

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concept: Safe Routes to Schools

Purpose and Need:

Metro's Regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Program supports both safety project and programming investments to make it possible for all students to get to school and travel around the community safely, affordably, and efficiently by walking, biking and taking transit. The program funds both infrastructure improvements, such as traffic safety projects near schools, and programming to encourage walking and biking and teach students how to walk and bike safely.

Safe Routes to School investments help students get their daily physical activity and support improved classroom learning. By reducing car pickups and drop-offs, Safe Routes investments also reduce congestion. Nationally, school travel accounts for as much as 14% of car trips during morning rush hour.

In 2016, Metro assessed the needs and opportunities in the region's 17 school districts and identified pressing needs and inequities. Two thirds of school districts reported funding as the primary challenge to implementing Safe Routes to Schools infrastructure improvements; and 83 percent of districts named traffic safety as the primary concern for students walking and biking. In addition, schools with more than 50 percent of students on free or reduced lunch see a 30 percent higher rate of collisions within 1 mile of the school. Targeted education and encouragement activities at historically underserved schools and increased funding for safety improvements across the region could drastically improve conditions for students to walk and bike to school safely.

Metro's Regional Safe Routes to Schools Coordinator manages a grant and technical assistance program and works with local, state and national partners in the region to strengthen and coordinate programming. The existing grant program (\$900,000 over 3 years between 2018-21-) provides funding for education and encouragement activities led by local coordinators around the region, with a focus on Title 1 schools serving low-income students. In the first allocation cycle, there were twice as many requests for funds than Metro could fulfill.

Metro's Safe Routes to Schools program provides much needed additional funding for traffic safety projects near schools, such as crosswalks and signals, as well as safety programming at Title 1 schools, where there is an increased likelihood of serious crashes and fatalities. Culturally specific and sustainable programming requires long term investment in building trust and relationships with school communities. Increased investment in this program could support dedicated staffing at the county, city, and school district levels for optimum coordination and implementation of Safe Routes program activities.

Task Force Values: Significant progress toward zero deaths and permanent injuries in all modes of transportation, especially among vulnerable community members, including seniors, youth and people with disabilities; significant safety investments in areas where people of color and people living with low-incomes live; improves safety outcomes in areas where people of color live; overall increase in transportation options in areas with a high proportion of people of color; makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels to access the transportation system and move around our region; overall decrease in vehicle miles traveled; overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions that meets the regional Climate Smart Strategy targets to the extent achievable by the scale of the overall investment

Possible Cost: \$5 million/year

Challenges:

- Need to align investments with ODOT's Safe Routes to School Program, which has grown significantly with the implementation of HB 2017.
- Not all schools have defined project lists; Metro could expand the existing technical assistance program to work with districts and jurisdictions on project development.
- Need to ensure that local school districts are consulted and brought in to both the project and programming development processes.

Considerations

- The most effective model for Safe Routes to Schools is pairing capital investments with education and encouragement for schools, teachers, parents and students.
- New funding could be integrated into Metro's existing regional Safe Routes to Schools program and grant structure, perhaps by expanding the program to include capital investment grants for local jurisdictions.

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concept: Safety Hot Spots

Purpose and Need:

Metro's safety program aims to reduce death and serious injuries from traffic crashes. Using crash data, Metro has identified both high injury corridors and high injury intersections in the region in order to identify and prioritize needed safety investments.

While many of the region's most serious safety concerns are on T2020 priority corridors, there are still many pressing safety needs on other roadways across the region. These locations, either in a single place or in clusters along a roadway, are often referred to as safety "hot spots." Localized, targeted low-cost investments in hot spots can reduce crashes, injuries and deaths. Examples include adding signals to crosswalks, re-striping intersections to slow and control turning movements, constructing medians, and reconfiguring streets to manage speeds. While ODOT administers a federal program to address hot spots, there is not enough funding to meet the need, particularly in the Portland region.

A Safety Hot Spot program would provide grants and technical assistance to the transportation agencies for small, strategic capital improvements to address safety needs. Metro staff and local jurisdictions would identify projects and solutions using a data-driven approach, relying on local, regional and state transportation safety plans, analysis of the most current crash data and tools such as the Highway Safety Manual. Local jurisdictions would need to put forward a proposal to Metro that demonstrates uses cutting-edge safety treatments and addresses the key needs based on available data. The T2020 Safety Hot Spot program would coordinate with and complement state and local programs. Typical grant amounts could range between \$500,000 and \$3 million.

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Possible Cost:

\$10-20 million/year

Challenges:

- One challenge with a data-driven program is that there can be up to a 2-year time lag with crash data from ODOT's crash data analysis. Metro will work with transportation agencies to use the most current crash data available. Also, crash data tends to under-report pedestrian and bicycle crashes; Metro will take that into account when analyzing data.

Considerations:

- A majority of high injury corridors pass through areas with higher concentrations of people of color, people with low incomes and English language learners. By investing in areas with traffic safety and equity needs, there is an opportunity to meet multiple goals.

