



# Metro Regional Travel Options Racial Equity Strategy

July 2022



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**Program web site:** [oregonmetro.gov/regionaltraveloptions](https://oregonmetro.gov/regionaltraveloptions)

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Thank you to Anita Yap of MultiCultural Collaborative for leading and facilitating the RTO Racial Equity Strategy process, and supporting the development of this report.



Thank you to RTO Core Partner grantees and the individuals and organizations who participated in the focus groups that helped inform the actions laid out in this strategy and whose work is critical to support equitable travel options programming in the region.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) program has committed to advance racial equity in travel options to ensure that all residents in the Portland Metro region can get to where they need to go safely, affordably, and efficiently. This work is in alignment with our regionally developed and adopted 2018 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), in addition to our 10 year RTO Strategy; developed in partnership with agencies and organizations across the region in 2018. In addition, this work aligns with Metro's adopted Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion, adopted by Metro Council in 2016. *See how this strategy aligns with existing Metro policies in Appendices A, B & C.*

In 2020, during the global COVID-19 pandemic and racial reckoning our country and communities grappled with, program staff recognized that we had not fully defined the specific outcomes and actions necessary to measure and evaluate the impact of our progress. In 2021, the RTO program worked with Anita Yap of MultiCultural Collaborative to lead us through a year-long strategy and action plan development process. This work included:

- Best Practices review of racial equity in transportation demand management and grantmaking
- Staff Racial Equity Assessment and priority setting workshop
- RTO Program Power Analysis: identifying who holds influence as well as who is impacted by our program and investments
- Focus Groups with highly impacted communities from Power Analysis
- RTO Racial Equity Goals, Outcomes and Action Plan Matrix

### RTO Program Racial Equity Goals & Outcomes

Based on this process, as well as existing research and prior engagement with partners and input from communities of color toward both the RTP and RTO Strategy, the RTO program developed the following goals and outcomes:

**Goal 1:** Metro's RTO program addresses community identified barriers to, and burdens on, Black, Indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) in accessing travel options

Outcome 1a: The RTO program identifies and funds strategies to address barriers and burdens in collaboration with partners

Outcome 1b: The RTO program qualitatively and quantitatively measures barriers and burdens to, and perceptions of, travel options for BIPOC communities before and after Metro and partner-led programming

**Goal 2:** Metro RTO funded travel options programs that are developed for BIPOC communities are developed and delivered in collaboration with BIPOC communities

Outcome 2a: The RTO program removes barriers and increases accessibility of funding for culturally specific organizations

Outcome 2b: The RTO program has an effective and culturally specific engagement and partnership strategy

**Goal 3:** Metro's RTO program generates long term opportunity for BIPOC communities to grow wealth through improved access from transportation investments

Outcome 3a: The RTO program measures access to gainful employment and stable housing for BIPOC communities through Metro-led and partner-led travel options programming

**Goal 4:** Metro's RTO program works with partners to learn together on how to adapt and develop programming that is inclusive of and meets the needs of BIPOC community members in all parts of the region

Outcome 4a: All RTO partners have a racial equity plan for their travel options program and a strategy for ongoing training, refinement and evaluation of their work toward that plan

Outcome 4b: RTO staff regularly report on and share progress toward racial equity goals, actions and evaluation; ensuring work is in alignment with Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

## **Accountability & Implementation**

This work will inform actions and activities of the program over the next 5 years. In the short term, this work will immediately inform staff work plans and our upcoming grant solicitation process that will open in January 2023.

A key outcome of this strategy is consistent communication and accountability on our work toward these goals and outcomes. This includes developing a communications plan with quarterly report-outs on Metro and partner-led efforts.

Staff will review progress toward short, medium and long-term actions with report-outs and evaluation of progress on the following timeline:

- December 2022 – Integration into 2023 RTO grant application process
- October 2023 – Short term action progress report
- October 2024– Medium term action progress report
- 2025-2026 - Integration into 2024-2026 RTO Program Evaluation

We will also be considering this work in the context of our adopted 2018 RTO Strategy and how we integrate this work into future updates as well as policy direction that continues to evolve, like the 2023 RTP update.

