



GETTING THERE TOGETHER

January 13, 2020

Metro Council
600 NE Grand Avenue
Portland, OR 97232

RE: T2020 Projects

Dear Council President Peterson and Metro Councilors:

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 in the Metro region. The Coalition is comprised of more than 60 member- and mission-based organizations in the region that work with stakeholders, businesses, and community members, including communities of color, transit riders, youth, older adults, people with disabilities, and the most vulnerable users of the roadway and transportation system.

Access to transportation options is a basic human right, just like food and housing, and providing accessible and affordable transportation should be approached with the same prioritization for those most in need. Throughout the Task Force process, we have all heard loud and clear the community demands for a list of projects that secures a climate-smart future by investing heavily in transit and safety, and provides affordable access to transportation options for those who have been marginalized and displaced.

Oregonians have been consistent for decades in their backing of keeping clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems for generations to come. Voters across the region continue to signal their support prioritizing safety for kids, people with disabilities, and older adults, people with low incomes, communities of color, and those who have been displaced and or overlooked in our transportation system. It's time to build our transportation system with these values in mind.

The Coalition represents many of the people in the community that T2020 transportation improvements would impact and benefit, and we appreciate the opportunity to provide that perspective as you consider which projects to include in a possible T2020 measure.

The Coalition's Approach to Projects

The Coalition, our 60+ member organizations, and the people we represent across the region remind you to lead with your own values of equity, safety, affordability, and climate. The Coalition urges you to continue to use a racial equity lens and a community- and people-driven approach in your decision-making, ensuring this measure only includes those projects that will build an equitable and clean transportation system that works for people of all ages and abilities.

What this should look like: Investments must support communities most in need of transportation safety and options, drastically increase transit ridership and reducing emissions through increased transit and community-driven projects that provide options and drastically reduce both Greenhouse Gas emissions (GHG) and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), and help people get where they need to go, safely and quickly.

Support for Project Recommendations in the T2020 Measure

The Getting There Together Coalition is supportive of most of the recommendations made by the Task Force in their December 18th meeting. We were pleased to see unanimous support for many projects that stay true to the values of improving safety, prioritizing investments that support communities of color, supporting clean air, clean water, and healthy ecosystems, and increasing access to opportunity for low-income Oregonians. Furthermore, the Coalition was particularly excited by the Task Force's unanimous support for including Enhanced Transit (ETC) on all funded corridors, increasing safety and active transportation investments on critical corridors, and the inclusion of many important projects throughout the region.

The Coalition supports many of the recommended projects and, together with region-wide programs, see these recommendations as a large first step forward for the region with needed investments that can be supported by a majority of voters and will provide transportation options that work better for people of all ages, abilities, races, incomes, and backgrounds. We are excited by the transit, safety, and active transportation improvements, and think this measure will bring much-needed change to the region. Projects we support include:

- Enhanced transit investments for the entire region that help beat congestion and get people where they need to go.
- Increased funding for highly needed safety and accessibility improvements on 82nd Ave, TV Highway, McLoughlin, Powell, 122nd, 162nd, 181st, SW 185th, Canyon Rd, and Highway 212.
- Projects that help advance racial equity through improvements for the Albina Vision Project, 82nd Ave, TV Highway, Powell, and McLoughlin-- some of the most diverse and underserved communities in our region.
- Active transportation trails that help people get around with options such as the Trolley Trail Bridge in Clackamas County and Council Creek Trail in Washington County.

Project Amendments

The Coalition has been proud of our work with Metro and other stakeholders to amend several projects included in this measure in order to gain community support. This being said, we think there are several ways certain projects could be modified so that they meet the Coalition's and the Measure's values.

The proposed project list contains plain and simple roadway expansion projects, in direct opposition to Metro's and the Task Force's values for this measure and our region's goals to reduce GHG emissions from

transportation and increase transit, walking, and bicycling mode share. It is empirically proven¹ that roadway expansions only increase Vehicles Miles Travelled (VMT) in the long run, and therefore only continue to exacerbate the climate crisis and only temporarily improves roadway safety and flow conditions caused by congestion. If roadway expansion results in more cars on the road, the inverse is also true: reducing, or at least holding roadway capacity constant, while providing additional transportation options, works to reduce the number of vehicles on the road, and therefore reduces congestion. For example, “In 1999, in Vauxhall Cross London [a downtown major urban corridor], road capacity was reduced by 15% through a combination of road layout alterations and traffic-light sequencing adjustments. No significant congestion or tailbacks occurred, and the experiment appeared not to cause any significant problems in Lambeth or neighbouring boroughs. A 2–8 % reduction in peak time traffic was observed and traffic queues were shorter than before.”² This is not a one-off conclusion, rather it is supported with multiple other domestic and international examples of the same phenomenon of induced demand³.

