

Getting there



with a connected region

.....

2018 Regional Transportation Plan Update

# Stakeholder Interviews

# Report

October 2015

.....

*Prepared for Metro*



*by JLA Public Involvement, Inc.*



### **Metro respects civil rights**

Metro fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related statutes that ban discrimination. If any person believes they have been discriminated against regarding the receipt of benefits or services because of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability, they have the right to file a complaint with Metro. For information on Metro's civil rights program, or to obtain a discrimination complaint form, visit [www.oregonmetro.gov/civilrights](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/civilrights) or call 503-797-1536.

Metro provides services or accommodations upon request to persons with disabilities and people who need an interpreter at public meetings. If you need a sign language interpreter, communication aid or language assistance, call 503-797-1700 or TDD/TTY 503-797-1804 (8 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays) 5 business days before the meeting. All Metro meetings are wheelchair accessible. For up-to-date public transportation information, visit TriMet's website at [www.trimet.org](http://www.trimet.org).

**Metro is the federally mandated metropolitan planning organization** designated by the governor to develop an overall transportation plan and to allocate federal funds for the region.

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (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 assures 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.

**Project website:** [www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp)

*The preparation of this report was financed in part by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The opinions, findings and conclusions expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Regional Transportation Plan background

In the early 1980s, Metro adopted the first Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which serves as a blueprint to guide investments in the region's transportation system for all forms of travel: motor vehicles, transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and the movement of goods and freight. The plan identifies current and future **transportation needs, investments recommended** to meet those needs, and **funds** that are expected to be available to make those investments a reality. The plan is a long-term vision for the next 25 years.

Every four years, Metro updates the RTP so that it continues to be in line with what is important to people who live and work in the Portland metropolitan region. The 2018 RTP update process began in May 2015 and is expected to be complete by Fall 2018. In December 2015, Metro Council is expected to formally approve a work plan and public engagement plan to guide the RTP update process.

### Interview purpose and background

JLA Public Involvement conducted 31 interviews with public officials, business and community leaders and other interests to support and inform the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update.

The **goals** of the interview process were to:

- engage stakeholders to clarify concerns, views and desired outcomes for regional transportation planning and investment decisions
- increase participation in regional transportation decision-making processes by underrepresented communities
- develop new relationships and maintain and strengthen existing relationships with elected leaders and business and community-based organizations
- build support for addressing regional challenges through partnerships, planning, and implementing policies that promote a safe and effective transportation system that supports local plans and visions and advances achievement of Metro's six desired outcomes for the region.

The interviews were structured to elicit input on key concerns that stakeholders would like to see addressed through the 2018 RTP update, key trends and choices facing the region, how the region should work together to address them, and desired process outcomes. Interviewers also asked for suggestions on the public engagement process for the RTP update. The input will help shape the RTP update work plan and community engagement strategy.

## II. INTERVIEWEES

Interviewees were selected to represent a mix of interests, including elected officials, businesses, and community organizations from across the region, to ensure a wide range of viewpoints and perspectives.

The following individuals were interviewed:

### Elected Officials

Name	Organization/Rep	Type	Location
Mark Gamba	City of Milwaukie	Mayor	Eastside
Jerry Hinton	City of Gresham	Councilor	Eastside
Tim Knapp	City of Wilsonville	Mayor	Westside
Jerry Willey (and Don Odermott, Transportation Planning Manager; Rob Dixon, Assistant City Manager)	City of Hillsboro	Mayor	Westside
Lori DeRemer (and Michael Walter, Economic and Community Development Director; Jason Tuck, City Manager)	City of Happy Valley	Mayor	Eastside
Diane McKeel (and Sean Files, Policy Advisor; Joanna Valencia, Transportation Planner)	Multnomah County	Commissioner	Multnomah
Paul Savas	Clackamas County	Commissioner	Clackamas
Roy Rogers	Washington County	Commissioner	Washington
Steve Novick	City of Portland	Commissioner	Portland

### Business and Economic Development

Name	Organization/Rep	Type	Location
Susie Lahsene	Port of Portland	Ports/Freight	Metro
Jill Eiland	Intel	Business – large westside employer	Westside
Linda Moholt	Tualatin Chamber of Commerce	Business	Westside
Alisa Pyszka	Greater Portland Inc.	Economic Development	Metro
Joe Esmonde	IBEW Local 48	Trades	Metro
Laura Addonizio (and Jacob Adams, Human Resources; Steve Flury, Traffic Coordinator)	Precision Cast Parts	Business – large eastside employer	Eastside
Peter Stark	Central Eastside Industrial Council	Business – inner Portland	Portland
Lanny Gower	Con-Way, Inc.	Freight	Portland
Jana Jarvis and Bob Russell	Oregon Trucking Association	Freight	Portland/Metro

## Community

Name	Organization/Rep	Type	Location
Steve White	Oregon Public Health Institute	Health	Oregon
Gerik Kransky	Bicycle Transportation Alliance	Bicycle	Metro
Duncan Hwang	Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon	Equity/communities of color	Metro
Cary Watters	NAYA Family Center	Equity/communities of color	Portland
Jared Franz	Transportation Justice Alliance/ OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon/ Bus Riders Unite	Transit	Metro/ Eastside
Michael Tetteh	Community Cycling Center	Bicycle/Equity	Portland
Eric Flores	Park Rose School Board	Youth (underserved)	Metro
Victor Merced	Hacienda Community Development Corporation	Housing/Latino	Multnomah
Ruth Adkins	Oregon Opportunity Network, Portland Public Schools	Housing/Schools/ Equity	Oregon and Metro area
Kari Schlosshauer	Safe Routes to School	Schools/Active transportation/youth	Clackamas County
Marie Dodds	American Automobile Association	Drivers	Oregon
Elaine Freisen-Strang	AARP, Inc.	Older persons	Oregon
Luis Nava	Latino Leadership Network	Latino	Washington County

### III. KEY THEMES AND TRENDS

Interviewees provided input on transportation trends, challenges and opportunities that should be addressed or reflected in the RTP, as well as considerations for prioritizing investments. They explored ideas for ways to increase funding, and also discussed strategies and ideas to guide the public engagement effort for the update process. Several key themes came out of these conversations:

**TRENDS:** *A number of trends are likely to change the way we get around in the next 25 years*

A **larger and more diverse population** will put greater demands on the transportation system. The region's **urban centers will become denser**, providing closer access to everyday needs and services and reduced need to drive long distances.

