Report
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Metro Commute Program Action Plan

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Metro Commute Program Action Plan

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Overview

Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) program provides transportation demand management (TDM) services in the Portland metro region, aiming to change travel behavior through programs and outreach. The RTO program supports commute-specific programming across the region which is delivered by a variety of transit providers, non-profits local jurisdictions, colleges and universities and transportation management agencies (TMAs). While these partners each contribute individually toward RTO program goals of reduced vehicle travel, a regional strategy that supports improved coordination and collaboration would provide partners with tools to address current and future needs (hybrid work, for example) and would allow Metro to better quantify the impacts of the work delivered. Metro developed this Action Plan in 2022 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of commute programming across the region.

Through research and stakeholder engagement, Metro and Steer identified six goals to guide the RTO program's work related to commuter programming. Those goals are as follows:

1. Increase regional collaboration and leadership around commuter programming
2. Advance and increase commuter programming through policy
3. Prioritize equity in commuter programs
4. Increase awareness, breadth and reach of Regional Commute Programs
5. Achieve adequate resourcing for commuter programming
6. Collect regional data to demonstrate impact and refine programming

To provide further strategic guidance, objectives and recommended actions were developed for each overarching goal. Key issues addressed in these recommendations include:

- Ensuring the region has access to a wide range of interventions and programs
- Supporting regional coordination structures
- Evaluation and measurement approaches for regional commuter programming
- New partnership opportunities
- Identification of needs/gaps in commuter programming

In undertaking these actions, Metro will advance a shared regional vision and work plan for a comprehensive, multi-agency, regional commute reduction program. The collaborative program will work towards a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through an equity-centered approach to delivering TDM programming in the Portland metro area.

1. Introduction

Background

Metro's Regional Travel Options (RTO) program provides transportation demand management (TDM) leadership and supportive funding in the Portland metro region, aiming to change travel behavior through programs and outreach. TDM works in conjunction with infrastructure improvements to reduce the number of single occupant vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and increase the non-auto mode split.

An important component of TDM work is commute trip reduction programming that reaches those who travel to work and colleges or universities. In the Metro region, that programming is delivered by a variety of transit providers, local jurisdictions, transportation management agencies (TMAs), non-profits, and "in-house" transportation coordinators. Collectively, their work aims to ensure employers and schools are aware of the many commute benefits available for them to offer, and commuters are aware of their travel options and benefits.

While this work aims to reach commuters across the Portland metro region, data and stakeholder engagement shows that many employers and employees are not engaged or reached by programming and benefits. Metro developed this Action Plan in 2022 to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of commute programming across the region.
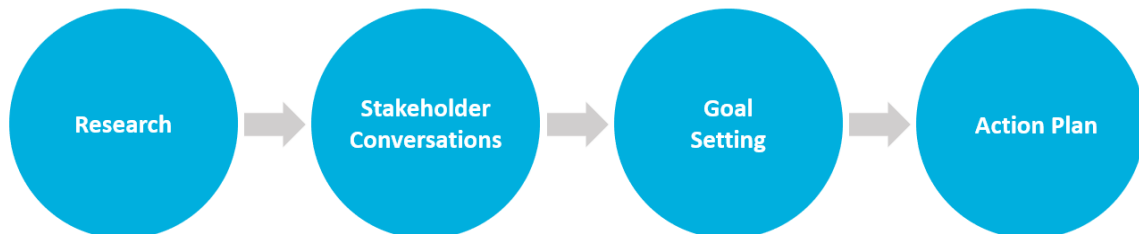
Report Purpose

This report is intended to provide a framework to support the growth of commuter programming in the region. It outlines goals and provides recommendations to help ensure future programming is effective, addresses equity, and meets the needs of commuters in the region.

Process

This report was developed through a four-stage process that involved both desktop research and stakeholder coordination (through workshops with key partners and a subsequent focus group of businesses). Based on the information gleaned from those stages, the project team then developed a set of goals and recommendations (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Project Process Chart

Research

The initial phase of work included background research in order to develop a robust understanding of the current state of commute program outreach in the region. The research established a strong foundational understanding of the agencies and organizations that Metro works most closely with, service coverage areas, existing commute program offerings, equity-related issues, and how programming is currently monitored and evaluated. This research can be found in the RTO Commute Program Current State Report, Appendix A.

Stakeholder Conversations

Following the research phase, engagement with partners focused on learning more about their existing programs, partnership coordination, and identifying opportunities for program efficiency and potential for improved collaboration. The project team held engagement sessions with four distinct groups of Metro partners:

1. a 'core team' who works most closely with the RTO team
2. a broader group of partners delivering commute programming across the region (which included partners such as Ride Connection, Washington County, and SMART)
3. Metro and ODOT managers and staff
4. businesses that provide commute services to their employees.

The outcomes from the partner engagement informed the creation of a shared vision and goals for streamlined commute programming in the region. From the conversations, it was clear that partners value collaboration among themselves and with Metro to receive support and achieve common goals related to messaging and communication, program delivery, and vehicle trip reduction.

However, labor shortages and funding constraints pose key challenges when it comes to retaining adequate partner staffing and meeting program needs. The lack of data and coordination to address the needs of the changing commute landscape was voiced as a key area for the need for leadership. Partners also noted that there is a lack of clarity on the framework for monitoring and evaluation of the ECO survey.

