

Planning for transit

2035

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN

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RTP FACT SHEETS: ONE IN A SERIES

The 2035 Regional Transportation Plan sets the course for using innovation and creativity to build a sustainable transportation system. It calls for making transportation investments that serve downtowns, main streets, job centers and other areas of urban activity. It sets out the importance of offering a range of affordable transportation options for everyone. It suggests that transportation investments should boost our economy, increase access and opportunity for underserved communities and clean our air. And it calls for on-going monitoring to ensure that as time goes on our investments are effectively coordinated across communities to make the most of past investments and keep this region a great place.



Metro, the regional government, crosses city limits and county lines to build a resilient economy, keep nature close by and respond to a changing climate. Representing a diverse population of 1.5 million people in 25 cities and three counties, Metro's directly elected council gives voters a voice in decisions about how the region grows and communities prosper.

Growing transit in the future

Public transit has been an increasingly important part of the Metro region's transportation system during the past 25 years. Transit is required to implement the 2040 Growth Concept, which calls for focusing future growth in regional and town centers, station communities, and corridors. A regional public transit system, coupled with transit-supportive development patterns and policies that support taking transit, biking, and walking help the region decrease dependence on automobiles, improve health, reduce overall transportation and housing costs, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The 2040 Growth Concept sets forth a vision for connecting the central city to regional centers with high capacity transit. The Regional Transportation Plan expands this vision to include a complete network of regional transit along most arterial streets to better serve suburban communities. Existing land use mixes and future transit-oriented development potential should be considered and incorporated into service planning and station locations.



At some point in their trip, all transit riders are pedestrians. High quality local and regional bicycle infrastructure extends the reach of the transit system, allowing more people to access transit from longer distances. The region prioritizes walking and biking to transit and deemphasizes driving to transit.

Five policies form the RTP transit network vision

1. Build the total system and transit-supportive land uses to leverage investments.
2. Expand high capacity transit.
3. Expand frequent service.
4. Improve local service.
5. Support expanded commuter rail and intercity transit service.



Investing in high capacity transit helps the region concentrate growth and development in its centers and corridors. This in turn minimizes the need to expand the urban growth boundary and supports the region's efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Regional transit system functional classification

The following are the regional transit network functional classification categories as identified in Chapter 2 of the 2035 RTP (Figure 2.15).

Light rail transit in this region is TriMet's MAX service. It is a system of modern passenger rail cars operating on a fixed guideway within an exclusive right-of-way. Light rail transit (LRT) serves the central city and regional centers as well as station communities and may serve town centers and corridors. In addition, LRT serves regional public attractions such as the Washington County Fair Grounds, Civic Stadium, Oregon Convention Center, Oregon Zoo, Metropolitan Exposition Center and the Rose Garden. Light rail transit service typically runs at least every 15 minutes throughout the day. It operates with limited stops and operates at higher speeds outside of downtown Portland. MAX is powered by overhead electric lines though some systems in other regions are powered by on-board diesel or electric motors. Main elements include rail vehicles, rail tracks, overhead electric lines, modern rail stations, signal priority at intersections, and integration with transit-oriented development strategies. A high level of passenger infrastructure is provided at transit stations and station communities, including schedule information, ticket machines, special lighting, benches, shelters, bicycle parking and commercial services. The speed and reliability of LRT can be maintained using transit signal priority at at-grade crossings and grade separation.

Streetcar services are fixed guideway transit services mixed in traffic for locally-oriented trips within or between higher density mixed-use centers. Streetcar services provide local circulator service and can also serve as a potent incentive for denser development in centers. Service runs typically every 15 minutes or better and streetcar routes can include transit preferential treatments, such as transit signal priority systems, and enhanced passenger infrastructure, such as covered real-time schedule information, bus shelters, curb extensions and special lighting. Streetcar is distinguished from rapid streetcar (defined elsewhere) by its operation in generally mixed-traffic lanes and with relatively short stop spacing.

Rapid streetcar services operate primarily in an exclusive right-of-way so that they are able to travel faster and more reliably than streetcars that operate primarily mixed in traffic.

Intercity high speed rail is passenger rail that is part of the state transportation system and extends from the Willamette Valley north to British Columbia. Amtrak already provides service south to California, east to the rest of the continental United States and north to Canada. These systems can be integrated with other transit services within the Portland metropolitan region with connections at passenger intermodal facilities.

Commuter rail services provide short-haul rail passenger service operated within and between metropolitan areas and neighboring communities. This transit service operates in a separate right-of-way on standard railroad tracks, usually shared with freight use. The service is typically focused on peak commute periods but can be offered other times of the day and on weekends when demand exists and where rail capacity is available. The stations are typically located one or more miles apart, depending on the overall route length. Stations offer infrastructure for passengers, bus and light rail transit transfer opportunities and parking as supported by adjacent land uses. See also inter-city rail.