**People will be driving less** due to increased congestion, increased cost of driving a car (such as road use fees) and, and change in people's habits and preferences. We are likely to see **increased transit use** as congestion increases and investments are made in transit to improve the system. Advances in technology (**autonomous cars and smart roads**) may make driving more efficient. It is unclear whether such technology as well as increased availability of electric and no-emissions vehicles will increase or decrease the amount that people drive.

**Trucks will continue to move the majority of goods** around the region. An effective transportation system will be crucial to support movement of goods and the economy.

#### TRANSPORTATION CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

**The shortage in transportation funding** is a key challenge that affects all modes of travel. Everyone agrees we need more funding, and we'll need a conversation about how to increase funding and gain public support around the issue.

**Congestion** is the top concern particularly for regional commuters and the freight industry. A strong economy depends on an effective transportation system and the **effective movement of goods and employees**. The RTP will need to address major choke points on highways, and how to ensure that traffic does not spill over into neighborhoods and roads not designed to carry such high volumes. It will also need to focus on the **cross-regional transit commute** and find new transit connections that go beyond the "hub and spoke" model to improve connections between smaller towns and cities, as well as to low-income communities and communities of color that have historically been underserved by transit.

The **link between land use and transportation** needs to be stronger. Our transportation system does not necessarily support our land uses in many areas, and the region lacks a jobs-housing balance.

In terms of the RTP planning process and transportation planning overall, there is a need to **think regionally** and have a robust conversation about our true regional priorities. The plan needs to provide for *regional* connectivity of roads and transit—and assign responsibility for local issues to local

jurisdictions. The planning process should also recognize that **one size does not fit all**. The RTP needs to consider and incorporate the distinct needs of various parts of the region and of the various users of the system.

## PRIORITIES AND FUNDING

Interviewees discussed how we can prioritize projects and needs with limited transportation funding. Many agreed that the RTP update process will need to identify our **most pressing regional** needs and prioritize projects that respond to those needs—regardless of location or mode. We need to reframe the conversation: it is not about which jurisdictions or modes get a larger share of funding, but about funding the *best* projects for improving the regional system.

The most urgent need is to **improve movement of goods and employees** to support our economy, which means prioritizing projects that reduce single-occupancy vehicle trips, improve regional transit, add more capacity to congested roadways, and fix known freeway bottlenecks.

We must also be sure to make **equitable investments** that support the travel needs of low-income populations and avoid gentrification.

Interviewees provided many ideas for **increasing transportation funding**, including raising local and regional revenue, increasing the gas tax, instituting a vehicle miles traveled fee, pursuing tolling, public-private partnerships, and congestion pricing.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND MESSAGING

Interviewees recognized that long-range transportation planning processes like the RTP update are difficult to explain. They suggested that communication should include these key messages:

- The value of the RTP and transportation system in people’s daily lives
- Congestion and travel time information
- Cost of transportation and link to the pocketbook
- Why the transportation system is vital to a strong economy

They agreed that traditional open houses are likely not an effective outreach tool and provided a variety of suggestions for structuring the public engagement process:

- Focus on deeply engaging key leaders and thinkers rather than trying to get everyone engaged
- Partner with organizations, businesses and community based organizations (CBOs)
- Gather statistically valid input to provide the basis upon which to build a list of projects
- Cast a wide net and try to engage as many people as possible using a large toolbox of outreach methods, including social and traditional media, attending meetings of key groups and organizations, and doing direct engagement

## IV. SUMMARY BY QUESTION AND TOPIC

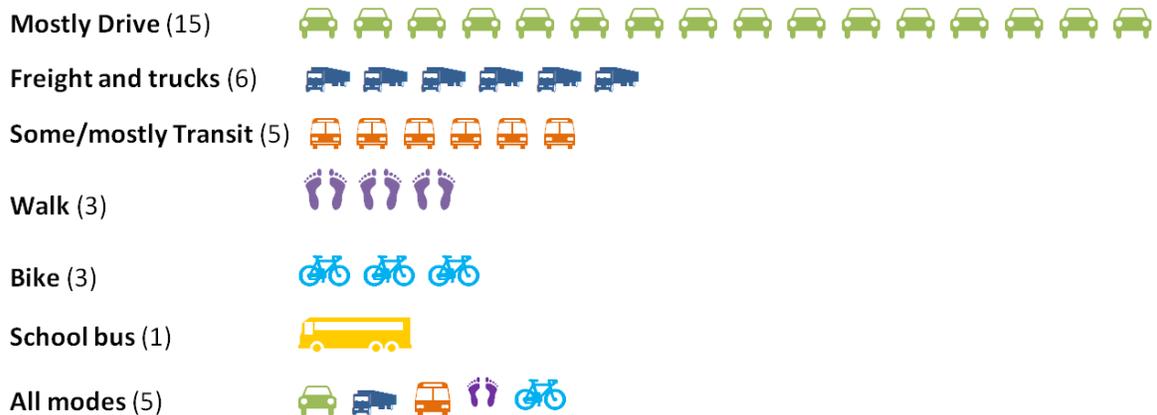
### 1. Question: What would you say “your place in the region” is?