In terms of opportunities, partners expressed interest in policies that support sustainable commute options, active transportation infrastructure improvements, transit-supportive land use, and new mobility options.

In addition to engagement with partners, the project team engaged with businesses in order to learn about the current services the businesses are using and understand the types of services Metro could provide to support their commute programs.

The participants identified the following as having been successful in changing employee behavior when promoting commuter travel options:

- transit incentives
- end-of-trip facilities for cyclists
- carpooling/vanpooling
- pre-tax payroll deductions
- emergency ride-home programs

They expressed interest in improved collaboration between Metro, TriMet, and other transportation agencies in the area to improve commuters' transit experience and helped to identify ways in which the regional commute program could support the employers' efforts. For example, participants discussed an updated, easier-to-navigate universal pass program, a centralized and up-to-date information hub for commuters, and incentives for additional modes beyond transit. While the *Get There* campaign does provide a comprehensive resource for commute information, there may be opportunities to create more awareness about how to maximize the brand and its existing tools.

For more on the summaries of stakeholder comments from the partner workshop and business focus group, please refer to Appendix B

Goal Setting

The research and stakeholder conversations identified the breadth of commuter programming undertaken by Metro and its partners. It also shed some light on opportunities for better coordination and collaboration across the region to provide more efficient and effective services. The following goals were developed considering the input gathered from the conversations with stakeholders and through coordination with Metro staff.

1. **Increase regional collaboration and leadership around commuter programming**
2. **Advance and increase commuter programming through policy**
3. **Prioritize equity in commuter programs**
4. **Increase awareness, breadth, and reach of Regional Commute Programs**
5. **Achieve adequate resourcing for commuter programming**
6. **Collect regional data to demonstrate impact and refine programming**

Action Plan

To guide Metro in taking steps to achieve the goals outlined above, the team developed an Action Plan. The following section of the report provides further details on the recommendations, including objectives that advance the identified goals and recommended key actions to be taken over the next 5 years to achieve the regional vision for commute programming.

2. Action Plan

Overview

The following section further describes the goals, objectives and recommended actions for Metro and its partners to undertake as part of a regional commute program strategy. These elements are outlined below:

- **Goal:** Broad aspiration for commute programming in the region.
- **Objective:** Concrete milestones to be achieved.
- **Action:** Recommended steps for an individual organization or groups to undertake to achieve each objective. Each Action identifies which agency, organization, or partners will lead and collaborate on the recommended action and the recommended timeframe within which to complete each action. The timeframe notes: short (1 year), medium (2-3 years), and long (4-5 years) term actions.

Table 1 on the following page provides a summary of all goals, objectives, and actions.

Table 1. Summary of all goals, objectives, and actions

Goal	Objectives	Action(s)
1. Increase regional collaboration and leadership around commuter programming	1.1 Partners fully understand their role, the roles of others, and how to best collaborate across the region	1.1-A Create a Regional Work Plan to define leadership structure, roles, and programming focus areas.
		1.1-B Create an overall regional identity framework that positions *Get There* as the primary brand for employer outreach.
		1.1-C Undertake grant program review focused on encouraging and evaluating partner collaboration.
		1.1-D Create an RTO Communications Plan to ensure partners are well-informed of opportunities, collaboration, and partner activities.
		1.1-E Connect partners and other relevant organizations through an annual or bi-annual workshop.
	1.2 The business community participates in commute programming more actively	1.2-A Host yearly focus groups, and surveys and conduct outreach to refine *Get There* and associated programming.
		1.2-B Create opportunities for the business community to become meaningfully involved in programming and decision-making, including ECO Rules programming.
2. Advance and increase commuter programming through policy	2.1 Policy and programming are informed by engaged jurisdictions, in coordination with larger regional and state efforts	2.1-A Collaborate with jurisdictional partners, stakeholders, and communities through formal regional and local TDM working groups.
	2.2 TDM goals around commute programming are supported by RTO's policy agenda	2.2-A Broaden RTO staff roles to include policy direction for TDM. 2.2-B Commute partners and goals inform RTO Strategy update.
	2.3 Partners and employers that are required to offer TDM programming by their jurisdictions or other entities have support to meet goals	2.3-A Respond to emerging policy that formalizes TDM at the state, regional, and local levels.

