

STAFF REPORT

COUNCIL DISCUSSION AND FEEDBACK ON THE 2023 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE AND EMERGING TRANSPORTATION TRENDS STUDY

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Research

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Length: 60 minutes

ISSUE STATEMENT

The [Regional Transportation Plan](#) (RTP) is a state- and federally-required long-range transportation plan for the Portland metropolitan area. As the federally-designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Portland metropolitan area, Metro is responsible for leading and coordinating updates to the RTP. As the regional government responsible for regional land use and transportation planning under state law, Metro is also responsible for developing a regional transportation system plan (TSP), consistent with the Regional Framework Plan, statewide planning goals, the Oregon Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), the Metropolitan Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Reduction Rule, the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), and by extension the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) and other state modal plans.

The RTP meets these federal and state requirements using an outcomes-based planning framework to guide planning and investment in the region's transportation system for all forms of travel – motor vehicle, transit, biking, and walking – and the movement of goods and freight.

The RTP is a key tool for the implementing the [2040 Growth Plan](#) and [Climate Smart Strategy](#) and connecting people to their jobs, families, school and other important destinations in the region. The current RTP establishes four overarching priorities – equity, safety, climate and congestion relief – and eleven goals and supporting objectives, performance targets and policies that together guide planning and investment priorities to meet current and future needs of our growing and changing region. The plan identifies local, regional, state and federal transportation funds the region expects to have available to pay for those investments.

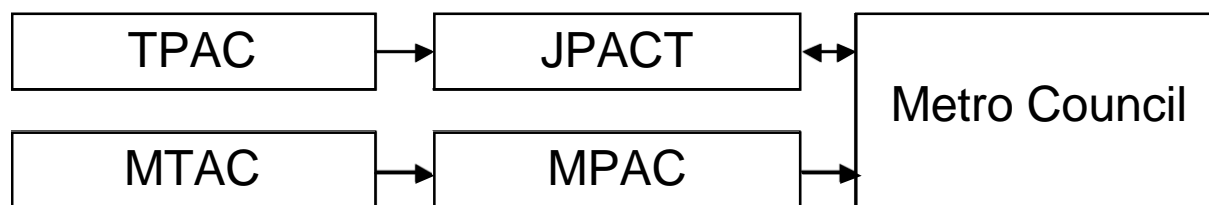
2018 RTP Vision

In 2040, everyone in the Portland metropolitan region will share in a prosperous, equitable economy and exceptional quality of life sustained by a safe, reliable, healthy, and affordable transportation system with travel options.

From 2018 Regional
Transportation Plan Chapter
2 (Our Shared Vision and
Goals for Transportation)

The Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) must adopt an updated RTP every five years to maintain compliance with federal and state requirements. As a land use action under the statewide land use planning program, the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) serves in an advisory role to the Metro Council. The regional decision-making framework is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Decision-Making Framework



Metro works closely with local jurisdictions, port districts, transit providers and state agencies in preparing the RTP, and provides meaningful opportunities for public input.

The Metro Council adopted the most recent update of the RTP in 2018. The next plan update is due by December 6, 2023. During 2022 and 2023, Metro will engage the public and local, regional, and state partners to update the RTP through the year 2045. Shown in **Attachment 1**, the 2023 RTP update is proposed to be completed over two years, beginning in Fall 2021 and concluding in the Fall 2023.

To support this update to the RTP, staff has initiated a scoping phase to engage the Metro Council and local, regional, state and community partners to inform the overall scope of the update as well as the values and priority policy outcomes that will guide the development of the updated plan. Planned engagement activities for the scoping phase (from Oct. 2021 to March 2022) include stakeholder interviews, culturally-specific focus groups, a community leaders forum, briefings to regional policy and technical advisory committees and county coordinating committees, and consultation activities with tribes, resource agencies and other stakeholders. Metro has also initiated background work, including an Emerging Transportation Trends Study to identify how the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent disruptions could impact meeting the overarching RTP priorities.