Interviewees came from and felt connected to a wide range of geographies, including:

Multnomah County Area	Clackamas County Area	Washington County Area
Inner northeast Portland East Portland/East Metro Portland Inner southeast Portland Multnomah County/East County Gresham	Clackamas County Happy Valley Southeast Oregon Wilsonville Milwaukie	Washington County Hillsboro Westside Aloha Tualatin
Portland metropolitan region	Oregon	The planet!

### 2. How do you and your employees, members or constituents use the transportation system to get around?

Most interviewees said that the majority of their members, constituents or employees drive a personal vehicle, particularly in suburban and smaller communities. Interviewees that represented more urban interests or underrepresented communities found that many of their members and constituents use alternative modes of transportation to get around.



### 3. TRENDS What will change or shape the way we get around 25 years from now?

Interviewees pointed to a number of trends and factors that may change the way we travel over the long term.

#### Trends around land use and housing

Growth in the region will continue in designated areas served by multiple transportation options, ensuring people will have improved access to goods and services within close distances. Either by choice or due to congestion, **more people will walk, bike, or take transit** to nearby destinations. We've also seen that the millennial generation prefers a more urban and car-lite lifestyle, adding to this trend. Similarly, "retirement" has taken on a new meaning: older adults prefer to live in more connected communities and understand the health benefit of active transportation. Older adults may choose to live in denser communities and drive less.

However, we have already begun to see some **backlash against density** (for example, in close-in Portland neighborhoods) from homeowners dealing with the effects of higher-density residential developments in their neighborhoods and decreased parking availability. There is also some caution against following the millennial trend: as this generation grows older, earns a higher income and starts families, they may prefer larger homes and driving.

It is likely that local and regional governments will pay closer attention to **housing-jobs match** and invest in projects that reduce the need to commute long distances to work. If people live where they work, this may drastically alter travel patterns. For this to happen, however, a concerted effort will need to be made to bring employers into the region's available lands and locate near new or existing housing.

#### Trends around driving

We are likely to see **autonomous vehicles** come onto the scene, which means more efficient use of roadways because vehicles can drive closer to together and fewer parking spaces are needed. However it is likely that not everyone will have access to this new technology (particularly low-income drivers). We are also likely to see **more electric and no emissions vehicles**, as well as smaller two-seater vehicles (both autonomous and electric). It is unclear whether the increase in "green" and autonomous vehicles will put more or fewer cars on the road.

There are various points of view on how **driving habits will change** in the future. Many people agreed that growing congestion will change the way that people choose to travel. On the one hand, even as we continue to grow in designated areas, people will continue to drive and it will take decades for car ownership to decrease (90% of residents in the region own cars today). In suburban and rural areas, driving will continue to be the main way to get around. On the other hand, a variety of factors may speed up the shift toward driving less, including increased congestion, increased cost of driving (due to higher gas prices or a likely VMT fee), and greater awareness around climate change. There is also likely

to be more **carshare** and rideshare services, making it easier to not own a car. The benefit of carsharing is likely to be felt only in urban areas.

### Trends around people and the economy

We will see **increased population growth** and a more **diverse** population. Where people choose to live (and where they have to commute) will have a major impact on the transportation system. Planners and policymakers will need to look carefully at where residential communities and employment centers are likely to grow, and think ahead to how the transportation system will meet future travel needs.

We may see a decline in blue collar jobs and a shrinking middle class. Telecommuting will likely continue.

### Trends around freight movement

**Trucks will continue to move the majority of the goods** around the region (trucks currently move 70-75% of goods). Rail is not likely to grow as a viable alternative to truck movement. A growth in exports and the growth of Oregon's manufacturing-based economy will cause an **increase in freight movement**. Dealing with congestion will be crucial to help move freight on the roads.

Technologies are likely to make truck movements more efficient. For example, online services will make it easier to match freight haulers or "truck share" to help avoid empty hauls. Autonomous trucks are possible. Emissions regulations and social pressures will move the trucking industry toward a greener fleet, such as electric or liquefied natural gas (LNG)-fueled trucks.

### Trends around active transportation

**More investments** are likely to be made in transit. **More people will choose to use transit**, due to various reasons such as increased congestion, increased transit availability, increased awareness of the health benefits of active transportation, and the increased cost of driving. Increased sidewalk coverage and access may also encourage more transit use.

Electric bicycles and a shared bicycle economy (including employer-based bicycle fleets) may become more popular, particularly for commuting.

#### 4. CHALLENGES and OPPORTUNITIES What transportation challenges do we face over the next 25 years? What opportunities exist to address those challenges?

Interviewees identified major transportation challenges, some that affect all modes of travel and some that are mode-specific. They also provided some ideas for solutions or ways to address these challenges.

##### Transportation funding

**Lack of transportation funding** is the number one concern, affecting all modes of travel. There simply is not enough money available to meet the many, diverse transportation needs in the region, including infrastructure and programming needs. The lack of funding tends to stifle innovation and prevent economic growth. There is also **disparity in where funds are invested**—smaller communities lack sidewalks, good arterial roads and highways, and transit options. Passing a legislative funding package and finding other sources of transportation funding need to be a top priority.