3. Prioritize equity in commuter programs	3.1 Equity is built into all commute programming	3.1-A Conduct an equity assessment and action plan for commute programs. 3.1-B Prioritize partnerships with affordable housing developers to identify commuter programming opportunities that benefit residents and employees. 3.1-C Prioritize support for employees that are not traditionally served by commute programs, including BIPOC communities, service workers, and people who hold hourly wage jobs.
4. Increase awareness, breadth and reach of Regional Commute Programs	4.1 All areas in the region are fully covered by commute programming	4.1-A Update and utilize the TDM Inventory to identify gaps and opportunities. 4.1-B Establish a process for Metro to fill service gaps with assistance from consultants or contracted partners. 4.1-C Work with partners to support their programming, help grow their regional partnerships and adapt to changing commute patterns.
	4.2 Commute Programming includes multi-modal travel options beyond fixed-route transit	4.2-A Increase support and capacity for micro-mobility programming across the region to support commutes not served by frequent service and/or high-capacity transit. 4.2-B Develop commuter-focused bike and pedestrian programming.
	4.3 Metro serves in a leadership capacity for ECO programming	4.3-A Work with ODOT and DEQ to position Metro, under the *Get There* brand, as the go-to organization that coordinates ECO programming in the region. Programming would be delivered by *Get There* partners.
5. Achieve adequate resourcing for commuter programming	5.1 Adequate resources exist to support additional staff time from partners	5.1-A Assess staffing needs into a regional recommendation. 5.1-B Continue to work with ODOT and jurisdictions to advocate for adequate funding through formula adjustments and new funding.
	5.2 Jurisdictions' efforts to provide commuter programming are supported	5.2-A Work with jurisdictions in applying to Emerging Partner grant categories and participate in county/regional TDM workgroups
	5.3 Metro work is focused on regional efficiencies, such as lead generation and Employer Transportation Coordinator (ETC) education to minimize the burden on partner programs	5.3-A Create an ongoing ETC recruitment, training, and recognition program. 5.3-B Devise a system for employer lead generation, collaboration, and maintenance of contact database for use by all regional partners involved in employer outreach

6. Collect regional data to demonstrate impact and refine programming	6.1 A standardized set of metrics and data are collected by commuter program implementers across the region (beyond ECO)	6.1-A Work with partners to move toward standardized data collection across the region.
	6.2 Various technology are leveraged to support data collection and innovation	6.2-A Explore partnerships with micro-mobility providers and data aggregators. 6.2-B Incentivize the development of bespoke tech tools in the grant process.

Goal 1: Increase regional collaboration and leadership around commuter programming

Collaboration between and among Metro and its partners can lead to better and more efficient programming across the region. It will cut back on duplicative actions and help partners identify opportunities to grow and expand their current programming.

Objective 1.1: Partners fully understand their role, the roles of others, and how to best collaborate across the region

To increase collaboration between partners, it's important that agencies align with the RTO strategy, rely on clearly establish leadership, and understand with whom they can collaborate and how. Recommended actions for this objective aim to make the roles of partners and programs clear through guiding documents and clear branding and aim to encourage collaboration through funding mechanisms and regional partner programming.

Action 1.1-A Collaborate with partners to create a Regional Work Plan to define leadership structure, roles, and programming focus areas.

To streamline regional TDM programming efforts to meet shared goals, a Regional Work Plan will define the roles of Metro and each of its regional partners in achieving a comprehensive regional commute program. Details on each partner's key programming focus areas, responsibilities and accompanying actions will be outlined. The Regional Work Plan should also specify high-level policy agenda goals, potential areas for growth and new partnerships.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Short	Metro and RTO partner workgroup

Action 1.1-B Create an overall regional identity framework that positions Get There as the primary brand for employer outreach.

Clear and consistent branding can help partner agencies be effective and efficient communicators with a united message and set of tools. ODOT's *Get There* brand geared at employee and commuter programming at the statewide level provides an opportunity to demonstrate hierarchy and relationships and call out commute-specific programming among broader TDM efforts.

Metro and partners will create a regional sub-brand of *Get There*, which will in turn allow partners to adjust their branding to align with both the regional and statewide programs. The brand framework will detail the brand package, including logos, marketing and outreach products, tools, and events.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Leads and Collaborators
Short	Metro and ODOT, RTO grantees

Action 1.1-C Undertake grant program review focused on encouraging and evaluating partner collaboration.

The review of the current grant program will focus on both the grant application process and the evaluation process to increase effective collaboration between partners. For example, Metro will provide resources and opportunities to establish partnerships amongst the grantees during the application and scoping phases, such as partner lists and virtual or in-person collaboration events. Additionally, Metro will outline expectations for partnerships within the grant application itself. Expanding the 'Partnership' metric in the Multiple Accounts Evaluation (MAE) Framework to further evaluate both the quality and nature of partnerships amongst grantees will provide valuable insights into growth and opportunity areas for the grant program.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium	Metro

Action 1.1-D Create an RTO Communications Plan to ensure partners are well-informed of opportunities, collaboration, and partner activities.

To further support coordination efforts, an RTO Communications Plan will detail how to adapt and build upon existing communication tools (e.g. Basecamp) to encourage their use among partners and better foster communication and collaboration. The Plan will also identify appropriate levels and types of communication between Metro and different groupings of partners.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Short	Metro

Action 1.1-E Connect partners and other relevant organizations through an annual or bi-annual workshop.

To foster knowledge transfer and experience-sharing between partners, Metro (in collaboration with regional partners), will host workshops on an annual/bi-annual basis. One approach for organizing these workshops is on a topic-specific basis. For example, streams could focus on:

- working with the Street Trust to support partner collaboration concerning commuter programming through their annual Active Transportation Summit. This would be an opportunity for partners to highlight some of their successful programs and learn from each other.
- Convene TDM-focused partners, vocational education organizations, and other community-based organizations (CBOs), for a workshop, focused on transportation and commute trip equity in the region, which will advance efforts to create a program-wide approach to equity (addressed further in Goal 3).

