

**GETTING THERE
TOGETHER**



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON



Metro Council
600 NE Grand Avenue
Portland, OR 97232

January 7, 2019

Dear Council President Peterson and Metro Councilors,

The Getting There Together coalition is a growing regional coalition representing environmental justice, transportation, climate, affordability, disability, youth, older adults, land use, and community livability, and we welcome you as the new Metro Council. Our coalition formed in 2017 in response to growing concerns that the greater Portland metropolitan region wasn't adequately planning or financing the comprehensive infrastructure and transportation choices that our communities want and need. Getting There Together advocates for transportation solutions that are coordinated with housing and land use efforts and will create a just, safe, climate smart, comprehensive transportation system via a strategic approach to effective transportation funding. We advocate for funding allocations that advance the region's goals of racial equity, climate smart solutions, and zero deaths on our roadways by:

- providing people reliable options in how they get around;
- empowering working people to get to jobs by completing connected transit and active transportation networks;
- ensuring all the region's residents prosper from an equitable, sustainable, and climate-smart investment in our future transportation system.

As the elected Metro Council, we look to you to guide the greater Portland region's transportation investments in a direction that focuses on people-moving capacity over vehicle capacity, and is just, sustainable, and safe. Over the past few years, Metro adopted many forward-thinking plans, including the Metro Racial Equity Strategy, Climate Smart Communities Strategy, and the Regional Transportation Plan, including the Active Transportation Plan and Vision Zero. A regional transportation funding package must describe a commitment to achieving the established goals articulated in Metro's Equity Strategy and Climate Smart Strategy, thus moving our region forward. Our coalition cannot support a package that does not lead with racial equity, focus on a climate smart system, and guarantee a safe system for all road users. As you work together to make decisions on a future funding package that will invest in building a safe, sustainable, and reliable transportation system that works for everyone in the region, we urge you to align the outcomes with the below guiding principles.

Lead with racial equity.

Focus on eliminating the disparities that people of color experience in all aspects of social well-being, by ensuring Metro's transportation funding package advances racial equity. When transportation investments are targeted towards communities with the fewest resources, the economy will grow stronger for the long haul. People of color tend to experience the worst outcomes in measures of social well-being. By addressing the barriers experienced by people of color in the Portland metropolitan region, especially in connections to jobs, we will effectively identify solutions and remove barriers for other disadvantaged groups. A transportation funding package that leads with racial equity will also ensure our frontline communities receive the most benefit from transportation investments. The result will be that all people in the region will experience better outcomes.

- Per Metro's Racial Equity Strategy, conduct meaningful public engagement. Metro should convene and support regional partners to advance racial equity by using existing committees and additional new opportunities to convene and work collaboratively with regional partners to advance equity related to accessible, safe and affordable transportation. Furthermore, ensure project construction supports economic opportunities for community members by increasing the participation of local minority, women, and emerging small businesses (MWESB) in government contracts.
- As outlined in the Coalition of Communities of Color's 2018 report, *Leading With Race: Research Justice in Washington County*, make investments in transportation that are meaningful to communities of color: "[Communities] propose that public agencies consider reforming transportation infrastructure to encourage the use of public transit, carpooling and biking. They advise public transit be made affordable for low-income communities, for affordable housing to develop near transit hubs and farmer's markets."

Focus on building a Climate Smart system.

Metro has clear guidance in its already adopted Climate Smart Strategy, and it is unambiguous that we must act with the utmost urgency to be leaders on climate change by taking the needed steps to invest in a climate-resilient transportation system. It is your moral duty to ensure all projects and programs under consideration comply with the most effective tools (3 or more stars) in Metro's Climate Smart Strategy:

- Make transit convenient, frequent, accessible and affordable by upgrading frequency of bus lines throughout the region; enhancing routes to accommodate a spectrum of workshifts, including prioritizing the return of 24-hour service, and new weekend service; and expanding service to currently underserved communities with new bus lines and route extensions.
- Funding for region wide travel programs that support the hard infrastructure of a functioning system, including transit operations as well as travel options programs.

- Quickly move the region’s vehicle fleets toward a carbon-free future by accelerating TriMet’s commitment to move away from diesel buses.

Guarantee a safe system for all road users.

Traffic deaths are increasing and are disproportionately impacting people of color, people with low incomes, people with disabilities, people over age 65, and people walking to essential destinations such as school, work, and transit. Furthermore, a majority of traffic deaths are occurring on a subset of arterial roadways. A just and climate smart system will also be safe for the most vulnerable roadway users. Metro should ensure regional transportation funding decisions result in an integrated, connected, and sustainable transportation system that prioritizes safety—particularly for people walking and biking—in all funding programs for streets and highways:

- Make biking and walking safe and convenient by funding 100% completion of the Regional Active Transportation Network. Nearly 45% of all trips made by car in the region are less than three miles, but with complete networks, education, encouragement, and other programs, many short trips made by car would be replaced with bicycle or pedestrian trips, also increasing road capacity.
- Provide sufficient funding to implement safety fixes to the region’s High Injury Corridors and Intersections. Those who reside in low-income neighborhoods bear the brunt of our most dangerous streets, and are more than three times more likely to be hit and killed while walking than residents in our wealthiest neighborhoods. A majority (60%) of fatal or severe injury crashes in the region occur on 23% of the regional transportation network roadways, and await needed fixes to ensure safe use by all users.
- Support jurisdictional transfer of the region’s “orphan highways” to local control in a way that promotes community safety and connectivity. For example, while Oregon Route 213 (NE & SE 82nd Ave.) was once the primary passenger freight route through this area, nearby I-205 has long since taken over the role that Route 213 was meant to fulfill, leaving businesses and residents a legacy highway classification that does not meet the changing needs of the area or region.

We are eager to continue this important work with you, and look forward to future collaborations as we move toward a future transportation system that is safe, sustainable, reliable, and works for everyone the region.

Yours sincerely,

Getting There Together Coalition

1000 Friends of Oregon
 APANO
 Climate Solutions
 Disability Rights Oregon
 Friends of Gateway Green
 Oregon Environmental Council
 Portland Forward
 Safe Routes to School National Partnership
 Unite Oregon
 Verde NW

AARP Oregon
 Bienestar
 Community Cycling Center
 East Portland Action Plan
 OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon
 Oregon Walks
 The Rosewood Initiative
 The Street Trust
 Urban Greenspaces Institute
 WashCo Bikes