



Metro

*The Portland metropolitan region is stronger when we all have options for safe, quality, affordable housing with access to jobs, education, services and amenities.*

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## Metro's role in housing

*Challenges in the housing and job markets, environment and transportation system do not stop at city limits or county lines.*

Housing is a critical piece of regional infrastructure. Where someone can choose to live affects their ability to access jobs, education, social networks, nature and quality of life. Metro plays many roles in promoting a strong regional housing network through partnership and collaboration, grant funding and research and incubating ideas to find new solutions as our region continues to grow and change.

## Preparing for growth

### **Equitable Housing Initiative**

Metro created the Equitable Housing Initiative to convene regional public, private and not-for-profit housing stakeholders to better coordinate efforts already under way and identify new solutions to address the acute housing needs in our region. The initiative brings together local and national experts to develop shared understanding of needs, opportunities and best practices. Metro supports local partners through grant funding, research, state policy development and capacity building to put those best practices to work in local communities. Local partners developed an equitable housing framework and are advancing strategies to maximize housing resources, promote affordability in high-growth areas, mitigate displacement and diversify market-rate home prices. The initiative also supports research and planning with partners to coordinate on funding and investment solutions to build and preserve more affordable places to live throughout the region.



*“Whether you live in Orenco Station or Happy Valley, quality, affordable housing is key to creating and maintaining quality of life in the Metro region.”*

*– Metro Council President Tom Hughes*

## Regional policy and growth management

By state law, there must be room to house 20 years of expected population growth inside the region’s urban growth boundary. Regional policies such as the 2040 Growth Concept encourage housing development in existing communities. This maximizes urban expansion within the boundary to protect important farm and forest lands outside the boundary.

Consistent with these policies, Metro manages the regional urban growth boundary to ensure there is enough room for new housing development and redevelopment throughout the region. Metro works with jurisdictions, communities, advocates and the private sector to direct growth into areas where it makes sense and where it can support a range of housing options well-connected to transportation and jobs.

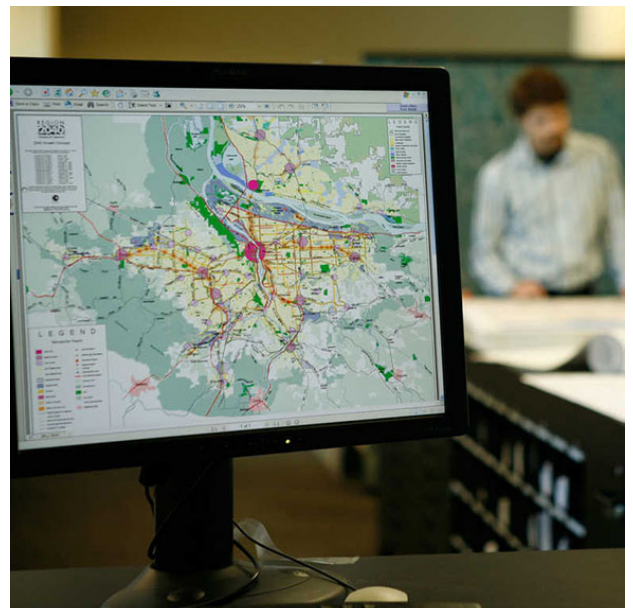
## Regional Transportation Plan

Affordability is intimately linked to the roads and transit people use every day to get to work and other destinations. If the housing is affordable but the commute is costly and burdensome, people can still struggle to get by. That’s why Metro defines cost-burdened households based on the portion of household income spent on housing plus transportation, rather than housing alone.

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a 20-year blueprint for a safe, reliable, affordable and healthy regional system of roads, transit, pedestrian and bicycle facilities and more. Metro and its partners update this plan every four years in accordance with federal law. The RTP framework seeks to support the production and preservation of affordable housing in the region by ensuring the availability of transportation options that connect communities with a range of housing, employment and educational opportunities.

