



Planning for transit

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.



METRO
Regional Services
Creating livable communities

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.

Public transportation in the region

Public transportation has been an increasingly important part of this region's transportation system during the past 25 years. In the next 20 years, transit will play a critical role in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) linking people to activity centers throughout the region and getting them around local communities. On an average weekday in 1999, 193,000 riders used the region's bus and rail systems. By 2020 if expected



funds are available for transit improvements, that number could increase to 450,000 riders. The number of riders could increase to as many as 590,000 per weekday by 2020 if additional funds are found for transit improvements identified in this plan.

Metro's RTP establishes where major transit capital improvements will be located, and reflects the policy direction identified in the 2040 Plan.

Tri-Met's role as the primary public transportation provider for the region is to design and construct the improve-

ments outlined in the RTP. Tri-Met is committed to providing the appropriate level of transit service to achieve regional 2040 Growth Concept objectives. Tri-Met plans for changes to its service every January (contact the Tri-Met comment line at (503) 962-5806 for further information).

New transit projects include light rail to the Portland International Airport opening in 2001 and Interstate MAX, scheduled to open in 2004.

Providers other than Tri-Met are needed to serve special transportation needs. Other public transit operators include South Metro Area Rapid Transit (SMART) in the Wilsonville area and C-Tran in Clark County and areas of Portland.

Cities and counties, responsible for their public rights-of-way and traffic signal systems, coordinate with Metro, Tri-Met and other public transit operators to ensure their transportation improvements support the transit service planned for in the Regional Transportation Plan. Cities and counties also consider transit service when locating public facilities and regulating property development.

Regional policy development for public transportation

Goals and objectives for the public transportation system were created to guide future investments in public transportation in the region. The goals and objectives include the following:

- *Provide an appropriate level, quality and range of public transportation options to serve this region and support implementation of the 2040 Growth Concept.* This includes the provision of the regional transit network, implementing Tri-Met's Transit Choices for Livability community transit plan, and expanding transit service to the mobility impaired. A long-term strategy for potential use of freight railroad lines will be explored.

- *Expand the amount of information available about public transportation to allow more people to use the system.* This includes expanding public information and education with schedule formats that are easy to understand. It also includes responding to feedback from users of public transit. New technologies will be explored to improve information about schedules, routes and transfers.

- *Continue efforts to make public transportation an environmentally friendly and safe form of motorized transportation.*

Transit service providers will continue to reduce the amount of air pollution and noise generated by transit vehicles. The level of passenger safety and security on public transportation will be increased. The number of avoidable accidents involving public transit vehicles will be decreased.

- *Provide transit service that is fast, reliable and has competitive travel times compared to the automobile.* Travel time for light rail and rapid bus routes during peak hours should be no slower than 150 percent of the auto travel time during off-peak hours. Exceeding this threshold would result in considering preferential treatment to the road system for transit and express operation. Total transit travel time for trips on regional bus routes should be no slower than 200 percent of the total auto travel time.



To implement these goals, different types of transit service were defined as parts of a regional, community or inter-urban transit network. The transit service types were planned to serve particular 2040 land-use components.

Regional transit network

The regional transit network is part of the public transportation system where fast and frequent transit service is needed to carry large numbers of passengers to the major 2040 land-use components: Portland central city, regional and town centers, main streets, industrial areas and intermodal facilities such as the Portland International Airport. The six transit service types included in the regional transit network are light rail, commuter rail, rapid bus, streetcar, frequent bus and regional bus service. The locations of these transit modes are intended to remain fixed, providing certainty to property developers that transit service will be provided. It also gives direction to cities and counties to reflect transit in transportation and land-use plans in these areas.

Future service will include new forms of local transit, such as minibuses and van pools that are better able to serve communities. All types of transit, including busses must be accessible.

Light rail transit – Light rail transit is frequent high-capacity service that operates on fixed tracks in an exclusive right-of-way. Light rail transit connects regional centers to each other and the Portland central city. It also serves intermodal facilities such as Portland International Airport and Union Station, as well as major public attractions such as the Oregon Convention Center and the Rose Garden Arena. Service is at maximum 10-minute intervals during the weekday and midday on weekends. High levels of amenities are provided at light rail transit stations.

Commuter rail – Commuter rail is the use of existing freight railroad tracks for passenger service. It is typically focused on peak commute periods but can



Many bus corridors need safer pedestrian crossings.

be offered at other times when demand exists and rail capacity is available. Stations are typically located one or more miles apart, depending on route length. Stations offer basic amenities for passengers, transfer opportunities to bus and light rail and often parking.