- Currently, some regional traffic safety funding needs are being met through the Regional Flexible Funds Allocations (RFFA) or ODOT grant programs. Staff would coordinate a T2020 Safety Hot Spot program with future RFFA processes to leverage federal funding and streamline the various grant application processes.
- Safety investments in the roadway usually improve walkability and livability in a neighborhood.

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concept: Active Transportation Regional Connections

Purpose and Need:

Equitable access to affordable and safe transportation options are key to meeting community and regional goals. The regional pedestrian and bicycle networks are planned to provide safe, direct and comfortable access to transit, town centers, employment, education and daily needs. As a region, greater Portland has made great strides towards filling sidewalk gaps, creating safe crossings, and building bikeways and access to transit. However, we must invest in infrastructure to eliminate barriers to people being able to walk or bike for transportation. Many of the gaps in the region's active transportation networks are not within the T2020 corridors but are spread across the region.

An Active Transportation Regional Connections program could provide grants and technical assistance to transportation agencies for critical connections in the regional pedestrian and bicycle networks. These kinds of critical connections are typically more complex and expensive to construct; they may cross jurisdictional boundaries and involve multiple agencies. Pedestrian and bicycle bridges, missing segments of multi-use paths in built-up areas, and separated bikeways on high crash corridors are examples of these types of projects. Grant amounts could range between \$1 million and \$15 million depending on the complexity of the project.

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Possible Cost: \$10-20 million/year

Challenges:

- Many of the region's remaining critical active transportation gaps, such as bridges or multi-use paths in corridors where there isn't a lot of excess space, may be quite expensive to address. Another challenge is that some projects need additional planning and development to address feasibility issues before funding for construction. Lack of funding for planning and development has been a persistent road block in completing large, complex, active transportation projects.

Considerations:

- Currently, some active transportation project development needs are being met by federal Regional Flexible Funds Allocations (RFFA); however, many of the more expensive projects would not typically be funded through this program. Staff could use the RFFA program criteria as a starting place to develop criteria for T2020 program funding, and coordinate with future RFFA processes to leverage federal funding and streamline the various grant application processes.
- Transportation agencies have completed a considerable amount of planning with each other and Metro to identify regional active transportation projects. A pool of projects, drawn from the Regional Active

Transportation Plan, are identified in the Connected Corridors and Centers document developed by Metro in May 2017.

- The program guidelines could prioritize projects in equity focus areas.

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concept: Smart Cities

Purpose and Need:

Emerging technologies like autonomous vehicles and car, bike, or scooter sharing can help decrease congestion, reduce pollution, and give more people access to healthy and affordable transportation options. People increasingly rely on smart phones and Internet access to learn about these new options, as well as to plan trips by transit, bike, and car. In order to deliver on the potential of new technologies, our region needs to work with new transportation services to pursue outcomes that benefit the public good, not just the private sector, and that make technology accessible to everyone, and develop tools to manage and plan for new options. Emerging transportation services can help complete “last mile” connections to transit centers.

Metro’s Emerging Technology Strategy (2018) identifies steps that Metro and our partners to take harness new developments in transportation technology to create a more equitable and livable region. A T2020 Smart Cities program could build on that success by: 1) Funding pilot projects that explore new opportunities to keep our region moving, such as new car share or shared ride services in communities that lack good public transportation options or subsidizing shared bicycles and scooters in communities with underused bicycle infrastructure; 2) Improving access to emerging technology for communities of color and other underserved groups, including facilitating wi-fi access, creating strategies to access cash-based payment options, and offering education; and 3) Developing tools and resources to help public agencies monitor and manage new transportation services.

In 2018, Metro launched the new Partnerships and Innovative Learning Opportunities in Transportation (PILOT) program and allocated a modest \$150,000 to four strong projects that focused on providing equitable access to emerging technology, but the program was unable to meet all of the demand in the region. Metro received requests for well over three times the funding available. New and increased funding would build off the successes of and the lessons learned from the initial PILOT program and would allow the program to invest in additional capital projects.

Task Force Values: Creates a more interconnected transit system and the reduces impact of congestion on transit; makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income levels to access the transportation system and move around our region; improves roadway and transit reliability

Possible Cost: \$3M/Year

Challenges:

- Public-private partnerships would be central to this program. These partnerships can provide a cost-effective way to create public sector benefits, but they require a more thorough analysis of risks and allocation of responsibilities between the public and the private sectors.
- Technology is evolving rapidly, which creates some uncertainties for any smart cities program. This program would need to be designed to focus on outcomes, instead of on specific technologies that may arrive more slowly than anticipated or soon become obsolete.
- Some of the concepts that could be part of this program, such as providing wi-fi on corridors, represent a significant new role for Metro and could create administrative challenges including security, maintenance, and privacy concerns.

Considerations:

- Metro has limited information on how new transportation options like ride-hailing and car sharing are impacting our region. The companies that operate these services are not always willing to share data with public agencies. However, Metro and our partners are investing in new data tools and resources that can guide our investments in emerging technologies.

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concept: Air Quality Monitoring

Purpose and Need:

As Oregon's population grows, so do the human activities that contribute to air pollution. Not only are more vehicles on the road, but there are more people mowing their lawns and burning wood fires. Low gas prices mean that more people drive larger, less fuel-efficient vehicles. Emissions from these sources accumulate in our air, pointing to a greater need to monitor air pollution region-wide, but also at a localized scale.

Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) collects air pollution data around the state, and publishes this data on a public website: the Air Quality Index. DEQ's Air Quality Annual Report contains additional information on air quality monitoring and pollutant concentrations in Oregon, by region and by pollutant, but not at a corridor or neighborhood scale. Multnomah County and City of Portland have also convened partners and undertaken local actions address air pollution, with the City leading an effort to test air pollution sensors for the purposes of local air quality monitoring.

Task Force Values: As this program is a monitoring program only, it does not directly impact any of the values that the Task Force has identified. Instead, it could provide additional information that might lead to additional policy and funding actions that would align with Task Force values.

Possible Cost: \$1 M

Challenges:

- Metro does not currently monitor or collect air pollution data and relies on reports and information published by DEQ. Metro conducts limited regional modeling of transportation emissions for the purposes of complying with federal and state regulations, and would need to work with partners to expand its role in this area. To stand up this program, Metro would need to hire an air quality expert to oversee the monitoring program, and invest resources for data collection and data analysis. Metro would most likely contract with DEQ and/or local jurisdictions for some of the work.
- Jurisdictions collect air quality information from diverse sources, including citizen-owned sensors. There is risk that Metro could not get enough reliable and consistent data to conduct the special modeling.

Considerations:

- Metro might duplicate DEQ's existing air pollution monitoring efforts, although Metro could potentially complement DEQ's efforts by conducting additional spatial modeling.
- Given a significant investment in staff and other resources, spatial modeling would allow Metro and partners to evaluate scenarios at a grid-like scale and provide information about where pollution, by pollutant, is projected to be most highly concentrated. This could inform pre-emptive pollution and exposure strategies.

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concepts: Main Streets Revitalization

Purpose and Need:

Main streets are at the center of neighborhood life and vibrant downtowns, with local businesses, key transit routes and community activity all within walking and bicycling distance. The 2040 Growth Concept defined centers and main streets as places with a traditional commercial identity, good access to transit, a strong sense of proximate, walkable neighborhoods and greater density.

A T2020 Main Streets program could provide grants and technical assistance to cities and counties for improvements to main streets and centers that are not situated within the T2020 corridors. Projects could either rehabilitate existing downtowns or help develop a downtown main street where one doesn't exist. Improvements could include sidewalks and sidewalk buffers and other investments to improve safety. Other eligible improvements could increase transit access and reliability in a downtown setting, like seating and other amenities at transit stops, enhanced pedestrian crossings, bikeways, pedestrian scale lighting, street trees and vegetation, street seating, art and other placemaking elements. Grant amounts would typically range between \$3 and \$5 million depending on the length and complexity of the projects and whether they are phased.

As the region's downtown centers grow and change, they need investments that give people transportation options and promote vibrant and healthy public spaces. Every city and county in greater Portland has one or more center or main street, but many struggle with deferred maintenance, safety concerns and limited capacity for transit. When main streets are inadequate to support planned land uses, businesses, housing and other development stagnate. This new program presents an opportunity to invest in centers and main streets while other investments are being made in corridors.

Task Force Values: Significant progress toward zero deaths and permanent injuries in all modes of transportation, especially among vulnerable community members, including seniors, youth and people with disabilities; increase in number of corridors in the region with efficient and safe multi-modal options; makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels to access the transportation system and move around our region

Possible Cost: \$5-10 million/year

Challenges:

- There would be few challenges to administering this type of program. Metro has long supported investments in main streets, like the Boulevards program funded with Regional Flexible Funds, and the Complete Street program that has provided transportation design guidelines for main streets for over 20 years.

Considerations:

- Currently, some main street funding needs are being met through Regional Flexible Funds Allocations (RFFA). Staff could create criteria for the Main Streets grants, building on the previous Boulevards RFFA program, and coordinate with future RFFA processes to leverage federal funding and streamline the various grant application processes.
- The T2020 Main Streets Revitalization grants could coordinate with and leverage investments from other Metro grants and programs that support planning, development and revitalization of downtowns

and main streets, including 2040 Planning and Development grants, Community Placemaking grants, Transit Oriented Development, investments in affordable housing, and downtown revitalization and livable streets and trails guides.

- Investments in Main Streets can serve multiple purposes such as improving traffic safety, encouraging more people to walk bike and take transit, neighborhood revitalization, equitable access to and creation of community space, green streets, and enhanced personal safety.

Regional Transportation Investments

Program Concept: Better Bus

Purpose and Need:

As our region grows and congestion increases, people need reliable transportation options to get to their jobs, homes and daily activities. Transit could be a viable option for many, but currently, buses are often caught in the same congestion as personal vehicles. Random delays, many caused by traffic, make it hard for buses to stay on schedule, so the waiting time may be worse than published. This can lead to cascading delays all along the bus line that stretches across the Metro region, far from where the original delay occurred. Delays have major impacts on people's daily lives. People who need to arrive at work on time, or who need to pick up kids from daycare or school, can't afford the risks of using an unreliable transit system.