- Organize a working and collaboration group of RTO grantees and partners that engage with college and university students and staff to fill the unique collaboration and partnership needs of RTO's grantees and partners who serve college and university commuters.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Medium	Metro and all RTO partners

Objective 1.2: The business community participates in commute programming more actively

The active involvement of the business community in regional commute programming will ensure that efforts remain relevant and are impactful in shifting travel behavior at the site level. Recommended Actions for this objective outline approaches to engaging the business community and identify the types of insights Metro will want to seek from this important stakeholder group.

1.2-A Host yearly focus groups, and surveys and conduct outreach to refine Get There and associated programming.

To involve the business community and get feedback on the use of regional resources, Metro will host a yearly focus group of businesses to seek their feedback on what is useful and what can be improved. Steps to create a focus group might include:

- Identifying which businesses participate: Metro will likely want to involve the businesses with which they engage most, but this will also be a good opportunity to allow new businesses to learn about commute benefits and program support.
- Determining the types of questions that would be asked: Beyond a baseline of what programming the employers are utilizing already, Metro will want to also understand the challenges businesses face. The focus groups could dive deeper into questions about program sign-off or approval to better understand what types of programming might be most difficult for businesses individually, and where regional support might be most helpful.
- Analyzing the discussion points to create actionable next steps on how to refine the programming: Following the focus group conversations, it will be important that Metro review the outputs and utilize lessons learned to continue to shape its program.
- Assessing the level of satisfaction of business participation: Metro will likely provide a follow-up survey or quick poll to these focus group participants and engage a larger group of businesses to gauge the level of satisfaction with the Get There commute programming. A simple survey will be submitted to a broader business audience to understand their feelings about:

    – Diversity of commuter resources offered

    – Versatility and use of the provided promotional toolkit items

    – Likelihood to continue working with Get There to support their commute programming.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Short	Metro and partners

Action 1.2-B Create opportunities for the business community to become meaningfully involved in programming and decision-making, including ECO Rules programming.

Based on the results of outreach described in Action 1.1-A, Metro will provide opportunities for the business community to shape the programs supporting them, including programming to support the newly updated ECO Rules. This may include:
- Create space for collaboration with partners through regional and county-level TDM groups
- Supporting partnership development with jurisdictions to ensure local policy aligns with ECO requirements
- Encourage the creation of regional boards to influence and participate in ECO Rules decision-making

Direct and engaged collaboration with the business community will mean that Metro's supportive programs and guidance documents are responding directly to needs and can best support impactful programming at the employer level.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium	Metro

Goal 2: Advance and increase commuter programming through policy

A regional policy-supported approach to TDM will help formalize partnerships and efforts around commute programming. It will enable a strategic and structured approach to resourcing and collaboration as partners to work together to advance shared goals.

Objective 2.1: Policy and programming are informed by engaged jurisdictions, in coordination with larger regional and state efforts

To successfully improve regional commute programming, it is important to ensure multi-jurisdictional interests are understood and help shape outcomes. Actions for this objective identify recommended approaches to formalize collaboration with partner groups to collectively reach goals.

Action 2.1-A Collaborate with jurisdictional partners, stakeholders, and communities through formal regional and local TDM working groups.

It is recommended that two sets of Working Groups be created and facilitated by Metro, namely a Regional Policy Group and a set of Countywide Working Groups.

The Regional Policy Group will be comprised of both jurisdictional and business partners to inform policy and programming decisions surrounding TDM. The Countywide Working Groups will consist of representatives from interested jurisdictions, and other stakeholders, to organize commute programming at the county level. Their responsibilities will likely include:

- Developing sample work plans for jurisdictional TDM coordinators

- Guiding policy initiatives and programming work on the county level
- Coordinating/ pooling resources to collectively support programming needs and opportunities

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Regional Policy Group: medium Countywide Working Groups: short	Metro, jurisdictions, nonprofits and community organizations, transit providers

Objective 2.2: TDM goals around commute programming are supported by RTO's policy agenda

Enshrining the regional commute program's role in policy will ensure that the organization is backed by the appropriate mandates or supportive programs in carrying out its work. Recommended actions for this objective identify key operational and strategic opportunities.

Action 2.2-A Broaden RTO staff roles to include policy direction for TDM.

As Metro takes a more active role as the leader and coordinator of commute program activity in the region, it is important that they are actively engaged in advocating for, creating, and implementing TDM policy. Metro will take an active approach to securing their involvement by ensuring that Metro staff are empowered and positioned to participate in policy decisions at the regional and state level.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Short	Metro

Action 2.2-B Commute partners and goals inform RTO Strategy update.

Metro's RTO team is planning to develop an updated program strategy in 2023. The strategy will include guidance for the program as a whole and provides an excellent opportunity to formally outline Metro's intentions for a more coordinated approach to commute programming and policy. The Commute Program staff and partners will participate in the strategy update process to ensure that commuter programming and collaboration across the region are incorporated.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Short	Metro

Objective 2.3: Support for partners and employers that are required to offer TDM programming by their jurisdictions or other entities

Metro's support for partners and employers as they navigate evolving TDM requirements will be critical for both the success of individual TDM programs as well as the overall regional TDM programming efforts. Recommended actions for this objective outline how Metro can best provide the necessary support to partners as TDM and commute-related requirements evolve.

