

 **Metro** | *Agenda*

Meeting: **Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) Finance Subcommittee**
Date: Thursday, January 15
Time: 7:30 to 9 a.m.
Place: Metro Regional Center, Rooms 370A & B

1. **Welcome and Introductions**
2. **State Legislature - Next Steps: Continue Building the Need for Legislative Action**
3. **Federal Transportation Authorization: Core Messages for Washington D.C. Trip**
4. **Regional Landscape on Local Funding Measures; Interest in a Regional Measure**
5. **Definition of a Regional System for Regional Funding**
6. **Discussion**
7. **Wrap up and Next Steps**

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 Metro | *Memo*

To: JPACT
From: Andy Cotugno
Re.: Regional position on federal transportation policy
Date: December 23, 2014

Attached for discussion at the January 8 JPACT meeting is a draft regional position on federal transportation policy related to reauthorization of the transportation program. At the January meeting, I am seeking feedback and will finalize the piece in the form of a proposed resolution for consideration at the February 12 JPACT meeting. On the JPACT trip to Washington DC, the intent is to use this as a messaging guide in lieu of scripted speaking points for individual JPACT members.

PORTLAND REGION POSITION ON FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION POLICY AND FUNIDNG

Investment in a multi-modal transportation system is important for the region, the state and the nation to reach its goals for economic growth and prosperity, community livability and environmental sustainability and to ensure there is an equitable ability of all members of the community to benefit. The needed investment requires commitment at the federal, state and local levels. The state and local governments have stepped up substantially to increase their level of investment and are aggressively pursuing further increases. However, the federal government has not stepped up and the overall share of investment by the federal government is shrinking as a percent of the total. With this in mind, the following are the key policy messages from the Portland region to our Congressional delegation.

INCREASE INVESTMENT

- Substantially increase the level of federal investment in all parts of the multi-modal surface transportation system, preferably with some form of user fees and with a renewed expression of commitment through addition to the Trust Fund. Adopt the proposal to phase in a gas tax increase, index it to keep pace with inflation and fuel efficiency and sunset it to encourage conversion to a mileage based fee. Expand the application of Road User Charge pilot projects to more states to increase the understanding and awareness of this approach.
- With an increased commitment of funding resources, adopt a 5-6 year authorization bill to provide certainty and stability to the planning, engineering and programming process.
- If there is not an increased funding commitment, maintain status quo levels (with a modest allowance for inflation) and limit the authorization bill to a two-year period.

EXPANDED POLICY INTENT

With an increase in funding and 5-6 year certainty, it is feasible to expand the scope of the federal transportation program and invest in matters that need increased attention.

- Continue the TIGER program and establish additional categories of competitive grants. Competition reinforces local innovation leading to better transportation investments.
- Expand the federal ability to support transportation investment through better credit options including increased application of the TIFIA program and relaxing limitations on the use of tolls.
- Maintain the New Starts and Small Starts programs.
- Continue to expand the focus on freight but ensure freight is addressed in a multi-modal manner including urban and intercity trucking, rail, marine, air cargo and intermodal connections.
- Increase the level of investment in and the certainty of funds for passenger rail service.
- Continue to increase the focus on performance based planning and programming of funds. Ensure performance metrics are comprehensive in nature covering not only measures of the condition and operation of the transportation facilities themselves but the community benefits that result such as safety, economic prosperity, affordability for the user, health, climate change and equity.
- Clarify language for FTA sponsored joint development projects directing that they are intended to both provide for an economic return on the transit investment and produce more economically and socially successful communities as a result of the transit investment.

- Add an emphasis on improved access to employers including creation of employer based councils and funding for “last mile” access.
- Increase the suballocation of funds to metropolitan planning organizations.
- Continue to pursue methods of streamlining federal requirements to speed up project delivery while maintaining the requirements for intergovernmental cooperation, community involvement, inclusion and equity and environmental impact.
- Renew the Commuter Parity Act providing comparable tax benefits to transit users as auto commuters.
- Expand the emphasis on safety including reduced serious injuries and deaths across all modes and on all parts of the transportation system. Establish separate safety targets for bike and pedestrian modes.
- Continue the federal transportation investment in university research centers and programs.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Certain projects are significantly impacted by the administrative practices of the federal agencies and support from the delegation may be needed in the following areas;

- The Southwest Corridor and the Powell Division Corridors are progressing through the federal New Starts process with considerable FTA oversight.
- Passenger rail improvement between Eugene, Portland, Seattle and Vancouver BC is being pursued by Oregon, Washington and the Province of British Columbia. The scope of upgrade in Oregon is now under consideration in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement with considerable oversight by FRA.
- There is a legislative proposal in the DOT bill to revise the criteria for US Coast Guard permitting of a new bridge over navigable waters to also take into consideration the needs of rail, aviation, transit and highway traffic. This may be important for any possible future Columbia River Crossing.
- The region is targeting significant redevelopment around light rail and street cars stations which often involves significant FTA oversight. It is important to the region that investing in these sites be for the community goals of the area not just to capture the increased property value from the transit investment.
- There is currently a process underway with the US Army Corps of Engineers to consider alternate approaches for rehabilitation of the Locks at Willamette Falls and the reopening to public commercial and recreation service. This would enable the full length of the Willamette River to resume its historic function as an important transportation route.

