

Getting there with a connected region



2018 REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Comment summary

Winter 2016 comment opportunity

From Jan. 14 through Feb. 16, 2016 Metro hosted an online questionnaire to gather public feedback to inform the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update.

What did people say?

“The population is expanding and the infrastructure is aging and the city is unprepared for a natural disaster.”

“Response to global climate change requires rethinking of current energy use, modal options, and land use.”

“Need much more pedestrian and bike centric infrastructure to support aging population that can no longer drive, or younger generation that doesn't want to drive.”

More than 7800 people started the poll, with **more than 5800 people working through the questions.**

We had expected between 1500 to 2000 participants for the online questionnaire. Because of wide distribution (thanks to city, county and community partners), 7885 participants entered the questionnaire (put in their ZIP codes).

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Metro is the federally mandated metropolitan planning organization designated by the governor to develop a regional transportation plan and to allocate federal funds for the Portland metropolitan 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. 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.

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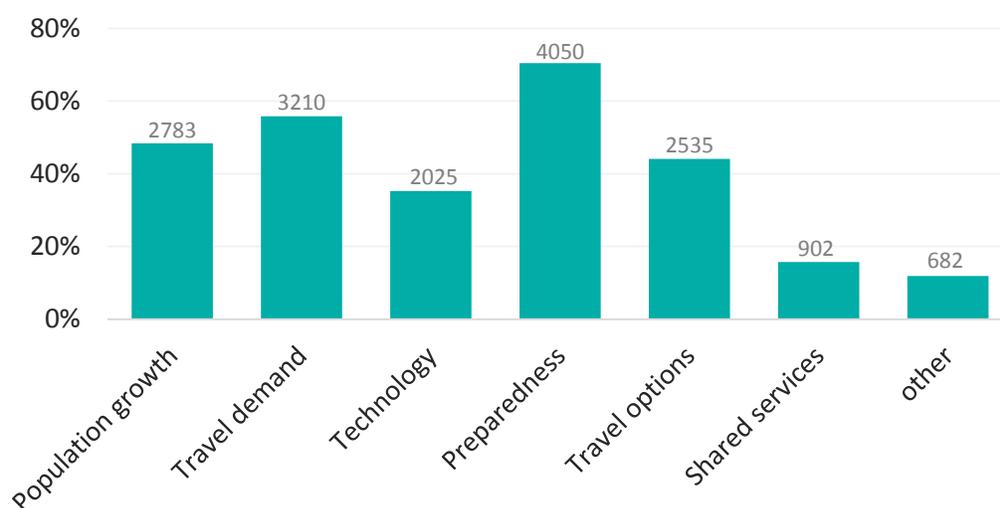
Responses to 2018 Regional Transportation Plan questions

To help inform the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan, participants were asked questions on transportation trends and challenges, ways to measure performance, and ways to measure performance as it relates to social equity outcomes.¹

What emerging trends do you think will most affect the future of travel?

Respondents were asked to pick three or add their own. The full text of the options is provided below.

Respondents: **5746**



Preparedness (4050 | 70%): Our freeways, roads and bridges are aging and not as prepared for natural disasters (flooding, earthquakes, major storms) as they could be.

Travel demand (3210 | 56%): More people and goods are using the transportation system as our population and economy grow.

Population growth (2783 | 48%): Our population is growing, aging and becoming more ethnically diverse.

Travel options (2535 | 44%): Our system is more multimodal (car, transit, biking and walking options) than many metropolitan systems.

Technology (2025 | 35%): Advances in technology (GPS, mobile devices, driverless vehicles, online shopping, automation) will change how we travel and move goods.

¹ The questionnaire included questions that will inform the regional flexible funds allocation (RFFA); development of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan; the strategic plan to advance racial equity, diversity and inclusion; and the equitable housing program. This summary focuses on the questions designed to inform the Regional Transportation Plan and corresponding responses.

Shared services (902 | 16%): People are using Uber, Zip Car, bike-share and other ride services more.

