



600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736
oregonmetro.gov

METRO COUNCIL 117th CONGRESS FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

The Metro Council 2021-2022 Federal Legislative Agenda lays out the principles, priorities, and issues for Metro to track at the regulatory and legislative level for the 117th Congress. This Congress represents a unique time for our federal government and for Metro: there are significant needs to ensure that we emerge from the COVID-19 public health pandemic economically stronger, more equitable, more sustainable, and more prepared to tackle the climate change, inequality, and racial justice crises. To do so will require coordinated, focused policies and sustained investment at all levels of government. This document captures the key needs and goals of the greater Portland area as we embark upon the recovery our region needs.

METRO COUNCIL 117th CONGRESS FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRINCIPLES

The Metro Council 2021-2022 Federal Legislative Principles are the key values that guide Metro's engagement on any issue and apply to all our policy and funding priorities.

ADVANCE RACIAL EQUITY

Metro envisions a region and state where a person's race, place of birth, 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 policies that acknowledge past discrimination (including using financial compensation to address past disparities, theft, and broken promises at the federal, state, and local level), eliminate current disparities, and promote inclusion and accessibility in public programs, services, facilities and policies. Metro supports removing barriers, through targeted universalism-based policies, to the full participation of Black, Indigenous, and immigrant communities as well as all communities of color in economic and social opportunities. Metro also recognizes the need for disaggregated data to help decision-makers better understand the needs and challenges faced by Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and efforts to center those lived experiences in decision-making.

SUPPORT GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT TRIBAL RELATIONS

Support Government-to-Government Tribal Relations: Metro acknowledges centuries of systemic harm to our tribal partners, including genocide, forced land removal, land and property theft, and the breaking of agreed-upon treaty rights. These actions were supported and often carried out by governments at the federal, state, regional, and local levels. Metro will track and advocate for strengthening requirements and incentives regarding government to government engagement and other initiatives that are intended to expand the role that tribal partners and indigenous peoples have in government decision-making.

TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE, RESTORE CLIMATE INTEGRITY

Metro supports aggressive efforts, policies, and bold investments to combat and adapt to climate change and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at the local, regional, state, national, and international levels. Metro advocates for policies, programs, and projects that incentivize or require greenhouse gas emissions reduction, advance planning efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and support climate adaptation, and facilitate data collection to improve climate and air pollution monitoring. Metro also supports policies that use possible revenue from carbon reduction fees to support family wage jobs, job training, transportation investments that reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and climate pollution mitigation programs.

FACILITATE REGIONAL COORDINATION AND GOVERNANCE

Support Regional Planning and Coordination: Many of our country's challenges are big and complex. While cities and counties play a key role in enacting policy change and improving the lives of their constituents, many of the most pressing issues require coordination between cities, counties and other local forms of government. Metro supports policies that advance regional coordination on policy challenges that ignore boundaries and require cooperation and alignment among cities and counties, particularly those related to climate change, land use policy, housing affordability and availability, transportation planning, waste management, and conservation.

PROMOTE SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITIES

Metro supports legislation that facilitates 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 global warming; clean air, clean water and healthy ecosystems; and equitable distribution of the burdens and benefits of growth and change.

PROTECT AND INCREASE FEDERAL FUNDING FOR OUR REGION

To ensure a prosperous economy, a clean and healthy environment, and a high quality of life for all of our residents, Metro and our partners must have the sustainable financial resources to provide quality public services and advance the principles and goal discussed above. This includes protecting existing federal funding, and supporting and seeking funding opportunities that align with Metro's Six Desired Outcomes and other regional priorities. After decades-long disinvestment at the federal level, the federal government must be a partner in tackling the looming challenges of economic inequality, systemic racism, climate change, and recovering from the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

METRO COUNCIL 117th CONGRESS FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Metro's Legislative Priorities reflect our key federal advocacy efforts. These represent the bulk of Metro's federal engagement for the 117th Congress, although other efforts may emerge in response to unforeseen opportunities.

Affordable Housing

Unified control of Congress for the first time in more than a decade is likely to lead to a more robust discussion about federal housing policy and ways that the federal government can be more supportive of local efforts to address chronic homelessness in the U.S. This will likely include the rollback of the Faircloth Amendment (which forbids the construction of public housing projects), increased interest in the intersection of transit and housing through legislation like the More Housing Near Transit Act, and efforts at improving the Affordable Housing Tax Credit. In addition, the Biden Administration will likely look for ways to expand use of existing programs, such as the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, and will roll back Trump Administration policies and guidance that limited or restricted eligibility for federal housing assistance.