Just as a delay on a single route can make travel unreliable across the system, local improvements in reliability can have a positive regional impact. Better Bus is a set of small, strategic, capital investments to improve transit capacity, reliability and travel time along major service bus lines that are relatively low cost to construct, context sensitive and able to be deployed quickly. Better Bus actions include changes to the design and operation of streets and signals to increase bus speed and reliability. Larger Better Bus investments could also include changes to transit vehicle fleet, station equipment and operation systems typically owned and operated by TriMet and Smart. The Better Bus program is a good return on investment because it requires a relatively moderate amount funding that can result in a much improved transit experience for bus riders.

In 2017, Metro and TriMet launched a \$5M pilot program to provide design technical assistance to implement enhanced transit projects region wide. This data driven program used bus delay, travel time and ridership information to determine where there was the greatest need, and then concentrated investments in those areas. A total of 38 projects were submitted for consideration, and 20 projects were selected to move forward through concept development and design. Many of these projects are still in need of funding. A Better Bus program could provide the resources needed to construct those projects, and develop a conduit for new projects.

Task Force Values: overall increase in transportation options in areas with a high proportion of people of color; makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels to access the transportation system and move around our region; overall decrease in vehicle miles traveled; overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions that meets the regional Climate Smart Strategy targets to the extent achievable by the scale of the overall investment

Possible Cost:

\$5-10 million/year

Challenges:

- Engineering designs for Better Bus are still fairly new to local engineers. To overcome that challenge, Metro included engineering tools for enhanced transit as part of the update to Metro's Urban Design/Livable Streets Guide and hosted workshops on transit design.

Considerations:

- The size and scale of Better Bus projects vary widely. Projects can be as small as a signal upgrade, or as large as restriping to create a dedicated bus lane along an entire corridor.

Partner Agency Implementation

Program Concept: School Bus Electrification

Purpose and Need

In addition to contributing to greenhouse gas emissions, increased diesel particulate matter is linked with significant public health concerns, including increased asthma and lung cancer rates – yet most Oregon school districts contract with companies that use diesel buses to transfer students between home and school. While school districts and the private fleet companies they contract with have had few options for cleaner burning fuels, there are companies developing electric-powered school buses. Transitioning from a diesel-powered fleet to an electric powered fleet would reduce air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions, and reduce children’s exposure to diesel particulate matter.

Using revenue from a regional transportation funding measure, Metro could run a grant program to provide matching funds to school districts interested in transitioning from diesel buses to electric vehicles. In some cases, this might involve providing funds to private companies who contract with local school districts. There is likely insufficient funding to support a full fleet transition for any school district in the region, but this program might allow school districts to test out one or two electric buses to determine their long-term interest.

Task Force Values

Overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions; overall decrease in diesel particulate matter

Possible Cost: This would depend on the size and scale of a program. Much more work would have to be done to determine turnover rates for the private fleets contracted by most school districts, and to better understand the difference between the cost of an electric school bus and a standard school bus. Staff would then need to determine what levels of adaptation are necessary to produce results. Without additional financial support from school districts or other funds, this program would likely have to be large (\$10-15 million/year) in order to produce measurable results for the whole region.

Challenges

- Current Oregon law requires a waiver for every individual electric school bus, posing a significant administrative hurdle for an ongoing program. This law could be changed but likely not before the regional transportation funding measure would go to the ballot.
- Electric school bus technology is still being developed and tested, and the implementation of this program would likely be the first deployment of electric school buses at any meaningful scale in the state. School districts or contracting companies would need to retrain mechanics and change maintenance programs in order to incorporate electric vehicles into the mix – an expense that some could be reluctant to take on, or that would need to be covered by the program.
- This program could be challenging to administer, as school districts would need to work with possible suppliers, and then apply to Metro for funding. Metro would need to set up a new grant program with brand new stakeholders and accountability mechanisms in order to ensure appropriate stewardship of taxpayer dollars. As most school districts in the region contract with a private fleet company, funds might go to private companies, which raises additional accountability concerns.

Considerations

- Is there a strong desire for electric school buses in the parts of the region where there is the greatest opportunity to deploy them?

- Because school buses run their routes a limited number of times a day, this program could impact a smaller number of diesel-miles-travelled than focusing on transit vehicle electrification.

Other Agency Implementation

Program Concept: Transit Vehicle Electrification

Purpose and Need:

The region's Climate Smart Strategy identifies increasing transit service as one of the key ways to encourage more people to ride transit, consequently reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution and reducing inequities built into our transportation system. However, most of our transit buses run on diesel fuel, which increases diesel particulate matter along key transit corridors. While the overall impact to our air quality and public health is still much better than it would be without that transit service, there is significant interest in the region in reducing our reliance on diesel-fueled buses in order to build a cleaner transit system. Reducing diesel particulate emissions would have significant impacts on public health outcomes and air quality metrics, and since many current transit lines run through low-income neighborhoods, this is important from an environmental justice perspective.

