



Southeast Uplift
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Date: 25 August 2023

To: Metro RTP Public Comment <transportation@oregonmetro.gov>

From: Southeast Uplift Neighborhood Coalition

Subject: SE Uplift Comment on 2023 Regional Transportation Plan Draft

Dear Metro President Peterson and Councilors:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 2023 update to Metro's Regional Transportation Plan.

SE Uplift collaborates with the SE Portland community to build informed, inclusive, and participatory neighborhoods that support our social and ecological well-being. Our organization advocates for a safe, complete, accessible, and equitable transportation system that caters to the diverse needs of our community members, and most especially, the growing inner southeast neighborhoods of Portland. SE Uplift is concerned about the increasing traffic fatalities within the region and the confirmation from Metro that we are off course to meet established climate and safety goals. The policies in place have failed to move us forward and provide a system that works for all. It with this in mind, that SE Uplift is pleased to **support the policies on pricing, mobility, and network completeness proposed in the 2023 update to the Metro Transportation Plan.**

The SE Uplift district coalition is situated within Metro District 6 and surrounded by major state highways such as I-5, I-84, I-205, OR-99E McLoughlin Blvd, and notably, US-26 Powell Blvd which bisects the length of the district. While these highways are critical to regional connectivity, the rising fatalities on Powell Blvd,

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McLoughlin, and elsewhere in the region, are unacceptable and require urgent action. Each life lost can never be replaced. It is deeply concerning that the current project list provided by the Oregon Department of Transportation underplays the urgency of addressing rising fatalities where they are happening while allocating eye watering amounts towards other projects in the region.

The draft 2023 Regional Transportation Plan itself acknowledges that we are off track to meet our safety, climate, and mode split goals. This revelation underscores the pressing need for policies that require projects provide robust engagement with local communities to find solutions together, demonstrate how they address safety first, and measure outcomes that support a complete system for all people and modes.

The proposed policies around pricing tools (3.2.5) present a mechanism to equitably manage congestion, increase transportation reliability, and significantly reduce vehicles miles traveled and emissions. With nearly 60% of the city's forecasted zoned along corridors and centers contained within the Regional Transportation Plan project list, it is critical that the right policies are in place to create transportation infrastructure that is safe, complete, and equitable for current and future populations. Furthermore, we would like to emphasize that any funds generated from congestion pricing contribute to network completeness for all modes.

The mobility policies (3.2.6) include important metric shifts including using Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) reductions, system reliability, and system completeness as key metrics in creating a transportation system that works for all while meeting established climate goals. We applaud the inclusion of policies that address concerns being faced in the community and the pivot away from past policies that have failed to move us

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forward together. The regional motor vehicle network policies (3.3.3.2) provide a way forward towards a safe, complete, and equitable transportation system for all and set us back on course towards our safety goals.

In conclusion, we applaud Metro's collaborative approach, involving the community and partner agencies, in the development of the Regional Transportation Plan. The proposed policies in the draft plan provide a framework to implement complete systems for all and are a step in the right direction to right size our lackluster progress towards established goals. Thank you for your time and attention and your continued commitment to providing a safe, equitable, and accessible transportation system for all.

Sincerely,

SE Uplift Neighborhood Coalition

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