



2018 Regional Transportation Plan update

Regional Leadership Forum 3 report

Connecting our priorities to our vision

A summary of the Dec. 2, 2016 forum about the future of transportation in the Portland metropolitan region in support of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update.

February 2017

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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 web site: www.oregonmetro.gov/rtp

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Connecting our priorities to our vision

Regional Leadership Forum 3 summary

The region is looking ahead to how our transportation system will accommodate future growth and change – and what investments we should make over the next 25 years to build a safe, reliable, healthy and affordable transportation system.

On Dec. 2, 2016, the Metro Council convened Regional Leadership Forum 3, at the Oregon Convention Center. Nearly 60 city, county, regional and state policymakers, business and community leaders from across the Portland metropolitan area joined in bringing the perspectives of their constituents and communities to the conversation.

These leaders offered their views on:

- a **shared vision** for the region’s transportation future
- the current **funding landscape** on the federal and state level
- **priority challenges** to address in the next 10 years and beyond
- building a **path to future funding**.

What did leaders say?

Let’s go big.

We need to build a coalition with new and diverse voices.

We need to build trust and be accountable.

Equity and social justice should be integral to the vision.

Shaping our shared vision and desired outcomes

Participants reviewed and provided feedback on a draft vision statement for the region’s transportation future, developed from Regional Leadership Forums 1 and 2 discussions and additional engagement activities in 2015.

Our region’s shared economic prosperity and quality of life are sustained by a transportation system that provides every person and business in the region with access to safe, reliable, healthy and affordable ways to get around.

Draft vision presented at the forum

Feedback on the draft vision from the large group discussion and written comments submitted by participants included:

- It’s not a question of how much money it is, it’s a question of how persuasive the vision is to build public support.
- Equity and social justice should be integral to the vision and explicitly called out.
- “Sustain” feels like “stay where we are” rather than grow and enhance our prosperity.
- Need to include reference to a “well maintained transportation.”
- We need a stronger look toward the future.



Transportation priorities and funding

Leaders participated in group discussions to review and prioritize the region's top transportation challenges and actions that need to be taken to improve the funding deficit. Feedback from the discussions and written comments submitted by participants included:

Addressing the region's most urgent challenges

1. **Everything is intrinsically tied together – congestion relief can't be achieved without safer streets, better transit and fixing aging infrastructure.**

Leaders had a difficult time narrowing the challenges to the three most important, because they felt that they are all intertwined.

2. **We need to develop an equitable, inclusive transportation system.**

Leaders discussed the need to focus on the shared values, health and well-being of the populations they serve.

3. **We need to focus on funding first.**

Leaders agreed all of the transportation priorities need to be addressed through a comprehensive transportation package.

Building a path to funding our vision

1. **We need a big vision with specific projects that show how everyone will benefit from the region's transportation package.**

Leaders agreed it is important to finish the vision and clarify regional goals and priorities.

2. **We need to build a coalition, with new and diverse voices, to make the vision a reality.**

Many leaders agreed that to make the vision for the region's transportation system happen, a coalition with representation from throughout the region is needed.

3. **We need to engage communities in the process, build trust and be accountable to those we represent.**

Leaders agreed that it is important to educate people about how the transportation system plan supports their communities.

More information

News coverage of the forum is available at oregonmetro.gov/seedcorn.

A report on the forum will be available in February 2017. Find out more about the 2018 RTP update at oregonmetro.gov/rtp.



PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

This report summarizes the discussions of the third of five regional leadership forums that will be convened by the Metro Council in support of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update.

2018 Regional Transportation Plan update

Our region's economic prosperity and quality of life depend on a transportation system that provides every person and business with access to safe, reliable, healthy and affordable ways to get around.

The Regional Transportation Plan provides a shared vision and investment strategy that guides investments for all forms of travel to keep people connected and commerce moving throughout the Portland metropolitan region. The plan is updated every four years to stay ahead of future growth and address trends and challenges facing the region.

Our region is growing rapidly and straining our aging transportation system. A half-million new residents are expected to live in the Portland region by 2040. Our communities are becoming more culturally diverse, bringing rich cultural activity to neighborhoods. A new generation will grow to adulthood as others move toward retirement. Climate change is happening, and our system is not prepared for the expected Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake. We are experiencing technological changes in transportation that could radically alter our daily lives. Housing affordability and safe, reliable and affordable access to education, jobs and other important destinations are of concern.

