

On June 27, 2018, Metro hosted a community leaders' forum, bringing together community leaders focused on social equity, environmental justice, labor fairness and community engagement. Invitees included community representatives on MPAC, CORE, PERC, MTAC and TPAC, as well as previous participants in RTP regional leadership forums and those involved in discussions about an affordable housing measure. More than 90 community leaders were invited, and 24 leaders participated to learn about the current status of the RTP update, provide feedback on the public engagement guide, understand the draft process for developing the potential future funding measure and activate their communities to provide feedback during the last comment period.

Attendees

Community leaders: Anjala Ehelebe, Ramsay Weit, Kem Marks, Raymond Eck, Jessica Rojas, Jenny Lee, Thomas Aquinas Debpuur, Angela Kremer, Nicole Phillips, Effie Stansbery, Glenn Koehrsen, Patricia Kepler, Karla Hernandez, Sprinavasa Brown, Kari Schlosshauer, Emily Lai, Fiona Yau-Luu, Rachel Loftin, Willy Myers, Martine Coblentz, Vivian Satterfield, Luis Nava, Amandeep Sohi, Chris Rall

Metro and other jurisdictional staff: Clifford Higgins, André Lightsey-Walker, Tyler Frisbee, Grace Cho, Karynn Fish, Irene Schwoefferman

Introduction

- The meeting began at 10:09 AM. Cliff Higgins gave an overview of the day's agenda, including an explanation of the meeting materials, meeting norms, forum outcomes, and comment period announcement.
- Cliff provided an overview of the RTP, along with how the project lists changed with the feedback shared during the Community leaders' forum in January 2018.
- Cliff articulated that staff took the feedback from the last community leaders' forum and took it to the Regional Leadership Forum in March 2018. From those conversations, we took feedback to the Metro Council and they responded by telling jurisdictions to relook at their project lists and to have more focus on safety and benefits for historically marginalized communities.
- He noted that the RTP does not presume that a transportation measure will pass. The plan is developed in context of a constrained budget of funds the greater Portland region can reasonably expect through 2040 under current funding trends.
- Cliff also noted that the RTP formal comment period begins Friday, June 29. The survey will ask respondents about how their transportation priorities align with the plan's investments, along with their thoughts on the transit, safety, freight and emerging technology strategies. He encouraged community leaders to share the opportunity with their networks.
- The investments made through House Bill 2017, the state's recent transportation investment bill, have been incorporated into the plan.

Comments during initial discussion:

- Can safety be increased to talk about security and wellbeing?
- Speaking with the disabled community about access – important to emphasize local bus service and where enhance bus service will be located.
- There was a comment about access to parks and whether that was measured in the plan evaluation.

Public engagement guide

- Cliff provided an overview of the public engagement guide. He noted the intention in building the document was to answer some of the questions that have come up during the regional transportation plan process.
- The document is meant to give people enough information to know that we're updating the RTP, along with what it is, why we're doing it, the process, decision-making points and how the public can engage.
- The hope with the document is that we can give people the opportunity to weigh in and feel that they have access and can comfortably engage in the decision-making process.

Question posed to the group: *Are we hitting the mark on the detail? Comments during initial discussion:*

- A lot of people do not want to read packets of documents if they aren't policy wonks. A suggestion is postcards, which is not listed as an option.
- For most people, unless they're really involved, what is presented is too much information.
- Have you thought about animation or whiteboard? People have different learning styles which is important to consider.
- Centering more on the localized and personal interaction and focusing on the pathways and how it connects to the RTP on a regional level could be beneficial.
- Engaging is one level but having an actual influence on decision-making is something else.
- How does JPACT hear the comments? How does it influence their decisions?
- Are you weighting the comments?
- Very telling that community groups felt the necessity to make their needs heard in the process – we should find a new way to center these communities' voices. It would be beneficial if community folks could get involved earlier in the process. There's a higher bar to community engagement if we want to reach the voices we want to hear.

2020 transportation investment measure

Tyler Frisbee led a conversation around the potential transportation investment measure and the case behind the need for it. Important points of the overview include:

- The region is rapidly growing. Moving around the region is getting increasingly harder and the highest burden is on communities of color and low-income communities.
- Historically, we've been leaders in building transportation infrastructure but we're falling behind. If we want to keep pace, we need to figure out how to help ourselves.
- Cities like Denver, Seattle and Los Angeles have all passed multi-billion dollar measures to meet their transportation needs.
- Metro is currently taking the lead to figure out how to build a ballot measure that prepares us for the growth we will see in the next 10-20 years.
- This ballot measure will need to strike the balance between voters, elected leaders and stakeholders and interest groups. We are asking people to invest to make their lives better...so they have to believe that the investment will in fact make their lives better.

Tyler noted that the team wants to spend time over the next few months to figure out what's most important to people and focus in on top priorities. Examples she provided were safety, congestion, freight mobility, resiliency and community trips.

Tyler spoke about project development and engaging with stakeholders to identify “bigger things” that need to be taken care of, along with identifying what projects are missing. She laid out the phasing of developing the measure:

- Groundwork, value concepts, priority corridors, project development, draft project list, final framework

Comments during the discussion:

- Will air quality be incorporated into the conversation when developing the project list?
- Identify and link other outcomes to the transportation investments we're making
- There are other promises that jurisdictions need to make and keep...at what point in time do we capture the needs of the community?
- There's a difference between creating a project list and implementing it.
- In regard to electrification of TriMet's fleet, would the bond play a role here? When you're talking about corridors, how do these two things work together?
- Just because something is a priority doesn't mean it's a great fit for a ballot measure.

Question posed to the group: *How would you like to be involved in the development process of a 2020 ballot measure?*

- People should be involved early in the process.
- Meaningful engagement is about making sure people have the option to be meaningfully involved.
- Figure out meaningful ways to supplement the polls and offer opportunities every step of the way [for community to be involved].
- It can be difficult to engage people in the summer time.
- Meaningfully engage folks where it's impacting them directly. Storytelling and narratives have the ability to grab people and sharing how it has worked in the past. These are all the ways people were able to engage and have an impact.
- Make it as simple as possible so that we're engaged early. Making it “down to earth” provides opportunity to really engage.

Question posed to the group: *What role should the community leaders' forum have in further development?*

- It would be helpful if Metro had opportunities to share materials with organizations that help disseminate information to community groups.
- People want something to get excited about, we want the opportunity to dig into something. Ballot measures offer the opportunity to build community and exercise muscles of civic engagement.
- To [continue participating in these events/forums], we need to see our priorities reflected.
- Not convinced that the methodology we heard will get us there.