On-street bus rapid transit is a version of bus rapid transit (BRT) with limited stops and service at least every 15 minutes during much of the day. The changes in frequency for individual applications is based on demand. On-street bus rapid transit operates mostly in general purpose traffic lanes, mixed with other traffic, through transit preferential treatments which include short bus-only lanes and/or queue jumps. Stops are generally spaced one-quarter mile apart or more. Passenger amenities and information is similar to BRT. Due to its flexibility, on-street BRT can have attributes that are more like high capacity transit or frequent service bus and may be considered as a mode in either, depending on circumstances.

Frequent bus services offers local and regional bus service with stops approximately every 750 to 1000 feet, providing corridor service rather than nodal service along selected arterial streets. This service typically runs at least every 15 minutes throughout the day and on weekends. Frequency may increase based on demand, and can include transit preferential treatments, such as reserved bus lanes and transit signal priority, and enhanced passenger infrastructure along the corridor and at major bus stops, such as covered bus shelters, curb extensions, special lighting and median stations.

Regional bus services operate on arterial streets with typical frequencies of 15 minutes during most of the day, though midday headways may drop to 30 minutes. Regional bus may operate seven days per week, but not necessarily, based on demand or policy. Stops are generally spaced every 750 to 1000 feet. Transit preferential treatments and passenger infrastructure such as bus shelters, special lighting, transit signal priority and curb extensions are appropriate at some locations such as those with high ridership.

Passenger intermodal facilities accommodate or serve as transfer points to interconnect various transportation modes for the movement of people. Examples include Portland International Airport, Union Station, Oregon City Amtrak station and intercity bus stations.

System expansion policy

The regional transportation plan includes an outline for developing a high capacity transit (HCT) system expansion policy. The system expansion policy emphasizes fiscal responsibility by ensuring that limited resources for new HCT are spent where local jurisdictions have committed supportive land uses, high quality pedestrian and bicycle access, management of parking resources and demonstrated broad-based financial and political support.



The regional transportation plan vision is to complete a network of regional transit along most arterial streets in the region to better serve suburban communities. Encouraging mixed-use development and providing sidewalk and bicycle connections to bus stops and transit stations are important local strategies that leverage existing transit services.

One of the first post-adoption implementation steps included in Chapter 6 of the regional transportation plan called for developing regional guidance for the system expansion policy. The purpose of the system expansion policy implementation guidance is to:

1. Clearly articulate the decision-making process by which future HCT corridors will be advanced for regional investment.
2. Establish minimum requirements for HCT corridor working groups to inform local jurisdictions as they work to advance their priorities for future HCT.
3. Define quantitative and qualitative performance measures to guide local land use and transportation planning and investment decisions.
4. Outline the process for updating the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, including potential future RTP amendments, for future HCT investment decisions.

Following the system expansion policy guidelines will enhance support for transit investments, but does not guarantee a regional investment in high capacity transit. The ultimate decision rests with the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the Metro Council. Implementation guidelines have been developed for the system expansion policy in July 2011 and are available on Metro's website (www.oregonmetro.gov/tsp).



Frequent transit service is important for attracting riders who take short and local trips.

How do we track transit planning success with the RTP performance targets?

By 2035:

- ✓ triple transit mode share compared to 2005
- ✓ increase by 50 percent the number of essential destination accessible within 30 minutes by public transportation compared to 2005
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Local transit plans

Prioritization of public transit projects to receive federal funding occurs through the regional decision-making process with participation of the public, cities, counties and transportation agencies of the region. Service providers such as TriMet and South Metro Area Regional Transit (SMART) may only apply to receive federal funds for projects that are included in the RTP. The RTP also requires service providers to consider those with special needs, such as the elderly and disabled, when undertaking annual service planning.

As described in the Regional Transportation Functional Plan, cities and counties are required to include the following in their transportation system plans (TSPs):

- Investments to provide pedestrian and bicycle connections to all existing transit stops and planned major transit stops shown in Figure 2.15 of the RTP
- Improvements for transit access, transit stops and stations, and transit service speed and reliability at light rail station areas and along rapid, frequent and regional bus corridors.

TSPs shall include a transit plan with the following actions:

- Adopt a transit system map consistent with the RTP (see Figure 2.15, the regional transit network map in the RTP)
- Amend development code regulations to require commercial development to locate buildings near major transit stops
- Adopt site design standards for new retail, office, multi-family and institutional buildings located near or at major transit stops
- Provide marked pedestrian crossings at major transit stops and direct and logical pedestrian crossings at other transit stops
- Consider transit facility needs and Metro's *Creating Livable Streets* handbook when designing street improvements.

Providers of public transit service shall:

- Consider and document the needs of youth, seniors, people with disabilities and environmental justice populations, including minorities and low-income families, when planning levels of service, transit facilities and hours of operation.

*For complete language, refer to the Regional Transportation Functional Plan, section 3.08.120 Transit System Design.