

# Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation Federal Policy Agenda

*More than \$2.5 billion in federal funding is already at work building and maintaining critical transportation and transit infrastructure in the greater Portland, Oregon region.*

Metro is the metropolitan planning organization representing the urban areas of the three counties and 24 cities that comprise the greater Portland region. The Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) and the regional elected Metro Council, are jointly responsible for maintaining a regional long-term transportation plan and programming billions of federal dollars to transportation projects every year.

JPACT agencies manage a vast transportation system serving the more than 1.9 million people that live, work, and commute through the region. This system includes more than 3,700 miles of roads (627 miles of highways), seven transit agencies providing 250,000 daily trips, and six freeway corridors—anchored by I-5, a critical Canada-to-Mexico connection moving over 70,000 tons of goods through Portland every day. JPACT members and our partners appreciate the delegation and Administration's continued support to improve the region's transportation and transit system.

As Congress considers the next surface transportation bill and other legislation, **we are advocating for policies that:**

- Diversify and **expand transportation revenue sources** for a sustainable Highway Trust Fund
- Create a **safe transportation system** that quickly and efficiently moves people and goods
- Prioritize investments that create jobs and **promote economic development**
- Increase **multi-modal transportation options** for families and commuters to reach jobs and essential services
- Modernize transportation infrastructure to **maintain a state of good repair**

## JPACT members

C-TRAN

Clackamas County

Cities of Clackamas  
County

Cities of Multnomah  
County

Cities of Washington  
County

City of Portland

City of Vancouver

Metro Council

Multnomah County

Oregon Department of  
Environmental Quality

Oregon Department of  
Transportation

Port of Portland

TriMet

Washington County

Washington State  
Department of  
Transportation

## Diversify and **expand transportation revenue sources** for a sustainable Highway Trust Fund.



Federal resources are needed to deliver big infrastructure projects.  
Burnside Bridge rendering by Multnomah County

*There are not enough revenue sources to build and maintain the nation's transportation system.*

The federal gas tax — fixed at 18.4 cents per gallon since 1993 — doesn't generate enough revenue for the Highway Trust Fund, which provides formula and discretionary funding to states and local agencies for highways, bridges, and transit. Rising inflation and supply chain challenges drive up operating and capital construction costs, reducing the overall purchasing power of federal resources. Revenue shortfalls are worsening as more people adopt electric vehicles and drivers pay less in gas taxes.

In Oregon, this funding gap strains the Oregon Department of Transportation, transit agencies, and local governments, all of which rely on federal funds to maintain roads, sidewalks, bridges, and multimodal transit infrastructure. Shrinking resources delay projects, increase deferred maintenance, and limit opportunities to improve infrastructure or expand transit service.

JPACT urges Congress to **stabilize the Highway Trust Fund with new, sustainable revenue sources**. Options include increasing or indexing the gas tax to inflation, implementing a national road user charge program, or establishing registration fees for electric vehicles. As Congress evaluates new revenue options, they must **preserve the Highway Trust Fund's traditional 80-20 split between the Highway and Mass Transit accounts**. Immediate action is essential to ensure Oregon's transportation system remains safe for the people who rely on it.

**Local Governments are Facing Funding Cliffs:** State and local jurisdictions face the same structural funding challenges as the federal government. Declining gas tax revenue, rising project costs, and statutory restrictions on how agencies can spend money make it hard to maintain the roads that communities rely on. The gas tax is not a reliable source of revenue and unlike other states, Oregon does not have a sales tax to fill the gap. **Federal funding reforms that generate more revenue are urgently needed** to stabilize revenue and maintain critical transportation infrastructure.

**Funding for Maintenance is Critical:** Rebuilding infrastructure is only part of a transportation system. Long-term, reliable funding for maintenance—like resurfacing roads and repairing potholes—is essential. Most federal transportation funding programs cannot fund these activities, making it harder for local governments to maintain a state of good repair and weakening the system's long-term safety and dependability. It is important for Congress to **provide funding programs that include maintenance activities as eligible expenses**.

## Create a **safe transportation system** that quickly and efficiently moves people and goods.



Families rely on safe transportation.