ACTION REQUESTED

No formal action is required. Staff seeks Metro Council discussion and feedback on:

- (1) Staff's proposed process for updating the RTP (Attachment 1);
- (2) Council priority policy outcomes to be addressed in the update;
- (3) Council's desired outcomes for evaluation and selection of investment priorities;
- (4) Council's role in outreach and engagement for the update; and
- (5) Which trends the Emerging Transportation Trends Study should focus on (Attachment 3).

IDENTIFIED POLICY OUTCOMES

Adopted unanimously by JPACT and the Metro Council, the 2018 RTP established a vision and regional transportation policy direction for planning and investment in the greater Portland transportation system. In addition to adequately maintaining the transportation system, investments aim to improve outcomes toward desired performance for the following priority policy outcomes:

- Equity
- Safety
- Climate
- Congestion relief

These priority policy outcomes are further defined in **Figure 2**.

Figure 2. 2018 Regional Transportation Plan Priority Policy Outcomes



Summarized from the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (Chapters 3 and 6)

Much has changed since adoption of the 2018 RTP, and the future is uncertain and likely to include increased disruption. The greater Portland region is facing urgent global and regional challenges. Rising inequities and public health, safety, housing affordability and economic disparities are being heightened by a global pandemic and changing climate. How, why, when and where people travel changed dramatically during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., increases in fatal and serious traffic crashes, increases in telework, fewer commute trips during morning rush hour, increases in e-commerce and home deliveries, lower transit ridership and increases in recreational walking and biking). At the same time, the climate is changing, and we need to continue to work for clean air,

clean water and healthy ecosystems. Systemic inequities mean that communities have not equally benefited from public policy and investments, and the pandemic has exacerbated many disparities that people of color, people with low incomes, women and other marginalized groups already experience.

In June 2021, Metro staff shared a new Emerging Trends work program with Council that encompasses several parallel efforts to examine how changes like those above will impact a variety of the areas in which Metro works, including land use, employment and climate resilience. The Emerging Transportation Trends Study is the first of these efforts to get underway.

Metro staff signed a contract with the consultant team that is conducting the Emerging Transportation Trends Study in August 2021. The study consists of four tasks:

1. Researching potential trends and determining which ones to focus on;
2. Analyzing the impacts of those trends on travel behavior and RTP Goals;
3. Creating tools and scenarios to support analysis of emerging trends in the upcoming RTP update; and
4. Identifying potential RTP policy changes in response to emerging trends.

The consultant team has conducted their background research and identified potential trends for Metro to consider. With their support, staff are collecting feedback from Council and from Metro's community and agency partners about which trends to focus on as the study proceeds. Once trends are selected, the consultant team will be working with Metro staff to analyze the impacts of the trends. We will share these results with Council in Spring 2022 and collect feedback on how the results should inform Metro's approach to the RTP update. The feedback we receive today from Council will also help to inform how staff address high-priority emerging trends during the RTP update.

In August and September 2021, Metro staff began engaging the Council individually in preparation for this work session. For this update, staff have heard from individual Metro Councilors that they would like:

- To **focus on people and values**, as well as policy, analysis and engagement approaches that **advance Metro's commitment to racial justice, climate leadership and resilient communities**.
- To continue to **prioritize safety, equity and climate outcomes**.
- To consider **reframing the congestion relief outcome to focus more on moving people and goods** than on moving vehicles.
- To **better evaluate climate and equity impacts** at a project- or corridor-level, as was done for the recent transportation measure effort "Get Moving 2020."
- To consider how the plan's policies and investments can be updated to **accelerate implementation of the Climate Smart Strategy**.
- To consider how the plan's policies and investments can be updated to **address safety and equity issues on major urban arterials** in the region.
- To consider how to **balance and weight priority outcomes relative to each other** – and account for projects that meet multiple outcomes – when evaluating projects and developing the near-term (10-year) RTP investment strategy.

