

Meeting minutes



Meeting: **Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) Workshop**
Date/time: Wednesday January 11, 2023 | 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
Place: Virtual online meeting via Web/Conference call (Zoom)

Members Attending

Ted Leybold, Vice Chair
Karen Buehrig
Allison Boyd
Chris Deffebach
Lynda David
Jaimie Lorenzini
Mike McCarthy
Tara O'Brien
Chris Ford
Katherine Kelly
Shawn M. Donaghy

Affiliate

Metro
Clackamas County
Multnomah County
Washington County
SW Washington Regional Transportation Council
City of Happy Valley & Cities of Clackamas County
City of Tualatin & Cities of Washington County
TriMet
Oregon Department of Transportation
City of Vancouver
C-Tran System

Alternates Attending

Steve Williams
Dyami Valentine
Melissa Johnstone
Neelam Dorman
Glen Bolen

Affiliate

Clackamas County
Washington County
City of Troutdale & Cities of Multnomah County
Oregon Department of Transportation
Oregon Department of Transportation

Members Excused

Eric Hesse
Jay Higgins
Karen Williams
Laurie Lebowsky-Young
Lewis Lem
Jasmine Harris
Rob Klug
Ned Conroy
Rian Sallee

Affiliate

City of Portland
City of Gresham & Cities of Multnomah County
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality
Washington State Department of Transportation
Port of Portland
Federal Highway Administration
Clark County
Federal Transit Administration
Washington Department of Ecology

Guests Attending

Bryan Graveline
Chris Smith
Cody Field
Idris Ibrahim
Jason Beloso
Jeff Owen

Affiliate

Portland Bureau of Transportation

City of Tualatin

Washington State Department of Transportation

Guests Attending

Jennifer Sellers
Jessica Pelz
Tom Armstrong
Tom Shook

Affiliate

Oregon Department of Transportation
Washington County
City of Portland
HRD

Metro Staff Attending

Ally Holmqvist, Daniel Audelo, Grace Cho, John Mermin, Kim Ellis, Lake McTighe, Marie Miller, Matt Bihn, Matthew Hampton, Shannon Stock, Thaya Patton, Tim Collins

Call to Order and Introductions

Vice Chair Leybold called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. Introductions were made. Reminders where Zoom features were found online was reviewed. The link for providing 'safe space' at the meeting was shared in the chat area.

Committee and Public Communications on Agenda Items – none received

Consideration of TPAC workshop summary, November 9, 2022 (Vice Chair Leybold) Edits or corrections were asked to be sent to Marie Miller. No edits/corrections were received.

High Capacity Transit Strategy Update: Corridor Investment Readiness Tiers (Ally Holmqvist, Metro)

The presentation described the work done to date with partners to revise the draft policy framework, re-envision the network, and identify corridor investment priorities – milestones for this key policy focus area for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update.

While going through the process to apply the policy framework to develop the refined vision and the approach for assessing readiness, agency partners made additional recommendations for revising the policy framework to:

- Better reflect the role of high capacity transit as the backbone of the transportation network and that with rapid bus and streetcar that role expands to connecting major town centers;
- Support high capacity transit operating in exclusive guideway to the greatest extent possible, while recognizing that it may operate in mixed traffic, exclusive guideway, or some combination of the two;
- Incorporate network design spacing best practices and mode shift goals;
- Clarify high capacity transit's role in speed and reliability, as well as the definition of mobility corridor and clean fleet; and
- Better reflect quality of life and environmental justice in the policy language.

While all of the corridors in the vision are an important part of a broader system to meet our regional land use and transportation goals, they differ in their readiness for high capacity transit investment and not all are ready today. The expanded number of corridors in the refined vision went through additional system analysis and readiness evaluation to help better understand trips along the corridors, make additional adjustments, and assess these key indicators of readiness.

Readiness evaluation criteria measures and other key indicators of the success of planning activities for and implementation of a high capacity transit investment were described. Based on the assessment results, the team grouped the corridors by readiness into tiers also indicating the location and a representative mode for modeling.