*Federal Safe Streets and Roads for All funding is improving transportation safety in communities across our region – developing safety action plans, upgrading infrastructure, and delivering projects that make every trip safer.*

JPACT is making streets safer for all roadway users through programs like Safe Routes to School and investments in sidewalks, bikeways, streetlights, and crossings in high-injury areas. While our region has one of the lowest traffic fatality rates in the nation — and saw a 7% decline last year — JPACT remains committed to the Safe System approach and has a goal to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2035. **Renewing the safe streets and roads for all program** will help us get there.

Some of the region's deadliest roads, **82nd Avenue**, **Tualatin Valley Highway**, and the **Sunrise Corridor** were designed as freight routes to move agricultural products quickly. As our region has grown, these roads have become critically important, heavily used local connections to schools, healthcare, housing, and jobs. Their original design favored speed over safety and now, these roads are “high crash corridors.” **We are pursuing federal funding through FTA Capital Investment Grant and other programs for major safety improvements** that will make daily travel safer for children, families, older adults, and people with mobility challenges.

Transportation safety issues at bottlenecks is driving congestion, collisions, and unreliable travel times across our region — placing Portland among the nation's top 20 regions for traffic delays. Collisions caused by stop-and-go traffic affect our transportation system efficiency, especially for commuters and businesses using these roads to ship their goods to market. The interchange and ramp improvements included in the **I-5 Interstate Bridge**, **I-205**, **Rose Quarter**, and **Burnside Bridge** projects will reduce crashes, address bottlenecks, and reduce congestion on freeway corridors.

**Delivering Economic Benefits with Safety Investments:** Transportation safety investments don't just save lives — they grow local economies. At 75% of sites that received recent safety improvements, food and retail businesses gained traffic and sales. These projects boost small business activity, raise property values, and create jobs.

**Streamlining Permitting for Small Scale Safety and Modernization Projects:** Jurisdictions need flexibility to quickly deliver small, low-cost, high-impact safety projects like curb ramps and signal upgrades without costly delays due to federal requirements. **Clarifying permitting requirements or issuing guidance for proven quick-build projects** on developed land without significant environmental impacts will speed up project delivery.



## Prioritize investments that create jobs and **promote economic development.**



Multi-modal transportation promotes vibrant business corridors.  
Photo by TriMet

*We need federal support to deliver the pipeline of transportation projects that will create tens of thousands of jobs, expand economic opportunities for local businesses, and enhance the region's economic vitality.*

Regional partners are **seeking FTA Capital Investment Grant Program funding** to transform **82nd Avenue**, **Tualatin Valley Highway**, and **Montgomery Park**. These comprehensive investments will create tens of thousands of jobs and drive economic growth. Making transit service faster and more reliable on the region's busiest commuter corridors will make it easier for workers and families to get to local businesses, jobs and essential services and promote long-term economic growth across the region.

These projects will also unlock opportunities to develop housing and create new businesses. The **Montgomery Park Streetcar project** will transform an underutilized industrial and employment district adjacent to Highway 30 into a transit-oriented, mixed-use hub with over 2,000 new housing units and more than 400 middle-wage jobs. The **Sunrise Corridor project** will create safer access to businesses, housing, and industry along the busy Hwy 224 and Hwy 212 interchanges.

The **Rose Quarter** and **I-5 Interstate Bridge** projects are transformative investments for Oregon's economy. Addressing one of America's worst freight bottlenecks, these mega projects will improve the movement of goods and vehicles along the West Coast's I-5 corridor. Federal funding is needed to deliver these projects that will make it easier for Oregon businesses to transport goods, generate over 2 million labor hours and tens of thousands of jobs, improve travel times for commuters and freight access to domestic and international markets, and drive long-term economic growth and opportunity.

**Creating Jobs and Workforce Benefits:** Transportation projects are extraordinary workforce opportunities that create thousands of well-paying construction jobs and support local businesses through procurement commitments and Metro's Construction Careers Pathways Program. Beyond immediate employment opportunities, a robust transportation system enables housing and economic opportunities that are vital to the health of our communities.

**Investing In Transit-Oriented Development:** Our region is partnering with developers and community organizations to build affordable housing and economic opportunities along high frequency transit corridors. **Renewing the FTA Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development** will help communities concentrate development near transit and maximize long-term economic and community benefits.