Action 2.3-A Respond to emerging policy that formalizes TDM at the state, regional, and local levels.

As more jurisdictions implement TDM-supportive policy, more employers across the region will deliver their own commute programming at the site level. Metro will take an active role in working with jurisdictions that may be considering implementing policy, whether it be through developer requirements or supportive programs for their city or county employers. Within the forthcoming regional coordinated brand, it will be easier for employers to tap into services to comply with local policy.

Work may include:

- Development of a TDM policy statement and direction for the 2023 RTP
- Implementation of the Regional Mobility Policy update (RMPU), including:
  - Engaging with Metro to support the identification and development of a regional TDM system, which includes commute programs as an essential component
  - Supporting jurisdictions in their system planning processes as they are updated in compliance with the RMPU
- Provision of oversight and guidance to ECO Rule programming direction and policy (where allowable)
- Support for efforts to incorporate TDM into large regional and state efforts around multi-modal travel.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium and Long	Metro

Goal 3: Prioritize equity in commuter programs

Metro's RTO program has committed to advancing 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. Making equity a priority when planning and implementing commuter programming will ensure that the Program advances this commitment.

Objective 3.1: Equity is built into all commute programming

It is essential that commuter programming across the region is shaped and implemented through an equity lens providing all commuters in the Portland Metro region accessibility to high-quality travel options that work for them. Actions for this objective identify key opportunities for Metro to focus equity-related efforts with respect to delivering commute programming across the region.

Action 3.1-A Conduct an equity assessment and action plan for Commute programs.

Metro will conduct an assessment and action plan to identify gaps and opportunities within the current approach to equity within commute programming. The equity assessment and action plan should align with the goals and outcomes identified in Metro RTO's Racial Equity Strategy. Specifically, Metro will want to better understand the barriers and burdens faced by equity-seeking groups in accessing commute programming. With this understanding, Metro can then

effectively address these issues in partnership with the respective communities, and with a focus on the long-term relevance and ability of its programming to positively impact their livelihoods.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium	Metro

Action 3.1-B Prioritize partnerships with affordable housing developers to identify commuter programming opportunities that benefit residents and employees.

In collaboration with partners, and Metro's housing and development-related peers, RTO staff will prioritize strategies that support commute trips to and from affordable housing and multi-family housing sites. This may include commuter benefits for affordable housing residents, shared vehicle or carpool coordination support, or improved transit access through on-site amenities, and support for residents with last-mile challenges. The Metro team will work with their nonprofit and jurisdictional partners to bring developers and property managers for affordable housing sites into conversations around commute programming to better understand what services will be most useful for their residents.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Medium	Metro and Partners

Action 3.1-C Prioritize support for employees that are not traditionally served by commute programs, including BIPOC communities, service workers, and people who hold hourly wage jobs.

While it has become increasingly acceptable for many traditional office workers to work remotely, retail, restaurant, and other wage workers must still commute regularly. Metro will address this by ensuring that commute programming, previously more focused on serving workers with more office schedules, can support service workers as well. The following process can help inform how best to prioritize support for this target group:

- Review existing regional employment data for BIPOC and low-income individuals, to help prioritize gaps
- Identify types of organizations or groups that work with low-income communities and might be interested in partnering to support commute programming for those populations
- Build upon Westside Transportation Alliance's (WTA) Essential Workers efforts and host a focus group to identify the unique needs of such employees.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Medium	Metro and partners

Goal 4: Increase awareness, breadth and reach of Regional Commute Programs

To successfully shift travel behavior, it is essential that commuters across the region know of and have access to a variety of travel options that serve their needs and enable them to access the places they need to go in a safe, reliable, and efficient manner. Stakeholder feedback echoed the

need to promote the range of travel options in addition to transit, particularly in geographic areas that are not served by transit.

Objective 4.1. All areas in the region are fully covered by commute programming

To advance regional equity-related efforts, it is essential that the entire Portland metro area is served by commute programming. Recommended actions for this objective outline how Metro can refine its approach to grant distribution, identify opportunities to address service gaps, and conduct targeted outreach from an equity-focused perspective.

Action 4.1-A Update and utilize the TDM Inventory to identify gaps and opportunities

In refining the RTO grant program to focus on underserved areas, Metro will define a process for regular updates to TDM inventory (acknowledging that updates to some of the original categories may not be possible due to the intense nature of data collection required). Regular updates to the TDM inventory will serve as a useful tool to identify areas that are not receiving enough or the right types of commute programming and allow Metro to work with partners and jurisdictions to provide additional support in those places. Additionally, it will identify areas where certain commute programs are popular and could be streamlined to be delivered more efficiently or collaboratively.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Short and medium (update)	Metro

Action 4.1-B Establish a process for Metro to fill service gaps with assistance from consultants or contracted partners.