As a short summary, roadway expansion and the principle of induced demand:

- In the short term, expanding roads leads to more congestion and VMT as:
 - some drivers who avoided the congestion by using parallel roads will use the new roadway,
 - some drivers who delayed their trip will no longer delay their trip, and
 - some drivers who skipped their trip completely will now make the trip.
- In the long term, expanding roads leads to more congestion and VMT as:
 - some drivers will travel farther for trips or live farther away, and
 - some cyclists, walkers, transit users will drive; some will need to buy a car.

Roadway expansion investments do little to benefit communities with the highest needs; feeds and contributes to climate change; and creates an unsustainable cycle of expansion and congestion. This is why the Coalition advocates for the removal of projects that expand roadways, and seeks to work with Metro and other stakeholders to modify projects so they serve actual community needs and stay true to the measure’s values.

Airport Way & 82nd Avenue Project

The Coalition’s analysis on this project indicates that as proposed it does not meet the Task Force’s and Metro Council’s values of safety, climate resilience, and racial equity. This project should not have been advanced. We know that the Port, and many of the surrounding and supporting businesses represent strong employment opportunities for Portlanders. This project currently does very little to support these workers -- thousands of them who travel to the Port area each day, and who often do not have access to a car, or being required to rely on a car is an enormous financial burden. To those who work at and around the Port, this project only reinforces to them that a car is the preferred and necessary way to get to work -- which in turn only makes it more expensive, increases carbon emissions, congestion, and makes it more difficult and less safe to travel by foot, bike, or transit.

Using a racial equity lens, the project on Airport Way could be improved to benefit the Port, and better serve the 10,000 workers who travel to the airport and surrounds to check-in travelers, clean rooms, or pull espresso before a flight — and often don’t travel by car because they can’t afford to.

¹ <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.101.6.2616>

² <https://www.rapidtransition.org/stories/reducing-roads-can-cause-traffic-to-evaporate/>

³ Generated Traffic and Induced Travel, Implications for Transport Planning, 18 March 2019, Todd Litman Victoria Transport Policy Institute, <https://www.vtpi.org/gentraf.pdf>

The double-tracking of the MAX lines at the Airport provides a unique opportunity: why not build a rail overpass that prioritizes investments in transit? Several key improvements could be made to this project and section of the 82nd corridor, such as:

- Create an overpass for light rail that matches the intent of the 185th Max Overpass Project, and correctly aligns public investments with the public transportation future we need.
- Extend the 72 Bus Line so that it services Portland Airport instead of turning off 82nd on Killingsworth
 - This builds on ETC Investments already being made in this measure.
- Create site-specific congestion pricing for drop off at the airport to generate revenue and potentially pay for some portion of the project.
 - Over half of UK airports use congestion pricing for passenger drop off via car⁴, and their airport transportation mode share both to and from the airport is much more diverse than the US's⁵.
 - The community around the Port benefits from creating incentives that create a diverse modeshare for its flyers.

C2C Connector Project

The Coalition's analysis on this project indicates that as proposed it does not meet the Task Force's and Metro Council's values of safety, climate resilience, and racial equity. This project should not have been advanced. The 2018 Regional Transportation Plan indicates this project's main purpose is to alleviate congestion, and the 2018 RTP analysis finds for this project: "Intersects Equity Focus Area: no, Safety Benefit: no, Intersects High Injury Corridor: no."⁶

Regional connectivity is important, yet it is clear that this project does not live up to the values put forward by Metro and the Task Force.

The Coalition continues to advocate for the C2C Connector Project to be removed from this measure.

Sunrise & Highway 212 Corridor

While the Coalition was greatly concerned with this project as first proposed, we would like to thank Metro staff, Task Force members, and Clackamas County for their work to modify and segment this project so that it better reflects the values of this measure. The Coalition supports safety, local connections, and planning dollars for this corridor as recommended by the Task Force in their December 18th meeting, but as several Task Force members noted, concerns remain about the right-of-way acquisition totalling \$70m, especially without details about what exactly would be acquired. The Coalition believes regional planning plays a vital role in identifying the best use of acquired right-of-way, and that any planning funded by T2020 should be completed prior to right-of-way acquisition.

