



# GETTING THERE TOGETHER

August 20, 2019

## Getting There Together Coalition | Who We Are

The Getting There Together Coalition (the Coalition) formed in 2017 in response to growing concerns that the Portland metropolitan region wasn't adequately planning to build the comprehensive infrastructure and transportation system in a way that effectively responds to the needs of people who live, work, learn, practice spiritually, and play. The Coalition is comprised of over 35 member- and mission-based organizations in the Metro region that work in and with stakeholders, businesses, and community members, including communities of color, transit riders, youth, older adults, and the most vulnerable users of the roadway and transportation system.

The Coalition represents many of the people in the community that T2020 transportation improvements would impact and benefit. As you all discuss and make recommendations for programs tonight for potential investment through the T2020 measure, we urge you to use a racial equity lens and a community- and people-driven approach in your decision-making.

***What racial equity means to us*** is to prioritize minimizing harm to historically marginalized communities and to use resources to remediate past harm. Lack of equity in transportation planning can present significant impacts in decision making, and people of color and historically marginalized communities suffer most. Some examples include: The quality of transportation offered and/or available will affect people's economic and social opportunities. Additionally, lack of equity in transportation activities and services impose various indirect and external costs, such as congestion delay, anti-displacement, pollution, and undesirable land use impacts. What we know is that when we apply the targeted universalism theory of change, we center those community members that are currently the least served in policy decisions, and the benefits are also received by the broader community. A regional transportation measure must be about **servicing the people in our community in getting to where they need to go** - as such, many of our recommendations will address removing barriers to accessing modes of transportation and increasing transportation options.

## The Coalition's T2020 Programs Recommendations

The Getting There Together Coalition's Steering Committee developed a survey for our member organizations and affiliates, which requested Coalition partners to share their thoughts on Metro's proposed T2020 regional program concepts, plus four additional concepts for consideration suggested by the Coalition -- community safety training, participatory budgeting, transit service expansion, and paratransit expansion.

Coalition members and allies strongly supported affordability as their top priority, and were in favor of *Fare Affordability*, *Anti-displacement (Community Strengthening)*, and *Multi-Family Housing*; safety, selecting *Active Transportation Regional Connections*, and *Safety Hotspots*; and programs that fall into transit service needs, including *Better Bus* and our suggested additional programs *Paratransit*, and *Transit Service Expansion*. We heard from numerous Coalition partners that they saw overlap in many programs and wished to merge programs together to leverage impact; some of the program concepts they found important and wanted to keep in the conversation, but didn't make their top five; and many expressed frustration for having to limit the programs to the concepts provided and defined. Several Coalition partners noted pointently that better air quality was very important, but felt that by providing more and safer transportation options they would see direct benefit to our air quality as an outcome. Quotes below come directly from our survey results.

**Making Trimet Fares More Affordable** - Our coalition members want to see more affordable fares for a variety of marginalized groups, including youth and people with low incomes, as well as a commitment to stopping proposed fare hikes. We recommend a youth program that is year-round, extends beyond students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, includes all youth, not only students, and expands the age range up to 18. As such a program gets developed, youth must be centered and prioritized as decision makers from start to end.

- "Yes and give all senior and kids free transportation."
- "Youth pass should cover everyone 18 and under (not stigmatize low-income students)."
- "I think we should work toward a fareless system and try other ways of reducing or eliminating fares."

**Anti-displacement** (Community Strengthening) - Our coalition members want to see a robust program that will fully offset the likely impact of capital transportation projects. The Coalition wants to see where affordable housing developments are planned in relation to potential T2020 corridors, and demand a clear strategy in place before investments are made. We recommend a program which allows community members to stay in their homes (or

neighborhoods, in the case of unhoused individuals without a fixed address). In the event that a particular home, building, or campsite must be demolished or displaced as a result of construction, we call for a 1-for-1 replacement policy, in which individuals and families would not be displaced unless and until they can be placed in another home within a reasonable distance, or compensated fully for their displacement from their community.