## Increase **multi-modal transportation options** for families and commuters to reach jobs and essential services.



**Robust multi-modal options get people where they need to go.**

*JPACT envisions a regional multi-modal transportation system that is well integrated across modes and scales – from high-capacity transit all the way to shared use paths.*

JPACT has a bold vision for the next generation of multi-modal infrastructure and transit investments that reflects how the region's population has grown and travel patterns to jobs and services have changed.

The region has a robust pipeline of high-capacity transit and bus rapid transit investments, targeting a combined \$1.4 billion from the FTA Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program over the next decade. These four priority projects — **82nd avenue, Montgomery Park Streetcar, I-5 Bridge Replacement**, and **Tualatin Valley Highway** — will expand transit service and reliability along heavily traveled corridors, connecting families and commuters to housing, jobs, businesses, and essential services. By moving trips onto transit, these projects also reduce congestion. The House draft FY26 budget dramatically reduces CIG funding, so it is critical to **preserve the Senate's proposed FY26 CIG funding level of \$3.3 billion to deliver these multi-modal projects.**

In addition to expanding bus rapid transit, the region is developing a Community Connectors study to explore microtransit and shuttle solutions for families and commuters in areas where fixed route transit service is not viable. While many federal transit funding programs prioritize building high-capacity projects, **there is need for programs that support smaller and alternative forms of transit** — like first-mile/last-mile connections, vanpools, and shuttles.

**Using Technology to Reduce Congestion:** TriMet is deploying transit signal priority technology on buses, light rail vehicles, and intersections, which uses AI to adjust traffic signal timing to prioritize transit. These investments reduce congestion, improve travel times, and make transit more reliable. **Renewing funding for FHWA's Advanced Transportation Technologies and Innovative Mobility Deployment program** will help us maximize transit efficiency and reliability.

**Integrating Multi-Modal Transportation Systems:** Providing safe, seamless, and well-connected multi-modal and active transportation infrastructure makes walking, biking, and taking transit feel safer, more convenient, and reliable for commuters and families. **Maintaining the Transportation Alternatives Program set aside within the Surface Transportation Block Grant** will support this work.

## Modernize transportation infrastructure to maintain a state of good repair.



Maintenance and construction projects create good-paying jobs.  
Photo by: Washington County Land Use & Transportation

*Much of the region's critical transportation infrastructure is aging, vulnerable, and urgently requires maintenance, retrofits, or replacement to ensure safety during extreme weather and provide long-term reliability for communities and commerce.*

The **I-5 bridge, Burnside Bridge**, and many **I-205 bridges** transport hundreds of thousands of travelers and connect billions of dollars' worth of freight and agricultural products to domestic and global markets. These bridges are also more than 50 years old, require costly repairs and retrofits, and contribute to an increasingly fragile transportation system at risk of catastrophic failure.

Despite being designated as emergency lifeline routes, these bridges are unlikely to withstand a magnitude 8 earthquake — which has a 1 in 3 chance of occurring in our region within the next 50 years. Improving these bridges is critically important for disaster preparedness and emergency response — if any of them collapse, emergency responders and disaster relief efforts to save lives, reunite families, and begin recovery will be delayed. **Renewing the Bridge Investment Program** will help us deliver these projects.

I-5 is the most important freight corridor on the West Coast, replacing the 108-year-old **I-5 Bridge** across the Columbia River is essential to regional and national commerce. IBR investments will ensure our infrastructure can withstand a major earthquake and maintain access for life-saving emergency response services. Recent federal funding awards provided \$2 billion for the project — a critical investment to continue moving the nationally significant project forward — and **federal dollars through the FTA Capital Improvement Grant are needed** to deliver this nationally significant project.

**Updating Transit Fleets and Facilities:** Transit agencies are modernizing their fleets and facilities to stay safe, operational, and reliable during extreme weather. Over the next 20 years, they'll purchase over 1,000 American-made buses, railcars, and paratransit vehicles. **Renewing the FTA Low/No Emissions and Bus and Bus Facilities programs** is essential to ensure transit-dependent families and commuters can safely and reliably get where they need to go.

**Addressing Impacts from Extreme Weather:** Increasingly common extreme weather events—like heat domes and ice storms—are straining our transportation system, causing buckled asphalt, frozen tracks, and transit disruptions. Federal programs must fund retrofit and modernization activities that keep roads, bridges, and transit safe and reliable. Congress should **make maintenance and resilience upgrades eligible activities across all transportation funding programs.**