

www.oregonmetro.gov

Regional Flexible Fund Task Force Report

Recommendations for the allocation of
2014-15 funds

January 13, 2011

About Metro

Clean air and clean water do not stop at city limits or county lines. Neither does the need for jobs, a thriving economy, and sustainable transportation and living choices for people and businesses in the region. Voters have asked Metro to help with the challenges and opportunities that affect the 25 cities and three counties in the Portland metropolitan area.

A regional approach simply makes sense when it comes to making decisions about how the region grows. Metro works with communities to support a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Together we're making a great place, now and for generations to come.

Stay in touch with news, stories and things to do.

www.oregonmetro.gov/connect

Metro Council President

Tom Hughes

Metro Councilors

Shirley Craddick, District 1

Carlotta Collette, District 2

Carl Hosticka, District 3

Kathryn Harrington, District 4

Rex Burkholder, District 5

Robert Liberty, District 6

Auditor

Suzanne Flynn

About the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT)

The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation is a 17-member committee of elected officials and representatives of agencies involved in transportation that make recommendations to the Metro Council on transportation needs in this region. www.oregonmetro.gov/JPACT

JPACT Members

Carlotta Collette, Metro Council, JPACT Chair

Kathryn Harrington, Metro Council

Rex Burkholder, Metro Council

Lynn Peterson, Clackamas County

Deborah Kafoury, Multnomah County

Roy Rogers, Washington County

Sam Adams, City of Portland

Donna Jordan, City of Lake Oswego

Shane Bemis, City of Gresham

Craig Dirksen, City of Tigard

Neil McFarlane, TriMet

Jason Tell, ODOT

Nina DeConcini, DEQ

Don Wagner, WSDOT

Bill Wyatt, Port of Portland

Jack Burkman, City of Vancouver

Steve Stuart, Clark County

About the Regional Flexible Funds Task Force

Charge of the Regional Flexible Fund Task Force

The Regional Flexible Funds Task Force was charged with developing a recommendation to the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) on the needs, priorities, implementation strategies for investing Regional Flexible Funds in the active transportation/complete streets and green economy/freight initiatives focus areas. Staff will conduct a project nomination and evaluation process using those needs and strategies to recommend projects for funding. The Task Force may then advise JPACT and Metro Council on the project list.

The task force addressed the following questions:

1. From a user/practitioner perspective, what are the transportation needs in the region for active transportation/complete streets & green economy/freight initiatives?
2. What are the priorities for meeting regional transportation needs with the limited flexible funds available?
3. What strategies should be employed to further the development of active transportation/complete streets & green economy/freight initiatives in the region?
4. What are potential opportunities for collaboration between active transportation/complete streets & green economy/freight initiatives?

Task Force Members

Carlotta Collette, Task Force Chair

Scott Bricker, America Walks

Gary Cardwell, Northwest Container Services

Jill Fuglister, Coalition for a Livable Future

Steve Ganiere, Alliance Packaging

Alison Graves, Community Cycling Center

Matt Hoffman, Fred Meyer

Chips Janger, Clackamas County Urban Green

John MacArthur, OTREC/Portland State University

Alejandro Queral, Multnomah County Health Dept.

Phil Selinger, Willamette Pedestrian Coalition

Joseph Santos-Lyons, OPAL - Environmental Justice Oregon

Stephen Gomez, Bicycle Transportation Alliance

Ron Russ, Portland & Western Railroad

John Willis, CH2MHill

Philip Wu, MD, Kaiser Permanente

Jeff Marson, Marson Trucking

Pete Lehmann, Oracle Americas

Greg Osnes, SolarWorld

Jim Petsche, Nike

Sheila Martin, Portland State University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction	2
Recommendations	2
Active Transportation & Complete Streets	3
Green Economy & Freight Initiatives	4
Next Steps	5

INTRODUCTION

Every two years the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and Metro Council to decide how to spend federal transportation money known locally as the Regional Flexible Funds. This process historically allocated money to both regional programs such as the Transit Oriented Development program and to individual projects planned and built by local transportation agencies. In this cycle, JPACT and the Metro Council decided that money for individual projects should be more coordinated and focused.

To achieve this, JPACT created two project "focus areas": Green Economy & Freight initiatives and Active Transportation & Complete Streets. The committee also endorsed Chair Carlotta Collette to appoint a task force to provide more specific policy direction for the allocation of funds within these new project focus areas. The task force was charged with identifying: transportation needs within the focus areas, priorities for meeting regional needs with funds available, the strategies that should be employed to further development of these focus areas, and potential opportunities for collaboration between the two focus areas.