For some of the corridors that are ready today, we have already started work to plan for new high quality transit connections in the nearer-term. These first-tier corridors either have a project with an adopted locally-preferred alternative or are actively working toward one now. The second tier identifies corridors where planning activities for high capacity transit investments could begin as soon as the next five years. Tier 2 corridors would be opportunities for 2045 constrained and strategic investments in the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan. Tier 3 corridors would be opportunities for additional 2045 strategic investments as feasible in the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan. Tier 4 corridors would continue to be identified in the transit vision rather than investment opportunities for the 2023 Regional Transportation Plan.

Between January and March, staff will be working with decision-makers, advisory committees' stakeholders, and community organizations to refine the investment priorities and identify additional considerations for high capacity transit investment readiness. The next and final upcoming milestone for the High Capacity Transit (HCT) Strategy update is the draft report. The report will summarize policy considerations, challenges and opportunities; vision development and outcomes; the corridor investment prioritization process; and actions and strategies for facilitating implementation of the HCT System vision.

Comments from the committee:

- Allison Boyd felt that all the pieces were coming together with better understanding. It was noted the order between evaluations and strategies built around readiness criteria is much like the chicken and egg scenario. It was felt some of the projects listed in tier 3 might not make it on the RTP project list. It was suggested to make sure projects with readiness evaluations ranked in top tiers be included in the RTP update. It was noted that possible high ranking scores with equity benefits may not have all the pieces in place for higher levels of evaluation.

Ms. Holmqvist noted the balance between access to transit with other investments such as sidewalks. The strategy was not to be too restrictive in the criteria. Capacity today was studied but this does not totally preclude corridors where they might be constrained with meeting criteria. With this level of investment, there is a certain level of people needed for higher ridership or potential higher ridership, partly studied from land use analysis. Interim investments cover the transit spectrum with HCT just one tool. Tier 2 projects are more ready for funding process development. Looking for additional investments for opportunity with tier 3 and 4 projects will continue. It was added the 2040 grant program was an opportunity for corridor readiness strategy as well.

- Mike McCarthy noted the higher demand from people coming farther out of the region toward the center of the region (downtown) and into technology centers. We could reduce VMT if we could meet them at the edge of transit service. This is not reflected in the tiers. It was asked how these are included and how can be address them more. It was noted having 99W corridor to Tigard-Sherwood corridor listed as tier 4 was a surprise.

Ms. Holmqvist noted the Tigard-Sherwood corridor did pop up as a regional priority, but compared to other Washington County corridors there was a difference seen from population demand expectations. Challenges to address on prioritizing corridors come from some outside the MPA boundaries where service districts look different and have different transit systems. The access to transit study will include this focus and look at the spectrum of transit options and opportunities.

Mr. McCarthy noted he was thinking more of the transit corridors that would fit this study. Demand is not being considered in the tiering of those corridors, and modeling is not capturing all the travel demand. Ms. Holmquist noted there is planned future refinement on corridors.

- Steve Williams asked about the McLoughlin corridor evaluation that scored high in readiness but low in the evaluation rankings. Ms. Holmquist noted the readiness scored high for the work done on the policy side and transit development work already done, but conditions with the market where people live and equity issues kept the project ranked lower when compared to other corridors. Destinations on the corridor and supportive environments that high capacity transit requires also kept the evaluation score lower. FTA is focused on current conditions, but we will keep future connections in mind for federal funding eligibility.

Mr. Williams noted the end of the Orange line ends with this corridor and clearly shows rising demand for transit on this corridor. With the next step in mind to encourage an increase in transit with capacity available, it was suggested to start to build high capacity transit in this corridor to meet the demand for ridership incrementally with service capacity. It was encouraged to move this corridor into tier 2. Ms. Holmquist noted we are working to build the story for FTA to show how improvements would lead to increased ridership, for better competitiveness with funding. Staff will reach out to jurisdictions on data and information that can help increase opportunities for funding.