The Coalition is in support of the Hwy 212 Multimodal Safety project elements, and we support right-of-way acquisition where it is used to support the multimodal and safety investments along Highway 212. Due to the

⁴<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2018/07/how-to-get-around-airport-kiss-and-fly-charges--and-drop-off-loved-ones-for-free/>

⁵ <https://www.itf-oecd.org/sites/default/files/docs/surface-access-airports.pdf>

⁶ 2018 RTP GIS Map, Projects 10033 and 12071:

<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=73e94a0343ea487e82b4830fead7c88e&extent=-13751666.1848%2C5656339.7069%2C-13586562.2037%2C5748675.6371%2C102100>

size of this investment on a single project, we suggest criteria should be placed on this project prior to inclusion in T2020:

- Itemization of the \$70M allocation to clarify exactly what right-of-way will be used for in the 212 Multimodal Project, and the cost of the land needed for that project;
- Independent assessment of each component of right-of-way acquisition and alignment with values of climate, transportation options, safety, affordability, and equity;
- Clearly articulated policies on anti-displacement, land use designations in this corridor, and what acquired right-of-way can and can't be used for;

The Coalition remains opposed to expansive right-of-way acquisitions that do not have clearly defined uses and outcomes as a direct component of the acquisition, and we do not support right-of-way acquisition that is used for increased automobile capacity infrastructure.

A Comprehensive Measure Includes Strong, Supported Regional Programs

When comparing the first draft of the measure to its current form, we are pleased to see substantial improvements secured for everyday Oregonians: a **43%** increase in safety project funding that will make our communities a safer place to bike, walk, and ride transit; a **193%** increase in public transportation improvements projects beyond the SW Corridor MAX Line, which will help folks beat congestion and get where they need to go faster; and **32%** less planning dollars and **48%** more project construction dollars, meaning more dollars are coming to projects needed now to improve transit access, safety, affordability, and climate resilience.

Cumulatively, these projects represent serious potential improvements for some of our highest need communities, and also represent a significant down payment on the transportation system our future demands. Despite these essential investments, however, there are many parts of the region that will not receive any investment in the form of projects being discussed today -- and it is essential that these projects are supported by a comprehensive package that includes regional programs.

We applaud that the projects investments increased by **36%** from the original recommendation, in order to adequately fund community needs; as we move forward, we urge you to support the Task Force to make similar adjustments to ensure programs are adequately and appropriately funded. The Coalition supports current programs under consideration in T2020, and we urge staff, the Task Force, and Council to prioritize and fund them as much as the infrastructure projects, because programs can help to address affordability and equity needs most explicitly. For our communities, it will be absolutely essential to see the following programs included in the measure:

- **Active Transportation Regional Connections, Safety Hot Spots, Better Bus, and Protecting and Preserving Multifamily Housing**
- **Robust and meaningful investments in anti-displacement measures and policies:** keep low to moderate income individuals and communities of color in their current housing near transportation options.
- **Safe Routes to School:** including both Infrastructure and Non-Infrastructure funding
- **Fare Affordability for Students:** a Regional YouthPass for all youth aged 18 and under, that helps the next generation of transit riders get around safely and affordably while reducing their climate impact
- **A new program concept:** In addition to the programs put forward, we would like to see a new dedicated program for significant bike/ped bridge investments to address major barriers to creating a complete network

Thank You!

The Getting There Together Coalition has been grateful to be a part of this process thus far, to consider serious, significant, and transformational investments in our region to help people get to where they need to go, especially as you return to discussing program elements and how they will coordinate with projects on corridors, as well as financing options. We will continue to be at the table as this process moves forward.

The future depends on what you do today, and we must continue to center serving the people in our community in getting where they need to go with safe, convenient, and affordable transportation options. We urge you to support projects that stay true to the measure's values, and are specifically designed to benefit the people and communities in our region who most need better, safer, and more affordable transportation.

Sincerely,

The Getting There Together Coalition

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GETTING THERE TOGETHER



DISABILITY RIGHTS OREGON



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eliminating racism
empowering women
ywca
of greater portland



CENTER FOR SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY
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