- “This needs to be addressed alongside and in synchrony with redevelopment of the T2020 corridors”
- “Southwest Corridor will displace 100 businesses, 293 housing units.”
- “1.5% is a starting point that I heard Kayse Jama of Unite Oregon expressing to Metro (.5% for planning, 1% for implementation); the actual need is greater.”

**Multi-Family Housing** - Our coalition members want to see coordinated housing and transportation investments. We recommend a program that builds on and leverages local and regional affordable housing funding, and ensures low-income, communities of color, and those who have been displaced, have the opportunity to live near transportation corridors receiving investments.

- “Transportation investments need to be tied to housing so they are successful long term.”
- “I’m wondering if the REIT would be able to build wealth for low income investors.”

**Active Transportation Regional Connections** - Our coalition members want to see significant progress made on completing the regional Active Transportation Network, both on and off the selected corridors. Members urge these investments to be responsive to community needs, and to prioritize connecting to transit lines. We recommend a program that prioritizes low-income communities and communities of color, and creates a safe and accessible connections to transit, schools, senior centers, community centers, employment centers, residential areas, and other destinations. We suggest this program concept could be coordinated with the Safe Routes to School program concept.

- “This should be coordinated with Safe Routes To School and Better Bus ideas.”
- “We should complete 100% of Active Transportation Regional Connections with funds from this measure and make sure they connect to transit. No more gaps.”

**Safety Hot Spots** - Our coalition members want to see safety improvements across the board - this is one of the most urgent needs and one with the most severe consequences in our communities if not addressed. Safety initiatives must be embedded into both corridor/project and program decisions. We recommend a program that is nimble and robust to address the

massive safety disparities that people with disabilities, youth, older adults, and communities of color face when using the transportation system. We suggest this program concept could be coordinated with the Safe Routes to School program concept.

- “Vision zero will never be reality without these type of investments.”
- “Could this be combined with Safe Routes to School and expanded to include other destinations like senior centers?”

**Better Bus** - Our coalition members want to see more and better bus service across the region, including capital improvements that complement enhanced transit investments along corridors, prioritized bus service, and new bus lines. We recommend a program that prioritizes the needs of low-income communities and communities of color, not just areas of transit congestion.

- “Yes, and I think this should be combined with service expansion.”
- “Anything that speeds up bus service is a great idea.”
- “Low income, people of color, have been asking over and over again about having bathrooms in the buses or Free public bathrooms near bus, MAX stations.”

**Transit service expansion** - Our coalition members want to see stable funding that would allow aggressive transit service expansions (new and more frequent bus lines) and increase access to transportation options, especially for communities of color and those communities that are transit-dependent, underserved, and low-income. As this is a high priority that has been repeated again and again and again from the community, we recommend including this as a program concept for discussion at the Task Force.

- “This is definitely needed to increase transit ridership.”
- “This is the sort of vision we need in the T2020 measure!”
- “I live in Beaverton and the MAX is helpful but not near and bus service is not close enough to make getting around easy. There's a bus nearby but it is an "express" bus that only runs to downtown in the morning and from downtown in the evening with no coverage the rest of the day. “
- “Make an assessment to find out where undeserved, low income, and people of color live and what transportation needs they have and prioritize the transit services based on this so people can see the benefits as soon as possible.”
- “Yes please. Particularly North-South connections and better connection to employment centers.”
- “Would be great to hear from TriMet on what they already have planned, and what additional could be included in this measure.”

- “Crucial and would love to see TriMet share service enhancement information to see where T2020 could support.”

**Paratransit expansion** - Funding to explore new and innovative ways to meet the vast need in the region for shared-ride service for people who are unable to drive, walk, roll, or use regular buses and trains.

- “Any conversation around increasing access to transit options must be accompanied by how we increase access for EVERYONE. Fully support.”