The task force met five times to develop policy recommendations for coordinating and focusing the impact of these funds. Staff helped it consider five ways it could direct staff to select projects within the two focus areas. First was to provide direction on what types of projects (e.g. sidewalks, traffic signal improvements) should be funded. Second was whether there were particular types of destinations (e.g. mixed-use centers, transit stops, industrial areas) that should be prioritized for access improvements. Third was whether projects should be dispersed or concentrated geographically. Fourth, was whether any funds should be set aside for the development of a regional strategy to advance long-term goals for facilities too expensive to be constructed with these funds. Finally, the task force considered what criteria staff should use to develop the project scopes (definition of project elements and location) and compare the relative priority of projects to receive funds.

Staff used a series of identification and prioritization exercises to gather input from the task force on these issues. Following is the task force's recommendation on how to achieve coordinated, focused and regionally significant results within the Green Economy & Freight Initiatives and the Active Transportation & Complete Streets project focus areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Active Transportation & Complete Streets

Recommended approach to developing projects

For this project focus area, the task force recommended an approach of selecting travel corridor/areas and identifying project elements that would address the most critical barriers to completing non-auto trips in the corridor/area or a concentrated portion of the corridor/area. Examples of barriers could be the lack of direct pedestrian or bicycle

facilities to key destinations in the corridor, inability to safely cross streets to access destinations, or lack of access to transit stop improvements.

To implement this approach with available funding, the following parameters will be utilized:

- improvements will be concentrated geographically in a travel corridor/area or portion thereof,
- improvements will be limited to a few travel corridor/areas within the region,
- potentially merge portions of several planned projects and several project types (bicycle, trail, pedestrian, transit stops) into a unified corridor/area wide project,
- project development will be allowed as an eligible activity for funding to address project readiness issues or as part of a strategy to phase implementation of projects.

Recommended criteria for scoping and prioritization of projects

To help define the scope (project elements and geographic reach) of projects to be considered for funds and to prioritize among candidate projects, the following criteria will be utilized.

Table 1: Active Transportation & Complete Streets criteria

Relative priority	Criteria
High	Improves access to and from priority destinations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Mixed-use centers o Large employment areas (# of jobs) o Schools o Essential services for EJ/underserved communities
	Improves safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o addresses site issue(s) documented in pedestrian/bike crash data o separates pedestrian/bike traffic from freight and/or vehicular conflicts
	Serves underserved communities (to be further defined through analysis with help of EJ/underserved working group)
	Improves safety by removing conflicts with freight and/or provides safety mitigation for any potential freight conflicts
Medium	Completes the "last mile"
Medium	Increase in use/ridership by providing a good user experience (refer to Active Transportation design criteria)
Medium	Serves high density or projected high growth areas
Low	Includes outreach/education/engagement component
Low	Can leverage funds
Low	Reduces need for highway expansion

Green Economy & Freight Initiatives

Recommended approach to developing projects

For this project focus area, the task force recommended an approach of allocating funds for two components: construction type projects and planning/strategy development type projects. Eligible project types and criteria that could be utilized to scope and prioritize potential projects are described below.

Construction focus

Capital improvements will focus on:

- System management, such as Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS), on arterial freight routes. This could include upgrading traffic signal equipment and timing or provide travel information to inform freight trip decisions.
- Small capital projects (e.g. spot widening or installation of mountable curbs to accommodate large truck turning movements). Technical measures should be developed that assess the regional impacts of nominated projects such as improving access to regionally significant industrial land or safe movements to/on the regional freight network to ensure a regional interest is served by the project.

Planning/strategy development focus

Project development for specific arterial freight routes would evaluate key barriers to the development of a green economy and freight movement and recommend operations and design improvements to address the barrier.

Funds may also be set aside to develop regional strategies for the following topics. These are areas that need further analysis and a policy development process to achieve a regional consensus on how to move forward on the issue. Potential topics include a strategy for how to pursue and accommodate higher speed inter-city passenger rail and improved freight rail facilities, and a strategy for the routing of hazardous materials in the region.

Criteria for scoping and prioritization of projects

To help define the scope (project elements and geographic reach) of projects to be considered for funds and to prioritize among candidate projects, the following criteria will be utilized.

Table 2: Green Economy & Freight Initiatives criteria

Relative priority	Criteria
High	Reduces freight vehicle delay
High	Project increases freight access to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Industrial lands o Employment centers & local businesses o Rail facilities for regional shippers
High	Projects that help green the economy and offer economic opportunities for EJ/underserved communities
Medium	Improves safety by removing conflicts with active transportation and/or provides adequate mitigation for any potential conflicts
Medium	Reduces air toxics or particulate matter
Medium	Reduces impacts to EJ communities e.g., reduced noise, land use conflict, emissions
Medium	Increases freight reliability
Low	May not get funding otherwise
Low	Can leverage (or prepare for) future funds
Low	Reduces need for highway expansion
Low	Multi-modal component

NEXT STEPS

Metro staff will work with technical staff from transportation agencies in the region to design a collaborative project nomination process that utilizes these criteria to scope and prioritize projects to consider for funding. After this process has nominated projects for consideration, the task force will be asked to review and provide comments on the nominated projects.