TriMet has set a goal of phasing out their diesel fleet over the next twenty years, and has dedicated significant resources to meeting that goal. SMART has a similar goal to transition entirely to alternative fuels by 2028. However, an electric bus costs roughly twice what a diesel bus costs once you factor in charging equipment and new maintenance workforce training. TriMet and PGE launched the first pilot electric buses and bus charging program this year, and plan to test different bus models and management approaches over the next few years to identify the most effective way to go fully electric; SMART purchased their first electric bus this year. A full transition to electric buses will require additional funding for both agencies, and a regionwide program could ensure that the Portland region does not need to buy another diesel bus ever again.

Task Force Values:

Improves outcomes for communities of color; overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions; overall decrease in diesel particulate matter

Possible Cost:

\$9 million/year

Challenges:

- The exact type of bus and charging model has not been finalized, but multiple options exist and the battery technology is only improving, so staff are confident that a commitment to move entirely off of diesel buses is viable.
- Administration of this program would be fairly simple and low-cost.

Considerations:

- While electric buses should first be phased in on bus routes based on topography, access to charging services, and other operational requirements, within those restrictions routes that run through equity focus areas and/or serve frequent transit lines could be prioritized for a transition to electric buses.

Other Agency Implementation

Fare Affordability: Affordable Housing Residents

Purpose and Need:

People who live in regulated affordable housing are among the most likely to rely on transit, but the cost of bus and MAX tickets can be a significant burden. As the amount of regulated affordable housing available to residents grows, this program could provide residents with free transit passes to increase their access to health care and social services and economic opportunity.

TriMet offers a low-income fare (for people with incomes below 200% of the federal poverty level) that is half of the standard adult fare (\$1.25 instead of \$2.50) and is capped at \$28/month. Under this proposal, people living in regulated affordable housing would receive 100% subsidized passes.

Task Force Values:

Coordinates and leverages investments in affordable housing and parks and nature, overall decrease in vehicle miles traveled, increase in access to living wage jobs, schools, social services, open spaces, and affordable housing choices, makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels to access the transportation system and move around our region, improves social, public health, and economic outcomes by making it safer, easier, faster, and more affordable for communities of color to access jobs, education, social services, affordable housing, and key community gathering locations, invests in transit improvements to improve access, frequency, and connections between equity focus areas and affordable housing and employment and education centers, significant safety investments in areas where people of color and people living with low-incomes live.

Possible Cost:**Challenges:**

- This program would likely be administered through the local housing authorities, which work directly with residents. Some accountability and tracking mechanisms would need to be put in place, but it is likely that administration would not be overly difficult.
- For residents in TriMet's service area who have smart phones, the pass could be provided through TriMet's HOP Pass program, making the program easier to administer and reducing the stigma associated with more visibly obvious reduced fare ticketing programs. For residents without access to a smart phone, or for those living in the SMART district, paper passes would have to be distributed.
- When other regions have transitioned from a discounted transit pass to a free way, they have struggled with additional fraud issues. Selling a discounted pass to someone who doesn't qualify for it is not appealing, but selling a free pass to someone who doesn't qualify for it can be. Additional administrative measures would need to be put in place to ensure that the residents intended to receive these passes are the ones who are using them.

Considerations:

- Home Forward, which serves mostly residents in Multnomah County, is exploring options to provide free transit passes to residents of the properties it manages.
- For a small amount of additional funding, this program could further support transit use by providing real-time transit reader boards at regulated affordable housing properties.

Other Agency Implementation

Fare Affordability: Students

Purpose and Need:

Research suggests that helping young people access and become familiar with using public transit at an early age makes them more likely to be regular transit users later in life. For students who are unable to drive, access to transit can also help expand job opportunities and make it more possible to participate in a variety of extra-curricular activities that would otherwise be difficult.

One school district in the region, Portland Public School district (PPS), is exempt from state requirements to provide yellow bus service for high school students and currently offers all high school students a free transit pass during the school year. That transit pass program is paid for through a joint effort by TriMet and PPS, and PPS is partially reimbursed by the Oregon Department of Education as they offer this pass in lieu of a yellow school bus program for high schoolers.

Currently, all other school districts in the region run a yellow school bus program for their high schools and consequently are not financially able to offer a transit pass to their students in addition to the existing student transportation program required by the state. Because transit service does not provide sufficient coverage in all districts, removing the yellow school bus program is not a viable option.

As part of a student affordability program, Metro could provide HOP passes to non-PPS high school students who qualify for free or reduced lunch, thus removing the cost burden of accessing transit. This program would need to be administered in partnership with local school districts.

TriMet is currently piloting a High School Transit Program as part of their HB 2017 State Transit Investment Fund program for the 19-20 school year. All of the school districts in the region can apply for funds for free youth transit passes for low-income students. The passes are allocated based on a school district's free and reduced lunch populations and are available for the school year. These funds represent about 15% of the cost of providing passes for all students who qualify for free and reduced lunch in the region.

Meanwhile, TriMet already offers a reduced fare for people with incomes at 200% of federal poverty or below, and a youth fare for those between 7 and 17 years of age. Both passes are half the cost of a standard fare. For qualifying individuals, their total cost is capped at \$28 per month and \$2.50 per day.