Other (682 | 12%)

Open ended responses to “other” option

Respondents who chose to offer thoughts often addressed several overlapping issues. Many respondents who chose to add a comment in the “other” option focused on providing more detailed thoughts on the multiple choice options provided. Four trends emerged that were exceptions to this:

- 1) About 70 respondents brought up the **economy and housing affordability**, especially housing costs in relation to income inequality. These respondents focused on the idea that as housing costs increase in central areas, there will be higher demand on the region’s transportation system, increasing traffic. A main concern was income inequality in relation to housing costs, which in turn impacts access to transportation options: As more people of lower income are moved to outer parts of the region – especially in areas with less transit access – they will be forced to drive more often and further to reach jobs and services. Additional comments around this theme looked to the current patterns of changing employers more regularly (than for past generations), demand from Washington residents working in Oregon, the need for areas to be a mix of housing and employment opportunities, and safety concerns related to people without homes.
 - *“Low/fixed income residents being pushed out to the suburbs from “walkable” neighborhoods (and further from jobs) by skyrocketing rents in the city.”*
 - *“Our economy is pushing vulnerable users to the geographic fringes, increasing their need but decreasing their access to efficient and affordable transportation.”*
- 2) About 60 respondents focused on **climate change and the environment**, and how a response to those concerns will force an adaptation to how we travel, which would cause different pressures on the system, requiring more walking, biking, transit and carpool options. About another 10 had a similar perspective in relation to peak oil or volatile oil prices.
 - *“Response to global climate change requires rethinking of current energy use, modal options, and land use.”*
- 3) About 30 respondents brought up the issue of limited **parking**, especially focused around new multifamily housing developments, around businesses and at transit park and ride facilities.
 - *“Many of the new high-rise apartments/condos have little to no parking. These draw people who own cars, but don’t use them much, so they remain at the curb. On-street parking has become unbearable, especially for seniors and disabled.”*
- 4) About 20 respondents focused on the need for **options for older adults and people with disabilities**, often related to the issue of housing affordability and transportation access.

A summary of comments that provided more detailed thoughts on the multiple choice options follows.

Preparedness: About 30 respondents focused on aging infrastructure and other maintenance issues (such as the disappointment that potholes were not fixed); about five additional respondents called out the potential of a major earthquake in the area.

Travel demand: About 160 respondents brought up congestion, with the comments ranging from a call for more and widened roads and freeways, more bike facilities and transit options, freight movement alternatives, and community design that provides a mix of housing and employment opportunities. Some forecast that cars will never go away, while others said that people will choose other options to get around. Several respondents expressed concern over impacts to quality of life, economics (personal and regional) and safety due to increased demand on the transportation system, often pointing out potential conflicts between freight and personal vehicles, autos and bikes, and autos and pedestrians.

Population growth: About 80 respondents focused on growth – especially the growth that has already occurred – and concern that our transportation infrastructure is not keeping up with demand. When solutions were offered, these comments most often specified the need for more road, freeway and bridge capacity for cars, but several called for more transit and bikeway options, with some saying that driving and parking should be difficult or costly in comparison to bike and transit options.

Travel options: About 300 respondents focused on some aspect of the region’s travel options (car, transit, biking and walking options). These comments were both diverse and directly in contrast. Some stated there should be no further light rail investments, while others said that expansion of the MAX system should be the priority. Some said to focus on transit, biking and walking options, while others said there has been too much focus and money spent on those. Some said that there should be more focus on expanding roadways, while others said that there has been the focus for too long. Some said that people will always want to drive, while others said that people will find it more beneficial to use transit and “give up” their cars. Some comments about the need for better transit access and for more biking and walking facilities in suburban areas, however, did not have counterpoint comments (aside from the comments that said not to spend money on these options in general). Very few comments tied all modes together as needed parts to a transportation system.

Technology: Few respondents addressed new technologies and, when they did, they focused on work practices that could change with emerging trends.