*“The funding shortage is the major obstacle. We need the public to understand how important the transportation system is in order to gain support for more funding.”*

##### Challenges for driving and roads

Congestion is the number one challenge for driving. **Congestion and lack of redundancy** in roads causes cut through traffic in neighborhoods and onto roads not meant to support such volumes. Some people said there is not enough infrastructure available to meet our current and growing travel demands. The major congestion concerns are: I-5 and I-205 bridges over the Columbia River; chokepoints on I-84, I-205 and I-5; Rose Quarter bottleneck; Sunset tunnel; Terwilliger Curves; and many of the Westside roads (US 26, Tualatin Valley Highway, Germantown Road, West Burnside, Cornell Road, Cornelius Pass Road, and Tualatin-Sherwood Road). For some, the most urgent need is to improve congestion over the Columbia River, with renewed vision for the I-5 crossing, a third bridge, or even river transportation. An efficient route from I-205 to the Westside is also needed.

*“Congestion is bad for everyone. People who commute far to work have less time with family. Cars idling on the roads produce pollution and greenhouse gases. And slow movement of goods is bad for the economy and affects all consumers.”*

Solutions to congestion problems must **recognize that one-size does not fit all**. Increased transit for commuters and bicycle lanes may ease congestion in urban areas, but smaller communities and particularly the Westside need added capacity. Standards must be flexible to allow for solutions that meet the needs of urban, rural, and suburban communities; flat and hilly areas; and wealthy, middle-class and low-income neighborhoods.

Other suggested solutions to congestion include:

- Changing regulations to allow for increased productivity of trucks. Increased trailer length or adding a truck axle would increase each truck’s capacity and reduce the number of trucks on the road.
- Investments in smart roads and technology (lower cost solutions to congestion). Smart driving cars and adaptive braking allow more cars to flow smoothly in the same space.
- Invest in transit and, to a lesser extent, bicycling to get more cars off the road.
- Allow for more mode-separation to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Speed up clearing accidents and stalled cars, and invest in technology to warn drivers when there is an incident and provide alternative routes.

**Parking** is a concern in urban areas, particularly inner-Portland. Forming public-private partnerships to fund parking garages is a potential solution.

**Earthquake resiliency** is a major concern for the region’s bridges and major roads. There is a shortage of funding and focus on the issue of disaster preparation.

### Challenges for freight movement

As for driving, **congestion** is the primary concern for truck movement. Congestion means lack of reliable travel time. Consistency in travel time is hugely important for planning routes and meeting regulations and customer needs. The solution is added capacity or reducing the number of vehicles on the road.

*“Movement of freight is the engine of our economy, and without a strong economy we won’t have funding to invest in transportation.”*

There is **difficulty moving freight in urban areas**. Freight needs lots of space and separation. There is also some conflict between freight trucks and active transportation modes. The policy decision to make “all roads for all modes” creates safety and efficiency issues. More mode separated roadways are a solution, and benefit safety for cyclists, pedestrians, drivers, and trucks.

The **loss of Port of Portland’s container terminal/carrier service** is a major challenge. Until a new carrier service is identified, the number of trucks on the region’s roads will increase.

### Challenges for the economy

An **effective transportation system is the backbone of our economy**. In order to attract businesses to locate and stay in the Portland metropolitan region, the transportation system must function well to **support employee commutes and movement of goods**. Many of the businesses in the region depend on hiring good talent, and in particular new and young talent. The younger generation prefers to live in urban areas, not commute long distances, and use active transportation; these are all challenges we have to face. We need to make our smaller employment communities attractive to young people and

focus on the last mile connections to facilitate the commute. We should also employ more business friendly practices to encourage businesses to move to the Portland region and grow here.

## Challenges for housing and land use

**Transportation must be designed to meet our land use.** This can be accomplished by linking land use and transportation plans, and considering transportation when new development occurs or new land is brought into the Urban Growth Boundary. We need to plan residential neighborhoods, high employment areas and industrial areas in ways that ease the burden on the transportation system. This will likely mean different solutions for different parts of the region (e.g., urban vs suburban vs rural areas) and might mean more mixed-use neighborhoods. One prime example is the need to connect new communities in Washington County, such as South Hillsboro and South Cooper Mountain, into the regional transportation system.

The region **lacks jobs/housing balance**. Some high employment cities or areas do not have enough housing to meet local needs, which increases the regional commute. Housing must also match the type of jobs available, with executive and affordable housing options to meet needs of varying income levels.

The region lacks **affordable and appropriate housing** to meet the needs of all residents, causing displacement concerns. This is an issue for low-income AND middle-income earners, as some areas become too expensive for everyone but the wealthiest.

## Transit and active transportation

The major challenge for transit is facilitating the **cross-regional transit commute**. Transit may be the best solution to providing a real alternative to driving for commuters, yet using transit for longer distances is difficult. The **“hub and spoke” transit system is too limited** for many smaller communities that need more connections that don’t tie into downtown Portland (particularly the Westside, Columbia Corridor and East Portland). Focusing on the **“last mile” connections** will be crucial, including creative solutions like partnerships between TriMet and employers to provide local shuttle service or incentives to employers who fund shuttle systems. Local internal circulators in smaller towns and cities (funded by city governments) could supplement service beyond TriMet’s regional system.

Several people noted the need for increased transit service to serve low-income and underserved neighborhoods, particularly in Washington County and East Portland. Extended transit service hours and weekend service are also desirable to provide a travel alternative for shift workers who are often people with low-income and people of color. Safer access to transit stops is needed to encourage and facilitate transit use.