We will also continue to integrate feedback and seek input from our partners, with the goal that our program is responsive to gaps and opportunities. Many of our actions include collaboration with existing and new partners, and we look forward to building out additional actions and continuing to refine our program activities to best meet community needs.

**Questions? Contact the RTO Team:**

[rto@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:rto@oregonmetro.gov)

## GOALS, OUTCOMES, AND ACTION PLAN

The following goals, outcomes and actions were developed through staff workshops and engagement with existing partners and community focus groups with groups and individuals identified through a program power analysis. The actions are intended to inform and direct RTO program staff work plans and program funding strategies in both the short and long-term.

**Action Plan Layout:** The following key describes the elements of each action plan table

<b>Actions:</b> <i>Associated Goal &amp; Outcome</i>	<b>Program Area 3 primary RTO program areas were identified:</b>	<b>Short-term –</b> <i>3-12 months</i>	<b>Medium-term –</b> <i>1-3 years</i>	<b>Long-term –</b> <i>3-5 years</i>
<i>Description of intended action</i>	<b>RTO Programming/Community Engagement</b> – activities RTO staff lead through RTO led program development or through engaging directly with community <b>Research &amp; Evaluation</b> – activities related to Metro RTO travel options research or evaluation of program outcomes <b>Grantmaking</b> – activities related to the RTO grant solicitation process and ongoing work with grant funded partners <b>Policy/Partnerships/Influence</b> – activities that involve coordination with partners and where we could have influence on policy outcomes but may not be final decisionmakers	<i>Light blue means that some level of progress is being completed toward this action – which may be prep work, or follow up work</i>	<i>Darker blue means that the bulk of work toward this action is taking place in the associated time-frame.</i>	<i>No color fill means action is completed or has not begun</i>

**Appendices:** Appendices A, B & C highlight how the Action Plan aligns with existing Metro and RTO policies, including:

- Metro’s 2018 Regional Transportation Plan
- 2018 RTO Strategy
- Metro’s Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (SPAREDI)
- Metro Planning & Development Department’s Racial Equity Action Plan

**Goal 1:** Metro’s RTO program addresses community identified barriers to, and burdens on, Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) in accessing travel options; which includes cost, personal safety from harassment/bias, and physical access to travel options

**Outcome 1a:** The RTO program identifies and funds strategies to address barriers and burdens in collaboration with partners

Actions: Goal 1, Outcome 1a	Program Area	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Identify gaps in grantee programming to address barriers and implement programming led by Metro; using data, research and funding to pilot concepts that could scale up	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Develop a language access program within RTO for Metro-led programs and grantees	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Continue racial equity focused research, building on 2019 focus groups to continue identifying barriers and potential strategies to address them	Research and Evaluation			
Explore how RTO can support programs that enhance safety on transit through non-armed and culturally trained staff – building on Portland Streetcar, TriMet and Portland Street Response programs	Policy/ Partnership/ Influence			

**Outcome 1b:** The RTO program qualitatively and quantitatively measures barriers and burdens to, and perceptions of, travel options for BIPOC communities before and after Metro and partner-led programming

<b>Actions: Goal 1, Outcome 1b</b>	<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Short-term</b>	<b>Medium-term</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
Provide qualitative and quantitative information from Metro research (and outside research) on barriers and burdens identified by communities of color in greater Portland to grant applicants as they develop their proposals.	Grantmaking			
Explore opportunities for funding specific barriers through Infrastructure and Innovation grant category that may address the built environment within RTO funding eligibility (i.e. lighting)	Grantmaking			
Develop racial equity performance measures/evaluation criteria on RTO program's reduction in identified barriers	Research and Evaluation			



**Goal 2:** Metro RTO funded travel options programs that are designed for BIPOC communities are developed and delivered in collaboration with BIPOC communities

**Outcome 2a:** The RTO program removes barriers and increases accessibility of funding for culturally specific organizations