The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update provides policymakers, community and business stakeholders and the public with an opportunity to work together across interests and communities to bring innovative solutions to the challenges facing our changing region. It provides a platform for updating our shared vision for the transportation system and defining strategies and investment priorities to help ensure people and products get where they need to go as congestion, safety and maintenance issues increasingly impact our daily lives.

The 2018 RTP update is an opportunity to define how we will create a safe, reliable, healthy and affordable transportation system that is environmentally responsible, efficiently moves



The region is looking ahead to how our transportation system will accommodate future growth and change – and what investments we should make over the next 25 years to build a safe, reliable, healthy and affordable transportation system.

Find out more about opportunities to be involved in the 2018 RTP update at oregonmetro.gov/rtp.

#RTP2018

products to market and ensures all people can connect to the education and work opportunities they need to experience and contribute our region’s economic prosperity and quality of life.

2016-18 regional leadership forums

To address the challenges and trends facing our region, the Metro Council is convening a series of five regional leadership forums as part of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update:

- 1 Exploring Big Ideas for Our Transportation Future** 4/22/16
- 2 Building the Future We Want** 9/23/16
- 3 Connecting Our Priorities to Our Vision** 12/2/16
- 4 Drafting Our Shared Plan for the Region** Dec. 2017
- 5 Finalizing Our Shared Plan for the Region** June 2018



Forum participants include members of the Metro Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC), the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT), state legislators, and community and business leaders from throughout the Portland region. Working side-by-side, regional and state leaders will bring the perspectives of their communities and constituents to the conversation around the challenges we are facing, our vision for the future and potential solutions for moving forward.

CONNECTING OUR PRIORITIES TO OUR VISION

On Dec. 2, 2016, the Metro Council convened Regional Leadership Forum 3, *Connecting our priorities to our vision*, at the Oregon Convention Center. Nearly 60 city, county, regional and state policymakers and business and community leaders from across the Portland metropolitan area joined in bringing the perspectives of their constituents and communities to the conversation.

These leaders offered their views on:

- a shared vision for the region's transportation future
- the current funding landscape on the federal and state level
- priority challenges to address in the next 10 years and beyond
- building a path to future funding.

In addition to state legislators and members of MPAC and JPACT, participants included 21 invited community leaders working in transportation advocacy, environmental justice, workforce equity, skilled trades and issues impacting older adults and 17 invited business leaders from established firms, emerging businesses, business alliances and workforce partnerships. In all, more than 100 people attended the forum with 59 invited regional leaders and more than 40 general audience members.

John Williams, Metro Deputy Planning Director, facilitated the forum. A summary of the morning's opening remarks, featured speaker remarks and small group discussions follows.

Opening remarks

Metro Councilor Craig Dirksen, Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation chair, welcomed participants and recognized the diverse representation in the room including elected officials, community advocates and business leaders. He acknowledged that while there are challenges that need to be discussed, there is also a lot of momentum for creating a shared vision for the region's transportation system.

Councilor Dirksen emphasized the need for everyone to share their ideas. We have big transportation problems in the Portland metropolitan area, he said, and our solutions have to be as big as our challenges. His advice: Be bold, be courageous.



Wood Village Council President Tim Clark, Metro Policy Advisory Committee chair, thanked everyone for being a part of the third leadership forum. He encouraged participants to help align the region's transportation priorities with public priorities to find long-term solutions. He also emphasized the importance of defining investment priorities for the region so people understand where transportation dollars are going.



SHAPING OUR SHARED VISION AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

Following the opening remarks, participants reviewed and provided feedback on a draft vision statement for the region's transportation future.

The draft vision statement was developed from regional leadership forums 1 and 2 discussions and additional engagement activities in 2015 and to work together to confirm a shared vision for the region.

Feedback on the draft vision from the large group discussion and written comments submitted by participants included:

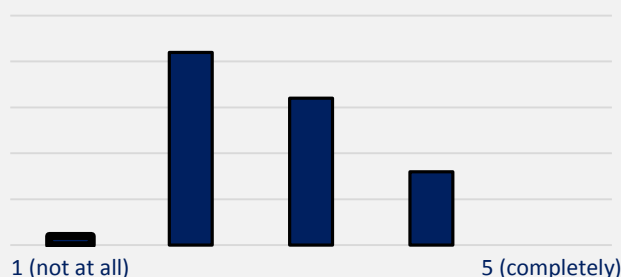


- It's not a question of how much money the plan needs, it's a question of how persuasive the vision is to build public support.
- "Sustain" feels like "stay where we are" rather than grow and enhance our prosperity.
- It should address a commitment to partnerships and innovation.
- Specific issues aren't specifically addressed, like climate change, social equity, income inequality, workforce opportunities, system maintenance and transportation options.
- We need a stronger look toward the future.

