

10.320 TRANSPORTATION

Purpose

The purpose of the Transportation element of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide a clear framework for transportation-related decision-making in Gresham as the community grows and changes. This section does not identify specific transportation projects; instead, it establishes a policy basis for evaluating transportation needs, priorities, and investments over time.

The transportation goals and policies in the Comprehensive Plan are consistent with the City's Transportation System Plan (TSP)—providing a policy framework for more detailed and technical content in the TSP. Policies are organized into broad system categories that address the full range of transportation modes and services across the city. Collectively, the transportation goals and policies guide how the various components of the system work together to achieve the community's long-term vision for a safe, efficient, and coordinated transportation system that meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Background

Gresham has evolved from a small agricultural community into the Portland Metro region's second largest city and Oregon's fourth largest city. Between 1980 and 2019, the city experienced rapid population growth, more than doubling in both population and geographic size. As Gresham grew, its transportation system also changed—transforming from a quiet, two-lane rural road network into a busy multimodal system that supports local travel, regional connections, and economic activity.

Gresham's transportation system includes a variety of street types, an interstate freeway, light rail, bus service, freight rail, and an expanding network of facilities for people walking and biking. This system reflects the city as a regional center for housing, employment, education, and commerce, while also serving neighborhoods with diverse transportation needs and travel patterns. A balanced transportation system provides all users with safe and reliable travel options while supporting economic growth and neighborhood livability.

Gresham City Council adopted the City's first Transportation System Plan (TSP) in 2002. Since that time, there have been a series of updates. In 2011, the City Council Work Plan initiated a project to examine how the built environment affects health, particularly related to physical activity, access to healthy food, and obesity. In 2013, a TSP update included major review and refinement of the 2002 document and the transportation components of the Springwater, Pleasant Valley, and Kelley Creek Headwaters concept plans. In 2019, refinements to the Pleasant Valley TSP reviewed and updated the transportation plan for the plan area by analyzing future roadway network needs and selecting a preferred street network concept to support growth and access. In 2020, the City adopted the Active Transportation Plan, with a focus on improving walking and biking connections to healthy food stores, schools, transit, and other everyday destinations. The 2026 minor TSP update amended policies based

on industry best practices and local trends related to climate, equity, safety, and emerging technologies. At that time, the City also updated its TSP goals to reflect community feedback and new state and regional requirements.

As Gresham evolves, it faces the challenge and opportunity of continuing to grow while maintaining a transportation system that is safe, resilient, and responsive to changing community needs.

Vision

The Transportation System will support the growth and development of the City of Gresham as an economically vital and livable community by providing its residents and all transportation system users safe, pleasant and convenient access and travel within, to and through the city.

GOALS

The TSP's vision is further defined by the following goals that are explicit themes woven through the TSP's system plans, policies, action measures, project list and funding forecast. The TSP policies are organized by system category, which supports multiple goals rather than a specific goal.

- Goal 1. Connectivity, Mobility, Accessibility - Provide the ability to reach desired goods, services, activities and destinations with relative ease, within a reasonable time, at a reasonable cost and with a full range of mode choices.
- Goal 2. Safety - Eliminate all transportation-related serious injury and fatal crashes through design, education, and enforcement.
- Goal 3. Equity - Provide all community members with access to safe, comfortable, affordable, sustainable, and reliable transportation choices to meet their daily transportation needs.
- Goal 4. Climate Action - Meet the transportation needs of the community and minimize adverse effects on the climate.
- Goal 5. Economic Development - Construct and maintain a transportation system that supports new business as well as business retention, expansion and relocation.

Transportation System

Gresham's transportation system is planned, constructed, and maintained by an interdisciplinary team at the City of Gresham. Together, transportation system assets are planned and managed to support all modes of transportation. The City's aim is for the transportation system is to create a street network for drivers, pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users to get around safely, equitably, and comfortably.

Transportation System Policy 1

Develop and promote a balanced transportation system that provides a variety of travel options and reduces the need to rely on automobiles.

Transportation System Policy 2

Plan, implement, and maintain an efficient transportation system.

Transportation System Policy 3

Provide a transportation system that maximizes accessibility to and within regional centers, town centers, transit corridors, station areas, and employment centers.

Transportation System Policy 4

Provide a safe transportation system that considers the needs of all people and all modes, eliminating transportation-related fatalities and serious injuries by 2045.

Transportation System Policy 5

Ensure equitable access to safe, reliable, and affordable transportation for all community members, regardless of economic status, race, age, or ability, while minimizing transportation-related burdens and environmental impacts on vulnerable populations.

