

METRO COUNCIL 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES



GENERAL PRINCIPLES:

- 1. Successful Communities:** Metro supports policy and funding solutions that facilitate the achievement of the six desired outcomes for successful communities that have been agreed upon by the region: vibrant, walkable communities; economic competitiveness and prosperity; safe and reliable transportation choices; leadership in minimizing contributions to climate change; clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems; and equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of growth and change.
- 2. Racial Diversity, Equity and Inclusion:** Metro envisions a region and state where a person's race, ethnicity or zip code does not predict their future prospects and where all residents can enjoy economic opportunity and quality of life. Metro therefore supports legislation that acknowledges past discrimination, addresses current disparities and promotes inclusion in public programs, services, facilities and policies.
- 3. Tribal Sovereignty:** Metro seeks to support tribal sovereignty through government-to-government relations and coordination with Tribes, exploring opportunities to incorporate tribal interests and priorities into Metro's work and ensuring agency compliance with pertinent cultural, historic and natural resource protection laws. Metro will not supplant any Tribe or tribal organization's efforts on legislative priorities and will strive to coordinate with legislative and policy representatives of Tribes, Tribal organizations and Indigenous legislators to determine if Metro's involvement on any legislative priorities is appropriate.
- 4. Climate Justice:** Metro supports efforts to combat and adapt to climate change, to meet the state's goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions, to avoid and mitigate climate impacts on our most vulnerable community members, and to promote climate resiliency. To this end, Metro supports state policy and funding solutions that can help to reduce emissions in all its main lines of business: land use and transportation planning and investment, housing and homeless services, consumption, waste management and solid waste management, parks and natural areas, and operation of visitor venues.
- 5. Vibrant Sustainable Workforce:** Metro supports a thriving and equitable regional economy that creates job and career opportunities for all people. To this end, Metro supports state policy and investments that create new career opportunities and remove barriers to career opportunities to meet the demand for a skilled and diverse workforce in Metro's lines of business and in the region. This includes initiatives that promote quality training, family sustaining wages, access to career ladders, the provision of workforce wraparound services, and incentives to promote economic adaptability and mobility.
- 6. Preemption:** With respect to issues related to matters of regional concern, Metro's policy and funding authority should not be preempted or eroded. Accordingly, the Legislature should

exercise caution in pre-empting the authority of the region's counties, cities and other service providers in a manner that could negatively impact their ability to carry out their duties.

- 7. Adequate Resources and Funding:** To ensure a prosperous economy, a clean and healthy environment, and a high quality of life for all of their citizens, Metro and the region's counties, cities, and other service providers must have the financial resources to provide sustainable, quality public services. Accordingly, the Legislature should remove relevant existing restrictions on local and regional revenue-raising authority and avoid enacting new limitations or pre-emptions, and all state mandates should be accompanied by funding. In addition, the Legislature should contemplate population size and diversity, need, and other appropriate factors in determining funding allocations.

SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES:

HOUSING:

- 8. Housing Choice:** Metro supports efforts to ensure that abundant housing choices are available to people of all incomes in every community in our region with particular emphasis on low-income and workforce housing. To achieve these outcomes, Metro supports legislative actions related to Oregon's land use laws that preserve and increase the supply of both regulated affordable housing and market-rate housing based on need. Metro also supports funding for needed housing development, infrastructure development to serve housing, and pathways to homeownership. Housing supply should be equitably distributed, ensuring that people of all incomes, races, and geographic locations have access to homes.
- 9. Housing Stability:** Metro supports efforts that offer permanent, affordable housing for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and provides supportive services and community-based support people need to keep their housing. Metro supports providing reasonable protections for renters against arbitrary and unfair actions. Additionally, Metro supports ways to stabilize and preserve the affordable housing stock.
- 10. Equitable Housing Access:** Metro aims to advance equity in housing access. For over 300 years, discriminatory housing and land exclusion policies like redlining, segregation, blockbusting, and racial steering practices have kept black, indigenous, and communities of color from opportunities to build generational wealth and access affordable and quality housing near good schools, grocery stores, jobs, transportation, and clean air and water. These harmful policies from the past are still deeply felt in communities today. Metro supports legislation that will affirmatively further fair housing, climate justice strategies, and advance more equitable outcomes for historically marginalized communities.
- 11. Cross System Alignment:** Homelessness is driven by system failures and inequities. Achieving housing stability for our most vulnerable neighbors relies on the collaboration of multiple interconnected sectors and governmental levels that historically operate in silos. Metro supports legislation and policy collaboration to better align housing and homelessness systems

at the local, regional, state and federal levels across sectors to ensure better outcomes for the community.

LAND USE AND URBAN GROWTH MANAGEMENT:

- 12. Oregon's Land Use System:** Oregon's land use planning system provides an important foundation for the prosperity, sustainability and livability of our region. The Legislature should exercise restraint and care when considering changes to Oregon's land use system to balance the various needs and goals that create a vibrant community. Accordingly, the urban growth boundary should not be expanded in absence of demonstrated need.
- 13. Local Land Use Decisions:** Management of the urban growth boundary is a complex undertaking that involves extensive analysis, public input, and a balancing of many factors. Urban growth management decisions have profound impacts not just on land at the boundary, but on communities within the boundary, and on farms and other rural lands outside the boundary. For these reasons, the Legislature should establish the process and policy framework for local land use decisions and should affirm the authority of local governments, including Metro, to make specific decisions on local land use matters.
- 14. Efficient Use of Existing Urban Land:** Land within the urban growth boundary should be used efficiently before the boundary is expanded. Metro supports policy and funding strategies to facilitate efficient use of existing urban land, including investments in brownfield cleanup and industrial site readiness, as well as policy and zoning reforms that authorize and/or encourage more efficient development in residential and commercial areas.
- 15. Annexation:** Cities are the preferred governing structure for providing public services to urban areas, and Metro supports reforms that will facilitate, or reduce barriers to, orderly annexation and incorporation.

