



# 2021 TSMO Strategy Project Solicitation Guide

August 19, 2022



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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. JPACT serves as the MPO board for the region in a unique partnership that requires joint action with the Metro Council on all MPO decisions.

**Program web site:** [oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy](http://oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy)

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## Introduction

The Transportation System Management & Operations (TSMO) Program invites letters of interest and applications for funding to deliver projects in the greater Portland region.

Regional funding for TSMO is an opportunity for Metro and partners to create projects that advance racial equity outcomes while meeting mobility needs of people traveling in the region. Historically, TSMO focused on the sources of traffic congestion. The 2021 TSMO Strategy focuses on how people experience congestion and actions that will improve mobility.

The 2021 TSMO Strategy integrated racial equity with series of questions, formatted as an [Equity Tree](#).<sup>1</sup> What barrier kept someone from making a trip? Will the project be inspired by Black, Indigenous, people of color and people with low incomes to co-create a solution? By leading with racial equity, TSMO projects will also manage congestion while providing a safer system that reduces climate emissions. The Strategy supports projects over the next ten years by taking 21 Actions that include a range of sub-actions. Here are a several example project themes to consider that are supported by Actions:

- When we walk, roll or bicycle along a busy arterial or try to cross it to get to a more comfortable sidewalk or lane, what would connect that gap? How does the intersection operate to sense vulnerable road users, detect near misses, react to unsafe conditions, illuminate transit waiting areas and provide amenities that allow all to access digital infrastructure? Projects that take up these challenges are supported by Actions 17 and 20.
- After stepping off the bus, what informs our next move? Do we need specific information to transfer to another transit vehicle, onto shared-use mobility or voice and haptic guidance through an assistive device to navigate both outdoor and indoor spaces? Projects that take up these challenges are supported by Actions 3, 10, 15, 18 and 19.
- As a major incident blocks a road, transit line or impacts the region, what project prepares us to serve the region for any eventuality with agility? How do we help commercial drivers navigate safely and comfortably through a snow storm? How will we keep emergency operations and route information flowing to travelers and incident responders? Projects that take up these challenges are supported by Actions 7, 11, 15 and 16.
- How shall we build capacity for a community listening program to reduce barriers for travelers to report experiences related to TSMO? What kind of feedback system could be generated by and for Black, Indigenous people of color, and people with low incomes? A project could help make this connection and support underrepresented groups when providing traveler information and community outreach and ensure that modal access and traveler information is free from technological and financial barriers. Projects that take up this opportunity are supported by Actions 6, 13, 18 and 19.

TSMO projects make more efficient use of the existing transportation system and help people and goods move around our region by restoring reliability, recovering from crashes (and other events or incidents) and managing demands that cause congestion. Projects can also provide access to more people that currently experience barriers by enhancing operations, illuminating the streetscape, bridging the digital divide or providing adaptive navigation systems.

## TSMO Opportunity

Before taking the first step, please consider the following eligibility requirements and guidelines:

- Projects must be located within, or for TSMO partners' use in, the region's Metropolitan

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<sup>1</sup> Link to Equity Tree <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy/equity>

Planning Organization (MPO) boundary.

- Non-profits and community-based organizations are not directly eligible based on the source of TSMO Program funds (federal). However, they are encouraged to submit a letter of interest with the potential to open an opportunity with Metro, a transit agency or another public agency. Applications may be submitted on behalf of eligible public-agency sponsors for projects located within the region's Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) boundary area, including Washington County and its cities, Clackamas County and its cities, Multnomah County and its eastern cities, the City of Portland, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, TriMet, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Metro, Port of Portland and Parks and Recreation Districts.
- In total, the Metro TSMO Program can spend just over \$10 million in the next six years to implement the 2021 TSMO Strategy through this solicitation. No minimum or maximum application amount is set. Metro staff estimate TSMO Program funds will cover approximately six to ten projects across a range of budgets.
- Project budgets are a combination of Metro's federal-source funds and local funds identified by the applicant. Nearly 90% of project expenses can be reimbursed by federal-source funds and just over 10% must be from non-federal source funds.

Please read below, draft a letter of interest and reach out with any questions or considerations. Caleb Winter, TSMO Program Manager, can be reached at [caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov).

### **TSMO Project Letter of Interest**

Please start the application process by submitting a letter of interest. Letters may be submitted to Metro via email to ([summer.blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:summer.blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov)). There is no limit on the number of letters you submit. A letter of interest is required before starting a full application. While there are requirements on how Metro can sub-allocate the federal funds used for 2021 TSMO Strategy projects, Metro staff will look for options to be flexible throughout this process.