RTP “Regional System” of interest DEFINITIONS

2014 Regional Transportation Plan

p. 2-24, 2.4 Regional System Definition

- Facilities are included in the regional transportation system based on their function within the regional transportation system rather than their geometric design, ownership or physical characteristics.
- A facility is part of the regional transportation system if it provides access to any activities crucial to the social or economic health of the Portland metropolitan region, including connecting the region to other parts of the state and Pacific Northwest or provides access to and within 2040 Target areas, as described below.
- Facilities that connect different parts of the region together are crucial to the regional transportation system. Any link that provides access to or within a major regional activity center such as an airport or 2040 target area is also a crucial element of the regional transportation system. These facilities are shown on the network maps in this chapter.

The regional transportation system is defined as:

1. All state transportation facilities (including interstate, statewide, regional and district highways and their bridges, overcrossings and ramps).
2. All arterial facilities and their bridges.
3. Transportation facilities, including bicycle and pedestrian facilities, within designated 2040 centers, corridors, industrial areas, employment areas, main streets and station communities.
4. All high capacity transit and regional transit networks and their bridges.
5. All regional bicycle and pedestrian facilities and their bridges, including regional trails shown on the regional pedestrian and bicycle networks.
6. All bridges that cross the Willamette, Columbia, Clackamas, Tualatin or Sandy rivers.
7. All freight and passenger intermodal facilities, airports, rail facilities and marine transportation facilities and their bridges.
8. Any other transportation facility, service or strategy that is determined by JPACT and the Metro Council to be of regional interest because it has a regional need or impact (e.g. transit-oriented development, transportation system management and demand management strategies, local street connectivity, and culverts that serve as barriers to fish passage).

Regional Transportation System Components

Regional multi-modal transportation facilities and services include the following components:

1. Regional System Design
2. Regional Arterial and Throughway Network, which includes the National Highway System (NHS) and State highways
3. Regional Transit Network
4. Regional Freight Network
5. Regional Bicycle Network
6. Regional Pedestrian Network
7. Regional System Management & Operations which includes Demand Management



Date: January 2015
To: Interested Parties
From: Ted Leybold, Andy Cotugno
Subject: Framework for discussion of Transportation System of Regional Funding Interest

Introduction

Discussions about potential for creating a regional transportation funding source is prompting efforts to define a system of transportation projects that are of sufficient regional importance that creates a shared interest by leaders and stakeholders in seeing those projects funded.

The regional transportation plan (RTP) has defined a regional transportation system needed to implement regional policy interests, define where intra-jurisdictional coordination is necessary and to establish federal funding eligibility (see attached). These purposes represent a broader set of interests and regional project definition than what is likely to be of a mutually agreeable set of interests to develop a shared revenue package. However, it does provide a framework from which a shared revenue transportation package can be developed.

RTP Framework

The regional transportation plan defines the regional system through a list of projects that are consistent with modal system maps (road system, freight system, bicycle system, etc.) and topical plans (system and demand management). Interested staff from across the region could work from these defined networks to develop a narrowed definition of a regional transportation system for the purposes of mutual funding interest. The purpose would be to define a system that regional leaders from any part of the region could clearly understand and articulate to their constituents why investments from a new regional funding source benefits or is important to everyone in the region.

Straw proposal

To demonstrate an example and begin discussions on this approach, one possible definition of such a system could include the following.

I. Any project that addresses a deficiency and brings a facility up to design guidelines that is located on the highest level orders of the regional system facilities:

- Arterial and Throughways (Principle and Major arterials)
- Freight (Main railroad and roadway routes)
- Transit (Light Rail/HCT, Frequent Bus Route, or inter-city high speed rail)
- Bike (Bicycle parkway)
- Pedestrian (Pedestrian parkway)
- System Management (Major arterial corridor management, Operations Centers)
- Demand Management (TBD from review of RTO Strategic Plan)

II. Projects that address a deficiency located on the next tier of RTP system classifications only when specific criteria (TBD) that elevate those projects to a level of mutual funding interest are met. Criteria could be developed around many issues such as addressing multiple modal benefits, removing a recognized transportation barrier to development of a regional significant land use area, leveraging a safety funded project, etc.

- Arterial and Throughways (Minor and Rural arterials)

- Freight (Road connectors and Branch railroads)

- Transit (Regional bus and terminal/P&R facilities)

- Bike (Regional Bikeway and Bicycle Districts)

- Pedestrian (Regional Pedestrian Corridor and Pedestrian Districts)

- System Management (Minor arterial corridor management projects)

- Demand Management (TBD from review of RTO Strategic Plan)

Next Steps

Continue to meet to refine the proposal, considering feedback and direction provided at the TMAC retreat, and propose next iteration at upcoming TMAC and JPACT Finance Subcommittee meetings. Should a definition of a system emerge that is of interest to stakeholders, consider embarking on a process to define a regional transportation funding proposal for consideration.

Consider “local share” portion of a regional funding package. This would ensure a distribution of some funding across sub-regions and with more local influence of decision making for projects closer to the local-regional portion of the geographic interest spectrum, but still needing to address “programmatic” regional interests (e.g. street connectivity, safety, demand or system management capacity, etc.).