Transportation System Policy 6

Reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions by promoting mixed-use, higher density development, expanding infrastructure for sustainable transportation modes, supporting the transition to cleaner fuels, and ensuring climate equity through urban design that mitigates climate impacts.

Transportation System Policy 7

Leverage emerging transportation technologies to increase the local and regional environmental, economic, and social benefits, while regularly reviewing and integrating new tools into city plans and processes.

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1714; passed 3/6/12; effective 4/5/12)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736; passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

STREET SYSTEM

Background

Gresham's transportation system is centered on its street network, which contains about 900 lane miles of roadway and provides the primary framework for movement throughout the city and supports access to housing, employment, services, and community destinations. The street system includes freeways, arterials, collectors, and local streets, along with facilities for pedestrians, bicyclists, and

transit users and traffic control devices. Together, these elements support travel for all users across Gresham.

Automobiles are the predominant mode of travel in the Gresham area and are expected to remain so through 2035, with approximately 85 percent of trips anticipated to be made by vehicles and the remaining trips by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Gresham had 41,195 households within city limits in 2020 and is projected to grow to 49,067 households by 2045, an increase of approximately 19 percent, or an annual growth rate of 0.7 percent over the 25-year period (Gresham Housing Production Strategy, 2023). In addition, employment in Gresham is projected to increase by 38 percent by 2045 (Metro 2045 Distributed Forecast). This combined growth in households and jobs will result in increased travel demand across the community. To accommodate growth while maintaining system performance and safety, major street system improvements will be required. These include multimodal enhancements to key corridors such as Hogan Road and Sandy Boulevard and completion of planned facilities in the Pleasant Valley and Springwater areas.

The Transportation System Plan (Gresham Community Development Plan Volume 4) coordinates public street investments with private development-related improvements to make effective use of limited funding. In addition to capacity needs, the street system must address development impacts, signal coordination, access management, local circulation, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, utilities, lighting, and overall safety. This context informs the Street System policies that follow.

Street System Policy 1

Provide a street system that accommodates a variety of travel options.

Street System Policy 2

Develop a street system that meets current needs and anticipated future population growth and development.

Street System Policy 3

Provide a street system that maximizes accessibility and mobility within the community.

Street System Policy 4

Ensure a street system that is safe and supports healthy, active living.

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1576, passed 7/29/03; effective 8/28/03)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

TRANSIT SYSTEM

Background

Gresham’s transit system, made up of public bus and light rail service, provides essential mobility within the city and connects Gresham to the greater Portland metro region. Transit is a critical component of the city’s transportation system, serving as a primary means of travel for people without access to a vehicle and offering an affordable option for residents with lower incomes to reach jobs, education, services, and daily needs. By providing viable alternatives to driving, transit helps reduce congestion, lowers greenhouse gas emissions, and supports City and regional sustainability goals.

Public transit service in Gresham is primarily provided by TriMet, the regional transit agency for the Portland metro area. TriMet operates all transit service in the city except for intercity travel to Sandy, Oregon provided by Sandy Area Metro. TriMet operates local and regional bus routes and the MAX Blue Line light rail, which connects Gresham to Portland and other regional destinations. The FX2 Division Bus Rapid Transit line, which began service in 2022, provides high-capacity, frequent service along one of the city’s key east-west-corridors.

The transit network in Gresham is oriented primarily toward east-west travel, reflecting regional travel patterns and arterial street connections to Portland, though recent service changes have strengthened north-south service in the city. In response to evolving travel needs, TriMet has adjusted post-pandemic service to focus on local access and mobility, including the development of a more grid-based network in suburban communities like Gresham. These changes have improved service frequency and span, particularly during off-peak and evening hours.

Transit investments support Gresham’s land use plans by improving access to housing, jobs, education, and commercial areas, and by encouraging development and redevelopment in designated centers and corridors. Transit also provides affordable mobility for lower-income households and alternative transportation options for all. This context informs the City’s Transit System policies.

Transit System Policy 1

Advocate convenient, expanded transit service within Gresham and the east Multnomah County area.

Transit System Policy 2

Encourage first/last-mile services supplementing fixed-route transit to meet the current and projected transportation needs of Gresham.

Transit System Policy 3

Promote the development of a transit system that maximizes accessibility, especially for people with low incomes.

Transit System Policy 4

Assist in the development of a safe transit system.

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

BICYCLE SYSTEM

Background

Providing a safe, comfortable, and connected bicycle network is an important part of Gresham’s overall transportation network as it expands transportation choices, supports recreational and everyday trips, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. Gresham’s bicycle facilities include on-street bike lanes, off-street multi-use paths, and Gresham Greenway routes on low-volume, low-speed local streets.