Metro, in close coordination with partners, provides commute-related programming to areas underserved by commute programming directly through staff and consultant work, and indirectly through work with regional partners. The RTO team will utilize the information gleaned from regular updates to the TDM Inventory (outlined in Action 4.1-A) to prioritize filling geographic and service-level gaps across the region. Metro will outline service level categories (e.g. types of TDM services, defined/required service areas) as part of their grant-making process. Work to ensure coverage will likely consist of:

- Defining a base desired amount of commute programming desired across the region. This may be context-sensitive with more intensive targets set in denser areas better served by travel options. It will be supported by the RTO grant Level of Support structure expected to be produced by Metro's broader RTO team in the 2023 grant cycle.
- Utilizing the TDM Inventory to identify geographic areas where service levels are lower than desired
- Coordinating with County TDM working groups (outlined in Action 2.1-A) to understand how best to address service gaps
- Utilizing existing structures such as the grant program and Metro-led outreach to prioritize support for lesser-served areas.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium	Metro

Action 4.1-C Work with partners to support their work with employers, help grow their regional partnerships and adapt to changing commute patterns.

Metro will support grantees in their coordination and outreach with their partners to maximize the use of the regional *Get There* brand (outlined in Action 1.1-B) and align with the new program framework (outlined in Action 1.1-A). This would involve:

- Working with TriMet and SMART to create a framework for programming (Action 1. 1-A) that centers their role as regional transit providers.
- Working with TMAs and nonprofits to maximize their effectiveness and reach, and research new markets.
- Identifying opportunities for improved efficiency within the employer pass programs
- Identifying specific strategies to focus outreach to service workers and their employers (aligning with Action 3.1-C)
- Adapting scopes to address changing commute patterns and other long-term impacts due to COVID and other disruptors.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Medium	Metro and grantees

Objective 4.2: Commute Programming includes multi-modal travel options beyond fixed-route transit

A variety of programming that features high-quality multi-modal options needs to be available to increase the likelihood of shifting travel behavior to more sustainable modes. This will allow commuters to select the option that best suits their needs. The recommended actions for this objective identify how Metro can identify commuter needs and how to engage partners in implementing new offerings.

Action 4.2-A Increase support and capacity for micro-mobility programming across the region to support commutes not served by frequent service and/or high-capacity transit.

To support multimodal travel in areas less served by fixed-route transit, Metro will support multimodal programming and innovation across the region. Support of this work provides an opportunity to address the needs of essential service workers that may not have the traditional 9-to-5 work schedules (as aligned with Action 3.1-C).

Similar to the process recommended in Action 4.1-B, after clearly defining gaps and opportunities Metro can carry out supportive programming through a combination of self-and consultant-operated processes and prioritization for transit gap areas within their grant awards.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Long	Metro

Action 4.2-B Develop commuter-focused bike and pedestrian programming

Metro will work with its partners to formalize commute programming through new and existing bicycle and pedestrian-supportive programming such as on-site bike clinics, end-of-trip and bike parking projects, mode-specific challenges, and employer or campus bike-share schemes. For example, Metro can coordinate with their partner Go Lloyd's mobility committee to discuss creating programming and incentives that encourage walking and biking. Similarly, the Street Trust's *Move More* Challenge, which focuses on bicycle commuting, could be used to promote updates to bike and pedestrian programming or infrastructure.

Metro can provide opportunities for agencies and partners to scale up their programs or events and incorporate them into larger regional efforts. For example, partners and businesses have mentioned pairing transit with biking as the last mile connection and biking with secured bike lockers.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and collaborators
Medium	Metro and working group

Objective 4.3: Work with ODOT and DEQ to position Metro, under the *Get There* brand, as the go-to organization that coordinates ECO programming in the region, and is delivered by *Get There* partners.

Metro, as the regional MPO and through its close collaboration with jurisdictions and partners, is well-positioned to play an increasing role in ECO programming. The recommended actions for this objective outline how Metro can leverage its inter-governmental relationships to provide increased support for partners serving employers subject to ECO rules.

Action 4.3-A Work with ODOT and DEQ to position Metro, under the Get There brand, as the go-to organization that coordinates ECO programming in the region.

As Metro seeks to streamline commuter programming and data collection across the region, it is natural that they become the coordinating agency for partners working collectively to help employers comply with ECO rules. Metro will work with ODOT, the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and impacted partners to agree to roles and reporting structure that ensures the success of the updated Rules.

To best position themselves as the regional leader for ECO support and coordination, Metro may want to consider undertaking the following steps:

● Coordinate programming that helps employers successfully comply with ECO Rules and reach their TDM plan goals.
● Coordinate with partners to help ensure their programming is helpful for employers and aligns with any requirements specified in the forthcoming ECO Rules update

- Support partners in their work to guide employers to select strategies that are appropriate for the regional context through templates and direct support
- Facilitate connections between employers and Metro partners for more specific or local programming, where appropriate.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead and Collaborators
Medium	Metro, ODOT and *Get There* partners

Goal 5: Achieve adequate resourcing for commuter programming

Commute programming can be limited by resource constraints, including staffing and program funding. Ensuring that resource needs on a regional level are well understood and that there is a coordinated approach to filling resource gaps will be essential to the overall success of commuter programming in the region.

Objective 5.1: Adequate resources exist to support additional staff time from partners

To achieve the goals outlined in this document, it is essential that the necessary and appropriate resources are in place. The recommended actions for this objective outline a process for regional coordination in defining the required resources to ensure that partner programming is appropriately supported through adequate staffing and funding.

