

Memo



Metro

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Date: November 10, 2021
To: EMCTC
From: Kim Ellis, Principal Transportation Planner
Subject: 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update – Kick-off Scoping Process

PURPOSE

Metro is initiating a major update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The purpose of this memo is to provide an introduction and overview of the proposed process.

Metro staff seeks feedback on these questions:

- Do you have feedback on staff’s proposed process for scoping and updating the RTP?
- What policy outcomes are most important for this update to address?
- Do you have suggestions on outreach and engagement for the update, including stakeholders to engage and how best to engage local governments and elected officials throughout the process (e.g., special workshops, regular Metro advisory committee meetings, TPAC/MTAC workshops, regular coordinating committee meetings, other activities?)

The purpose of this initial discussion is to begin identifying what is most important for the update to address and hear your ideas for how the region should work together to update the plan. The discussion is part of a series of engagement activities that will inform development of a work plan and engagement strategy for consideration by the Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) in early 2022.

BACKGROUND

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.

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.

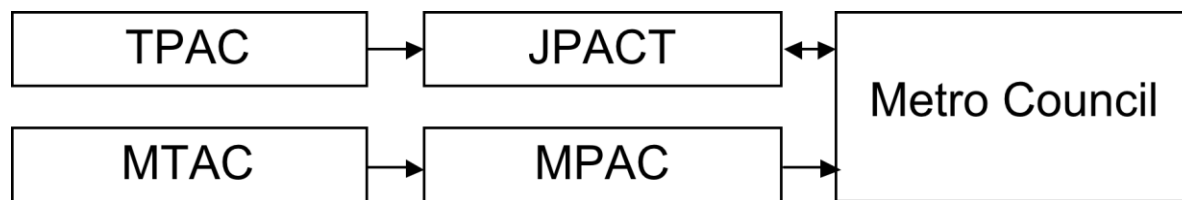
From 2018 Regional Transportation Plan Chapter 2 (Our Shared Vision and Goals for Transportation)

The RTP meets these federal and state requirements using an outcomes-based planning framework that guides 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 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.

The Metro Council and JPACT must adopt an updated RTP every five years to maintain compliance with federal and state requirements. JPACT is a 17-member committee that provides a forum for elected officials and representatives of agencies involved in transportation to evaluate transportation needs in the region and to make recommendations to the Metro Council. The established decision-making process strives for a well-balanced regional transportation system and involves local elected officials directly in decisions that help the Metro Council develop regional transportation policies, including allocating transportation funds. JPACT serves as the MPO board for the region in a unique partnership that requires joint action with the Metro Council on all MPO decisions. 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 and federal agencies in preparing the RTP, and provides meaningful opportunities for public input.

JPACT and 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 Oct. 2021 and concluding in Nov. 2023.

To support the update to the RTP, staff has initiated a scoping phase to engage the Metro Council, JPACT 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 for the RTP update (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 to support the update, including an Emerging Transportation Trends Study to identify how the COVID-19 pandemic and other recent disruptions could impact meeting the overarching RTP priorities.

Current Regional Transportation Plan Priority Policy Outcomes

In December 2018, JPACT and the Metro Council unanimously 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.

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)

These policy priorities have since provided the policy foundation for the most recent Regional Flexible Fund Allocation (RFFA) cycles and several regional planning activities identified in Chapter 8 of the RTP that have since been completed or are underway, 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 2021)
- [Active Transportation Return On Investment Study](#) (anticipated completion in Spring 2022)
- [Regional Mobility Policy Update](#) (anticipated completion in June 2022)
- Regional Transportation Trends Study (anticipated completion in June 2022)
- Regional Freight Delay and Commodities Movement Study (anticipated completion in July 2023)

These regional planning activities and other local, regional and state efforts have been completed or are underway since 2018 will inform the update.

However, 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 in how we plan, fund and invest in transportation mean that some communities have not equitably benefited from public policy and investments, and the pandemic has exacerbated many disparities** that people of color, people experiencing low income, women and other marginalized groups already experience.

This fall, Metro staff started the scoping process by engaging the Metro Council on the RTP update. The Metro Council would like this RTP update to:

- **Focus on people and values**, as well as use policy, analysis and engagement approaches that **advance Metro's commitment to racial justice, climate leadership and resilient communities.**

- Continue to **prioritize safety, equity and climate outcomes.**
- **Reframe the congestion relief outcome to focus on mobility - moving people and goods.**
- **Better measure climate and equity impacts** at a project- or corridor-level, as was done for the recent transportation measure effort “Get Moving 2020.”
- 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](#).
- Consider how the plan’s policies and investments can be updated to **address safety and equity issues on major urban arterials** in the region.
- 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.
- 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.**
- Consider how to **manage and operate the existing transportation system to make the most of past investments** (and existing capacity).
- **Better understand which communities are underserved by the transportation system and the barriers people experience** in meeting their daily needs.
- **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.**
- **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.
- Use **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.
- **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.
- **Update the process for updating and prioritizing the plan’s 10-year and 20+ year financially constrained project lists** to advance the RTP priority policy outcomes, particularly in the near-term as well as increase transparency and accountability.

NEXT STEPS FOR SHAPING THE 2023 RTP UPDATE WORK PLAN AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

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

- **Community leaders and community-based organizations** working in:
 - communities that have been excluded from decision making processes and where transportation investments have disproportionately led to harm, displacement and disinvestment. These communities include: Black, Indigenous

- and other people of color, youth, older adults and people with low incomes, limited English proficiency and disabilities.
- transportation policy, public health, environmental protection, economic development, affordable housing, 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, South Metro Area Regional Transit (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).

A draft work plan and engagement strategy will be presented to the Metro Council and JPACT for further direction in early 2022. An overview of the scoping schedule follows.

- **October to December 2021** – Metro Council and regional advisory committees discuss values, priorities and desired outcomes for update.
- **November 2021 to January 2022** – Outreach to further shape work plan and engagement strategy, including stakeholder interviews, culturally-specific focus groups, a community leaders forum, briefings to county coordinating committees, on-line survey and consultation activities with tribes, resource agencies and other stakeholders.
- **January to February 2022** – Metro Council and regional technical and policy advisory committees discuss draft work plan and engagement strategy.
- **March 2022** – JPACT and Metro Council consider approval of work plan and engagement strategy (by Resolution).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed planning process for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Update
2. Overview of 2023 RTP Update