

**Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, State and Regional Affairs Advisor
On Senate Bill 395
Joint Committee on Transportation
March 4, 2021**



Metro is the elected regional government that serves nearly 1.7 million people in the 24 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area. We provide a broad range of public services that includes land use and transportation planning, solid waste and recycling operations, housing and homeless services, management of parks and natural areas, and operation of major visitor facilities like the Oregon Convention Center and the Oregon Zoo.

Recognizing the significant impact the transportation sector has on overall greenhouse gas emissions, Metro supports actions that lessen the carbon footprint of transportation. SB 395 is one such strategy, and it aligns with Metro's Climate Smart Strategy, the legislatively-directed plan Metro developed in regional partnership to decrease transportation greenhouse gas emissions in our region.

The Climate Smart Strategy – now integrated into the Regional Transportation Plan – includes investments in a wide range of transportation projects and programs including, but not limited to, road connectivity, transit capital and operations, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, and technology that improves traffic flow. In adopting this strategy, the region affirmed its commitment to provide transportation choices, protect air quality, build healthy and equitable communities, and grow the economy – all while significantly reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Active transportation improvements are a crucial component of Climate Smart Strategy. Major gaps currently exist in our region's planned pedestrian and bicycle networks that make it difficult, unsafe and unpleasant for people to access destinations that meet their daily needs. Far too many of our community members do not have sidewalks or feel safe crossing the street to get to school, work or the grocery store. And these gaps are concentrated in low-income and Black, Indigenous and People of Color neighborhoods. Expanded investment in bike and pedestrian infrastructure make it safe and accessible to walk and ride a bike and can make progress to reduce disparities in historically marginalized communities.

Metro looks to advance opportunities that provide support for Climate Smart's activities and investments and move our region in the direction of achieving its required reductions. Increased investment in bike and pedestrian infrastructure can reduce carbon and advance safety and equity in transportation.