<b>Actions: Goal 2, Outcome 2a</b>	<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Short-term</b>	<b>Medium-term</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
Develop a Racial Equity Capability Index. Along with TDM Capability Index, help partners advance in both and prioritize partners with higher capability in both as part of the RTO grant program. Start out as a simple self-assessment with grant application, develop with partners into a more robust tool.	Grantmaking			
Learn from the Community Placemaking grant program strategies for inclusive engagement, which could include: hiring community liaisons to help inform and engage potential partners; creating different types of application submission options	Grantmaking			
Explore opportunities for more fiscal sponsorship and subcontracting to culturally specific organizations with embedded equity elements such as: requirements for timely payments, evaluating reasonable grant funding for CBO's, fiscal sponsor's commitment to racial equity, criteria for subcontracting organizations that builds their capacity to apply directly in the future	Grantmaking			
Ensure expectations around subcontracting, federal funding requirements, overhead rates, and grantee reporting are clear and offer technical assistance for new and smaller organizations	Grantmaking			

<b>Actions: Goal 2, Outcome 2a (cont'd)</b>	<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Short-term</b>	<b>Medium-term</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
Develop training series for grantees on applying for grants, reporting, and racial equity outcomes. Offer a few at the beginning of the 3 year cycle and smaller sessions annually.	Grantmaking			
Develop a process for direct contracts vs. grants with organizations high on racial equity capability index and emerging or new partners. Provide access to funds with a lower barrier than a grant, as well as work on Metro-led pilot initiatives to address known barriers or fill gaps in grantee programming	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Add evaluation of level of funding going toward culturally specific and BIPOC-led organizations	Research and Evaluation			

**Outcome 2b:** The RTO program has an effective and culturally specific engagement and partnership strategy

<b>Actions: Goal 2, Outcome 2b</b>	<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Short-term</b>	<b>Medium-term</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
Develop inclusive process for diverse grant review committee, with a focus on inclusion of those with lived experience with racism. Include implicit bias training for all committee members. Learn from other departments and grant programs at Metro.	Grantmaking			
Provide ‘meet and greet’ opportunities between smaller organizations and Core Partners to connect on opportunities before grant solicitation	Grantmaking			
Provide more outreach and engagement to community based and culturally specific organizations to better understand and access the program	RTO Programming/Community Engagement			
Provide support for Core Partners on community engagement with BIPOC communities, employers, and workers	RTO Programming/Community Engagement			
Determine internal review process for racial equity strategy. Engage with Metro DEI team for direction on internal review of strategy and outcomes.	Research and Evaluation			
Develop racial equity outcomes for Multiple Accounts Evaluation Framework, review with DEI and align with existing outcome measurement at Metro	Research and Evaluation			
Determine external review strategy of the RTO program’s impact in meeting our racial equity goals and outcomes; specifically from communities of color	Research and Evaluation			

**Goal 3:** Metro’s RTO program generates long term opportunity for BIPOC communities to grow wealth through improved access from transportation investments

**Outcome 3a:** The RTO program measures access to gainful employment and stable housing for BIPOC communities through Metro-led and partner-led travel options programming

Actions: Goal 3, Outcome 3a	Program Area	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Refine RTO Commuter program equity outcomes as well as RTO Community program development. Focus on defining the barriers we are trying to address within each program area.	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Explore ways to expand the employer pass program, particularly partnering with affordable housing agencies and other existing Metro workforce partners. Determine how Metro plays a role in prioritizing certain categories of workplaces.	Policy/ Partnerships/ Influence			
Determine RTO role in vanpool or local shuttles for community – particularly for non-commute trips, and for connecting workers to jobs outside of the Metro boundary	Policy/ Partnerships/ Influence			
Determine RTO role in regional discussions with large employers that require a labor force from around the region to underscore the importance of providing equitable travel options	Policy/ Partnerships/ Influence			

**Goal 4:** Metro's RTO program works with partners to learn together on how to adapt and develop programming that is inclusive of and meets the needs of BIPOC community members in all parts of the region

**Outcome 4a:** All RTO partners have a racial equity plan for their travel options program and a strategy for ongoing training, refinement, and evaluation of their work toward that plan.