Rapid bus – Regional rapid bus service, similar to light rail service in speed, frequency and comfort, serves major transit routes with limited stops. This service runs at least every 15 minutes during the weekday and weekend mid-day periods. Passenger amenities are concentrated at major stops and transit centers.

Streetcars – Streetcars provide fixed-route service for local trips in higher density mixed-use centers. This service runs every 15 minutes and may include transit preferential treatments and enhanced passenger amenities along the corridor. (“Transit preferential treatments” include bus-only lanes, signal preemption, bus stops that are closer together and more direct transit routes; “enhanced passenger amenities” include covered shelters, benches and electronic displays of bus arrival times.)

Frequent bus – Frequent bus service provides slightly slower, but more frequent, local bus service than rapid bus. This service runs at least every 10 minutes and includes transit preferential treatments and enhanced passenger amenities with more frequent stops.

Regional bus – Regional bus service is provided on most major urban streets. This service operates with maximum frequencies of 15 minutes with conventional stop spacing along the route. High ridership or congested locations may have transit preferential treatments and passenger amenities.

Locations of these six transit service types of the regional transit network are shown in Figure 1.16 of the Regional Transportation Plan as the regional public transportation map. Specific alignments of service types that require large capital investments (such as light rail, commuter rail, streetcar and rapid bus) may be refined during future corridor planning and engineering phases of those projects.

Community transit network

A network of community transit service provides more locally oriented public transportation. Transit service providers, cities and counties will develop specific elements of the community transit network. This service is focused more on accessibility and coverage to a wide range of land-use options rather than on speed between two points. The location of this service is intended to remain flexible, responding to changing passenger demand and roadway conditions.

The community transit network is comprised of the following:

Community bus – Community bus lines provide service linking neighborhoods and lower density employment areas to the regional transit network, town centers and regional centers. It runs as often as every 30 minutes on weekdays; weekend service is provided as demand warrants.

Mini-bus – Mini-bus service provides coverage in lower density areas. This service may range from fixed route to demand-responsive service, including dial-a-ride, employer shuttles and bus pools. On weekdays, a mini-bus should be able to respond to a call within 60 minutes.

Para-transit – Para-transit service is a non-fixed-route service for special transit markets, including Americans with Disabilities Act patrons, throughout the greater metro region.

Park-and-ride – These facilities provide convenient auto access to the regional transit network for areas not directly served by transit. Safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian access through a park-and-ride facility is considered during the siting process of new facilities. Evaluation of park-and-ride sites will be done periodically to determine their appropriate size, location and design to support timely implementation of land-use goals.

Interurban public transportation

Interurban travel and passenger facilities (such as bus and train stations) help provide connections to other urban areas. They are located to allow efficient operations and to be convenient to passengers using regional transit. The following are interurban passenger facilities identified in the RTP:

Passenger rail – Inter-city high-speed rail (up to 79 miles per hour) is part of the transportation system that extends from the Willamette Valley north to British Columbia. Amtrak provides service south to California and east across the country.

Inter-city bus – Inter-city bus connects points within the region to nearby destinations, including neighboring cities, recreational activities and tourist destinations. Several private inter-city bus services are currently provided in the region.

Passenger intermodal facilities – Passenger intermodal facilities include Portland International Airport, Union Station and inter-city bus stations. These facilities serve as the hub for various passenger modes and the transfer point between modes. They are closely interconnected with regional transit service and accessible by all modes of travel.

Implementation of the Regional Transportation Plan

The Regional Transportation Plan is implemented through the targeted use of federal funds to build projects, and through local plans and development codes.

Prioritization of public transportation 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 Tri-Met and SMART may only apply to receive federal funds for projects that are included in the plan.

The RTP also requires service providers to consider those with special needs, such as the elderly and disabled, when undertaking annual service planning.

Providers must consider the following:

- the adequacy of facilities to provide service
- the hours of service availability, relative to the hours of operation of other service providers to these communities
- the level of transit service to these populations relative to the larger community.

Cities and counties are required to do the following:

- adopt a transit system map consistent with the RTP (see Figure 1.16, the regional public transportation map in the RTP)
- plan 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
- amend development code regulations to require commercial development to locate buildings near major transit stops
- designate pedestrian districts consistent with the RTP (See Figure 1.1 in the plan)
- 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 guidelines when designing street improvements.

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.

Visit our web site at www.metro-region.org

Send e-mail to trans@metro.dst.or.us