## Research and forecasting

Metro regularly collects and aggregates data that monitors housing preferences, supply, demand, construction and pricing, which includes an inventory of regulated affordable housing. Data and models are used to develop future growth scenarios that inform regional and local planning and policy. For example, Metro’s MetroScope is a land use forecasting tool used to develop urban growth management strategies and support transportation planning by showing where people are likely to live based on affordability and housing supply.





# Investing in communities

## Transit-Oriented Development

Metro's Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) program acquires land and provides gap funding for nonprofit and for-profit private developers to support the construction of higher density building forms and more affordable housing in areas served by frequent service bus, streetcar and light rail. Since 1998 the program has helped create more than 729 units for residents who earn 60 percent or less of the region's area median income. An additional 825 units are currently being planned. The program's investment criteria reflect the higher propensity of lower income residents to use transit and the challenges of developing affordable housing in areas with high rents and land costs. Metro's TOD investments can be coordinated with planning for future high capacity transit projects, such as a new mixed-income project in east Multnomah County (see sidebar) and the 2016-2018 redevelopment of a former furniture store into 48 units of affordable housing along a future bus rapid transit line.



## High Capacity Transit Planning

Metro's Investment Areas program plays a lead role in planning the region's light rail and other rapid transit lines to serve a broad range of residential, commercial and employment centers. Past experience has shown that these major transit investments can have a big impact on housing costs. Without proactive planning, these investments can contribute to involuntary displacement of residents and businesses.

By working to better understand the relevant consequences and impact that transportation investments have on housing costs, Metro and its partners can maximize opportunities to plan transit investments while also addressing housing stability and affordability.

For example, ongoing efforts to design the SW Corridor MAX light rail line are working closely with housing advocates to create proactive strategies to preserve and develop affordable housing while connecting lower-income residents to living-wage jobs through high-quality, affordable transit service.



### Building homes near transit

Woody Guthrie Place, a new four-story apartment building in Lents Town Center broke ground on September 13, 2017.

Woody Guthrie Place will feature one-, two- and three-bedroom apartments and serve individuals and families of mixed incomes.

Some of the apartments will rent at the going rate for the Portland market, while others will be reserved for individuals and families earning incomes that range from 30 to 80 percent of the region's area median income.

"It's about a \$21 million investment in Lents Town Center," said Nick Sauvie, executive director of Rose Community Development Center, the nonprofit developer constructing the project. "So the rents for the building are going to be as low as \$378 a month."

Metro's Transit-Oriented Development program contributed \$350,000 to the project.

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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## State and local policy

Since 2005, Metro has been an active partner in the Oregon Housing Alliance, a diverse statewide coalition that advocates for statewide policy and funding to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Metro also offers grants and research that helps cities and counties develop local affordable housing policies and tools. Supported projects tackle challenges on a number of fronts:

- Creating new incentive programs, such as density bonuses and tax exemptions, to encourage the development of affordable housing,
- Identifying new sources of money to pay for preserving existing housing and new affordable housing,
- Identifying sites for potential affordable and mixed-income housing communities along transit lines and in business districts,
- Developing new strategies and programs for rehabilitating existing affordable housing and preserving its long-term affordability and
- Updating zoning and building codes to support shared property and infill development such as accessory dwelling units, duplexes, garden apartments and smaller housing forms in primarily single-family neighborhoods.

## Build Small Coalition and Summit

Metro convenes the Build Small Coalition, a group of public, private and nonprofit partners working to promote the small-house movement in greater Portland and across Oregon. Its mission is to create awareness about smaller homes, including corner duplexes, cottage clusters and secondary housing units on private property commonly referred to as accessory dwelling units. The coalition helps advance policies, regulations and financing tools that will make it easier to build and pay for them. Coalition members are conducting a statewide assessment of zoning codes and building regulations, as part of larger efforts to understand the barriers to building accessory dwelling units and potential for smaller homes to add more choices for where to live.