There was broad support in our survey for including more information about these additional program concepts in the programs conversation:

- **Community Safety Training** - Grant funding that can be made available to community groups to give trainings around de-escalation, crisis intervention, and personal safety for multi-modal users, with a focus on transit. This addresses community concerns about the increased presence of armed officer on transit and personal safety when riding a bicycle or walking.
- **Participatory budgeting** - Participatory budgeting is a proven tool to build leadership and is a proven tool for increasing the number and diversity of people engaged in making public budget decisions, civic processes, and voting. A pilot program would offer consistency and additional opportunities for implementing this process in our region. Participatory budgeting can be the process used for distributing funds for many of the program concepts above.

### **Our Approach to Programs**

Similar to our approach to corridor prioritization, we took a people- and equity-first approach as we considered the programs. Centering people who use the system will inevitably lead us in accomplishing our region’s climate and safety goals. The following considerations are reflected in our coalition’s priorities for programs:

- Which programs address safety issues that may not be covered in corridors?
- Which programs best complement potential enhanced rapid transit that could come from the investments in corridors?
- Which programs best address anti-displacement and help to repair past harm to communities who have been affected by displacement and gentrification in our region?
- Which programs best help address barriers to accessing public transit, especially for low-income people, youth, elders, people with disabilities?

- What programs best address personal safety issues related to walking, biking and taking public transit in our region?

## **Feedback on Community-Informed Program + Project Investments**

The Coalition recognizes the significant time and thought that Task Force and Local Investment Team (LIT) members are making to support the shaping of a measure that works for our region. We greatly appreciate this commitment. In addition to the recommendations the Coalition has made thus far on corridors and programs, we'd like to elevate some community feedback and recommendations to processes we've been hearing from Task Force and LIT members.

A common theme brought through LIT conversations has been the emphasis on making sure that projects are focused on how to move people around the region that prioritizes transit, biking, walking, and ADA access. We suggest a broader look at projects on corridors that may better reflect the Metro Council's and Task Force's values of **equity, safety, options** and **affordability**.

- We recommend in particular the inclusion of deeper **equity** analysis for all the program concepts for the Task Force and Metro Council to consider.

Metro's spring [Coordinated Outreach](#) results should be used to inform decisions in a more meaningful way. For example, the top priority that emerged from that engagement was **safety**; in Metro's summary of the engagement, safety was reported to have been discussed with multiple meanings: *"The most frequent conversations about safety were related to pedestrian and bicycle safety. Participants consistently identified the need to separate and protect pedestrians and bicyclists from car traffic. Separated and protected bike lanes, wider sidewalks, and clearly marked and lighted street crossings were repeatedly mentioned... Safety and comfort of transit was also a frequently cited concern. Concerns spanned a variety of issues including dark bus stops, bus stops without shelters, and transit police."*

- We recommend in any sort of program prioritization at the Task Force level (dot exercises, others) **there should be added weight to the programs that address safety**.

We heard from LIT members that the list of potential projects along the corridor have been helpful, but it has been hard to provide meaningful feedback on prioritizing the projects based on the cost projections provided without a discussion of potential transportation financing mechanisms for the measure. The LITs will be reviewing projects introduced to determine overall cost before providing testimony for the Task Force recommendations to Metro Council. The LIT meetings have been very content heavy, and LIT members have expressed they feel

there has not been enough time for actual LIT members to authentically provide meaningful feedback. Some LIT members have asked for an all-county combined LIT meeting, and the Coalition agrees that a cross-county conversation would be valuable context for the LIT discussion and feedback--this is something that LIT members have voiced that would support them in providing meaningful feedback.

- We highly recommend adding an all-jurisdictional LIT committee meeting that will provide an opportunity for collective understanding and feedback of how corridors and projects across the region connect and relate.

Coalition and community members are deeply interested in learning more about funding mechanisms and concerned with how revenue will be collected and distributed throughout the corridors. LIT members are reviewing and discussing projects that have been introduced with enormous price tags, yet no defined return on investment for communities that will be heavily impacted.

- We recommend a discussion of financing mechanisms and potential package options in the near term.

