Transportation Funding Task Force. Co-chaired by Commissioners Jessica Vega Pederson and Pam Treece, the Task Force has met 13 times. To date, the Task Force has reviewed Metro Council direction and policy applying to the regional investment measure, identified additional desired outcomes, and provided input to Council on priority corridors and regionwide programs.

In June, informed by input from the Task Force and an online survey completed by approximately 3,500 area residents, the Metro Council directed staff to move 13 “Tier One” corridors into further project identification, development and engagement. The council also identified 16 “Tier Two” corridors that could also be considered for funding if there is revenue capacity. Over the summer, three Local Investment Teams toured the Tier One corridors and provided feedback to inform staff and Task Force project recommendations.

In September, informed by input from community forums in the spring and Task Force discussions in the summer, the Metro Council provided direction on nine regionwide programs to continue developing for potential inclusion in the measure; these programs would advance Council outcomes and meet community needs beyond the priority corridors identified in the measure. Staff are now developing these program concepts further through engagement with community and jurisdictional partners.

The Metro Council will continue to direct staff in future iterative policy discussions, including direction on options for investments, programs, revenue mechanisms, oversight and implementation. The council could consider referral to voters in late spring.

- Is legislation required for Council action? **Not at this stage**