Shared services: Only a few respondents mentioned car share services like Uber (none focused on bike share services). Those commenters were split on car share. Some commenters said that it could lower the cost of single passenger vehicle trips (thus decreasing incentives for other travel options). Other people said that more vehicles on the road is the wrong direction, saying that it could help reduce demand but not



significantly, and expressed concern for Uber specifically needing to unionize and “play by the rules” regarding taxes, insurance, etc.

What challenges and opportunities – for you or for the Portland region – do you see from trends you selected?

Participants were asked to provide their thoughts on the challenges and opportunities they see from the emerging trends they selected in question two.

Respondents: **3742**

Many of the responses overlapped with the previous question including housing and the economy and travel options. Key themes most frequently addressed included:

1) A recurrent challenge addressed was population growth and congestion. Comments focused on how rapidly the region is growing and the increase in commute time as a result. Respondents expressed concern for the lack of opportunity to increase capacity to the transportation systems already in place.

- *“Our roadway capacity (and maintenance/condition) have not kept pace with growth. Some areas (mostly outside the City of Portland) have incomplete street networks and the current funding system does not support their need to complete roadway systems for better connectivity. Get rid of the split so that projects can be brought forward that work for the local jurisdictions current needs. Multimodal is great, but that still includes cars.”*
- *“Too many users- system at capacity- freight should be on separate system.”*
- *“Nowhere to expand our freeways, or should I say our one freeway (I-5) with a growing population. We're years behind widening and improving the interstate.”*
- *“Challenges: traffic build up and frustration with road work/construction. Road systems becoming more like LA and Seattle. Opportunities: Increased opportunities for alternative transportation methods which could reduce the number of cars on the road depending on transit routes and speed.”*

2) Respondents frequently brought up aging infrastructure and disaster preparedness. Particularly the ability to access services in a disaster if bridges and highways are damaged. Respondents were principally concerned with safety and upgrading bridges, roads and freeways to make them seismically sound if a major earthquake happens. A common theme was to invest in the infrastructure already in place.

- *“The population is expanding and the infrastructure is aging and the city is unprepared for a natural disaster.”*
- *“Mainly the aging bridges around Portland, I would imagine to be the most challenging issue to address as far as transportation goes. This is the issue that's the most concerning for me and I believe will become the most problematic in the future.”*
- *“We need to take care of the roads and bridges we already have in place. Infrastructure is critical.”*

- *“Infrastructure, particularly the bridges needs to be kept up and maintained. Bridges are not ready for an earthquake event. That is very scary.”*
- *“The challenges all relate to funding. From the point that a major earthquake WILL happen which could lead to hundreds of deaths, it would seem like we should find a way to fund these repairs that are required.*
- *“I’m definitely concerned about the ability of our infrastructure to support a growing population as well as natural disasters. I’d love to see investment in that type of infrastructure.”*

3) Respondent frequently brought up the region’s aging demographic both as an opportunity to improve mobility with new technology such as self-driving cars and as a concern for access to goods and services.

