

Testimony of Anneliese Koehler, Legislative Affairs Manager

On House Bill 2025

Joint Committee on Transportation Reinvestment

June 12, 2025



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.

Metro is heartened to see the Legislature consider a transportation package this session. Transportation is a critical issue facing our state and our region. We know that transportation might not be top of mind for everyone, but it is top of mind for us and critical to the livability of our communities. We appreciate the Legislature's leadership in tackling this crucial problem facing Oregon.

Knowing the importance of speaking with one voice, Metro facilitated a nearly yearlong process in our region to develop an agreed upon set of legislative priorities for the transportation package. While we are still working to understand all the components of the bill that just dropped, many of the priorities are reflected in the package.

HB 2025 is comprehensive and holistic, and it takes a substantive step forward in addressing our transportation systems' needs. The bill reflects the multitude of needs in the transportation system from operations and maintenance, to transit and rail, and funding stability. It reflects many of the topics brought up in listening sessions throughout the state including our region, and the conversations from workgroups formed last fall.

Metro supports the significant commitments to operations and maintenance in HB 2025. This package will mean filling potholes, rebuilding bridges, putting in sidewalks, and making it safer for cars and people on our roads. It will create a more functioning and safe transportation system where people can get to work on time and know that their roads will be plowed during inclement weather. It also puts us on the path towards a more sustainable transportation funding system -- road usage charges and indexing gas tax to inflation are necessary steps to help set us up for the future.

Metro is also supportive of the historic commitments to safety programs and transit in this package. Great Streets and Safe Routes to School provide critical safety improvements to our roads, ensuring that our children can get safely to school and that our state highways that now function as main streets have the needed infrastructure improvements to reflect their current uses. These programs put in safe crossings, sidewalks and bikeways, and transform dangerous roads to safe ones. HB 2025 also contains a significant improvement in transit funding compared to the .08% increase proposed in the framework. While it may

still mean some cuts to service, this funding provides a much-needed lifeline to our transit providers, ensuring that Oregonians across the state will have access to transportation.

This package will also fund long-overdue projects like the I-5 Rose Quarter project and I-205 Abernathy Project. These projects will improve safety and congestion along these corridors and deliver economic benefits to nearby communities. Metro appreciates the Legislature providing funding to complete these anchor projects from HB 2017.

Metro is disappointed to see the lack of funding for Oregon Community Pathways (OCP) in HB 2025. OCP is dedicated to helping communities create and maintain connections through shared-use paths, with the goal of complementing and expanding existing active transportation networks. OCP-eligible project requests outstripped available funds by more than 4:1 over the program's first two funding cycles, leaving dangerous gaps in our trails and active transportation networks across Oregon's urban, suburban, and rural communities. The greater Portland region alone has over \$400 million in immediate unmet needs for shared-use path funding.

Again, we want to emphasize how much we appreciate the Legislature tackling this issue. Our transportation system at the state and local levels is in dire need of funding to fix potholes, pave streets and put in sidewalks.