Task Force Values: Coordinates and leverages investments in affordable housing and parks and nature, overall decrease in vehicle miles traveled, increase in access to living wage jobs, schools, social services, open spaces, and affordable housing choices, makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels to access the transportation system and move around our region, improves social, public health, and economic outcomes by making it safer, easier, faster, and more affordable for communities of color to access jobs, education, social services, affordable housing, and key community gathering locations, invests in transit improvements to improve access, frequency, and connections between equity focus areas and affordable housing and employment and education centers, significant safety investments in areas where people of color and people living with low-incomes live.

Possible Cost: \$7-9 million/year

Challenges:

- Privacy concerns would prevent Metro from working directly with students to determine program eligibility, so the program would need to partner with school districts. School districts may have limited resources to administer and promote a public transportation program.
- Students using smart phones could access tickets through TriMet's HOP pass, which avoids the stigma of a more visibly obvious free or reduced fare ticketing process. SMART users would have to use a paper pass.
- When other regions have transitioned from discounted to free transit passes, they have struggled with fraud. Selling free passes to unqualified individuals is easier than selling discounted tickets. Additional administrative measures would be required to ensure that the residents who are supposed to receive these passes are the ones who are using them.

Considerations:

- In general, free youth transit is much more appealing in areas with good service coverage; Metro staff have heard consistently from community groups that expanding service is a bigger priority in areas that still lack coverage. Pairing increased service investments with expansion of a free fare program could facilitate youth ridership and awareness of new routes.
- Providing students with a free transit pass raises larger questions of fairness around prioritizing students over people living with disabilities, seniors, veterans, or other low-income transit users.
- In the interest of serving all types of students, this program could be expanded to cover community college students or even all undergraduate and graduate students in the region who fall under a certain income threshold. This would expand both the cost and the administrative challenges of the program, but would allow the program to serve more people who would benefit from access to transit for educational and economic opportunities.
- This program could impact ridership on certain lines in significant ways; additional service funding might be needed to serve expanded ridership.

Community Investment

Program Concept: Community Placemaking

Purpose and Need:

For three years, Metro's Community Placemaking grants have helped communities tackle challenges or pursue opportunities through arts-based, equity-focused projects. Community Placemaking fosters neighborhood partnerships and provides rare and much needed resources enabling communities to have agency and influence over the public places they care about. The program's objectives, its processes and decision-making structures are all grounded in Metro's Strategic Plan to Advance Racial Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. These community-defined efforts help strengthen and stabilize our region's neighborhoods, especially for communities of color and other historically marginalized groups. The importance of community resilience cannot be understated when we acknowledge the ways our region will continue to change – by intentional investments, by the unintentional consequences of development, and by the ongoing consequences of past and present systemic racism, discrimination and oppression.

To date, the program has funded 23 projects that are as unique as the corners of our region – from prompting safer crossings of a high-crash corridor via art, to creating safe spaces for Black and Brown residents to flourish, to re-introducing lost cultural traditions to multiple generations of Indigenous people. Additionally, these 23 projects represent hundreds of partnerships. The program offers an effective way of meaningfully engaging communities that Metro or other jurisdictions are otherwise unlikely to reach.

Interest in these resources continues to grow, increasing with each cycle and far outstripping available funds. In 2019, for instance, Metro offered \$160,000 in grants but received requests for more than \$1.4 million.

Expanding the program would stabilize placemaking efforts and invigorate communities prior to, during and following major transportation investments. It will create new partners for Metro and local jurisdictions and foster opportunities for deeper relationships – to help planners understand what communities need in a way that is impossible to glean from our conventional planning efforts. Support for this program generates good will not only because it provides much needed resources, but because it demonstrates government's trust in communities' ability to define solutions for themselves.

Opportunities at this funding level would allow for:

- support of multiyear efforts (a cohort model successfully applied in other parts of the country)
- higher funding levels (grants currently range from \$5,000 to \$25,000)
- true community-based outreach to potential applicants
- technical assistance to grantees to foster sustainability beyond Metro funds
- thorough evaluation of grant-funded projects and the overall program, which will improve local and regional planning efforts

Task Force Values: Ensures equitable distribution of benefits and burdens of transportation investments and acknowledges historic inequities of that distribution; identifies potential displacement impacts and invests in anti-displacement strategies for each corridor; coordinates and supports investments in affordable housing and parks and nature

Possible Cost: \$3-\$5 million/year

Challenges:

- A smaller version of this program already exists at Metro and is vastly oversubscribed; the current funding meets only about 10% of demand. It would be relatively easy and impactful to scale the program up.

Considerations:

- This program could be directed to prioritize proposals associated with the corridors that receive investment, or support communities across the region.

Community Investment

Program Concept: Community Strengthening

****NOTE: This is being included in the regionwide program conversation to respond to the Task Force (and Council's) significant interest in anti-displacement investment, but Metro staff suggest that this concept could be funded through the corridor process, in order to align with each corridor's need and to ensure adequate funding for other possible programs.****

Purpose and Need:

As we have seen in our own region, transportation investments can support and improve the quality of life for the people who live in a community, or they can disrupt neighborhoods and drive displacement. Achieving the former and avoiding the latter requires a multi-disciplinary approach and significant investment that is tailored to the specific needs of the community and the affected neighborhoods.