Discussion guide comments

In addition to the large group conversation, participants were offered the opportunity to provide written feedback about how well the draft vision reflected their vision for the transportation future via the discussion guide. Participants were asked to rank, from one to five, how well the draft vision reflected their vision and to provide comments. As with the larger group conversation, leaders felt the vision statement was headed in the right direction, but was missing some key elements.

How well does the draft vision reflect your vision for our transportation future?



"We need equity to be explicitly called out."

"The statement is trying to incorporate a lot, but doesn't seem inspiring."

respondents: 68

FEATURED SPEAKERS: THE FEDERAL AND STATE FUNDING LANDSCAPE

The first regional leadership forum identified big ideas for the region's transportation future, and the second forum explored what investments should be made over the next 25 years to address current needs and accommodate future growth and change.

This third regional leadership forum provided an opportunity for participations to work together to prioritize the ideas and investments after listening to two featured speakers. Travis Brouwer and Drew Hagedorn set the stage about future funding realities.

Travis Brouwer, Oregon Department of Transportation assistant director, provided a transportation funding overview markedly different from what state and metropolitan areas have relied on in the past. He explained that while the gas tax is probably the largest single source of funding for transportation for multiple levels of government across the nation, it does not rise automatically to keep pace with inflation. He also noted that gasoline sales have been flat or declining for a decade, in part because vehicles are rapidly becoming more fuel efficient.

He also explained that this is also true of motor vehicle registration fees. They don't rise with inflation, so over time a greater share of DMV revenue is needed for the rising costs of administration, leaving less net revenue available to invest in roads.

Brouwer urged leaders not to count on the federal government to make up the funding deficit. He explained that the current federal transportation bill expires in 2020, and the incoming administration is talking about transportation financing, not funding. He clarified there is a key distinction between the two: Funding is like a grant – though it's often at least partially matched with local or state funds – while financing has to be paid back, often with interest.

The changing landscape of federal and state transportation funding means Oregon and the Portland metropolitan region should be ready to pursue new resources to fund priority transportation projects, like tolling or other pricing mechanisms, he said. He also noted that financing tends to work only for big projects, not more vital things like maintenance, transit operations or smaller walking and biking projects.

Brouwer concluded by encouraging leaders to look to the Oregon State Legislature to help fund the priorities identified during the forum and through the update to the Regional Transportation Plan.



“Even as Oregon’s population grows and people continue to drive more miles, growing fuel efficiency is projected to cause Oregon’s fuels tax collections to stagnate in coming years before beginning a long decline.”

– Travis Brouwer, Oregon Department of Transportation

Following Brouwer's presentation, Drew Hagedorn, Oregon Transportation Forum chair, built on Brouwer's presentation, recommending leaders focus on a state transportation funding package to make up the gaps.

Hagedorn referenced Brouwer's presentation and that the gas tax is declining but remains the only funding mechanism we currently have. He also talked about the federal impediments to tolling, though he called it a good potential revenue source.

Hagedorn shared that recent listening tours by Oregon's governor and legislators revealed that transportation is a concern all over the state. The legislature could raise the gas tax, he went on, or propose another way to fund transportation projects, but it isn't a sure thing.

Hagedorn expressed optimism, despite the funding challenges. The Oregon Transportation Forum will be proposing a yet to be determined gas tax increase during the 2017 legislative session, he said, and there is a lot of momentum for a transportation package. It isn't a partisan or urban versus rural issue, he continued, congestion throughout the Portland region impacts Oregon's rural communities that are dependent on reliable freight movement throughout the state's economic center. Addressing congestion and expanding transit service are top priorities in both urban and rural areas. Legislators pay attention to that.

Hagedorn also said that stakeholders like the automobile and freight industries might support a gas tax increase that is capped at around \$300 million on a statewide transportation package, with the possibility of referral to voters if the legislature tries to raise more from a gas tax or other user fee.

Hagedorn argued for transportation policy objectives and priorities for the region that includes maintenance and preservation, ODOT's Fix-it-First policy, seismic retrofitting and investments in transit. Transit isn't just for urban populations. It is also important for people living in rural areas that need to connect to communities, especially the aging population and millennials. It is critical that legislators hear a consistent message from all of you, Hagedorn concluded.