The City of Gresham has taken an active role in the planning and development of bicycle facilities throughout the years. Gresham developed the 1996 Gresham Trails Master Plan and adopted a Bicycle Guide in 2010. The 2013 Transportation System Plan identified cross-sections with bicycle facilities on all major street types and the 2014 Parks and Trails Master Plan identified future multi-use paths for bicyclists. In 2020, the Active Transportation Plan identified the need for the Gresham Greenways network that would connect local streets to everyday destinations.

A complete bicycle system must provide a high level of safety across all street types, from busy arterials to local streets near schools. Facility designs that separate bicycles from high-volume and high-speed vehicles are more likely to be used by bicyclists of all ages and abilities. When the bicycle system feels safe and comfortable, it becomes more likely for people to integrate bicycling into their everyday lives. This context informs the City’s Bicycle System policies and guides future investments to create a safer bicycle network.

Bicycle System Policy 1

Develop a bicycle network that is easy to use, continuous, connected, safe, and equitable.

Bicycle System Policy 2

Increase bicycle safety on the bicycle network through infrastructure improvements and safety programs.

Bicycle System Policy 3

Create a bicycle network to encourage and support physical and mental health.

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

PEDESTRIAN SYSTEM

Background

The pedestrian system is an important part of Gresham’s transportation network and provides safe, accessible, and convenient travel for people of all ages and abilities. A well-designed pedestrian environment improves public health, enhances community livability, reduces reliance on vehicle trips, and supports local businesses by increasing access to activity centers.

Gresham has a long-standing commitment to planning and investing in pedestrian facilities through its Transportation System Plan, Active Transportation Plan, and parks and trails planning efforts. The pedestrian network includes sidewalks, crossings, shared-used paths, and multi-use trails that serve both transportation and recreational purposes and provide connections to Downtown Gresham, commercial areas, schools, parks, and public transit. The City is committed to meeting and exceeding Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements to ensure the pedestrian system is inclusive, functional, and accessible for people with disabilities.

Pedestrian safety is a key consideration in system planning. Analysis of crash data shows that most pedestrian crashes occur on arterial streets, particularly at major intersections with high traffic volumes and speeds. As a result, improving pedestrian safety, comfort, and connectivity in these locations is a primary focus for future investments. This context informs the City’s Pedestrian System policies.

Pedestrian System Policy 1

Provide a pedestrian network that is easy to use, accessible, continuous, connected, and equitable.

Pedestrian System Policy 2

Improve pedestrian access to key destinations, such as transit stops, jobs, schools, parks, natural areas, commercial areas, and stores that sell healthy food.

Pedestrian System Policy 3

Increase pedestrian safety on the pedestrian network through infrastructure improvements and safety programs.

Pedestrian System Policy 4

Create a walking network that encourages physical and mental health.

(Added by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)
(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)
(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT

Background

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) aims to reduce reliance on single-occupant vehicles to make the existing transportation system more efficient. TDM supports the City's mobility, air quality, and livability goals and help meet state requirements to reduce parking demand and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) under Oregon's Transportation Planning Rule (TPR). Rather than expanding roadway capacity, TDM emphasizes strategies that manage travel demand and make better use of the transportation system already in place.

TDM is not a single action, but a coordinated set of policies, programs, and incentives that encourage alternative travel choices, particularly during peak travel periods. These strategies promote walking, bicycling, transit, carpooling, vanpooling, and telecommuting, while also supporting more efficient travel patterns and improved traffic operations. TDM aims to reduce congestion, lower emissions, and support a more sustainable and efficient transportation system. This context informs the City's TDM policy.

Transportation Demand Management Policy 1

Implement transportation demand management programs and strategies that reduce the need for single occupant vehicle (SOV) travel and make walking, bicycling and taking transit more convenient for all trips to and within Gresham.

(Added by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)
(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)
(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

PARKING MANAGEMENT

Background

Parking is an integral part of the transportation system and influences how people travel and how land is used. While convenient parking supports businesses and vehicle access, oversupplying parking consumes valuable land, spreads destinations farther apart, and encourages driving—making it harder to reduce congestion, vehicle miles traveled (VMT), and greenhouse gas emissions.

Oregon's Transportation Planning Rule calls for reduction of vehicle miles traveled and per capita parking as a means of responding to the transportation and land use impacts of growth. The Metro

2040 Growth Concept calls for more compact development to encourage more efficient use of land, promote non-auto trips, and protect air quality. In response to the Department of Land Conservation and Development's Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) requirements to remove parking minimums near frequent transit, Gresham removed minimum parking requirements citywide rather than implement a paid parking program the community did not support. Private development is now allowed to determine its own parking supply, while the City focuses on monitoring and managing public parking where needed.