Actions: Goal 4, Outcome 4a	Program Area	Short-term	Medium-term	Long-term
Explore dedicating a portion of grant funding for Core & SRTS partners toward working with a racial equity consultant, depending on partner's racial equity self-assessment or placement of the Racial Equity Capability Index	Grantmaking			
Provide clear directions, definitions, and expectations for racial equity activities in grant application – tie to existing Metro policies	Grantmaking			
Regularly convene existing and past grantees to share program improvements, challenges and opportunities	Grantmaking			
Convene Core Partners to explore opportunities to create a shared racial equity data collection and analysis framework, which can inform the Racial Equity Capability Index, outcome evaluation in Multiple Accounts Evaluation Framework, etc.	Research and Evaluation			
Provide general and on-going racial equity/racial equity in transportation trainings for staff and partners. Develop training continuum and operationalization expectations that connect to grant deliverables. Use Racial Equity Capability Index to support development of training continuum.	RTO Programming/Community Engagement			

**Outcome 4b:** RTO staff regularly report on and share progress toward racial equity goals, actions, and evaluation; ensuring work is in alignment with Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity.

<b>Actions: Goal 4, Outcome 4b</b>	<b>Program Area</b>	<b>Short-term</b>	<b>Medium-term</b>	<b>Long-term</b>
When developed, apply Racial Equity Capability Index to overall Metro RTO program, report out to partners during evaluation of RTO program	Grantmaking			
Collaborate and be responsive to other Metro policies and programs to refine actions and determine roles (including DEI, RTP, TSMO, Housing, Community Placemaking, etc.)	Policy/ Partnership/ Influence			
Develop communications plan for new program initiatives, possibly a quarterly newsletter that highlights staff and the program, project examples, provides resource links and a calendar of upcoming events or opportunities	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Ensure RTO staff are trained and using Metro's Racial Equity Framework on any Metro-led RTO initiative to ensure it advances racial equity as defined by the agency	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Utilize Metro's decision-making framework and action plan on policing and use of carceral systems to evaluate our funding and impact on enforcement of the transportation system	RTO Programming/ Community Engagement			
Evaluate Metro-led initiatives work toward racial equity outcomes and metrics for RTO and P&D, as well as within grantee program evaluation	Research and Evaluation			
Add evaluation of level of funding toward organizations at different levels on the Racial Equity Capability Index, tracking progress of organizations moving up in both Racial Equity & TDM Capability Indices	Research and Evaluation			

## APPENDIX A – METRO REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN ALIGNMENT

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) is a blueprint to guide investments for all forms of travel through the Portland metropolitan region. The plan identifies current and future transportation needs, investments needed to meet those needs, and what funds the region expects to have available over the next 25 years to make those investments a reality. This table details how the 2022 RTO Racial Equity Strategy aligns with goals within the 2018 RTP.

View the complete [2018 Regional Transportation Plan](#)

Regional Transportation Plan Goals	RTP Objectives	RTO Racial Equity Goal 1	RTO Racial Equity Goal 2	RTO Racial Equity Goal 3	RTO Racial Equity Goal 4
<b>Goal 2 – Shared Prosperity:</b> People have access to jobs, goods and services and businesses have access to workers, goods and markets in a diverse, inclusive, innovative, sustainable and strong economy that equitably benefits all the people and businesses of the greater Portland region	<b>Objective 2.4 Transportation and Housing Affordability</b> – Reduce the share of income that households in the region spend on transportation to lower overall household spending on transportation and housing.	✓		✓	
<b>Goal 3 – Transportation Choices:</b> People throughout the region have safe, convenient, healthy and affordable options that connect them to jobs, school, services, and community places, support active living and reduce transportation-related pollution.	<b>Objective 3.1 Travel Choices:</b> Plan communities and design and manage the transportation system to increase the proportion of trips made by walking, bicycling, shared rides and use of transit, and reduce vehicle miles traveled.	✓			✓
<b>Goal 4 – Reliability &amp; Efficiency:</b> The transportation system is managed and optimized to ease congestion, and people and businesses are able to safely, reliably and efficiently reach their destinations by a variety of travel options.	<b>Objective 4.5 – Demand Management:</b> Increase the number of households and businesses with access to outreach, education, incentives and other tools that increase shared trips and use of travel options	✓			✓