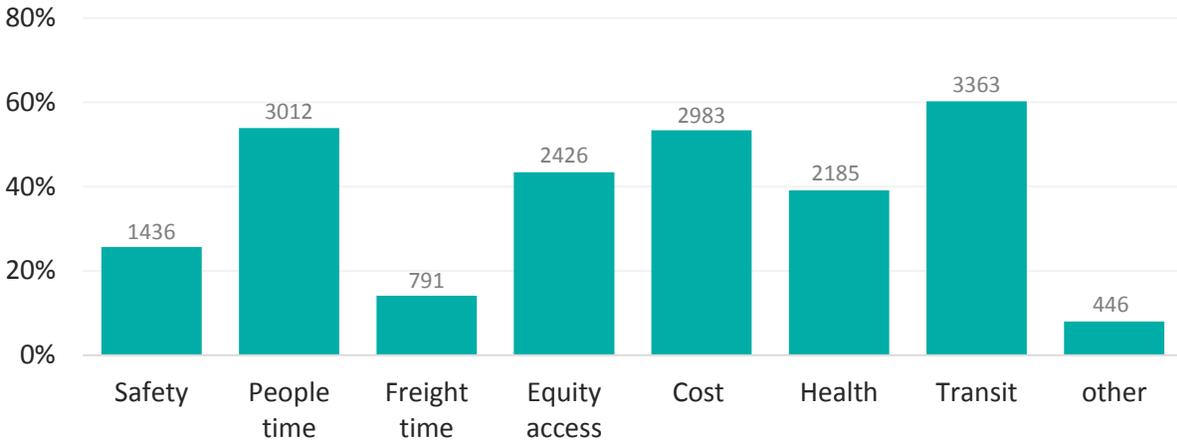
- *“Baby Boomers are aging at a rapid rate! They will want more dense housing and they will walk to dine and shop.”*
- *“Need much more pedestrian and bike centric infrastructure to support aging population that can no longer drive, or younger generation that doesn't want to drive.”*
- *“There will be pressure from increasing (and aging) population, which will require smart transportation planning and development. We will only be able to be a resilient, economically sustainable and equitable region if we grow utilizing smart growth principles: multi-modal transportation system based on the 20-minute neighborhood and dense, mixed-use, multi-modal-oriented development.”*
- *“The combination of aging population and technological changes (self-driving cars) may extend the mobility capacity for many that otherwise would not be in the system.*



How do we know when we have created the best transportation system possible for our region?

Respondents were asked to pick three or add their own. The full text of the options is provided below.

Respondents: **5585**



Safety (1436 | 26%): Fewer people are seriously injured or die from crashes.

People time (3012 | 54%): People spend less time in traffic.

Freight time (791 | 14%): Delivery trucks spend less time in traffic.

Equity access (2426 | 43%): It's easier for older people and people of color, with low incomes or living with disabilities to access stores and services.

Cost (2983 | 53%): Housing and transportation costs are manageable for households of all incomes.

Health (2185 | 39%): Community health is improved, because of less pollution from transportation and more people are able to walk and bike to get places.

Transit (3363 | 60%): Transit is more frequent and goes to more places.

Other (446 | 8%): The main themes from the 446 respondents who chose "other" were a focus on transit cost, reliability and access, overall safety concerns, pollution and race.

Open ended responses to “other” option

Safety was a concern for these respondents stating that easing traffic and congestion, providing off-street trails and paths and accessible biking and walking routes would allow people to safely get where they needed to go:

- *“Safe routes to school & after-school for 6-12 grade students.”*
- *“It’s as easy and safe to walk and bicycle as it is to drive.”*
- *“All able-bodied kids walk or bike to school without fear of traffic.”*
- *“Safety is a priority. I have commuted for 10 years (to OHSU and the VA) because it was safe and parking was convenient.”*



Access to goods and services was also a concern:

- *“It’s easier for older people or people living with disabilities to access stores and services.”*
- *“The lives of residents will be enriched with more opportunities to access jobs, entertainment venues, parks, and schools.”*
- *“It is easy for all people in the community to reach their essential services without NEEDING to drive.”*

Reliable and affordable transit service was one of the most frequently raised issue:

- *“Everyone wants to ride public transit because it’s fast, affordable and convenient.”*
- *“As it is now, I cannot afford transit and have to give up food so I can buy tickets.”*
- *“Transit is more efficient and cost effective to ride than my car.”*
- *“There is less traffic not because of less congestion but because multi-modal transport is so accessible that fewer people drive.”*

Several respondents raised concerns about pollution and climate change:

- *“Neighborhoods are improved by less auto traffic and its pollutions (exhaust, dust, etc.).”*
- *“Lower pollution, more safety and hopefully quicker travel times*
- *“Fossil fuel use decreases every year in line with City/County Climate Action Plan and state climate goals.”*
- *“I like the last one, but I would add ‘community and environmental health’”*
- *“CO2 emissions per capita are halved”*

Quite a few commenters raised concerns about race being a consideration in the questions.