- A formal Letter with subsequent formatting is not required - an email letter of interest is acceptable.
- For ease of writing and reviewing letters of interest, please limit them to no more than two pages of text (up to 1,000 words). There is no limit on the number of charts, figures, tables, maps or images (none of which are required).
- Please respond to each of these topics and use this outline for your letter:
  1. In a brief description, what is the purpose of the project? For example, what is the problem and how is this project going to help solve it?
  2. In two paragraphs, describe what the project will do and the activities that will take place during the project.
  3. Describe the connections this project has with the [2021 TSMO Strategy](#). For example, the project fits a Goal, Objective or Action, and how it can be evaluated or measured.<sup>2</sup>
  4. Describe how the project connects, or will connect to the roots of the [TSMO Equity Tree](#) (Context, Choices, Voices) and are there any specific areas of the tree to highlight related to this project?<sup>3</sup>
  5. What approach or activities will the project take to integrate racial equity? For example, will this project include public participation and decision-making particularly among BIPOC residents?

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<sup>2</sup> Link to 2021 TSMO Strategy: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy>

<sup>3</sup> Link to the TSMO Equity Tree: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy/equity>

6. What is the anticipated budget needed for this project? Briefly describe how the resources needed are uniquely suited to the TSMO Program funding opportunity. What matching funds can be brought forward with the proposed project?
7. Which public agency will take the lead in administering this project?
8. Who is the lead contact for this project? Please include the following contact information: name, preferred pronouns, organization, email, phone number

- Letters of interest are due September 30, 2022, by close of business. Please email letters to [summer.blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:summer.blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov) and [caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov)

Letters will be evaluated by October 21, 2022. Metro staff will contact all lead contacts before Oct. 11 with any additional questions or considerations. Metro staff will reply on or before Oct. 11 to confirm whether to proceed with a full TSMO application. If Metro staff initially views a letter of interest not to proceed with a full TSMO application, Metro staff will seek two other public-agency partner viewpoints before determining a letter of interest will not proceed.

Please reach out with questions, or for assistance to Caleb Winter, TSMO Program Manager, [caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov)

### **TSMO Project Eligibility**

All agencies, non-profits and community based organizations are welcome to submit letters of interest. Metro staff will work to facilitate partnerships where the organization may not meet the following eligibility:

- Lead agencies take fiscal responsibility for the project. Lead agencies are qualified to spend federal funds by being:
  - a certified agency in the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) process; or,
  - a transit agency eligible to administrate Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds; or,
  - a public agency working in partnership with a certified agency or transit agency.
- Lead agencies will form an intergovernmental agreement or contract with Oregon Department of Transportation or Metro. Agreements with additional partners will stem from this original agreement.
- Project partners are required to budget for and spend non-federal funds on the project. The minimum portion must be 10.27% non-federal of the total project to qualify for the remaining 89.73% in federal funds.
- Projects must be consistent with the federal surface transportation legislation. Applicants responding to the 2021 TSMO Strategy are very likely to be consistent with this legislation. If there is a question in this area, Metro staff will assist applicants to a reasonable extent to determine an application's eligibility under the legislation. For example, Metro will contact Federal Transit Administration or ODOT federal funding specialists for clarification.

#### *Source of TSMO Program Funds*

Metro's source for TSMO program investments stems from Regional Flexible Funds. This funding program was prioritized by the regional leadership of Metro Council and Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and is administered by Metro. The funding source is federal and therefore projects carry federal requirements. Federal requirements are dependent on funding categories that will be addressed in detail for the projects that are recommended for funding. For example, funds may carry FTA rules or FHWA rules depending on the project, while some projects may address Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) requirements.

## TSMO References

The following are resources to help develop a letter of interest and application that responds to recent regional planning efforts.

2021 TSMO Strategy Goals, Objectives, Performance Measures and Actions

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy>

TSMO Equity Tree

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy/equity>

TransPort Subcommittee

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/regional-leadership/metro-advisory-committees/transportation-policy-alternatives-committee/transpo-0>

Additional TSMO Resources

<https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy/2010-2020-tsmo>

## TSMO Project Application Checklist

Use this as a checklist to track your work through the 2021 TSMO Strategy project application process.

- Letter of Interest: Review of 2021 TSMO Strategy and Equity Tree
- Letter of Interest: Bring together supporters and/or references to support (for example, planning process)
- Letter of Interest: Write and email Letter of Interest by Sept. 19, 2022 by close of business
- Receive response from Metro staff no later than October 11, 2022.
- Identify lead agency (if you are proposing a region-wide project, multi-agency project or in the case your organization is not eligible to use FHWA or FTA funds directly)
- Gather information helpful to describe the performance of the project and the people served by the project
- Complete application and submit on or by November 18, 2022 by close of business. Include an email or letter from the lead agency Director or Manager with budget authority regarding non-federal funds identified for use on this project.
- If the project is recommended, share a budget scenario to facilitate starting the project and the project's timeline. This is particularly important for projects targeting a start date between October 1, 2023 and June 30, 2023. Please note that all work prior to an official Notice to Proceed will not be reimbursed by the TSMO Program awarded funds.