## Transportation planning process

Many elected officials and business representatives stated that a major need is to **think regionally**. There seems to be a lack of responsibility and separation between the roles of various jurisdictions. We need to take a **holistic view of the transportation system**, appropriately classify roads (as state

highways, local roads, etc.), **and assign responsibility and accountability to jurisdictions** to maintain and invest in those roads. The RTP should deal only with truly regional problems. It should not just be a sum of all local TSPs. This requires that we get all stakeholders and jurisdictions together to **identify true regional priorities** and decide on the “best” projects to fund through the RTP. It is important to fund the most innovative and useful projects—rather than distributing some percentage of funding to each geographic area. If all stakeholders feel included in such a process, they will feel ownership and connection to the regional priorities and projects. Then if the process is derailed or conflict arises, we can refocus by reminding ourselves that we are trying to solve the same thing. Metro has an opportunity in this process to be forward thinking and to **lead other entities in thinking strategically and collaboratively**.

This will also require that we **depoliticize transportation funding** and not allow a few loud voices to drive or derail the process. **Good data collection** can help us determine where the biggest needs are, so we can objectively prioritize projects.

**Partnerships** and true collaboration will be important to have this regional point of view.

To be more efficient, we should link together various plans that overlap (i.e., RTP, TSPs, Climate Smart Strategy, and local, state and regional modal plans). Then focus on **more implementation and less planning**. Some people wanted to make sure that the RTP incorporates the complete 2014 Climate Smart Strategy and 2014 Active Transportation Plan.

## 5. PRIORITIES AND FUNDING

Interviewees had a variety of views on how to prioritize scarce resources to fund the identified projects. Several ideas came up for how to prioritize projects across modes and geographies.

- Prioritize projects that **respond to the most pressing regional needs**. This will require that we first decide as a region what the problem is, and what we’re trying to accomplish. Not *everything* can be a regional priority. Local jurisdictions must take responsibility for local needs. It also requires a shift away from the mindset that each jurisdiction deserves some proportional split of funding; instead, we need to decide which roads are truly regional priorities and focus investments there—regardless of where they are located. Politically, this will be a challenging task and will require a difficult conversation to fundamentally shift the way we think about transportation funding. Once we define the regional needs, priorities and projects, we should stick to our plan, and not let it be derailed by special interests or new political voices.

One suggestion is to prioritize projects according to how well they meet Metro’s six regional outcomes or the key

*“The hard conversation is long overdue. We need someone who will drive a consensus-building process among all jurisdictions and stakeholders to identify the true regional priorities. Don’t just dump all TSPs into the RTP. Do the hard work to determine the ‘best’ projects.”*

goals outlined in the Climate Smart Communities Strategy.

- A couple of people would also like to see the RTP be more **aspirational** as to what we as a region strive for beyond the dollars we have. This solid vision will make it easier to find investors and private-public partnerships and make a tax increase more palatable.
- Recognize that **one size does not fit all**. Evaluation measures must recognize the unique needs of urban, rural and suburban areas; the varied travel patterns of employees, parents, youth, and older adults; and that all roads are not equal.
- Fund those projects that have the **best return on investment** and move the most number of people. Collect data on how people and goods actually move, and focus on projects that make this movement more efficient. **Credible, robust data collection** is required to accomplish this.
- Prioritize **equitable investments rather than equal investments**. Targeting investments in depressed and underserved neighborhoods leads to better economic growth than trying to serve all people/areas equally. It is also important to make sure projects that benefit low income and communities of color happen first. Apply a racial justice lens when selecting projects, and avoid projects that may have the effect of gentrification. Metro's Equity Strategy can provide additional guidance.
- Consider **land use and transportation together**. Prioritize investments that reduce the need to make expensive road expansions, such as investments in transit-oriented developments and projects that promote mixed-use neighborhoods.
- A few interviewees added that **safety** should be the highest priority, regardless of mode, and the RTP should prioritize **earthquake resiliency**, particularly on bridges.

*"Everyone agrees that we want to reduce single occupancy vehicle (SOV) trips, so we should focus energy on reducing SOV trips to free up roads for 'high value' trips like moving freight and mass transit."*

*"Prioritize investments that help greatest number of people and reduce carbon emissions, while responding to income and racial equity."*

Many interviewees had mode-specific suggestions for how to prioritize projects:

### Roads, driving and freight movement

Highest priority should be given to **road maintenance** (over widening or building new infrastructure) and to projects that **fix known bottlenecks**. At the same time, many people recognized the need to invest more funding in roads, particularly in **high capacity roadways**. High priority projects include fixing bottlenecks and widening or improving I-5 and I-205. Several said that too much funding seems geared toward transit, bike and pedestrian projects, and that we need to prioritize reduction of vehicle congestion by investing in roads. Transit solutions may not be appropriate for areas that lack dense, large populations.

A couple of people said that the region should prioritize investments in **technology and smart roads**: low-cost methods for high impact solution to congestion.

People from a wide range of interest groups agreed that **movement of freight should be a top priority**. They stressed that movement of freight is the engine of our economy, and without a strong economy we won't have funding to invest in transportation.

## Transit

Across interest groups and jurisdictions, interviewees said that the RTP should **prioritize transit investments to facilitate the regional commute**. This includes regional transit connections (beyond the hub-and-spoke model) and adapting routes to connect middle-income job earners and places of employment. Many people noted that transit investments have multiple benefits: increased transit reduces congestion and frees up roads for movement of goods and services, promotes health and active transportation, and provides a lower-cost transportation option for low-income populations. Some people noted that we should first focus on transit investments, and then bicycle and pedestrian improvements to complement transit. Providing youth bus passes and low-income bus fares should be a priority, in order to facilitate transit by students and people who most need an affordable option.

A couple of interviewees noted that the greatest transportation behavior change comes from providing safe and accessible active transportation platforms. Local and regional funding sources should be geared towards active transportation investments, since federal and state funding is highly focused on street and highway improvements.

## Bicycle and pedestrian

A few people discussed pedestrian projects. They noted that priority should be given to pedestrian projects that **improve safety around schools**, like crosswalks and sidewalks into neighborhoods, and in particular, implementing the Safe Routes to Schools projects.