Action 5.1-A Assess staffing needs to formalize a regional recommendation.

In the development of this report, the project team identified the number of full-time staff working across Metro and their partners' programs. However, a more comprehensive and in-depth review specific to commute programming is required to truly understand the level of resource constraint that exists across the region. Partners identified that they felt their time was constrained in relation to partnership development, lead generation, transit pass coordination, and paperwork, but further review is required to determine the necessary capacity for each program to operate at the desired level of efficiency and effectiveness.

Metro will engage in conversations with partners to understand the staffing gaps needed to carry out programs on a case-by-case basis. It will be important to determine whether specific types of partners or organizations are more constrained than others and whether there are additional specific activities with which partners struggle to maintain adequate levels of coverage.

Based on those conversations, Metro will formalize a regional recommendation to help partners set their own internal staffing targets and provide supportive programming in 'need areas' that might allow staff to focus efforts on broader programming. For example, Metro may want to consider whether there are opportunities to work with transit agencies to streamline transit pass reporting so partners can free up time for other activities.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium	Metro and working group

Action 5.1-B Continue to work with ODOT and jurisdictions to advocate for adequate funding through formula adjustments and new funding.

Newly projected state and federal funding opportunities will require a coordinated and high-performing commute program to ensure the region is competitive in allocations. Metro will work with partners to continue to engage ODOT and regional policymakers to advocate for funding levels that can ensure successful programming.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium to long	Metro

Objective 5.2: Jurisdictions' efforts to provide commuter programming are supported

TDM and commuter programming are most efficiently delivered on a personal level, where site coordinators or jurisdictions can respond to context-sensitive challenges and opportunities. In addition to providing some programming that directly reaches commuters, Metro should focus on supporting their jurisdictional partners in their chosen roles to ensure the delivery of commute programming across the region. The recommended actions for this objective describe how Metro can support its municipal partners in their efforts.

Action 5.2-A Work with jurisdictions in applying to Emerging Partner grant categories and participate in county/regional TDM workgroups.

Metro defines Emerging Partners as organizations that have conducted travel options work in a limited capacity previously and wish to expand their efforts into a full-time, ongoing service. The opportunity to receive Emerging Partners grants will encourage jurisdictions to undertake preliminary TDM efforts and will expose them to more formal and comprehensive programming through Metro, with the ultimate goal of moving them toward Core Partner status.

Metro will encourage jurisdictions to apply for Emerging Partner grants by helping them achieve at least a Level 2 status on the RTO Strategy's Travel Options Capability Index, meaning they are dedicating at least some time and funding to TDM or commute program activities. To educate and encourage jurisdictions to participate, Metro can host information and collaboration sessions for the grant application process created specifically for jurisdictions. These sessions would outline the level of effort that must be achieved prior to applying for an Emerging Partner grant, and provide guidance on the types of planning, staffing, and materials or community outreach programs that Metro typically chooses to fund.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Short	Metro and jurisdictional partners

Objective 5.3: Metro work is focused on regional efficiencies, such as lead generation and Employer Transportation Coordinator (ETC) education to minimize the burden on partner programs

Planning for the continuity of programming is an essential part of building an efficient and sustainable program. The recommended actions for this objective identify strategies for Metro and its partners to facilitate efficiency across the regional program.

Action 5.3-A Create an ongoing ETC recruitment, training, and recognition program.

Engaged and active ETCs have a tremendous impact on travel behavior at the site level. In 2019, the Go SanMo TMO in Santa Monica studied the engagement level of the ETCs in the City and compared it to their sites' Average Vehicle Ridership (AVR) as they worked with the ETCs to become more engaged. They found that as ETCs participated more, their AVRs improved.

To maximize the promotion of commuter resources among partners and businesses, Metro will create a training and recognition program for ETCs in the region. This process will likely include:

- Working with partners, ODOT, and DEQ to obtain contact information for ETCs in the region (see Action 5.3- B below)
- Encouraging and assisting companies who promote transportation options to apply for the Best Workplaces for the Commuters recognition program.
- Inviting ETCs to participate in custom training exercises as well as regularly scheduled workshops and events.
- Undertaking clear data collection to identify which ETCs from which sites are participating heavily and rewarding active and engaged ETCs through a recognition program. This might initially take the form of simple participation certificates or raffle entries but could ultimately become formalized in a broader commute programming rewards event.
- Continuing to monitor impact data through ECO reporting to identify the most impactful types of training or engagement.
- Supporting connections for ETCs and Partners to the Association of Commuter Transportation (ACT) at local/national levels as an opportunity to showcase program successes as well as to maximize promotions of ACT-sponsored TDM webinars.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Long	Metro

5.3-B Devise a system for employer lead generation, collaboration and maintenance of contact database

Using the upcoming Salesforce platform provided by ODOT Transportation Options program, Metro will work with partners to consolidate efforts to generate leads and maintain a database of regional employers. Using this tool, Metro can:

- Ensure regional partners are coordinated and collaborative in their efforts to provide programming
- Partners, Metro, ODOT and DEQ are coordinated on ECO programming and surveys.
- Comply with proper record keeping on state and federally funded initiatives
- Allow for easier reporting and increased transparency

Goal 6: Collect regional data to demonstrate impact and refine programming

A data-driven approach to planning for the regional commute program will not only allow Metro to make evidence-based decisions but will also offer partners and stakeholders transparency regarding those decisions.