SOLID WASTE:

- 16. Life Cycle Approach:** Metro supports efforts to minimize the health, safety, environmental, economic and social impacts associated with consumer products and packaging throughout all stages of a product's life cycle, beginning with resource extraction and continuing through design, manufacturing, consumption and disposal.
- 17. Product Stewardship/Producer Responsibility:** Metro supports legislation providing that whoever designs, produces, sells or uses a product bears responsibility for minimizing the product's environmental impact throughout all stages of the product's life cycle. Under this market-based approach, the life-cycle costs of a product are internalized into its price rather than being forced onto the general public. This approach also provides an incentive for manufacturers to design and produce their goods in a way that minimizes waste, environmental impact and management costs.
- 18. Quality, Responsible, and Responsive Solid Waste System for All:** The Regional Waste Plan aims to eliminate disparities experienced by people of color and historically marginalized

communities from the full life cycle of products and packaging used and disposed in the region. Metro supports legislation that achieves this by advancing: community restoration, community partnerships and community investment; access to recycling, waste and reuse services and information; jobs with improved worker health and safety, compensation and career pathways; business opportunities in the local economy; and community health through minimized impacts from system operations - locally and in end markets - and from toxic chemicals in products and packaging. Legislation should require the establishment of targets, standards and compliance processes, as appropriate, to ensure progress toward equity goals.

19. Waste Reduction and Reuse: Hundreds of organizations in the Portland region help residents, businesses, schools and others extend the life of their products by repairing or reusing them instead of throwing them away. For this reason, Metro supports legislation that encourages and incentivizes the innovation, investments and partnerships to support a thriving reuse and repair economy that benefits local communities across the state.

TRANSPORTATION:

20. Transportation Funding: Providing adequate funding for all transportation modes that move people and freight supports economic prosperity, community livability, public health and environmental quality. For these reasons, Metro supports an increase in overall transportation funding, investments in a safe and balanced multimodal transportation system that addresses the needs of all users, and flexibility in the system to provide for local solutions to transportation problems.

21. Safe and Equitable Transportation: Our region has adopted policies and developed programs to make it safer to walk and bike to school and other destinations, reduce serious traffic crashes and deaths, and reduce the disproportionate impact of traffic crashes and traffic enforcement in low income communities and communities of color. Metro supports legislation that advances safe and equitable transportation, including more effective and equitable enforcement of speed limits and other safety regulations, greater investment in infrastructure that improves safety (especially in disadvantaged communities), and greater authority for local governments to safely manage their transportation networks.

PARKS, NATURE AND CONSERVATION:

22. Access to Nature: Our region has invested heavily in protecting water quality and fish and wildlife habitat and providing residents with access to nature and outdoor activity. Parks and natural areas are regional assets that support public health, environmental quality, strong property values and economic prosperity. For these reasons, Metro supports legislation that increases access to nature either by policy or raising revenues to support parks, natural areas, and trails in local governments by acquisition, capital improvements, and park operations.

23. Species and Habitat Conservation: Our landscape creates a stunning place to call home, and a lot of opportunities to explore. By protecting nature, we keep our air and water clean for the public, fish and wildlife now and in the future. Metro supports efforts to increase protection of a diversity of habitat types, plants and animals across the region and the state,

acquisition, restoration and management of habitat connectivity for fish and wildlife, long-term protection of the ecological integrity of streams, wetlands, rivers and floodplains.

- 24. Nature Education:** Across greater Portland, Metro supports community nature projects, from park building to stream restoration to pollinator gardens. By connecting residents and community organizations to each other, Metro helps build a greater sense of community as the community helps nature. This cannot be sustained without continued nature and conservation education that is accessible to all. Metro supports efforts to provide stable and reliable funding to nature and conservation education.
- 25. Natural and Cultural Resource Protection:** Metro and the state are co-stewards to thousands of acres of land with precious and finite natural and cultural resources. Metro supports legislation that helps protect natural and cultural resources by safeguarding and using those resources wisely and appropriately to avoid unnecessary waste or harm.

CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC VITALITY:

- 26. Regional Venues:** Because the Oregon Convention Center, Expo Center, Portland's Centers for the Arts and Oregon Zoo contribute millions of dollars to the state and regional economies, Metro supports policy and funding solutions that facilitate the success of these venues in attracting visitors and enhancing the quality of their experiences. In addition, recognizing the crucial role that other regional venues play in the cultural and economic vitality of our region and state, Metro supports policy and funding solutions that facilitate a vibrant regional arts, culture and entertainment ecosystem.
- 27. Disaster Resilience:** Metro supports legislative efforts to improve community disaster preparedness and resilience, with the goal of enabling the Portland region to provide for the immediate needs of its residents and businesses after a catastrophic event and facilitating the region's short- and long-term recovery.