A couple of people want to see a policy shift toward more mode-separation on roadways. **Separate bike facilities** are the best way to reduce crashes. While "complete streets" are important, we also need to recognize the need for some mode-preferred routes to improve safety and efficiency.

## Funding

These ideas were provided to increase transportation funding or make more efficient use of existing funds:

- Raise more **local revenue** through levies or local tax increases. This will require a widespread understanding of the importance of transportation funding in order to gain support for a tax increase. A couple of people noted that the middle-class is already over-taxed, so gaining support will be difficult.

- **Increase the gas tax**, but recognize that this is only a short-term solution as vehicles get more fuel efficient and we have more electric vehicles. Support will depend on implementation and what kinds of projects the gas tax funds. There is some concern about the regressive nature of a gas tax for low-income drivers.
- Institute a **vehicle miles traveled fee** in the long-run, as gas tax revenues decline. This fee has the benefit of capturing dollars from drivers of low-emissions and electric vehicles. It can be developed as a progressive income-based fee to provide a more equitable solution.
- Institute **tolling or hot lanes** on certain highways. Look to other successful tolling models in the country, and provide education on the benefits of tolling to gain public support.
- Pursue **public-private partnerships**. This could include, for example, a partnership for toll roads in which the private entity pays for construction and maintenance of a toll road, and after a set number of years the ownership reverts to state.
- Begin **congestion pricing or demand-based pricing** with a mechanism to reduce its regressive effect (such as using technology to scale rates appropriately based on income).
- Identify a **regional transportation fund** to reduce reliance on scarce state and federal dollars.
- Conduct research to find the **best price point for transit fares** (high enough price to provide some revenue, but not so high that it discourages ridership).

## 6. DEFINITION OF SUCCESS What do you hope would be different in four years as a result of this process?

Interviewees provide a variety of definitions of success for the RTP update process.

Most commonly, people defined success as **achieving public buy-in and a feeling of ownership** over the final outcome. This will require true engagement of key stakeholders, providing input opportunities early and often, and building capacity and long-term relationships with new leaders. Gaining public trust in transportation planning is crucial.

Successful **regional collaboration and good discussion on regional priorities**. Several people would like to see a lively, comprehensive conversation about transportation needs across the region, and hope for out-of-the-box thinking and creative solutions.

A **plan that is truly regional in scope**. The project list should include only solutions that respond to truly regional problems, and go beyond the polarized process of jurisdictions and interest groups competing for a

*“We need to come out with a list of projects that answers the larger policy questions and connects the region.”*

percentage of funding to go toward projects in their boundaries or that represent their preferred mode of travel.

**Identification of enhanced or additional revenue sources**, or agreement as to how to raise new transportation funding. Some hope that the RTP inspires communities to seek more resources to fund transportation projects or helps gain support for new tax measures.

That the process **provides a renewed emphasis on movement of freight** and prioritizes freight and mobility in the region.

That the process results in **better jobs/housing match** to reduce the number of commuter miles, with corresponding transportation improvements to link those residential communities to the region.

A few people hoped for certain types of projects in the project list, such as solutions that reduce travel times, promote high capacity transit, and help meet greenhouse gas reduction targets.

## **7. EQUITY What recommendations do you have for Metro to improve the region's transportation equity and better engage underserved and underrepresented communities?**

### **Ideas for better engaging underserved communities**

Overwhelmingly, the top suggestion was to **partner with organizations** that have relationships with underserved communities. The goal should be to find local champions. A number of good organizations serve the Portland/urban area, but few organizations serve smaller communities. One suggestion is to provide grant funding to smaller, newer organizations in surrounding areas to help fill this gap. Several people suggested **compensating community-based organizations** to conduct engagement work and provide their expertise. Some warned that Metro should beware of the “gatekeeper” problem, and not expect one organization to represent the needs and interests of all of the community members it represents.

Outreach methods and messaging should be **tailored to the communication style of the particular community**. This means a different strategy for different communities, translating materials, and making sure presenters are “of” the community. Campaigns must also use simple and interesting language that people feel comfortable with so they feel they can contribute.

It is important to **go to the community** and meet them where they are, rather than holding RTP-specific meetings at a government building. Find out where the target communities get their information, and tap into that resource. This might include senior centers, churches and health clinics.

Other ideas include:

- Collect demographic data at outreach events to demonstrate who is participating.

- Make sure meetings are at a convenient time (after 6pm, or on Saturdays) and have food available. Maybe even include entertainment and classes.
- Tap into the relationships that some government employees have with community members. County health departments, libraries, and various city bureaus have some staff that work with underrepresented individuals every day, and can help link Metro to these communities.
- Use focus groups to engage the Naïve American community and other groups that have a strong storytelling culture. Create a space that encourages celebration and relationship-building, and invite Metro councilors and decision-makers to these events.
- Online surveys are not a very effective tool for engaging communities of color.

### Suggestions for improving the region's transportation equity

How the process is structured is critical to achieving equity. **Community self-determination** should play a role in the process. This means *asking the community what their needs are* and asking them to identify projects rather than respond to a list of already-developed investment ideas. Metro will need to work with leaders to empower and educate them so they can truly make a difference in the process. A motto is: “empower, engage, then step out of the way.”

An **equity subcommittee** for the RTP could help weave equity throughout the plan and process. Additionally, Metro could include community members who are most impacted in other RTP committees so they can all hear each other’s points of view.

Metro should also apply an **equity lens** using the 5 Ps: people, place, process, power and purpose. This lens should be applied to both the engagement strategy as well as to the project lists, evaluation criteria and other technical products of the RTP.