Over the last two years, Metro has piloted the Southwest Corridor Equitable Development Strategy (SWEDS) in partnership with the cities of Portland and Tigard. The program brings together local businesses, community organizations, and other residents to identify needs and strategies to:

- Increase supply and meet demand for diverse places to live to fit the needs of individuals and families of all incomes and sizes.
- Encourage jobs that provide individuals and families with sufficient wages that allow them to live within the corridor.
- Prepare current and future corridor residents for existing and emerging industries.
- Protect and invest in existing development, adapt or development areas, or invest in new development.

This process has resulted in bringing new voices to the table, helping strengthen and increase capacity for community organizations within the corridor, and support the community in identifying the investments, policies, and strategies that will most help them in advance of the significant light rail investment.

Metro proposes setting aside a portion of funding from each corridor to replicate the equitable development strategy on all corridors. The strategy would support community members who live and work along each corridor to first identify the best strategies to strengthen their community in advance of significant transportation investments, and then implement those strategies.

Task Force Values: Ensures equitable distribution of benefits and burdens of transportation investments and acknowledges historic inequities of that distribution, identifies potential displacement impacts and invests in anti-displacement strategies for each corridor, coordinates and supports investments in affordable housing and parks and nature

Possible Cost: 1.5% of each corridor's total funding

Challenges:

- The SWEDS model of equitable development is a resource-intensive program that would require additional staff at Metro to administer the programs on all corridors, as well as significant investments in community-based organizations along the corridor to help them engage directly with community residents and businesses.

Considerations:

- The level of community engagement, and even the capacity for community engagement, varies among the proposed corridors. In some cases, engagement has already led to clearly articulated, community-driven strategies. In these corridors where well developed community-driven strategies exist, funds should support implementation of those strategies. Other corridors may need additional investment to build community capacity and connection in order to establish a foundation to co-create recommended strategies for that corridor. A flexible, corridor-specific approach to allocating resources is recommended in order to best align with local community needs.

Community Investment

Program Concept: Protecting and Preserving Multi-Family Housing

Purpose and Need:

Our region has built major transportation projects that have displaced and disrupted communities of color and low-income communities. Although a new statewide rent stabilization policy protects tenants from no-cause evictions and extreme rent increases, new investors are still permitted to use for-cause evictions for major renovations. Unregulated affordable apartments are often redeveloped or improved to charge higher rents, or neglected by property owners who keep rents low by not investing in their properties.

The region must build new, regulated affordable housing to address the housing crisis, but it is also important to preserve affordable housing that has naturally occurred in places that are important to communities, including housing near schools, jobs, transportation and other places people want to be. Rehabilitation of existing housing can make it safer, healthier and can preserve community assets.

Currently, private and philanthropic partners are exploring the development of a real estate investment trust (REIT) that could acquire and improve multifamily housing across the region. T2020 funds could be leveraged with these other funding sources to increase the feasibility of this funding model.

Alternatively, Metro and local partners could explore the creation of another Land or Investment Trust to acquire, rehabilitate, own and operate properties in accordance with established goals and policies.

Task Force Values:

Improves outcomes for communities of color, leverages existing investments in affordable housing and parks and nature, increase in access to living wage jobs, schools, social services, open spaces, and affordable housing choices

Possible Cost:

\$5-10 million investment in REIT

Challenges:

- The real estate investment trust model is still under development. Metro staff need to understand how T2020 funds would be used to support financial model over time
- If an agency acquires buildings with existing tenants, those tenants may not all meet the affordability goals of the program. In that case, residents who do not meet the affordability parameters would either need to be evicted, resulting in displacement, or the program would need to allow for those tenants to stay in the building and adjust affordability expectations appropriately.

Considerations:

- This program could focus on serving seniors, veterans, people living with disabilities, or other historically marginalized groups.

Community Investment

Program Concept: Equitable Transit Oriented Development

Purpose and Need:

Our region's past investments in major transportation projects have contributed to the involuntary displacement of communities of color around the region and have resulted in loss of both community wealth and community identity. While Transit Oriented Development programs and projects have helped contribute to the production of affordable housing near transit over the last twenty years, only recently have these programs focused explicitly on serving the needs of low-income households and communities of color.

There is a housing affordability crisis in our region, where average wages aren't enough for families to afford to live near where they work. Not all areas of the region are well served by transit and people struggle with long and unreliable commutes. The region needs more housing close to transit investments that is affordable to people with a wide range of incomes.

Property that is well-served by transit tends to be more desirable and commands higher rents, leading to the construction of housing that is not affordable to lower income levels. Property in these areas can be also be expensive to acquire, making affordable housing development financially infeasible without deeper public investment. However, in key locations, public agencies such as TriMet, ODOT, school districts, and community colleges may already own land that could be redeveloped using T2020 funds as a financing tool to ensure affordability and racial equity goals are met. A regional investment measure could fund an ongoing program to finance the building of affordable housing on land already owned (and no longer used) by local government agencies, particularly in areas with access to living wage jobs, transit, and social services.