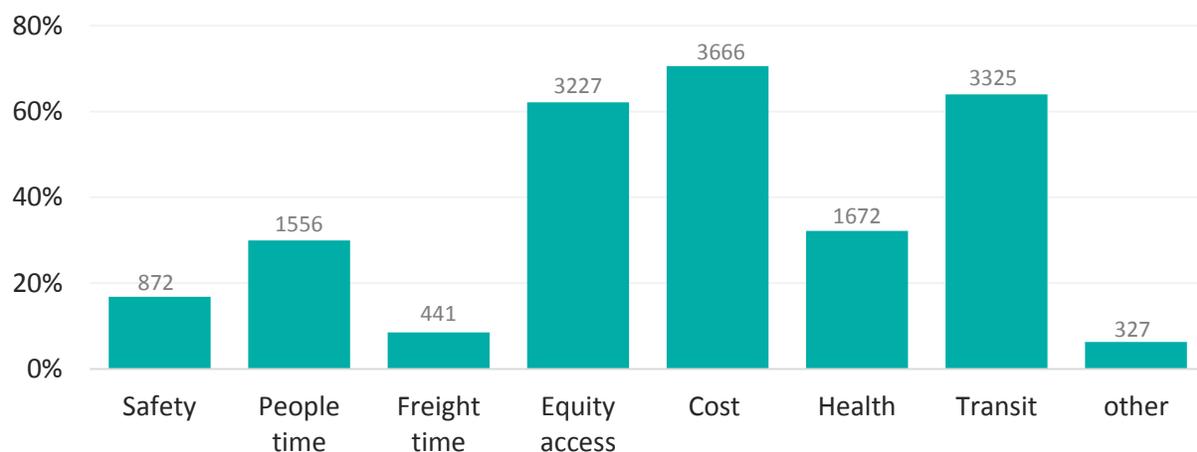
- *“Seriously? Ethnicity? I don't see how that is that relevant.”*
- *“I don't know if you get out much but now a days it's not just people of color with low incomes.”*
- *“What does “people of color” have anything to do with lack of access to stores or services?”*

Participants were then asked about their thoughts on the effects of the region’s housing challenges and priorities for Metro’s racial equity program (addressed below). To allow for comparison, responses to the question regarding measuring performance from a social equity perspective are presented next.

When considering issues of social equity, what should be the priorities for our system?

Respondents were asked to pick three or add their own. The full text of the options, which is the same as the performance question above, is provided below.

Respondents: **5195**



Safety (872 | 17%): Fewer people are seriously injured or die from crashes.

People time (1556 | 30%): People spend less time in traffic.

Freight time (441 | 8%): Delivery trucks spend less time in traffic.

Equity access (3227 | 62%): It’s easier for older people and people of color, with low incomes or living with disabilities to access stores and services.

Cost (3666 | 71%): Housing and transportation costs are manageable for households of all incomes.

Health (1672 | 32%): Community health is improved, because of less pollution from transportation and more people are able to walk and bike to get places.

Transit (3325 | 64%): Transit is more frequent and goes to more places.

Other (327 | 6%): The main themes from the 327 respondents who chose “other” were a focus on transit: cost, access and reliability.

Open ended responses to “other” option

A summary of common themes from the open ended responses follows.

Cost was a concern for these respondents, stating that to better help underserved populations, lowering the cost of transit fares would provide direct benefit:

- *“Price of mass transit is critical. No matter how long or short the ride, \$150 for a monthly pass is a lot for a minimum wage worker.”*
- *“People with limited income can afford to ride the bus. At \$5/trip, that's a significant cost for many people, especially families with several children who need to pay bus fare. Not every low income family is connected to an agency that provides bus pass.”*

Access to good service was another issue raised, with respondents stating that ensuring that **where people of less means can live should also have convenient transit**. This interest in providing good access included increased frequency and stops designed for a more comfortable experience.