- To consider how the plan's investments **advance outcomes and goals for more equitable and resilient communities, affordable housing, job creation, environmental protection and shared prosperity.**
- To consider how to **manage and operate the existing transportation system to make the most of past investments** (and existing capacity).
- To better **understand which communities are underserved by the transportation system and the barriers people experience** in meeting their daily needs.
- To better **understand where there are gaps in different types of transit service and what policies and investments are needed to make transit a preferred travel option.**
- To better **understand how transportation is funded today, inequities of different funding sources and how transportation could be funded in the future** using an equity lens.
- To use of **storytelling and other meaningful and inclusive engagement strategies combined with quantitative data** to elevate diverse community voices to decision-makers and bring to life the experiences and transportation needs of people living and working throughout the region.
- To **coordinate engagement internally and with jurisdictional partners to the extent possible**, recognizing community-based organizations have limits to their capacity to participate in planning processes that most impact the communities they represent.

At this work session, staff will kick-off the scoping phase to develop the work plan and engagement plan that will guide the 2023 RTP update and seek feedback from Council on which trends should be the focus of the Emerging Transportation Trends Study. A draft work plan and engagement strategy will be presented to Council for further direction in January 2022. The outreach and engagement plan to be developed this fall will be coordinated with and help leverage other engagement efforts across the agency and seek to be more inclusive of historically underrepresented community voices.

POLICY QUESTIONS

1. Do you have feedback on staff's proposed process for scoping and updating the RTP?
2. What policy outcomes are most important to address in this RTP update?
3. What are Council's desired outcomes for the "Call for Projects" phase of the RTP update?
4. Do you have suggestions or comments on outreach and engagement for update, including stakeholders to engage and Council's role in engagement activities?
5. Which trends should the Emerging Transportation Trends Study focus on?

POLICY OPTIONS FOR COUNCIL TO CONSIDER

Metro Council makes decisions based on the outcomes that it wants to achieve. For the RTP, Metro shares this outcome-based decision-making process with JPACT and seeks feedback from MPAC. For the upcoming update to the RTP, Council could provide feedback on desired process and policy outcomes that are most important for this RTP update to address and which trends the Emerging Transportation Trends Study should focus on.

STAFF RECOMMENDATIONS

None at this time. Staff will return to Council with a recommended draft work plan and engagement plan at a future Metro Council work session for discussion.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT & FRAMING COUNCIL DISCUSSION

The Metro Council participated in the development of the current RTP that used Metro racial equity goals and climate action goals, Vision Zero safety goals and congestion relief goals and integrated them into regional transportation policy that is guiding regional transportation planning and investment decisions, including the most recent Regional Flexible Funds Allocation (RFFA) cycles and development of the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

Council will work through the next two years to update the plan's policies and investment priorities during the development of the 2023 RTP. In this work session, Council will consider how it may wish to refine these desired transportation policy outcomes as defined in the 2018 RTP and provide feedback to staff on updating the plan's policies and investment priorities to further advance achievement of those policy outcomes and demonstrate progress in the 2023 RTP.

How is this related to Metro's Strategic Plan?

This update will be guided by the [Metro Council's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion](#) and supporting Metro Racial Equity Framework and the [Planning and Development Department Strategy for Achieving Racial Equity](#) using a targeted universalism¹ approach. This will ensure that people situated in different positions in society because of institutionalized racialism can access the same opportunities and

How does this advance Metro's racial equity goals?

The RTP advances equitable outcomes by eliminating disparities as a priority policy outcome. The project team is partnering with Metro's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion team to apply Metro's Racial Equity Framework to the design of the planning and engagement process that will be reflected in work plan and engagement plan developed for Council consideration in early 2022.

How does this advance Metro's climate action goals?

The RTP is a key tool for implementing the [2014 Climate Smart Strategy](#) approved by the Land Conservation and Development Commission in 2015 and incorporated into the RTP in 2018. The update is an opportunity to consider how the plan's policies and investments can be updated to accelerate implementation of the Climate Smart Strategy and support implementation of the [Governor's Executive Order 20-04](#) on Climate Change and the [Statewide Transportation \(STS\) Strategy for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions](#).

