



Memo

Date: April 6, 2020
To: Metro Council
From: Margi Bradway, Deputy Director, Planning & Development
Subject: Regional Transportation Measure: Tier 2 Corridor Investment Recommendation

At the Metro Council's April 7 work session, staff will seek Council's direction on potential investments in "Tier 2" corridors as part of Get Moving 2020, the proposed regional transportation investment measure. This memo provides background on the Tier 2 corridors, summarizes proposals submitted by jurisdictions and feedback from the Transportation Funding Task Force, and provides staff's recommendation for each of the four proposals received from jurisdictions.

What are the Tier 2 corridors?

The Metro Council designated seventeen Tier 2 corridors in June 2019, based on input from the Task Force, community engagement findings and assessment of potential outcomes. These corridors were considered to have potential to advance key Task Force and Metro Council values, but with less urgent needs or fewer identified projects than the Tier 1 corridors. Tier 2 corridors were not included in the Local Investment Team project discussion over the summer, nor the Technical Workshops hosted by Metro, and therefore not considered as part of staff Tier 1 corridor investment recommendations released in October 2019, nor the Task Force's Tier 1 recommendations of December 2019.

The Metro Council directed that individual Tier 2 corridors could be considered for investment in the Get Moving 2020 measure if an agency partner or group of agency partners could demonstrate:

- the corridor and projects on that corridor align with Task Force and Metro Council desired outcomes for the measure
- those projects are supported by the local community
- those projects bring benefits and resources to parts of the region that aren't already directly impacted by other corridors in the measure.

The Metro Council directed that Tier 2 corridors with sufficient project identification and readiness could be considered for capital investment. Tier 2 corridors could also be considered to receive funds for corridor planning.

The Metro Council has been clear that Tier 2 corridor investments are intended to complement, not supplant, Tier 1 corridor investments. Funding for Tier 2 corridors in the measure ultimately depends on sufficient revenue capacity.

What has been proposed?

Local jurisdictions interested in having a Tier 2 corridor included in the measure were directed to develop proposals for review by the Task Force and Metro Council, with a focus on describing how these investments could advance Task Force and Metro Council outcomes, as well as discussion of public engagement to date, risks and supporting partners.

Four potential Tier 2 investments are proposed by jurisdictions. A summary is below; full proposals are part of the Council's packet for the April 7 work session.

Corridor	Proposing jurisdiction	Supporting jurisdictions	Proposed investment type	Proposed investment summary	Proposed measure investment
Highway 217	Washington County	Beaverton, ODOT	Planning, Design & Construction	Address safety and congestion on Hwy 217 and parallel north/south routes	Three phases: Corridor planning (\$2 million) Preliminary engineering (\$25-27 million) Project design and construction (\$105-125 million)
Highway 43	West Linn, Clackamas County	ODOT, Lake Oswego	Construction	Sidewalks, bicycle facilities, transit stops, intersections & turn lanes	\$54 million
Highway 99W, Tigard to Sherwood	Washington County	TriMet, ODOT, Sherwood, Tigard, Tualatin, King City, Durham	Planning	Planning to improve multimodal safety, transportation system management, economic activity and land use potential	\$3.5-5 million
Sunset Corridor	Hillsboro	Washington County, ODOT	Planning	Corridor planning to reduce congestion, reduce crashes and increase transit use in the broad Highway 26 corridor	\$1.3 million

How did the Task Force consider these proposals?

The Task Force received presentations and asked questions about the four proposals at its Feb. 19 meeting. Jurisdictions responded in writing to questions raised by Task Force members. Additionally, Washington County chose to revise its proposal for the Highway 217 corridor.

The Task Force discussed the proposals again at a virtual meeting on March 18. Following the March 18 meeting, members were asked to provide further input via an online survey. Members were asked to complete the survey by Sunday, March 29. Roughly half of the members completed the survey. The summary below highlights responses to the survey as well as discussion and questions at the Task Force meetings on Feb. 19 and March 18.

What happens next?

Staff are working toward a final corridor investment recommendation for the Council's consideration this spring. This recommendation will no longer distinguish between Tier 1 and 2 corridors as we work toward a final proposed investment package. It will build from previous Council direction and Task Force recommendations along with subsequent project development, cost refinement and risk assessments.

If the Council chooses to advance investments in these corridors, staff would move forward with jurisdictional partners to prepare them for this final recommendation. This work would include further cost and risk assessments of construction investments, and scope refinement of planning investments.

The full corridor investment recommendation will be presented to Council in May.

Tier 2 Corridor proposals: Task Force feedback & staff recommendations

Highway 217

Washington County's original Highway 217 corridor proposal focused exclusively on design and construction for the Highway 217 freeway, including interchanges. While several Task Force members recognized the significance of this corridor to Washington County and the region as a whole, many questioned the use of regional funding to invest in the freeway. Some noted that the overall scale of the funding request dwarfed other Tier 2 requests and asked whether other corridors should be a higher priority for investment if funds of that magnitude are still available.

Responding to concerns and questions raised at the Task Force's Feb. 18 meeting, Washington County revised its proposal to include three phases, beginning with a corridor-wide multimodal mobility study.

Even with this proposed planning phase, some Task Force members still advised against any measure funding in this corridor, seeing insufficient commitment to eventual project funding beyond the freeway itself and/or believing that other funding sources (such as state funding) are better suited to this type of facility. Several Task Force members raised concerns about whether the planning phase would include sufficient community engagement to meaningfully inform decision-making about transportation investments in the corridor, noting that Washington County's second and third proposed phases still focus on the freeway itself. Several members

said there was insufficient evidence that the proposal would advance racial equity or climate goals.