- *“Offering transit that is more frequent and goes more places can address issues that you want me to choose related to equity?”*
- *“People who rely exclusively on transit are able to get where they need to go and have shorter trip times.”*
- *“Transit is more frequent, goes to more places, and is more equitably priced for people with low incomes.”*
- *“Improve shelters for seniors & handicapped while they wait for the buses... Many have only standing areas, which is very hard for the elderly or when it rains (7-8 months/year)”*

Reliable service also rose as a concern for these respondents:

- *“I live 19 miles from my job in downtown Portland. Reliable transit would be my biggest one, upgrade the current systems and get timelier.”*
- *“Dependability! If public transportation won't get you to work on time, its value is diminished.”*

Another aspect of the issue of cost focused on the **affordability of housing and community design**:

- *“We created a bunch of downtown proximate housing that is priced outside the range of lower income people and left them to migrate to places like Rockwood and fringe areas where they are outside the bikeable trip range.”*
- *“Housing, housing, housing, and transportation convenient to it.”*

- *“Livable sub-communities / town centers that provide employment/services/walkability/natural resources within the area.”*
- *“Support employment opportunities and services that are spread throughout the region, so that commutes are short and nonexistent.”*

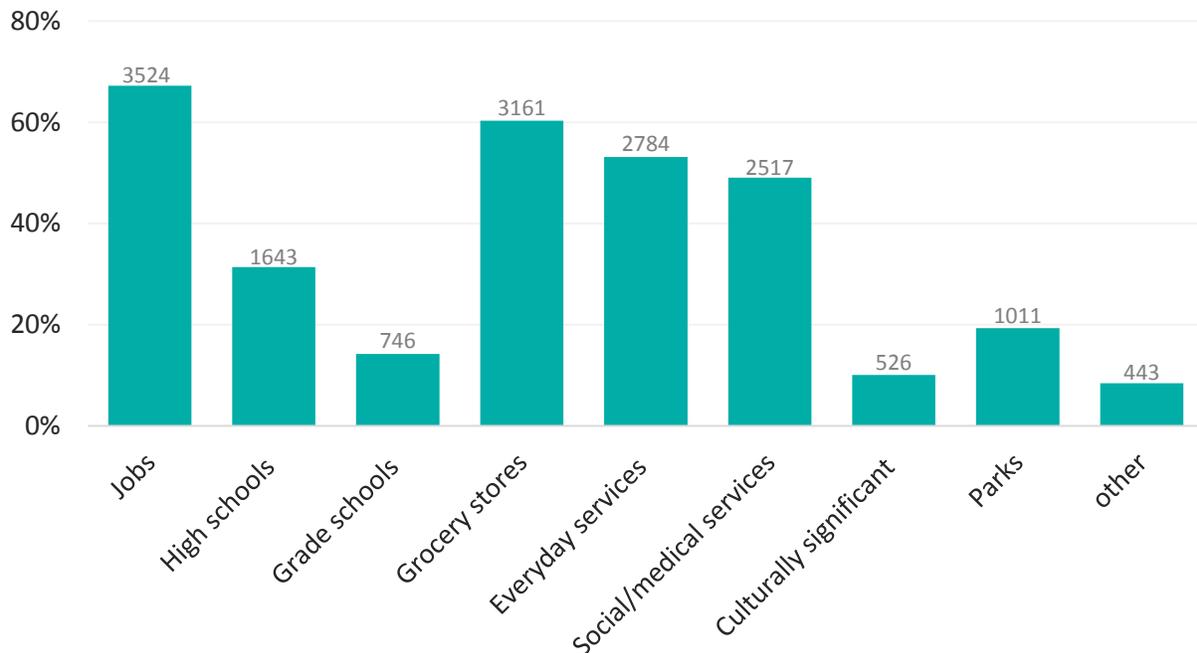
One less frequent but notable theme is that about 10 percent of the respondents raised **concern over a focus on social equity for Metro and its functions:**

- *“I don't believe that social equality should be a factor in determining how we invest in our transportation system.”*
- *“It's not about feeling good or making sure everyone is included. Add more roads so people can get around and the social issues will solve themselves.”*
- *“Social engineering does not work. In every society there are those who choose to not drive, or have not worked their way up the ladder to own a car. Leave it to the free market. This is the only country where you are rewarded for as hard as you work.”*

What types of places are most important to be easily accessible on our transportation system?