Objective 6.1: A standardized set of metrics and data are collected by commuter program implementers across the region (beyond ECO)

Coordinating approaches to data collection will ensure that high-quality outputs are streamlined and available for planning purposes. The recommended actions for this objective provide a summary of the necessary steps for Metro and its partners to establish a robust approach to data collection and management.

Action 6.1-A Work with partners to move toward standardized commute data collection across the region

Previous analysis from the Metro team (such as the 2019 RTO Evaluation) and the research undertaken to develop this report identified that while many commute programs across the region collect similar types of data, differences in specific reporting criteria and verbiage across programs make it difficult to combine into full regional reports. For example, individual commuters using the 'Get There' platform can specify that they are traveling by skateboard or scooter but the current survey for the ECO Rules does not include those options.

Metro will conduct further review to define a framework for commute data collection in the region. Steps will likely include:

1. Along with partners, potentially utilizing the working groups identified in Action 2.1-A, determine the ultimate categories of metrics Metro would like to access for the region. These will likely fall into categories of *outcomes* (mode share, VMT reduced) *outputs* (program participation), *actions* (number of events held), and *inputs* (staff time spent)
2. Develop a more detailed comparison of current metrics collected by various programs and align them with the categories identified in Step 1 to document discrepancies.
3. Define a set of metrics and design a data collection framework with the goal of identifying opportunities for minor adjustments that would lead to improved coordination across the region. To ensure that partners will buy-in to any requests from Metro to collect data differently, it may be helpful to use existing programs and metrics as a base from which to develop new systems. For example, based on the current ECO Rules reporting forms which do not address trip distance, it may not be sensible to expect ECO-required employers to collect

data specific to Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). However, Metro may want to define a standard process of estimating or calculating VMT from mode share data utilizing regional averages or other standard metrics.

It is important to consider that changes in reporting processes may not be immediate for partners who have already invested in technology, designed survey forms, or codified policy. Metro can work with partners to understand expected timelines and ensure they are able to support program update processes (such as the current ECO Rules review).

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Long	Metro

Objective 6.2: Various technologies are leveraged to support commute data collection and innovation

Exploring new technology-based partnership opportunities will support efforts to ensure that RTO's programming remains innovative. The recommended actions for this objective describe several entities with whom Metro may consider establishing relationships and consider ways to support partners in expanding their programming and service reach.

Action 6.2-A Explore partnerships with micro-mobility providers and data aggregators.

Metro will consider opportunities to partner with vendors to receive data and consider grants or other partnerships that incentivize data specifically related to commuter programming, such as pilots with large employers. Metro may also want to vet or more formally partner with specific vendors, so partners are encouraged to work with the same providers and Metro has access to more complete data.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Medium	Metro

Action 6.2-B Incentivize the development of custom tech tools in the grant process.

The region may benefit from tools such as Dero ZAP (commuter wellness tracking) counters/tags that automate bike counts while offering individualized rewards that can support accurate data collection. Metro will adjust its grant programs to prioritize grant applications that make use of creative technology solutions.

Implementation Timeline (Short/Med/Long)	Implementation Lead
Long	Metro

Other Considerations

In addition to the actions outlined above which provide guidance specifically to Metro, the regional partners identified six focuses and considerations of interest, to be considered as further action around commute programming is undertaken across the region:

1. **Disability access:** Metro could coordinate with their working groups to identify opportunities to address accessibility issues that may arise from different commuter modes. Additionally, Metro could work with Relay Resources and related organizations to provide areas of focus for the working group to consider and discuss.
2. **University and College Coordination:** While bike programs on campus seem to have a positive reception by students/staff and are well used, Metro could provide more support and incentives to encourage using transit and forming carpools. There is an opportunity for Metro to ensure the varied programs at each school are coordinated and leveraged. Metro could provide opportunities for knowledge sharing and collaboration.
3. **Parking policy and programming:** Increased parking costs and structures can encourage people to seek out non-drive alone travel modes. Metro may want to consider supporting programs that encourage parking-cashout, demand-responsive parking, unbundling parking costs from property costs, preferred parking, and limiting parking supply.
4. **Encouragement of transit fare models that reduce administrative burden for all parties:** transit agencies to streamline the administrative burden of partners and employers when issuing transit passes or answering employees' questions about transit by assessing the existing process for their employer program.
5. **Coordination and growth of programming focused on non-commute trip types:** Currently, the focus of outreach for most programs is the lone trip to work or school. Opportunities for collaboration with programming that addresses the many other trips people take for personal and recreational needs. . Full-time telework and hybrid work schedules add another dimension to the trips being taken.

3. Conclusion

Metro and Partners have an opportunity to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of commute programming across the region. While there are currently many impactful efforts underway to promote transportation options to commuters, the region could benefit from improved coordination and collaboration, a stronger focus on equity, regional lenses on program delivery and evaluation, and more standardized data collection.

Metro's next steps are to work with their partners to develop a working timeline, define roles, and undertake the action plan.

Appendix A: Commute Program Current State Report

Appendix B: Partner and business focus group notes