- Chris Deffebach noted hearing network spacing with important components. It was asked for clarity and what this means. It was advised no to include redundancies with transit lines, noting some on maps with project locations. We have a list of projects but do not have a HCT strategy, understand how they fit and work together. We may have competing services without a comprehensive strategy. There are many HCT projects, but with transit deserts and other areas that show a lot of growth, we need to think more regionally with the intent to grow ridership where needed, prioritize for this strategy and look for funding of these corridors where the needs are and will be.

It was suggested that more discussion was needed on corridor coordination in Chapter 8 of the RTP in matters of access to transit and statewide improvement program. Public and policy engagement is needed on options with various investment scenarios with Chapter 8 type studies. Ms. Holmquist noted that with the level we are working at currently the focus is on identifying corridors and key connections first before planning possible solution through corridor planning studies.

It was asked what the difference was between tier 1 and 2, and the implications placed in these categories. Ms. Holmquist noted tier 1 is what's happening now and getting to the construction process. It was noted the tunnel project has been identified as part of the constrained priority list now. Tier 2 includes the planning activities already paid for in tier 1 with funding started, with constrained and strategic priorities planned now. The difference pertains to where we are in funding opportunities. It was noted that in network spacing we tried to avoid being too inclusive but have flexibility on where investments could help benefit where most needed.

- Chris Ford noted that tier 1 was with planning not, but what's next to advance projects in tiers? Are regulatory acts or other resources need? There is concern with slow moving projects that need help to advance, and concern the region will put effort into tier 2 planning and not be

able to advance to tier 1. It is critical to have a plan on how these will be prioritized. It was suggested to require an endorsement from relative agencies on tier 2 projects that would show commitment on funding efforts. With operation costs critical it was suggested to have agencies and jurisdictions weigh in on possible efforts early and if these efforts can be done. Regarding transit planning in outlying areas, the update to the 2040 growth plan is important. Planning land use and transit together should include design guidelines. It was noted that park & rides in outlying areas can be transfer points with multi modal choices. These are not seen currently in corridor planning.

- Tara O'Brien noted that how projects appear in the RTP in the constrained list is a challenge due to the fact that as of right now at least five tier 1 projects likely would not get entirely into the constrained list. To advance SW Corridor, partnership support is needed to point to expected levels of revenue for the project. There needs to be levels of revenue identified within these constrained lists with commitment to advance them. Regarding the tier 2 project list, the evaluation process can't point to scoring for absolute projects known. There is not enough consensus on the project list to show what projects are prioritized and come next.

Cascadia Corridor Ultra High Speed Ground Transportation: Overview and Update (Ally Holmqvist, Metro/ Jennifer Sellers, ODOT/ Jason Beloso, WSDOT) An overview of the Cascadia Corridor Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation Project was provided with a progress report on the work done to date to initiate the program and complete the activities identified in the Memorandum of Understanding. The Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) is studying how ultra-high-speed (~250 miles per hour) ground transportation (UHS GT) might serve as a catalyst to transform the Pacific Northwest – stretching from greater Vancouver, British Columbia to metro Seattle, Washington to Portland, Oregon – with a fast, frequent, reliable and environmentally responsible transportation connection.

This enhanced interconnectivity would unite the Cascadia megaregion and allow to better manage population and economic growth potential and maximize public transportation benefits, resulting in better access to jobs, affordable housing, shared resources, increased collaboration, and economic prosperity.

As part of program initiation, President Peterson, Director Strickler, and staff have worked with fellow bi-country and state agency partners to reflect the goals, objectives, and principles from the Oregon State Rail Plan and ODOT Strategic Action Plan and Metro's 2040 Growth Concept, Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), Regional Transit Strategy (RTS), Climate Smart Strategy, and Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity within the work plan and in a developing vision that will ultimately guide the Cascadia Corridor UHS GT effort.