Known Opposition/Support/Community Feedback

None known.

Explicit list of stakeholder groups and individuals who will be involved in policy development. This information will be described in more detail in the draft engagement plan developed for Council consideration in early 2022.

¹ **Targeted universalism** means setting universal goals pursued by targeted processes to achieve those goals. <https://belonging.berkeley.edu/targeteduniversalism>

To date, the project team has identified a number of stakeholders to engage in the update:

- **Community leaders and community-based organizations** for historically marginalized and underrepresented communities², health and equity interests, environmental protection, affordable housing, transportation, and social, climate and environmental justice.
- **Business, economic development and freight groups**, including large and small employers, freight shippers, business organizations, associations and chambers of commerce.
- **Local jurisdiction staff and elected officials representing counties and cities in the region** (through county coordinating committees, TPAC/MTAC workshops and regional technical and policy advisory committees).
- **Special districts**, including TriMet, SMART, Port of Portland and Port of Vancouver (through TPAC, MTAC, JPACT and MPAC briefings and consultation activities).
- **Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC) and other Clark County governments** (through Regional Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC), SW RTC, TPAC, JPACT and MPAC briefings).
- **State agencies**, including the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD), the Oregon Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC), the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) (through TPAC, MTAC, JPACT and MPAC briefings and consultation activities).
- **Federal agencies**, including the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (through TPAC and consultation activities).

Legal Antecedents

- **Ordinance No. 18-1421** (For the Purpose of Amending the 2014 Regional Transportation Plan to Comply with Federal and State Law and Amending the Regional Framework Plan), adopted Dec. 6, 2018.

Anticipated Effects

With Council support, staff will begin engaging Metro's policy and technical advisory committees, community leaders, and other partners to further shape the work plan and engagement strategy this fall. A draft work plan and engagement strategy will be presented to Council for further direction in January 2022. The outreach and engagement plan to be developed will be coordinated with and help leverage other engagement efforts across the agency and be centered on historically underrepresented community voices.

Financial Implications (current year and ongoing)

The scoping phase for the update is accounted for in the current adopted Metro budget. The project will rely on a combination of Metro's federal transportation planning grants, MPO-related COVID-19 funding and non-federal MPO funding, based on the work plan and engagement plan developed during the scoping phase.

² Historically marginalized and underrepresented communities include people of color, people with low incomes, and people with limited English proficiency, youth, older adults and people experiencing a disability.

BACKGROUND

In December 2018, JPACT and the Metro Council adopted a significant update to the RTP following three years of engagement that included more than 19,000 touch points with community members, community and business leaders, and local, regional and state jurisdictional 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 RTP provided the policy foundation for several planning activities identified in Chapter 8 that have since been completed or are underway that will inform the 2023 RTP update, including:

- Designing Livable Streets and Trails Guide (completed in 2019)
- Jurisdictional Transfer Framework (completed in 2020)
- Enhanced Transit Pilot Program (ongoing)
- Regional Emergency Transportation Routes Update (Ph. 1 completed in 2021; Ph 2. anticipated completion in 2023)
- Regional Trail System Plan Map Update (completed in 2021)
- Regional Congestion Pricing Study (completed in 2021)
- Transportation System Management and Operations (TSMO) Strategy Update (anticipated completion in Fall 2021)
- Active Transportation Return On Investment (anticipated completion in Spring 2022)
- Regional Mobility Policy Update (anticipated completion in June 2022)
- Regional Transportation Trends (anticipated completion in June 2022)
- Regional Freight Commodity Flow Study (anticipated completion in July 2023)

Other local, regional and state efforts have been completed or are underway since 2018 that will also inform the update.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed planning process for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update
2. Overview of 2023 RTP Update
3. Assessment of potential emerging transportation trends to study (Task 1.1)

For work session:

- Is legislation required for Council action? **Not at this time.**
- What other materials are you presenting today?
 - Powerpoint presentations
 - 2023 RTP Update
 - Emerging Transportation Trends Study
 - Schedule for the Scoping Phase (under development)