"There is a big coalition in the room, which is a really neat thing. We need to hear your commitment to funding transportation."

– Drew Hagedorn
Oregon Transportation
Forum chair



Discussion on the federal and state funding landscape

Following Brouwer and Hagedorn's presentations, leaders shared their thoughts and questions. Several participants urged leaders to develop a bigger vision for transportation and encouraged developing a coalition to push it through the legislature. Others cautioned that there is work to be done building support with stakeholders and engaging the public to build support for a vote or legislative action.

Other leaders advised that for a vote to pass, there needs to be something in the transportation package for everyone in the region, everyone needs to see the benefits.

Successful transportation funding campaigns in Seattle and Los Angeles were brought up as examples to consider. TriMet general manager Neil McFarlane responded that while there is a lot to learn from those examples, we have to be cautious because our funding needs and goals are unique to this region, he said.

Some questioned why alternatives to a coalition weren't being discussed, such as a corporate tax. Responses included the need to make sure everyone paid for the benefits of a healthy transportation system. Wealthy people needed to pay more, one leader said, but we all need to pay. Metro planning and development director Elissa Gertler responded, saying it was a fair question to ask what else we are going to do to fund transportation.

Other comments included the need to incorporate new and emerging technology to achieve climate change goals and improve air quality.

"Let's go big. Let's go to the public and talk about something that's actually inspiring."

– *Ted Wheeler, Portland Mayor-elect and former Oregon State Treasurer*



"I am hearing a lot this going back to coalition building, having a vision and a project that is inclusive... Why am I not hearing about corporate taxes around transportation funding?"

– *Emily Lai, Momentum Alliance*

OUR FUNDING REALITY

Metro Councilor Craig Dirksen and Metro planning and development director Elissa Gertler introduced a jar filled with seed corn to provide a visual representation of the funds that the region thought in 2014 would be available to spend for transportation projects over the next 25 years.

While Councilor Dirksen scooped out cups of corn, Gertler explained that since 2014, much of the \$31 billion has been committed or targeted for transportation projects over the next 25 years. This includes road and maintenance operations, transit service increases as part of the region's adopted strategy to address climate change, and several other major projects, including the Southwest Corridor light rail project, Division Street bus rapid transit and three freeway bottlenecks.

When container was almost empty, Gertler clarified that the remaining seed corn was representative of what is left for the region to spend on transportation projects – around \$3 billion, or \$120 million annually over 25 years.

We need to go from here to a future with more transportation funding, she challenged. Moving forward, how we can use the Regional Transportation Plan update to set a vision for what we need, define our priorities for getting there and build the leadership needed to fund it, Gertler said, referencing the nearly empty jar.

Councilor Dirksen reminded forum participants that the demonstration is illustrative and based on a lot of assumptions, some that have been realized and some that haven't. He concluded by asking who in the room was satisfied with what was left to work with for the next 25 years. No hands were raised in the room.



“Instead of using our seed corn to plant in the spring, over the lean winter we’ve been eating our seed corn.”

– Metro Councilor Craig Dirksen,
JPACT chair



“We need to go from here to a future with more transportation funding.”

– Elissa Gertler, Metro planning
and development director

GROUP DISCUSSIONS ON PRIORITIES AND FUNDING

After the seed corn demonstration, leaders were asked to participate in small group discussions to review the region's top transportation challenges and prioritize the top three that should be addressed in the next 10 years. Leaders were then asked what actions need to be taken to improve the region's transportation funding deficit.

The following is a summary of the group discussions.

Addressing our most urgent challenges through our investment priorities

Leaders had a difficult time narrowing the challenges to the three most important, because they felt that they are all intertwined. They discussed the interconnectedness of all of the region's transportation challenges and that an equitable transportation system isn't possible without taking a holistic approach.



Everything is intrinsically tied together – congestion relief can't be achieved without safer streets, better transit and fixing aging infrastructure.

Leaders agreed it was important to finish the vision and leadership needed to be fully aligned with it.

Comments and suggestions included:

- Everything is a priority, and the region should be bold in making the case for more funding.
- Any one of the listed challenges can be used as a lens to look at the others.
- Services and amenities should be provided where people already are rather than make them travel to reach goods and services.

We need to develop an equitable, inclusive transportation system.