The process must **consider all types of equity**—racial, income, and geographic. The process should collect demographic data, and see how current and future transportation investments lineup with the travel needs of those demographics. Equity should be included as a criteria in the planning process. One meaningful metrics to include is *transit affordability*.

## 8. KEY MESSAGES What key messages should we communicate to encourage more people to care about and engage in the RTP update process?

Interviewees acknowledged that developing effective messaging will be difficult because transportation planning—especially long-range planning—is disconnected from people’s daily lives and immediate problems. It will be important to use clear, everyday language and reduce jargon.

They provided a wide range of suggestions for how to talk about the RTP update process. Three main messages stood out, and to a lesser extent a fourth one:

1. **What does this mean for me?** Messaging should focus on people’s daily lives and connect the project to their transportation needs. Messaging and questions to ask could include:
  - “We’re doing our best to make it easier to get around. How can we make it easier for you to get home from work so you can spend more time with your family?”
  - Consider not using the term “RTP” at all. Instead, define what you are trying to accomplish in everyday terms.
  - People need to feel like they have a stake in the outcome: “This is YOUR plan.”
2. **Congestion and travel time.** Everyone deals with congestion on a daily basis, so they will connect to this messaging. Ask: “Do you want to sit in three weeks more traffic per year?” “How’s that commute working for you?” To get people’s attention, outreach might need to include negative messaging and dire consequences of an inefficient transportation system.
3. **Cost of transportation and link to the pocketbook.** When people realize the cost of driving a vehicle or cost of congestion to the economy, they will be more willing to engage and perhaps willing to pay for transportation improvements. Use infographics so people understand the cost of transportation. Ask them: “What would you do with X dollars of transportation funding?” Talk about how the cost of transportation affects people’s daily lives and what can be done to reduce transportation costs.
4. **Intersection between transportation and economic vitality.** Explain that a strong transportation system is the backbone of a strong economy. Businesses don’t locate where it is hard to move goods and people.
5. **Vibrant region that serves the community.** Emphasize that the RTP is helping to build communities that people want to live in, and explain how it benefits all community members.

Interviewees noted that a lot of **education** is needed. Many people do not really understand what Metro is, and even fewer know about the RTP. Outreach tools should explain how various transportation plans are connected (i.e., RTP, local transportation system plans, and Climate Smart Communities Strategy). All Metro staff that engage with the public about the RTP should be versed in public engagement best practices.

One suggestion was to ask questions first and then provide messaging. Surveys and outreach tools could begin with questions about transportation needs and then follow up with how the RTP is trying to address those needs. It is also important to explain how feedback will be used and **show how input affected the process**, so that people feel their voice made a difference.

One person suggested developing a single, coherent platform that scales in sophistication. This includes a high level short message to the general public, and a very easy to understand one-page explanation of the RTP process that gives the key highlights that people want to know (modeled after Metro’s Regional Flexible Funds handout). Then others who are more technically inclined could go deeper.

## 9. ENGAGEMENT Do you have ideas for ways to involve the community in this process?

Many interviewees agreed that traditional open houses are not effective because they attract the same informed audience every time, and often feel like “checking a box” for public engagement. They provided a number of suggestions to get beyond traditional outreach techniques.

Four main approaches were suggested:

1. **Focus on engaging key leaders and thinkers.** Transportation planning is extremely complex, and in order to provide meaningful input a lot of education is needed. Most people do not have time or interest to get very informed so it makes more sense to partner with, inform and engage key individuals and leaders from a broad spectrum across the region. These leaders can then find ways to involve their constituents and members. One caution for this approach is to beware of changes in leadership (elections for government leaders, and turnover at major businesses and organizational leadership). When there is turnover, Metro might consider conducting Transportation 101 sessions to get everyone up to speed.

This might include forming **subcommittees** for the RTP on key topics such as business/economic development, freight and mobility, and equity. At the same time, it is important that various interest groups hear one another so they have a chance to discuss issues together.

2. **Partner with organizations, businesses and community based organizations (CBOs).** These groups know their constituents and communities and are in the best place to engage them. Plan events in partnership with organizations; people will be more likely to attend if they are invited by a group they trust and have ties to. Consider compensating CBOs to help with messaging and recruitment of underserved populations to engage in the process. Tie into existing events held by these organizations.

Partner with school districts and Safe Routes to Schools to get the youth perspective. This could include, for example, engagement of high school leadership groups to do projects around Metro and transportation to get a deeper level of knowledge and engagement. Students tend to bring home what they learn in school, spreading more awareness to adults.

3. **Gather statistically valid input.** Conduct many focus groups or telephone surveys to get statistical data on what people see as the main challenges. This can provide the basis upon which to build a list of projects. A problem is that traditional engagement techniques and online surveys tend to attract residents from the same demographic groups, produce skewed results, and miss a lot of voices. It is important to collect data on *all* communities—to see where the main investments are needed and to see which areas and populations are least served.
4. **Cast a wide net and try to engage as many people as possible.** This will require a large toolbox of outreach methods, including social and traditional media, attending meetings of key groups and organizations, and doing direct engagement like knocking on doors and having one-on-one

conversations at bus stops, gas stations, PTA meetings, etc. Work with cities, counties, and organizations to promote RTP outreach opportunities through their newsletters and email blasts. One key challenge to this method is giving people enough education on the benefits and tradeoffs of different investments so that they can provide informed and meaningful input.

The process should include checkpoints along the way to ask the public how the engagement process is going, so that Metro can shift gears as needed.