Task Force Values:

Improves outcomes for communities of color, leverages existing investments in affordable housing and parks and nature, increase in access to living wage jobs, schools, social services, open spaces, and affordable housing choices

Possible Cost:

\$2 million/year

Challenges:

- Identifying appropriate sites around the region would require Metro, TriMet, ODOT, and other local agencies to inventory which land is available and suitable for equitable housing development, recognizing that agencies have multiple needs and operational priorities affecting how they use their land.
- Not all locations have the same characteristics, and not all funders approach TOD opportunities with the same objectives, funding flexibility or political considerations, so specific projects would need to be negotiated individually.
- Identifying the best model to deploy these funds in partnership with other public and private funding sources to meet desired outcomes is a significant policy challenge.

Considerations:

- What criteria would be established for the housing created with these funds? (Income level? Preference policy? Contracting?)

Future Planning

Program Concept: Corridor Planning

Purpose and Need:

The Portland region is unique in the country for our approach that links transportation and land use together to guide where population and employment growth will occur. Our region's compact urban form with walkable neighborhoods, density concentrated in centers and corridors, and access to nature is a result of our deliberate connection of investments in transportation, development, and nature. A key element of this approach to urban development is ensuring a strong transit system that serves these centers and corridors, and attracting transit riders by promoting residential and business activity in centers and corridors.

As the Portland region has expanded its transit system over the years, planning agencies have grown increasingly sophisticated at leveraging transportation, housing, development, and other investments to not only construct major projects, but to maximize investments in these major transportation projects to accomplish broader community development and transportation goals. Creating investment strategies among partners in major transportation projects allows opportunities for other resources to support the main investment. This not only creates better outcomes for communities, it makes projects more competitive to receive federal funding.

Transportation investments in corridors can have consequences and impacts that are not all beneficial to community members. Investment can drive displacement; businesses can be disrupted during construction; residents may lack safe connections from their neighborhoods to the transit system. At the same time, partnerships with educational and community facilities, economic and workforce development, and housing development can bring opportunities when major transportation projects are well connected to achieving broader community goals.

For these reasons, what was called "Corridor Planning" at Metro for many years has now been called Investment Areas for over five years, reflecting the evolution of our regional transportation project development processes to include stronger connections to other community investments. This starts with linking other Metro investment programs such as flexible funds, travel options, placemaking, TOD, or community partnerships in areas where major projects are being planned. It includes leveraging other public, private and philanthropic funding sources and brings the participation of community based organizations to the decision making table alongside government agencies. Together these partners create Shared Investment Strategies that focus on key needs and priorities of multiple partners.

An example includes the Division Transit Project that, in addition to the transit project itself, leveraged regional investments in equitable transit oriented development at 82nd and Division, partnered with PCC on travel options for students, and helped the City of Portland leverage other key transportation and housing improvements in East Portland. Similar efforts are underway in the Southwest Corridor, where a shared investment strategy includes investments in transportation, economic development housing and parks. The East Metro Connections Plan and the Orange Line were also early examples of the evolution from corridor planning to investment areas.

T2020 Corridors will have a wide range of planning and project development needs and the Investment Areas model can be scaled up in accordance with the scope of the measure. Recognizing that not all

T2020 Corridors will need NEPA or other federal level planning work, Metro proposes to implement Investment Areas with the following approach for T2020 Corridors:

Level 1: Integrate with Metro's existing Investment Areas program which focuses on projects requiring federal NEPA planning and/or coordination of multiple major investments in one area. Align and expand current program criteria to increase regional capacity to provide this level of investment and public engagement over many years and across multiple places. In conjunction with appropriate project delivery agencies, develop pipeline and timeline of projects requiring federal planning and resources.

Level 2: Provide funds and technical assistance to local jurisdictions where Metro project management is not necessary or appropriate but where shared investment strategies can leverage multiple community goals as part of major transportation improvements. Projects could allow for smaller improvements within a targeted geography, or serve as predevelopment for future Level 1 projects.

Task Force Values:

Improves outcomes for communities of color, leverages existing investments in affordable housing and parks and nature, increase in access to living wage jobs, schools, social services, open spaces, and affordable housing choices; overall increase in transportation options in areas with a high proportion of people of color; makes it easier for people of all ages, abilities, and income-levels to access the transportation system and move around our region; overall decrease in vehicle miles traveled; overall decrease in greenhouse gas emissions that meets the regional Climate Smart Strategy targets to the extent achievable by the scale of the overall investment

Possible Cost:

Level 1: \$2-4M per year per Investment Area (for NEPA planning only) Post EIS project development \$10+M/year to project delivery agency

Level 2: \$1-2M per year competitive grant process or regional prioritization process

Challenges:

- The federal pipeline of funds is limited and competitive, and requires significant local match.
- How many corridors does the region have the organizational, financial, political, and community capacity to plan and deliver?

Considerations:

- The Investment Areas model requires local partners to bring matching funds to help leverage regional funds and to ensure shared equity in decisions.
- Project timelines can be long. The Orange Line and SW Corridor light rail project timelines are 10-20 years. Division Street is a 5-10 year project. These are long-term investments that will require future capital funds to realize the vision expressed in the plan.