## Reviewers and Selection Criteria

### **Reviewer Team**

The reviewer's role is to work as a team to find consensus on ratings for all projects by applying the TSMO Project Selection Criteria. Ratings are then passed on to TransPort Members for consideration in recommending projects. Metro staff will attach reviewer team ratings to TransPort Member's recommendation and present both to TPAC as they consider amendments to the MTIP for each project. TPAC, JPACT and Metro Council support TransPort Members to recommend projects, reserving the right to consider each project during Metro staff and lead agency requests amend the MTIP (i.e., an agenda item requiring each committee to take action and vote).

Reviewers will be a mix of public agency and community representatives. To improve the connections from TSMO projects to the travelers served by investments, 50% or more of reviewers will represent the community perspectives of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) or residents with low income in our region. These reviewers may work for non-profits, community based-organizations, public-agency staff with roles that are not related to TSMO, or people who have volunteered to represent their community. Up to 50% of reviewers will be from any of these agencies: ODOT, TriMet, Port of Portland, Portland State University/TREC, other academic institutions and Metro. For example, if four people with community perspectives are willing and able to serve as reviewers, four public agency reviewers will join them to make a team of eight reviewers. The minimum size for the reviewer team will be four: two people representing BIPOC or low income communities and two public agency reviewers.

Metro will request reviewers who have strengths in evaluating projects to meet 2021 TSMO Strategy Vision and Goals. Reviewers will commit to reviewing all submitted projects by the review deadline (to be determined). Metro will compensate non-public agency reviewers or their organizations for their participation. Metro staff will provide the reviewers with preparation materials and answer any questions (e.g., meet to discuss selection criteria in advance of reviews and ratings). Metro staff will provide any worksheets for ratings and an agenda with adequate time for a full discussion to achieve consensus among the reviewer team.

Please take into account that applications need to be broadly relatable so that the full reviewer team can evaluate the proposed project with the selection criteria. For example, describe technologies in terms of how they benefit operators and/or travelers.

Reviewers will make use of the following criteria, evaluation method and points toward an overall project rating.

***Pass/Fail (Points: N/A)***

Applications must:

- be complete and submitted by, or on behalf of an eligible applicant;
- have an identified budget that is non-federal, accompanied by an email or letter from the matching agency's Director or Manager with budget authority;
- include cost estimates that are more precise than "planning level" (see Budget Estimates and Evaluating Risk criteria below); and,
- be consistent with the 2021 TSMO Strategy.

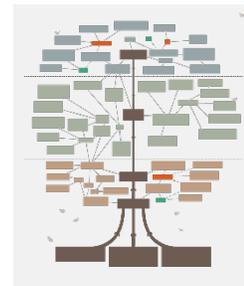
Project applications that pass will be evaluated further using points to rate each project according to selection criteria that will:

- integrate racial equity (up to 50 points);
- understand the precise nature of the project (up to 30 points);
- relate the timing of the project to the 2021 TSMO Strategy (up to 10 points); and,
- consider the work applied to estimating the budget (up to 10 points).

The ratings will have a maximum of 100 points.

**Integrate Racial Equity (Points: up to 50 across five areas)**

The first task of the 2021 TSMO Strategy was to integrate regional policy on leading planning and projects with racial equity. A thorough set of questions were developed as a tool to be incorporated into the planning work, and now, they are useful to implementing the strategy through projects. The Equity Tree includes branching questions for applicants to consider, reach out to stakeholders and respond to in the course of this application: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/public-projects/regional-tsmo-strategy/equity>



*Purpose and Need (Points: up to 10 of 50)*

The Equity Tree roots are about the voices, context and choices. How do these shape the purpose and need for this project? Utilize as many of these questions as needed to develop and write the purpose and need statement (or discussion of the problem and proposed solution):

- How do BIPOC and people with low incomes define the problem to be solved? (Voices)
- How can this solution solve existing transportation inequities that affect the quality of life for BIPOC and people with low incomes? (Context)
- How will this solution expand access to opportunities and meet individual needs for BIPOC and people with low incomes? (Choices)
- How is this solution solving problems for people without formal organization or influence? (Voices)

*Voices (Points: up to 10 of 50)*

Who was, or will be included in TSMO decision-making for the proposed project?

*Context (Points: up to 10 of 50)*

Thoroughly respond to one or both of these questions:

- Who are the people, neighborhoods, and geographic regions affected by barriers to travel today, and how does this project remove those barriers?
- Can the solution produce data that is currently missing, highlighting gaps identified by BIPOC and people with low incomes?