Leaders discussed the need for creating a more equitable transportation system for everyone. Their direction was to focus on the shared values, health and well-being of the population that government is there to serve.

Comments and suggestions included:

- All of the challenges are important, but if we look at the issues through an equity lens, maybe we can prioritize properly; everything is intertwined and social equity is key.
- We need to support women and people of color getting into construction, providing good paying jobs and career pathways.
- Opportunities for jobs and services are not distributed equally.

We need to focus on funding first

Leaders felt that rather than prioritize the challenges already identified, we should concentrate on how to pay for the investments needed for a comprehensive transportation package that addresses all of them.

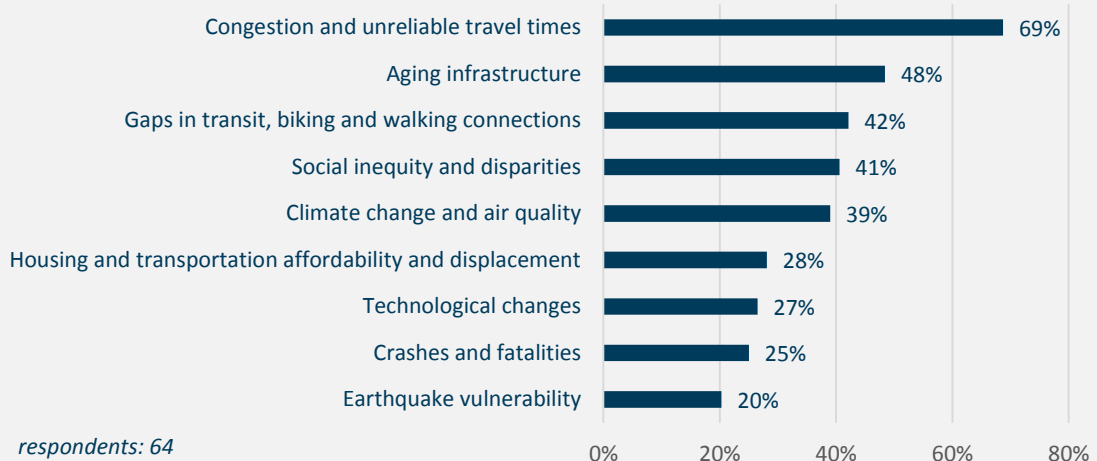
Comments and suggestions included:

- We need to focus on funding first.
- The elephant in the room is funding – Measure 97 failed and if that's not addressed, a bold transportation system will probably not get any traction.

Discussion guide comments

In addition to the large group conversation, participants provided written feedback in the discussion guide for addressing the region's most urgent transportation challenges through investment priorities. Participants were asked to choose three transportation challenges from a list – developed through discussions at the previous forums and prior public feedback – that were the most urgent for the region to focus on in the next 10 years and to provide comments.

What three challenges are most urgent for the region to focus on in the next 10 years with our current funding reality?



“Reliability, economic impact and alternative transportation are most important.”

“All of the choices will be addressed by prioritizing other challenges. They are all tied together.”

“Aging Infrastructure needs to be prioritized - maximizing the existing system is a safety issue and improves economic opportunity and quality of life in areas of pre-existing residential or commercial presence.”

Building a path to funding our vision

We need a big vision with specific projects that show how everyone will benefit from the region's transportation package.

Comments and suggestions included:

- We – as a region and as leaders – have to find inspiring messages and the partners that are going to advance those inspiring messages.
- Specificity is important and how we get to that specificity is also important.
- We need to recreate the kind of coalition that Los Angeles talked about at the last forum.



We need to build a coalition, with new and diverse voices, to make the vision a reality.

Many leaders agreed that to realize the vision for the region's transportation system, a coalition with representation from throughout the region is needed – as a cohesive group of people that come together and respect one another's opinions and priorities.

Comments and suggestions included:

- The coalition is perhaps the needed leadership element.
- Everything can't be built at once because the funds aren't there, but a coalition can develop a strategy for meeting the transportation needs of the region.

We need to engage communities in the process, build trust and be accountable to those we represent.

The general consensus was that to be successful, specific effort is needed to engage the people who have not historically been part of the conversation. If the region is to go big, we need a big vision, which requires talking to a lot of people. People need to understand what the funds are buying and how it will benefit them and their communities.



