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March 13, 2017

The Honorable Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Caddy McKeown, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization  
900 Court Street, NE  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: 2017 Portland Metropolitan Region Transportation Agenda

Dear Senator Beyer and Representative McKeown,

The Portland region is committed to addressing critical transportation needs for the Portland metropolitan area and the state as a whole. There is a significant need for investment in improved transportation infrastructure to meet the region's goals for economic prosperity, livability and environmental sustainability. Additionally, there is a shared sense among policymakers throughout the region that a new transportation package is urgent.

With this in mind, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) approved a policy document (attached) to advance our shared priorities in the 2017 Oregon Legislature. The key principles are as follows:

- Fix It First;
- Address Metropolitan Area Congestion;
- Invest in Multi-Modal Solutions for Congestion Relief;
- Prioritize Transit;
- Improve Regional Air Quality; and
- Preserve Local Options

Regional leaders implore state leadership to consider bold action of this kind to maintain transportation infrastructure, address congestion, and improve environmental quality. At the same time, the Portland region also recognizes current political constraints and is actively exploring a number of revenue options to help share the burden of investing in our state system. But the Legislature must do its part. We look forward to working with the Legislature to provide the resources required to address the critical needs of our transportation system in the region and throughout the state.

Sincerely,  
Members of the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation



BEFORE THE METRO COUNCIL

FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENDORSING  
REGIONAL POLICY AND FUNDING  
PRIORITIES FOR 2017 STATE  
TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION

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RESOLUTION NO. 17-4772  
  
Introduced by Councilor Craig Dirksen,  
JPACT Chair

WHEREAS, the governments of the Portland metropolitan region recognize the importance of investing strategically in public infrastructure, particularly transportation infrastructure, as a way to support private investment, economic prosperity, livability and environmental sustainability; and

WHEREAS, transportation investments that support private investment, job creation and long-term economic prosperity also bring increased revenues to local and state government budgets; and

WHEREAS, our region has a track record of working together to creatively finance forward-looking transportation investments that address the needs of both the present and the future, and of combining smart investment with policy innovations that support good jobs, livable communities and a sustainable environment; and

WHEREAS, a combination of locational advantages, careful planning and strategic investments supported by local, regional, state and federal resources and partnerships has helped to make this region globally competitive, the economic engine of the state of Oregon and an example to the nation; and

WHEREAS, the region's continuing economic success has created new challenges in the form of congestion, air quality and safety concerns; and

WHEREAS, the region has identified the top transportation priorities across all modes and invested regional funds to develop a bundle of projects that aim to relieve congestion for Oregon's economy, even as state and federal funds have continued to decline; and

WHEREAS, the Climate Smart Strategy has demonstrated that with an increase in transportation funding for all modes, this region can accomplish its many goals for safety, economic prosperity, livability, social equity and environmental protection while reducing per capita greenhouse gas emissions from light-duty vehicles as directed by the Oregon Legislature; and


WHEREAS, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) has recommended adoption of this resolution at their meeting on February 16, 2017; now therefore

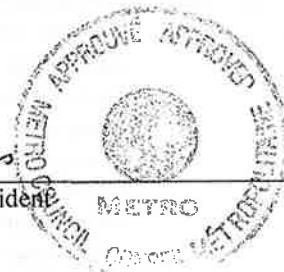
BE IT RESOLVED:

- I. That the Metro Council and JPACT adopt the following principles to guide the region's approach to transportation issues in the 2017 legislative session:
  - **Fix It First:** The best value for public investment is to invest now in our critical roads and bridges to avoid more costly repairs in the future. Doing so requires sufficient ongoing revenue to address the needs of the statewide system, as well as those maintained by cities and counties.
  - **Address Metropolitan Area Congestion:** Congestion in the Portland region is a *statewide* concern. As such, JPACT is partnering with ODOT to plan three bottleneck relief projects on state highways. The Portland region is willing to make additional investments, but is looking to see a full partnership from the Legislature to complete these projects.

- **Invest in Multi-Modal Solutions for Congestion Relief:** The Portland region's congestion issues can only be solved effectively through multi-modal investments. The 2017 Oregon Legislature should adopt a funding package designed to improve safety and address the needs of all modes of transportation for both people and freight.
  - **Prioritize Transit:** Expanding transit operations is the most important factor in achieving the region's state-mandated Climate Smart Strategy. The Portland region supports expansion of the light rail system in the Southwest Corridor as a critical element of congestion relief.
  - **Improve Regional Air Quality:** Federal funding from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) improvement program quality have been stretched to include more urban regions with existing funds. This means reduced funding for air quality in the Portland metro region at exactly the time when it is most needed. The Legislature should ensure that these programs are kept whole or expanded in the Portland region.
  - **Support and Expand Local Options:** The regional and local governments and agencies of the Portland region are committed to implementing plans for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from light-duty vehicles, providing transportation options, and addressing safety. This will require innovative policy and new funding commitments at all levels of government, including additional local funding to repair, maintain and improve existing transportation facilities. Accordingly, the Legislature should remove existing restrictions on local and regional revenue-raising authority; avoid enacting new limitations or pre-emptions; and explore new structures and authorities that give local governments the flexibility to build, operate and fund transportation systems that support prosperity, livability and sustainability.
2. That the Metro Council and JPACT endorse transportation funding and policy priorities for the 2017 legislative session as reflected in Exhibit A to this Resolution.