However, other Task Force members contended this corridor is too significant to leave out of the measure entirely. They highlighted not only its high visibility as Washington County's most significant north-south corridor, but also the growing population and workforce in communities along the corridor, and the opportunity to leverage other regional and local investments in transportation, housing and jobs. They also maintained that investing in the corridor is critical to the region's economic success. Noting that the County had updated its proposal to respond to Task Force members' concerns, these Task Force members advocated for funding at least a corridor planning phase.

Staff recommendation: This corridor is highly significant to the lives and daily travel of tens of thousands of people. It links communities and is a key connection in broader regional travel. The corridor includes the highway as well as several major parallel roads and important routes that cross the highway. Although the Oregon Legislature funded major construction in the southern portion of the freeway in the HB 2017 funding package, and TriMet has recently announced major bus service improvements in the corridor, the overall corridor deserves a closer look.

Staff recommends that the regional measure include these investments in the broader Highway 217 corridor connecting Tigard and Beaverton:

- **\$2 million** for a multimodal corridor planning phase that includes parallel arterials such as Hall Boulevard and Western Avenue, as well as streets and active transportation routes that cross Highway 217. This study must include inclusive and equitable community engagement with a clear link to recommendations for future investment, and should include particular focus on improving safety, transit and active transportation options in the corridor.
- **\$10 million** (approximately half the amount requested) for a second phase of project development that builds on the findings of the corridor study. Following the study's completion, Washington County should present its findings to the transportation measure's oversight committee and/or the Metro Council, and make a proposal for spending these development funds in a way that reflects community input and findings of the planning study.

Staff believe this recommendation responds to the concerns raised by the Task Force while also advancing key Metro Council outcomes in the corridor.

Highway 43

In meetings and survey responses, Task Force members were near-universally supportive of the Highway 43 multimodal improvement proposal and its potential to advance key Task Force and Metro Council values, particularly safety and making it easier to get around. Members cited the potential to create safer travel options and access to transit, updating a once-rural highway that now serves as a community main street as well as a major regional connector for driving, transit and bicycling.

Several members noted that the area served by the project does not have significant concentrations of people of color, advocating that this investment should therefore not be prioritized over other projects that serve more communities of color. However, other members also noted the area has an older population that is increasingly dependent on transit and in need of safe places to walk to essential services as well as for exercise.

At the Task Force's meeting on Feb. 19, some members raised concerns about the project's overall cost, including its contingency. Members also voiced apprehensions about whether the innovative project could be delivered as proposed on a state highway. West Linn staff emphasized their close partnership with ODOT and highlighted the fact that the project is highlighted in the state's new Blueprint for Urban Design. West Linn staff also emphasized that the project is ready for investment and construction could begin soon after funding is secured.

Following the Feb. 19 Task Force discussion and through further consultation with Metro staff, the City of West Linn reduced its funding request from its initial proposal of \$66.1 million to \$54 million.

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends including the full \$54 million revised Highway 43 safety proposal in the regional measure. We believe it advances key Council and Task Force values, is deliverable as proposed and would serve its communities and the region well.

Highway 99W Corridor planning

Task Force members broadly supported a corridor study that could improve safety and transportation choices while also advancing community and economic development goals on this key Washington County corridor. Several members stated that a funding package that did not include this corridor would be inherently incomplete.

While a few members asked questions about how investing in the corridor advances overall racial equity goals, other members noted an increasingly diverse population and workforce along the corridor, as well as opportunities to leverage other regional and local investments in affordable housing and transportation.

Several Task Force members urged that the study focus on improving transit and safety for people walking and biking in the corridor, above increasing capacity for automobiles. These members voiced concerns that the study could fail to advance climate goals if it leads to investments that support a higher number of motor vehicles driving through the corridor.

Staff recommendation: Staff recommends funding in the amount of \$3.5 million for the Highway 99W corridor study proposal be included in the regional measure.

The proposal would add an important corridor to the package, and help get future improvements in mobility and safety ready for investment from potential federal, state, regional and/or local sources.

Sunset/Highway 26 Corridor planning

Although many Task Force members recognized the significance of the corridor to the region's travel, and key challenges that exist there, most felt this proposal was inadequately defined and/or poorly suited for the regional funding measure.

A number of Task Force members expressed concerns that the study would result only in investments to move more motor vehicles through the corridor, undermining climate goals and potentially simply shifting traffic congestion to other places. Many were apprehensive that the study could include new or expanded roads through or under Forest Park.

The City of Hillsboro highlighted ODOT and Washington County as partners, noting that its funding request of \$1.3 million would leverage expected funding contributions of \$1 million from the state and \$100,000 each from Hillsboro and Washington County. However, Task Force members questioned whether the City of Hillsboro had secured commitment from other jurisdictions, such as the City of Portland, for the level of interjurisdictional collaboration that would be needed in the corridor.

Staff recommendation: The Highway 26 corridor is critical to overall regional mobility, providing an essential link from the growing west side to the rest of the region. Congestion in the corridor is of major regional significance and concern.

However, staff share Task Force members' concerns about the proposed study's definition, clarity of outcomes and potential solutions that will be studied. Staff also recognize that funding has been made available by the state for a study.

Based on Task Force feedback and the availability of other funding resources for a corridor study, staff do not recommend funding this proposal through the regional measure.