Other ideas include:

- Organize transportation trivia nights and other fun events.
- If online surveys are used, reach out to organizations and offer an incentive for recruiting members or constituents to participate in the survey.
- Create a major event/party at the Convention Center or key location that is a *celebration*, and encourage other agencies and business partners to participate or provide sponsorship.
- To engage businesses, provide a number of meeting options (at different times of the day including lunch time) for a one-time engagement point. They want to provide input, but do not have time to attend a series of meetings. Online participation may be effective. Tap into events held by chambers of commerce.

## 10. PARTNERSHIPS Who should be involved?

Interviewees listed a number of organizations, groups and individuals that should be involved in the RTP Update process:

### Organizations, groups and individuals that serve underrepresented populations

- Latino Network
- Living Cully Coalition
- Urban League
- Portland African American Leadership Alliance
- Asian Pacific American Network of Oregon
- AARP, Inc. (and older adult voice)
- Elders in Action
- Metropolitan Family Services
- Verde
- OPAL Environmental Justice
- NAYA
- Community Development Corporations (Rose CDC, Hacienda CDC, Reach CDC)
- Churches
- Younger people. They are the ones that will live in the future of our transportation decisions.
- Northwest Housing Alternatives (works with homeless and low income populations)

- Wichita Center for Family and Community
- Community Alliance of Tenants
- Jess Larson, Welcome Home (working to secure long-term revenue source for low-income housing in the region)
- Metro's Equitable Housing Initiative Work Group Members
- Metropolitan Alliance for Common Good (MACG)
- Anti-Displacement PDX
- Washington County Thrives
- East Portland Action Plan
- Kim Armstrong, Washington County Department of Housing Services
- Community Housing Fund (Beaverton)
- Chuck Robbins, Clackamas County Housing Authority
- Welcome Home
- Alma Flores, City of Milwaukie
- Jenny Glass, Rosewood Initiative (East County) – this is also a good community gathering place
- Native American Rehabilitation Association
- Immigrant communities

## Public Health

- County health departments
- Hospitals and health system. Include Philip Wu, Kaiser Permanente, Moda and Providence Health
- Cambia Foundation
- Health Columbia Willamette Partnerships: includes all CCOs, hospitals, and health groups in the region.

## Community

- Neighborhood associations
- Loren Behrman (rural interest; on Washington County Transportation Futures Study SAC)
- New Business Manager at the Bus Drivers Union (ATU 757)
- Shirely Block, Business Representative, Amalgamated Transit Union -Local 757
- Rotary Groups (Clackamas and Sunrise)
- Parents and schools
- Milwaukie Public Safety Advisory Committee (has lots of young parent members)
- City of Portland (and other cities') Transportation System Plan Committee members
- Cornell Road Sustainability Coalition
- Major education centers
- Employers and unions

- Schools United Neighborhoods (SUN Schools)
- School Superintendents and School Districts
- Employees who commute every day

## Business and Freight

- Happy Valley Business Alliance
- Technology associations and manufacturing associations
- Columbia River Economic Development Council
- Lise Glancy, Port of Portland – led initiative to look at industrial land supply.
- Freight community
- Auto industry – Trucking Association, Used Car Association, New Car Association, Rental Car Industry, Commercial Fleets. They’ll have great info about future forecasts
- Chambers of Commerce
- Westside Economic Alliance
- Greater Portland Inc.
- Nursery Men’s Association (freight interest)
- Intel
- Oregon Trucking Association
- Shippers Organizations (if there are any in Oregon)
- Oregon Business Association
- Associated Oregon Industries
- Contractors Groups (Road builders)
- North Clackamas Chamber of Commerce
- Portland Freight Committee
- Port of Portland (see the Cost of Congestion report)
- High tech industry
- Representatives from major industrial groups that are employers.
- Rail industry
- Oregon Business Plan
- Portland Air Cargo Association (or other groups that deal with air cargo)
- Form PPPs
- Top employers (in Tualatin, this includes: Lamb Research, Legacy Meridian Park Medical Center, Precision Wire Components, PGE campuses, UPS, Hunte Air, Pacific Foods, Columbia Corrugated Box, DPI Northwest, Havela’s, and Bridgeport Village)

## Government

- Southwest Washington MPO
- State Representative Tobias Reed

- ODOT planners. Ask them what they see as the biggest highway congestion challenges and forecasts of what those problems will be like in 20 years if unaddressed.
- Bernie Bottomly, TriMet (could give advice on public process, especially with what TriMet is doing to engage people on the tax increase)
- Region 1 ACT
- Regional Solutions (Portland region)
- Leaders of local government (genuine involvement)

### Examples of good partnerships

- Oregon Transportation Forum: this is a good model for getting a lot of different groups to the table. AAA, BTA, Oregon Truckers, Oregon Walks, counties, regional governments, and Port of Portland worked together to develop a multi-modal legislative transportation package.
- Sam Haffner, Governor’s Transportation Visioning Panel. The panel is looking at the statewide vision for transportation. This really needs to be coordinated with what the RTP does.
- Schools United Neighborhoods is a successful partnership between County and schools. Perhaps Metro could do something similar. For example, host an activity at Oxbow Park or the Zoo for the students where they can learn more about what Metro does.

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy and sustainable transportation and living choices for people and businesses in the region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges and opportunities that affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to providing services, operating venues and making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

**Metro Council President**

Tom Hughes

**Metro Council**

Shirley Craddick, District 1  
Carlotta Collette, District 2  
Craig Dirksen, District 3  
Kathryn Harrington, District 4  
Sam Chase, District 5  
Bob Stacey, District 6

**Auditor**

Brian Evans



Metro Regional Center  
600 NE Grand Ave.  
Portland, OR 97232-2736  
[www.oregonmetro.gov](http://www.oregonmetro.gov)



[www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp)

Oct. 27, 2015