FRA established a new Corridor Identification and Development Program for the purpose of creating a pipeline of funding-ready new or improved intercity passenger rail projects for investment through President Biden's Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Washington allocated \$50 million to be used as matching funds for a grant application, as well as an additional \$100 million to leverage federal funding opportunities over the next six years. In coordination with the partner committees, WSDOT and ODOT submitted a joint Expression of Interest for the program for a new ultra-high speed ground transportation system combined with substantial improvements and continued support for Amtrak Cascades service that work in tandem for an integrated Cascadia Corridor this August. The program team is working on developing a formal proposal to fund program initiation for submission late this year when the notice of funding opportunity (NOFO) is expected to be released.

The project timeline, corridor identification funding and future work planned was reviewed.

Comments from the committee:

- Chris Deffebach asked if funding for the project would be enough given the number of other projects we have for consideration currently. Mr. Beloso noted the applications reviewed in the presentation would ask for how much funding and what is the funding going to be used for. This appropriation of federal allocation is \$2.3 billion. It is focused on capacity building development and making sure this can be supported in the region.
- Tara O'Brien asked what the expectations from the applications and next steps for partners are to know about in the process. Ms. Holmqvist noted it was important everyone was reached for knowing about the letter of interest on the project. Metro Council and JPACT calendars will be reviewed for presentations. Applications are due in March. And a report will go to the Washington legislature in June. More information will be provided to the committee as further developments are taken.

Committee comments on creating a safe space at TPAC – none received

Adjournment

There being no further business, workshop meeting was adjourned by Vice Chair Leybold at 11:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Marie Miller, TPAC Recorder

Attachments to the Public Record, TPAC workshop meeting, January 11, 2023

Item	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
1	Agenda	1/11/2023	1/11/2023 TPAC Workshop Agenda	011123T-01
2	2023 TPAC Work Program	12/29/2022	2023 TPAC Work Program as of 12/29/2022	011123T-02
3	Minutes	11/9/2022	Minutes for TPAC workshop, 11/9/2022	011123T-03
4	Memo	1/11/2023	TO: TPAC and interested parties From: Ally Holmqvist, Senior Transportation Planner RE: High Capacity Transit Strategy Update: Corridor Investment Readiness Tiers	011123T-04
5	Attachment 1	N/A	Attachment 1: Vision and Investment Fact Sheet	011123T-05
6	Attachment 2	December 2022	Attachment 2: Key Meeting Dates and Engagement Activities for Project Milestones	011123T-06
7	Memo	11/17/2022	TO: Ally Holmqvist, Metro From: Ryan Farncomb, Kirsten Pennington (KLP Consulting), Oren Eshel (Nelson\Nygaard) RE: Approach to assessing HCT corridor readiness, modes, and tiering	011123T-07
8	Report	December 2022	HCT Policy Framework – Regional Transit Network Policy Review	011123T-08
9	Memo	Nov. 17, 2022	TO: Ally Holmqvist, Metro From: Parametrix and Nelson/Nygaard RE: HCT Corridor Analysis Approach to Identify “Big Moves”	011123T-09
10	Memo	Nov. 23, 2022	TO: TPAC and interested parties From: Ally Holmqvist, Metro; Jennifer Sellers, ODOT; Jason Beloso, WSDOT RE: Cascadia Corridor Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation: Program Initiation Overview	011123T-10
11	Attachment 1	Nov. 16, 2021	Attachment 1: Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) On Committing to Advance Activities in Support of an Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation Project	011123T-11
12	Attachment 2	11/21/2022	Attachment 2: 2022 UHSGT Policy and Technical Committee Meetings – DRAFT SCHEDULE	011123T-12
13	Attachment 3	N/A	Attachment 3: Interim UHSGT Policy and Technical Committee Charter	011123T-13
14	Attachment 4	August 1, 2022	Attachment 4: Letter of Interest from WSDOT & ODOT	011123T-14
15	Presentation	1/11/2023	HCT Strategy Update: Vision & Corridor Readiness Tiers	011123T-15

Item	DOCUMENT TYPE	DOCUMENT DATE	DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION	DOCUMENT No.
16	Presentation	1/11/2023	Cascadia Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation	011123T-16