Comments and suggestions include:

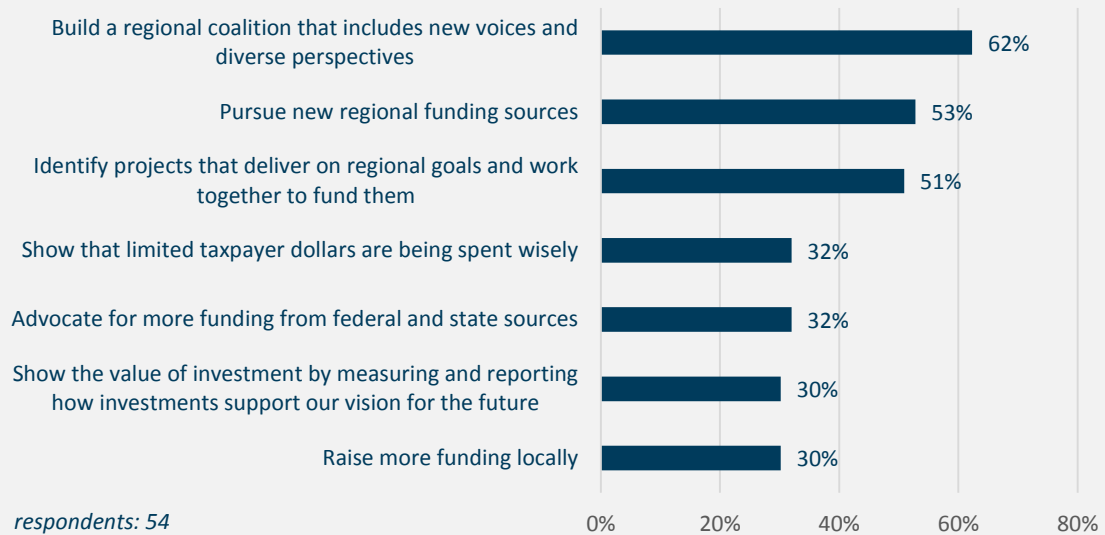
- We need inspiring messages that reach a diversity of interests.
- We need to engage those that are not traditionally part of the conversation.
- Education is key to success. We need to reach out to all communities by going to where they are. We need to speak in plain English and avoid jargon.
- It is imperative to stay committed and accountable to the diverse communities who are brought into the planning process.

- Leaders need to make sure constituents trust that the funds will be used wisely. We need to say what we're going to do and make sure we do what we say we're going to do.

Discussion guide comments

In addition to the large group conversation, participants were offered the opportunity to provide feedback on building a path to funding our vision via the discussion guide. Participants were asked where they would you like to focus their efforts – from a list developed through discussions at the previous forums – and for other actions the region needs to take to improve our funding situation.

Where would you like to focus your efforts to improve our funding situation?



“Build coalitions across interest groups to help everyone understand the benefits of funding the regional transportation system plan.”

“We need to fund a campaign with communications, organizing and campaign experts on staff.”

“The process must be transparent and open minded.”

NEXT STEPS

The Dec. 2 forum focused on discussing the region's vision for the future, defining regional priorities given the region's current funding reality and identifying the work ahead to build a path to new funding. There is strong support for building a coalition to make a shared vision a reality. Leaders recognized the importance of developing a transportation investment strategy that is equitable and makes progress on addressing all of the region's transportation challenges. Leaders also agreed that this forum was one step in the continuing, important discussions about how the region prioritizes and funds our transportation system.

In 2017, Metro and local, regional and state partners will update the region's near-term and long-term transportation priorities and strategies as part of the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update. This forum and the previous two forum discussions will inform the direction the Metro Council and the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation provide in May 2017 to guide updating the plan's projects and strategies and future regional funding conversations. The next forum is planned for December 2017 and will focus on a discussion of how well the updated projects and programs address the region's transportation challenges while advancing regional goals. The forum will result in further direction on drafting a shared plan that will be released for public review in spring 2018.

Find out more about upcoming opportunities to be involved in the 2018 Regional Transportation Plan update at oregonmetro.gov/rtp.

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If you picnic at Blue Lake or take your kids to the Oregon Zoo, enjoy symphonies at the Schnitz or auto shows at the convention center, put out your trash or drive your car – we’ve already crossed paths.

So, hello. We’re Metro – nice to meet you.

In a metropolitan area as big as Portland, we can do a lot of things better together. Join us to help the region prepare for a happy, healthy future.

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Bob Stacey, District 6

Auditor

Brian Evans

600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
503-797-1700

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