*Choices (Points: up to 10 of 50)*

How does this project improve mobility and/or access for BIPOC and people with low incomes?

*Evaluation and Accountability (Points: up to 10 of 50)*

Thoroughly respond to both of these questions:

- What project evaluation steps will be taken to understand whether the solution created, reinforced, or removed barriers to travel for BIPOC and people with low incomes?
- How will this project address barriers in contracting processes and workforces to advance racial equity in its contracting and investments? For contracting processes, the lead agency should provide recent policies at a minimum.

**Precision (Points: up to 30)**

To determine points, the reviewer team will look across the whole application as well as the applicant's response to this question:

- What evidence ties the project to a high degree of certainty it will accomplish the outcome, operator capability and/or TSMO Strategy performance measure it is proposes to achieve?

**Timing (Points: up to 10)**

The 2021 TSMO Strategy sets a course for regional TSMO over the next 10 years. Actions in chapter 5 include stakeholder input on timing as to when each should be worked on: near-term, in the middle of

the ten years, later or on an ongoing basis. This 2021 TSMO Strategy solicitation is for the first six years of implementation. Therefore, near-term, mid-term or ongoing Actions are more of a timing priority than late-term Actions. Thoroughly respond to one or more of these questions

- When over the next ten years is the project needed most?
- How does one project build the support structure for the next?

### ***Budget Estimates and Evaluating Risk (Points: up to 10)***

The purpose of this criteria is to include project-readiness by the work an applicant does to understand all the costs involved in delivering the project. Applicants will show the basis used for estimating costs which will help reviewers understand whether there is a low-, medium- or high-risk the project will finish without going over budget. The TSMO Program lacks additional funds, cannot support cost increases and has limited capacity to take on the administrative burden of amendments throughout the life of the project (administration that also greatly impacts a project's timeline). The following lists cost estimate methods that are increasingly precise:

- Unit costs – general costs that could apply to this type of project in any setting
- Recent project costs – costs were sourced from line items in a recent contract that is both a similar scope and similar context/location (or adjusted based on differences to each)
- Detailed budget - a budget submitted by a professional for this project
- Project bid or proposal – a procurement document for a prior version or phase of the project

Please note that “planning-level” costs are a “ballpark,” used for scale and are not acceptable.

Metro staff will request assistance from ODOT Local Agency Liaisons (LALs), FHWA Oregon Division and/or FTA Region 10 to evaluate budget estimates resulting in a rating of risk. Applicants will have at least one week to address ratings in writing before the rating is final. The final rating and summary of risks will be available to the applicant and reviewer team.

### ***TransPort and Sub-allocation Process***

TransPort was consulted in updating this criteria. TransPort will use ratings consistent with Bylaws to recommend TSMO Program funds for projects based on criteria.<sup>4</sup> Metro staff will write up the recommendation for TransPort's consideration and action. TransPort will communicate its recommendation to TPAC. Unless TPAC, JPACT or Metro Council request to review or act on the TSMO sub-allocation during their action to amend the MTIP, projects will proceed with the recommendation of TransPort. Metro staff will provide award letters to successful applicants with conditions of approval. Conditions of approval may be generated by discussion of the recommendation. Conditions of approval will also refer to the UPWP, MTIP/STIP and other required processes for federally funded Metro projects.

### **TSMO Project Application Format**

Download the Excel workbook for the TSMO project application. The project application was created in Excel with multiple tabs to avoid duplicating information that will help administrators and project managers for projects chosen in this process. Please open the application today and let Metro staff know if you have any questions. Metro staff will post answers to questions that are of interest to multiple applicants on the [TSMO Resources page](#). Please check that page as the application due date approaches for any useful clarifications.

Tabs are: Cover, AgencyInfo, LocationContext, PurposeNeed, Plans, ScopeSchedBudget, MeasuresAccountability.

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<sup>4</sup> TransPort Bylaws are posted here: <https://www.oregonmetro.gov/regional-leadership/metro-advisory-committees/transportation-policy-alternatives-committee/transpo-0>

Fill in information in the **blue cells**. All cells are optional although the application includes consideration for where points will be determined. Applicants are expected to provide clear, concise and well-defined responses in areas that are applicable to the project proposal in order to determine points and support the recommendation process.

Please contact Caleb Winter, TSMO Program Manager, with any questions ([caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:caleb.winter@oregonmetro.gov) or 503-797-1758).

**Applications Due: Friday, Nov. 18, 2022 by close of business**  
**Submit via email to: [Summer.Blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov](mailto:Summer.Blackhorse@oregonmetro.gov)**

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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