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# Memo

Date: Monday, October 5, 2026  
To: EMCTC members and Interested Parties  
From: Marne Duke, Senior Regional Planner  
Subject: Regional Vanpool Action Plan

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## Project Overview

The Regional Vanpool Action Plan is a project led by Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) staff to give research and direction needed to advance vanpool as a practical and appealing travel option for commuting workers in the Metro region. Vanpool is an effective Transportation Demand Management (TDM) tool that can assist in meeting goals identified in the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Climate Smart Strategy, and the Regional TDM Strategy.

The Regional Vanpool Action Plan has been guided by a Technical Working Group compiled of regional stakeholders and, thus far, informed by a TPAC workshop, regional peer interviews and an employer focus group. To date, the project team has produced several key deliverables:

- Research Memo, giving an overview of past and current vanpool efforts in the region and across the state
- Case-study, outlining success and challenges of Cherriots Vanpool at Salem Area Mass Transit District
- Opportunities and Barriers statement, gained from feedback from stakeholder engagement and best practice research
- Geographic and Audience analysis, to best direct upcoming outreach and engagement to ensure vanpool success
- Objectives, strategies and actions that guide work by RTO staff and partners over the next three years to capitalize on the current opportunity afforded the region through ODOT support

**The draft action plan will be available online at [www.oregonmetro.gov/vanpool](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/vanpool) on June 15, with Metro holding a 30-day public comment period beginning July 1.** Moving forward, the draft action plan will be presented to TPAC, JPACT and Metro Council for consideration and action during September and October 2026.

## Why a Regional Vanpool Action Plan?

To encourage vanpooling in the state and Metro region, ODOT has designated an estimated \$3 million in programming and subsidies. This effort will temporarily replace the need for an agency to manage vanpool providers, subsidies and National Transit Database (NTD) reporting, something the Metro region is currently lacking. These funds will be spent through an award to a vanpool vendor to provide services for commuters in urban and rural areas statewide. Metro's work to support this project is funded through a grant from ODOT's Transportation Options Program, Innovative Mobility Program, and Carbon Reduction Program.

For the duration of the contract, the successful vendor will be required to focus approximately 35 percent of their outreach and marketing effort on vanpools starting or ending in the Portland metro area, and approximately 50 percent of their effort on vanpools that start or end in rural areas or vanpools with passengers in agricultural, manufacturing, healthcare, hospitality, or other

businesses with lower-wage workers or off-peak shifts. This vendor will facilitate all services and reporting needed for three years, with ODOT facilitating the receipt and distribution of 5307 funds from the federal government.

**Goals of the project:**

1. Ensure a strategic regional approach to employer outreach and assistance to take advantage of ODOT vanpool contract for subsidy, services and reporting.
2. Identify priority audiences/areas for subsidies and services to inform outreach efforts and approval of vanpool services,
3. Create an action plan to ensure sustainability of vanpool programs and subsidies beyond the three years of funding from ODOT

Funding for this project comes to Metro through a grant from ODOT's Transportation Options Program, Innovative Mobility Program, and Carbon Reduction Program. With this investment, ODOT and Metro hope to increase the number of vanpools in the region and reduce vehicle miles traveled from commute trips.

**What is a vanpool?**

Vanpools are a type of transit where a group of people share a vehicle to travel together from their homes or a common community location, such as a park-and-ride lot or a transit station, to a place of work or transit stop. For the purposes of this action plan, Vanpools are limited to those eligible for reporting with the National Transit Database (NTD) within the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), which require vanpools that have more than seven (7) participants, uses at least 80% of its vehicle miles traveled for commuting purposes, is run by a government or transit agency, open to the public, advertised actively to the public, and is ADA accessible.

Vanpools generally work because of subsidies. Vanpool fare subsidies are funds that are used to directly offset the individual cost for commuters to participate in a vanpool program. Subsidies can be paid out directly to commuters in the form of a refund or most commonly are paid out to the vanpool organizing agency/company and passed onto the commuter in the form of a discount.

[This video from SMART explains the basics of a vanpool.](#)

**How will the Regional Vanpool Strategy complement other Metro planning efforts?**

The action plan will be referenced in the Community Connector Transit (CCT) Study, which explores how community connector transit solutions can expand the transportation network and improve transit in areas with limited access. Through this study, Metro will recommend a regional strategy for enhancing the public transit system with community connectors and identify where to allocate resources for improvements first. Vanpool is identified as a complementary form of transit, which lies outside the purview of the study. The outcome of the work will inform updates to the next Regional Transportation Plan, which is planned to begin early next year.

The recently adopted Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Strategy identifies new regional TDM policies, strategies and actions for TDM implementation in the region, including the need for a more robust and coordinated vanpool program. The Regional TDM Strategy will ensure that TDM programs support regional goals in a way that is meaningful and appropriate based on specific contexts for different communities across the region. In addition, this process will include implementation of actions for Metro's Regional Travel Options program on grantmaking, technical assistance, and regional coordination in partnership with local agencies and nonprofit partners.

**Next Steps**

The next steps for the project are outlined in Table 1

*Table 1: Key project milestones*

| <b>Audience</b> | <b>Date</b> | <b>Action</b>      |
|-----------------|-------------|--------------------|
| JPACT           | October 15  | Request for action |
| Metro Council   | October 22  | Request for action |