<b>Goal 5 – Safety &amp; Security:</b> People’s lives are saved, crashes are avoided and people and goods are safe and secure when traveling in the region.	<b>Objective 5.2 Transportation Security:</b> Reduce the vulnerability of the public and critical passenger and freight transportation infrastructure to crime and terrorism	✓			
<b>Goal 7 – Healthy People:</b> People enjoy safe, comfortable and convenient travel options that support active living and increased physical activity, and transportation-related pollution that negatively impacts public health are minimized.	<b>Objective 7.1 Active Living:</b> Improve public health by providing safe, comfortable and convenient transportation options that support active living and physical activity to meet daily needs and access services.	✓	✓	✓	
<b>Goal 8 – Climate Living:</b> The health and prosperity of people living in the greater Portland region are improved and the impacts of climate change are minimized as a result of reducing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.	<b>Objective 8.3 Vehicle Miles Traveled:</b> Reduce vehicle miles traveled per capita	✓			
<b>Goal 9 – Transportation Equity:</b> The transportation-related disparities and barriers experienced by historically marginalized communities, particularly communities of color, are eliminated.	<b>Objective 9.1 Transportation Equity:</b> Eliminate disparities related to access, safety, affordability and health outcomes experienced by people of color and other historically marginalized communities.	✓	✓	✓	✓
	<b>Objective 9.2 Barrier Free Transportation:</b> Eliminate barriers that people of color, low income people, youth, older adults, people with disabilities and other historically marginalized communities face to meeting their travel needs.	✓	✓		✓
<b>Goal 11 Transportation &amp; Accountability:</b> Regional transportation decisions are open and transparent and distribute the benefits and burdens of our investments in an equitable manner.	<b>Objective 11.1 Meaningful Public and Stakeholder Engagement</b> – Engage more and a wider diversity people in providing input at all levels of decision-making for developing and implementing the plan, particularly people of color, English language learners, people with low income and other historically marginalized communities.		✓	✓	✓



## APPENDIX B: RTO STRATEGY ALIGNMENT & EXISTING PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The 2018 RTO Strategy was developed to provide a framework for the program for the next 10 years. This strategy was developed with input and engagement from the community and our partners. The following table details how the 2022 RTO Racial Equity Strategy aligns with goals identified in the 2018 RTO Strategy.

View the complete [2018 RTO Strategy](#)

RTO Strategy Goals	RTO Strategy Objectives	RTO Racial Equity Goal 1	RTO Racial Equity Goal 2	RTO Racial Equity Goal 3	RTO Racial Equity Goal 4
<b>Goal 1:</b> Increase access to and use of travel options to reduce vehicle miles traveled, provide cleaner air and water, improve health and safety, and ensure people have choices for travelling around the region	<b>Objective 1.1:</b> Reduce the number of trips using personal, single occupancy vehicles by educating and encouraging the public to drive less and utilize walking, biking, carpooling, vanpooling and public transit	✓	✓	✓	✓
<b>Goal 2:</b> Reach existing and new participants more effectively by expanding the RTO program and working with new partners	<b>Objective 2.1:</b> Build partners travel options capacity and expertise regionally		✓		✓
	<b>Objective 2.2:</b> Allocate RTO resources in a way that prioritizes and impacts communities of color, older adults, youth, people with disabilities, and low-income households	✓	✓		✓
<b>Goal 3:</b> Encourage families to walk and bicycle to school safely by implementing a Regional Safe Routes to School Program	<b>Objective 3.1:</b> Provide regional coordination and program development to support SRTS efforts throughout the region	✓	✓		✓
	<b>Objective 3.2:</b> Support local jurisdictions, school districts, and other partners in delivering Safe Routes to School programming		✓		✓

