



Planning for pedestrians

Implementing the regional transportation plan

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What is the Regional Transportation Plan?

Metro's 2000 Regional Transportation Plan is a blueprint to guide new transportation investments in the Portland metropolitan region during the next 20 years. The plan begins to implement Metro's 2040 Growth Concept to protect the livability of this region in the face of an expected 50 percent increase in population and a 70 percent increase in jobs by 2020. The goal of the plan is to expand choices for travel in the region. To this end, the plan sets policies for traveling by cars, buses, light rail, walking, bicycling and movement of freight by air, rail, truck and water.



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Metro, the regional government that serves the 1.3 million people who live in Clackamas, Multnomah and Washington counties and the 24 cities in the Portland metropolitan area, provides planning and services that protect the nature of our region.

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Better opportunities for pedestrians

Walking is the most basic and reliable form of transportation. Virtually everyone is a pedestrian for at least a part of every trip. Walking accounts for a significant share of travel within neighborhoods, to parks, jobs and to most trips using transit. Increasing numbers of people walk for exercise and health benefits. In neighborhoods with good sidewalks and access to transit, more than 20 percent of all travel is on foot.

The 2000 Regional Transportation Plan envisions a transportation system where walking is safe, convenient and accessible to all. Today, the transportation system has many gaps where the need for sidewalks and pedestrian crossings has been ignored in the past. The plan recognizes that walking is an essential form of travel that must be accommodated in the design of streets.

Critical elements of the pedestrian system include:

- sidewalks
- mid-block street crossings
- crossings at most intersections
- well-connected streets
- safe, convenient access to transit.

The regional pedestrian system

The Regional Transportation Plan defines key policies to direct the region's planning and investment in the regional pedestrian system. These policies focus on providing safe, continuous, direct routes and convenient connections between destinations such as transit, home, schools and shopping areas. The goal is to increase the number of people who choose walking for short trips and improve access to transit and safety for pedestrians.

Benefits of planning for pedestrians

Providing a well-connected and well-designed pedestrian system has many benefits. By providing dedicated space for those on foot or using mobility devices, pedestrian facilities are recognized as an important incentive that promotes walking as a mode of travel.

Sidewalk curb extensions, as shown here at Northeast Grand Avenue in Portland, are being constructed at transit stops on major streets to calm traffic and provide safer bus boarding.



A well-connected high-quality pedestrian environment facilitates walking trips by providing safe and convenient access to destinations within a short distance. Public transportation use is enhanced by pedestrian improvements, especially those facilities that connect transit stations or bus stops to surrounding areas or that provide safe and attractive waiting areas. Improving walkway connections between office and commercial districts and surrounding neighborhoods provides opportunities for residents to walk to work, shopping or to run personal errands. This reduces the need to take an automobile to work, and enhances public transportation and carpooling as commute options.

Walking for short distances is an attractive option for most people when safe and convenient pedestrian facilities are available. Combined with adequate sidewalks and curb ramps, pedestrian elements such as benches, curb extensions, marked street crossings, landscaping and wide planting strips make walking an attractive, convenient and safe mode of travel.

Regional pedestrian system functional classification

The regional pedestrian system provides for safe walking along all major streets and complements the region's land-use goals. The Regional Transportation Plan defines three areas where the pedestrian system is of regional interest:

Pedestrian district – Pedestrian districts are areas of high, or potentially high, pedestrian activity where the region places priority on creating a walkable environment. Specifically, these include the 2040 Growth Concept of the Portland central city, regional and town centers, main streets and light rail station communities, where compact mixed-use, transit-oriented communities are planned. Pedestrian districts should be designed to reflect an urban development and design pattern where walking is safe and convenient. These areas will be characterized by buildings oriented to the street and

For more information

Call the transportation hotline, (503) 797-1900 option 2. You can leave a message requesting a copy of the Regional Transportation Plan or other fact sheets about the plan. Ask for a list of all RTP fact sheets. If you are hearing impaired, call TDD (503) 797-1804.

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boulevard-type street design features such as wide sidewalks with buffering from adjacent motor vehicle traffic, marked street crossings at all intersections with special crossing amenities at some locations, special lighting, benches, bus shelters, awnings and street trees. All streets within pedestrian districts are important pedestrian connections.

Transit/mixed-use corridor – Transit/mixed-use corridors (referred to only as corridors in the 2040 Growth Concept) are also priority areas for pedestrian improvements. These corridors will generate substantial pedestrian traffic near neighborhood-oriented retail development, schools, parks and bus stops. These corridors should be designed to promote pedestrian travel with such features as wide sidewalks with buffering from adjacent motor vehicle traffic, street crossings at least every 530 feet (unless there are no intersections, bus stops or other pedestrian attractions), special crossing amenities at some locations, special lighting, benches, bus shelters, awnings and street trees. Because street intersections are often widely spaced along these corridors, mid-block pedestrian crossings are needed to provide full access to transit stops.

Multi-use paths with pedestrian transportation function – These paths are paved off-street regional facilities that accommodate pedestrian and bicycle travel and meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Multi-use paths with a pedestrian transportation function are connections that are likely to be used by people walking to work or school, to access transit or to travel to a store or library. These paths are generally located near or in residential areas or near mixed-use centers.

Local pedestrian plans

The following key tasks must be addressed in local plans:

- define walking mode split target for each 2040 design type and specific actions to demonstrate progress toward meeting the target
- develop pedestrian system map (or text description) that identifies pedestrian system consistent with Chapter 1 of the RTP
- provide marked crossings at major transit stops and direct and logical crossings at other transit stops
- revise development codes to implement street connectivity and public transit planning standards and allow for implementation of regional street design guidelines
- provide direct pedestrian access as part of all transportation projects
- consider regional street design handbook when designing streets.