Respondents were asked to pick three or add their own. The full text of the options is provided below.

Respondents: **5240**



Jobs (3524 | 67%): areas with a lot of jobs

High schools (1643 | 31%): high schools and colleges

Grade schools (746 | 14%): grade schools and middle schools

Grocery stores (3161 | 60%): grocery stores

Everyday services (2784 | 53%): everyday services (post offices, libraries, banks)

Social/medical service (2571 | 49%): social and medical services

Culturally significant (526 | 10%): culturally significant places (places of worship, community centers)

Parks (1011 | 19%): parks and natural spaces

Other (443 | 8%)

Online participant demographics

Participants were asked to provide demographic information to help Metro know if we are hearing from people across all races/ethnicities, ages and income levels on these important decisions.

	Count	Percent	Regional population
County			
Respondents to this demographic question	5177		
Clackamas	533	10%	17%
Multnomah	3539	68%	49%
Washington	1012	19%	34%
Other	116	2%	n/a
Ethnicity			
Respondents were asked to pick all that apply and choose "other" or offer more specificity. ^{2 3 4}			
Respondents (5200) minus "prefer not to answer" or similar comment expressing dissatisfaction with the inclusion of the question (501) ⁵	4699		
White alone ⁶	4070	87%	73%
Black or African American	96	2%	5%
American Indian/Native American or Alaska Native	142	3%	2%
Asian or Asian American	167	4%	9%
Pacific Islander	33	1%	1%
Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin	226	5%	12%
other (please describe) or offer more specificity	126	3%	6%
Income			
Respondents (5210) minus "don't know/prefer not to answer" (709)	4501		
less than \$10,000	169	4%	7%
\$10,000 to \$19,999	251	6%	9%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	329	7%	9%
\$30,000 to \$49,999	1583	35%	18%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	913	20%	18%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	719	16%	13%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	862	19%	15%
150,000 or more	537	12%	11%

² Race/ethnicity categories were simplified to allow for correlation with U.S. Census data on race and ethnicity.

³ Since respondents could choose more than one ethnicity, totals add to more than 100 percent.

⁴ "Other" responses were reviewed to provide consistent tallies in the other categories. For instance, if someone stated "White/Latina" in the other/more specificity space, staff verified that tallies were entered in the "White" and "Hispanic, Latino or Spanish origin."

⁵ Sixty-seven comments questioning, objecting to or protesting the inclusion of this question were removed from the "other" category, including "human" or the like, and were added as tallies to "prefer not to answer," as appropriate. Responses such as "American," "Conservative Christian" or "Midwesterner" were left as self-identified ethnicities in the "other" tally.

⁶ Since the ethnicity question is asked to determine if Metro is reaching diverse communities, responses were reviewed to calculate the number of respondents who were white and no other ethnicity.

	Count	Percent	Regional population
Gender			
Respondents (5209) minus “prefer not to answer” (266) or similar comment expressing dissatisfaction with the inclusion of the question or the inclusion of non-(cisgender)male/female options (34) ⁷	4909		
female	2698	55%	51%
male	2153	44%	49%
transgender female	16	>1%	n/a
transgender male	12	>1%	n/a
other identification	64	1%	n/a
Age			
Respondents (5222) minus “prefer not to answer” (223)	5199		
younger than 18	8	>1%	23%
18 to 24	125	2%	9%
25 to 34	829	16%	16%
35 to 44	1049	20%	15%
45 to 54	1009	19%	14%
55 to 64	1073	21%	12%
65 to 74	726	14%	6%
75 and older	180	3%	5%

⁷ Though no U.S. Census correlation for additional gender categories, these categories were expanded to be inclusive of more gender identifications.