<b>Goal 4:</b> Measure Program, Evaluate Impacts, and Continually Improve the Program	<b>Objective 4.1:</b> Evaluate RTO grants and funded programs to pursue a suite of RTO-funded activities that collectively achieve program-wide goals and align with the state Transportation Options Plan performance measures	✓	✓	✓	✓
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The RTO Strategy identified performance measures by which to track progress toward our goals. The following are performance measures that align with the work developed for the RTO Racial Equity Strategy

RTO Strategy Performance Measure	RTO Strategy Goal	Baseline	2028 Target	RTO Racial Equity Goals
Identified barriers for communities of color, older adults, people with disabilities and/or low income households reduced	Goal 2	TBD	3-5 targets identified and reduced	Goal 1
Percent of RTO investments targeted to communities of color, older adults, people with disabilities, and/or low-income households	Goal 2	TBD	TBD	Goal 2

## APPENDIX C: METRO RACIAL EQUITY POLICY ALIGNMENT

Guided by input from regional partners and informed by research, in 2016 Metro identified racial equity as the approach to ensure all people who live, work and recreate in the Portland region have the opportunity to share in and help define a thriving, livable and prosperous place. Metro adopted the agency wide Strategic Plan to Address Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and each department within Metro created their own action plans to outline specific work toward this plan. The Planning & Development department adopted their Racial Equity Action Plan in 2018. This table details how the 2022 RTO Racial Equity Strategy aligns with the goals of Metro Racial Equity policies and action plans.

*View the complete strategy and action plan:*

[2018 Planning & Development \(P&D\) Racial Equity Action Plan](#)

[Metro Strategic Plan to Address Racial Equity, Diversity & Inclusion \(SPAREDI\)](#)

Planning & Development Racial Equity Action Plan Actions	P&D Racial Equity Principle	Metro SPAREDI Goal	RTO Racial Equity Goal 1	RTO Racial Equity Goal 2	RTO Racial Equity Goal 3	RTO Racial Equity Goal 4
Regulation and policy: Seek access to and utilize the most relevant, accurate, and informative data and analysis methods to better understand and articulate how our work affects people of color	Influence	A	✓			
Ensure the investment criteria for all grant programs in P&D require specific and transparent consideration of racial equity in the evaluation process	Influence	E	✓	✓		
Prioritize equity practices from Metro's Equity in Contracting program for all procurement efforts.	Influence	E		✓		
Develop capacity for emerging community leaders to participate in committees	Power	A		✓		

Increase diverse participation on Metro Committees by providing stipends, in accordance with agency policy.	Power	B		✓		
Ensure committee recruitment processes include proactive and meaningful efforts to reach out to and recruit candidates of color, make the recruitment process friendly and accessible,	Power	C		✓	✓	
Co-create community projects and programs in partnership with community based organizations to ensure they genuinely reflect community values and voices associated with the project or program	Power	B		✓		
Develop and standardize opportunities for people of color who served on decision-making/influencing bodies to provide feedback about whether they feel they actually made or influenced decisions	Power	B		✓		
Learn and apply new approaches to the co-creation of community engagement and partnership efforts.	Innovation	A		✓		
Provide opportunities for formal staff training and informal discussion of racial equity concepts	Culture	C				✓
Provide opportunities for staff to collaborate and connect with colleagues in other Metro departments and other partner public agencies who are working on applying racial equity to their work	Culture	A				✓

Actively participate in groups and organizations that are advancing people of color in the field of urban planning, develop relationships with others who are working on similar goals in the field	Culture	C		✓		✓
Seek opportunities to communicate with peers locally and nationally about Metro's commitment to racial equity and exchange best practices in order to effect change in the field.	Culture	A				✓
Create opportunities for staff to interact with community members of color around trends, challenges or opportunities that emerge from P&D programs	Accountability	C	✓	✓		✓
Establish indicators, tools and processes for tracking and reporting progress on the goals of this strategy.	Accountability	E				✓

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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