ADOPTED by the Metro Council this second day of March 2017.

  
Tom Hughes, Council President



Approved as to Form:

  
Alison R. Kean, Metro Attorney

**2017 Regional Transportation Agenda:  
Recommendations**

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The Portland region is committed to addressing critical transportation needs for the metro area and the state as a whole. Doing so requires both clear priorities and the willingness to propose bold solutions. The region's agenda for this session is in line with "Scenario 1" of the January report of the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC). This scenario, when combined with the urgent needs of cities and counties, would require a legislative package of approximately \$1 billion.

The Portland region's legislative is based upon the following principles:

1. **Fix It First**
2. **Address Metropolitan Area Congestion**
3. **Invest in Multi-Modal Solutions for Congestion Relief**
4. **Prioritize Transit**
5. **Improve Regional Air Quality**
6. **Support and Expand Local Options**

**The elements of the 2017 legislative funding package endorsed by the Portland metropolitan region are as follows:**

1. **Fix-It First:**
  - a. Increase State Highway Fund revenues at a sufficiently significant level to catch up with needed maintenance, operations and preservation on the city/county/state road system.
  - b. Establish a pilot funding program to facilitate the transfer of roads between ODOT and local governments.
  - c. Index the resource to avoid future losses of revenue or purchasing power.
  - d. Ensure that critical lifeline corridors are able to withstand a seismic event.
2. **Address Metropolitan Area Congestion:**
  - a. Like the OTC, the Portland metropolitan region has prioritized its highest priorities. In partnership with ODOT, the region has identified three priority bottleneck projects along the I-5 Corridor (Rose Quarter, OR 217, I-205 Abernethy Bridge). These were recognized as priorities in statewide hearings of the Joint Legislative Committee on Transportation, and by the Governor's Transportation Vision Panel. The region has invested early dollars in project development and is willing to pursue additional *regional* investments in these projects. This would represent a bold new funding model for addressing these projects of statewide significance. To make this viable for voters in our region, the state package should include sufficient funds to bond for at least half of the capital construction cost on these state facilities. Initial state funding is absolutely necessary to catalyze regional match.
  - b. Congestion should be addressed through a multi-modal package of investments. In addition to the proposed transit and highway improvements, the region supports calls for a significant increase in statewide funding for active transportation. This would best be achieved through alignment with the region's adopted Active Transportation Plan.

**3. Invest in Multi-Modal Solutions for Congestion Relief:**

- a. The region supports a seventh round of Connect Oregon funding for non-road multi-modal transportation projects, at the higher funding levels of the program's earlier rounds. This program has been critical for addressing the region's freight mobility needs, as well as advancing the region's Active Transportation Strategy.
- b. The region reiterates its support for comprehensive investments to improve mobility, including efforts to relieve highway bottlenecks, expand the high capacity transit network and enhance existing transit service, and provide safe bicycle and pedestrian connections.

**4. Prioritize Transit:**

- a. The region supports a significant ongoing investment in statewide transit operations, as reported from the statewide hearings of the Joint Legislative Committee on Transportation, and recommended by the Governor's Transportation Vision Panel. Expanding transit operations was identified as the most important factor in achieving the region's state-mandated Climate Smart Strategy. The region is actively pursuing a \$150 million investment in the Southwest Corridor, a one-time state capital investment comparable to previous light rail projects.

**5. Improve Regional Air Quality:**

- a. Federal funding from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) improvement program quality have been stretched to include more urban regions with existing funds. This means reduced funding for air quality in the Portland metro region at exactly the time when it is most needed. The Legislature should ensure that these programs are kept whole or expanded in the Portland region, while addressing other urgent needs around the state.

**6. Support and Expand Local Options:**

- a. The Legislature should remove existing restrictions on local and regional revenue-raising authority, and avoid enacting new limitations or pre-emptions.
- b. The Legislature should explore new tools and authorities that give local governments the flexibility to build, operate and fund transportation systems that support prosperity, livability and sustainability. Additional regional tools provide an opportunity to acknowledge that a higher level of capital infrastructure investment is necessary in the metropolitan region than in other areas of the state, given the higher population and resulting congestion of both residential development and job creation.