A balanced parking management approach is essential to support economic activity, protect neighborhoods from spillover impacts, and advance walking, biking, transit use, and climate goals.

Parking Management Policy 1

Manage the on- and off-street parking supply to ensure there is an adequate but not excessive amount of parking available for all land uses.

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

FREIGHT SYSTEM

Background

Truck and rail freight movement is essential to Gresham's economy, supporting manufacturing, distribution, and commercial activity and connecting local businesses to regional and national markets. Efficient freight mobility depends on adequate roadway and rail capacity to move goods within, to, and through the city. Freight activity must be balanced with other transportation needs, particularly in regional and town centers where streets prioritize walking, bicycling, and transit.

Gresham's truck freight network is shaped by regional planning efforts, including the East Metro Connections Plan, which improved freight routing and reduced conflicts with residential areas. Key freight corridors connect industrial areas near I-84, 181st Avenue, and the Fairview Parkway interchange, with I-84 and other freeways playing a critical role in regional freight movement. Gresham is served by one heavy rail line provided by Union Pacific which crosses the north part of the city. This line serves several large manufacturing and distribution uses and industrial parks in the Rockwood industrial area.

Freight System Policy 1

Provide for the safe and efficient movement of truck and rail freight through and within Gresham.

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

PASSENGER RAIL

Background

Gresham is not served by passenger rail. Metro’s High-Capacity Transit Plan assessed demand for commuter rail between Gresham and Hood River. The line would generally travel along Highway I-84 and connect Hood River to the MAX Red Line at the Parkrose/Sumner Transit Center. It was determined that this is a nonviable corridor given current and projected conditions.

The Oregon Department of Transportation is studying options for improved passenger rail service between the Columbia River in the Portland urban area and the Eugene-Springfield urban area through the Oregon Passenger Rail project. Through this project a general rail alignment and communities where stations would be located will be determined. Gresham will coordinate with ODOT on this project as needed.

Passenger Rail Policy 1

Support federal, state, regional and private investments in passenger rail service to the metropolitan area.

(Added by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

AIR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Background

There are no existing or planned public or private airports in Gresham. There is one helicopter landing facility located at the Gresham City Hall complex. The Aeronautics Division of ODOT has site approval authority for all airports and helicopter landing facilities. The Federal Aviation Administration regulates public use airports. There are specific approval criteria for the location of helicopter landing facilities in the Gresham Community Development Code.

Portland International Airport (PDX) is the major aviation facility serving the region. The Port of Portland operates PDX, as well as general aviation airports in Troutdale, Hillsboro, and Mulino, which are becoming increasingly important as “reliever” airports for PDX by serving corporate aircraft and training flights.

Air Transportation System Policy 1

Ensure that land uses in Gresham are compatible with aircraft noise exposure and aircraft safety.

(Added by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)

PIPELINE SYSTEM

Background

Pipelines serve an important function as part of Gresham’s transportation and utility infrastructure, providing a safe and efficient means of transporting large quantities of liquid and gas products. Compared to rail or truck transport, pipelines reduce safety risks and minimize impacts on the street system. There are currently six major pipeline corridors that cross Gresham.

Water pipelines

Four major Bull Run conduit water pipelines cross east-west through Gresham, with a fifth conduit planned. The Portland Water Bureau maintains these pipelines and five metering facilities where water is transferred to the local reservoir storage and distribution system in Gresham. Conduits 2, 3, and 4 are currently in service and provide water used in the Portland metropolitan area. Conduit 5 is planned.

Natural gas pipelines

Two north-south high-pressure natural gas pipelines cross Gresham: a 20” pipeline (built in 1964) runs almost entirely along Hogan Road, while a 30” pipeline (built in 1996) generally follows the Pacific Power & Light utility corridor and passes through the western part of the city. Operated by Northwest Pipeline Corporation, both lines connect to metering stations in Gresham where natural gas is transferred to a local distribution company. Both pipelines carry gas from the mainline in Washougal, Washington, down the Willamette Valley to Grants Pass. Together, they supply over 90% of the natural gas used west of the Cascades in Oregon.

Existing pipelines have sufficient capacity to accommodate the anticipated growth in demand over the next 20 years. No additional future corridors through Gresham have been identified.

Pipeline System Policy 1

Ensure that land uses in Gresham are compatible with established and planned pipeline corridors.

(Added by Ordinance No. 1461, passed 12/1/98; effective 12/31/98)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1610, passed 8/16/05; effective 9/15/05)

(Amended by Ordinance No. 1736, passed 1/7/14; effective 2/6/14)