Community engagement processes across Metro should be synced into the T2020 process. Last month, Metro convened a Community Leader Forum to receive input on the potential for a study on a MAX tunnel through downtown Portland, which is one of the Tier 1 corridors being considered by the task force. In that forum, overwhelming feedback and response was that while it may be worthwhile to pursue this type of project to study, it hadn't yet been vetted with the Task Force to determine whether it is a priority for investment compared to other safety and transit service improvements already on the table.

- We recommend that this kind of adjacent engagement be folded into the Task Force and LIT processes so as to meaningfully incorporate feedback.

We greatly appreciate Metro's work to conduct a robust public process and meaningful community engagement around the T2020 measure, and to hear our feedback from the community on community-informed program and project investments.

### **TriMet Priorities for T2020 Funding**

Finally, we wish to address the August 16 memo from TriMet to the T2020 Transportation Funding Task Force regarding their priorities for T2020 funding. In the memo, Trimet expressed that "task force members have expressed interest in adding funds to increase the number of

transit service hours in the region” but that “at this time, additional operating funds are not our top priority for the proposed regional measure.”

The Getting There Together Coalition has heard, loudly and in every context related to the T2020 measure, that the community wants transit service expansion - new bus lines and expanded service on existing lines. Despite the forthcoming 5-year STIF service increase plan, we were surprised to learn that TriMet does not see a need for transit service enhancement or expansion in a potential 20-year regional transportation measure.

To help the community--including many transit-dependent users who are currently burdened by a lack of transit access--understand how their needs and asks are being heard in this process, we reflect and recommend the following:

- TriMet’s robust involvement in identifying key opportunities to improve and expand transit service, including presenting a detailed service enhancement plan and how that aligns with Metro T2020 corridors and projects.
- TriMet present to Task Force members their plan for significantly increasing ridership in order to meet the regions mode share and climate goals.
- Elevate the recommendations from Metro’s spring Coordinated Outreach, which surfaced additional transportation ideas directly related to the community’s expressed desire and need for transit service expansion. In Metro’s summary of the engagement, additional transportation ideas that emerged included:
  - *Expand the transit system and increase the number of routes*
  - *Create a comprehensive connected network between modes*
  - *Increase the frequency of transit*
  - *Expand service hours/provide 24 hour transit service*
  - *Create more direct transit options*
  - *Create better transit connections to amenities, resources, and services for areas that are lacking*

## **Thank You**

The Portland Metro region is growing quickly, and Metro’s [2016 Metropolitan Area Population Forecast](#) projects that we will see a population increase of more than 533,000 new residents to the Metro area over the next 20 years - likely the lifespan of the T2020 measure should it pass at the ballot. While we face shortages in affordable housing, equitable access to transit across the region, and increasing gentrification and displacement to the edges of Metro’s Urban Growth Boundary and beyond, we have the opportunity to be bold in our vision for the future of our region. As we continue to develop the



T2020 measure, the Getting There Together Coalition urges the Transportation Funding Task Force to stand strong in their beliefs of prioritizing key investment measure outcomes that should **improve safety, prioritize investments that support communities of color, make it easier to get around, support resiliency, support clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems, support economic growth, and leverage regional and local investments.** These stated values align heavily with our Coalition’s guiding principles and with what we continuously hear from our coalition members, allies, and the broader community who strongly support programs and projects that increase **affordability, safety, and transit service needs.** Our recommendations seek to address the need to remove barriers to accessing modes of transportation and increase transportation options, center racial equity and inclusion, and have the potential to build a more comprehensive transportation system that works for people of all ages and abilities. The future depends on what we do today, and we must continue to center serving the people in our community in getting where they need to go.

Thank you, Local Investment Teams, Transportation Funding Task Force, Metro staff, and the many others invested in this process for your continued dedication and commitment to a transportation system that works for those who need it most.

Sincerely,

Walter Robinson II

Lead Organizer

**The Getting There Together Coalition**

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