- **Housing Affordability:** Metro supports policies that advance housing affordability, increase investments in regulated affordable housing programs to meet the national identified need, and provide diverse housing choices. This includes eviction moratoriums during times of national crisis, rental support and housing vouchers, and increased funding for services to help people stay in their homes. In order to reduce the barriers to home ownership, Metro also supports efforts to strengthen regulation of home mortgages and predatory lending practices. Metro believes all of these policies should also help dismantle racist housing policies and help people of color find safe, stable, and affordable housing. As part of that effort, Metro supports efforts to enforce and strengthen the Affirmatively Furthering Fair Housing rule.
- **Regional Housing Principles for National Housing Solutions:** The National Housing Solutions for Greater Portland policy proposals highlight the need to increase the supply of affordable housing coupled with accessible and high-quality wrap around services to ensure that everyone can find a place to call home. These principles were created in partnership with our region's Housing Authorities and Continuum of Care

providers to identify shared housing values amongst regional partners and will help guide Metro's engagement with housing policy at the federal level.

Economic Rebuilding

The Biden Administration's Build Back Better agenda includes a strong focus on workforce training and development, and using federal funds to help workers, as well as small businesses, regain stronger footing. Congress is expected to consider progressive legislation including possible paid family leave, a higher federal minimum wage, and worker training programs.

- **Regional Economic Recovery Plan:** The bi-state Regional Economic Recovery Strategy identifies key investments and tactics the region is pursuing in order to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic economically more robust, more resilient, and more equitable. The Strategy identifies key strategies and focuses on the need to help small businesses recover and grow, advance economic mobility through workforce training opportunities for individuals, and support families and children through better childcare and workforce policies, with an urgent focus on building opportunities and long-term wealth creation for Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC). Metro stands ready to support efforts identified by the Greater Portland Economic Development Plan and the Greater Portland Economic Development District Implementation Workgroup as key priorities to help the region in its economic recovery.
- **Workforce:** Ensuring that the benefits of a growing and green economy are equitably distributed means ensuring that our workforce and workforce training programs are focused on ensuring women and BIPOC communities can fully participate and succeed. As Metro advances the Construction Career Pathways program in the greater Portland area, we encourage the federal government to support investments in regional training programs and changes in local hiring regulations to make it easier for local agencies and hiring partners to use public investment to ensure that people of color can find employment and advance their careers.
- **Metro Venues:** Due to the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Metro may need ongoing support for our visitor-dependent entities, such as the Portland's Centers for the Arts, the Oregon Zoo, and the Convention Center. These venues are regional assets that contribute millions of dollars to the state and local economies, and are key to regional economic recovery. As necessary, we support federal aid to facilities that provide for public access to arts, education, and culture and boost tourism, in order to help these facilities survive the COVID 19 pandemic.

Safe and Reliable Transportation

Metro Council and JPACT have worked together to develop a robust federal agenda to help the region build and operate the transportation projects necessary to reach our

Climate Smart goals, our resiliency projects, our maintenance projects, our Vision Zero goals, and ongoing congestion in the greater Portland region.

- **Innovative and Stable Transportation Funding:** In order for our transportation system to tackle our region’s biggest challenges, including slowing climate change, increasing traffic safety, advancing racial equity, and supporting everyone’s ability to move around our region safely, affordably, and easily, the region needs a robust and multimodal transportation funding approach. Metro supports an increase in overall transportation funding, investments in a safe, electric, 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. Given the significant underinvestment in transit at the federal and state levels as compared to what is needed to implement the Climate Smart Strategy, Metro particularly supports increased investment in transit capital and operations.

Given the need for long-term, stable transportation funding sources, Metro supports innovative approaches, including congestion pricing, that better connect system performance, outcomes such as increased safety, reduced climate pollution or improved access for people of color, and road usage, with transportation funding mechanisms. There should be funding and policy changes to support exploring these innovative revenue mechanisms at the federal, state, and regional level, and ensuring that revenue from these innovations supports a cleaner, more equitable transportation system.

In addition, the region has spent two years identifying key transportation needs through the Let’s Get Moving process; funding for the projects and programs in that proposal is a key interest for Metro. Metro supports policies that make it easier to seek funding for these projects, particularly the corridor-long transit projects, and in general supports efforts to increase the transportation funds available at the regional level in order to advance regional goals around reducing greenhouse gas emissions and building a safe, equitable, affordable transportation system.

- **Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) Federal Legislative Agenda:** This agenda has included policies to support Vision Zero at the federal level, increase transit funding and funding for Safe Routes to Schools, provide set-aside funds for orphan highways, and provide funding for specific regional projects. Metro supports these policies as approved by JPACT and the Metro Council.
- **Coordinated Transportation Planning:** Metro supports policies and funding that highlight the importance of equitable, comprehensive, regional transportation planning; connect transportation, housing, and economic development; and that increase accountability for planning and funding decisions through stronger performance metrics at the federal level.
- **Trails and Outdoor Recreation Funding:** As both a parks operator and a regional planning agency, Metro supports increasing federal funding to plan, design, and build non-motorized trails and trail systems for recreation and transportation purposes.

Clean Air, Clean Water, and Healthy Ecosystems

The Biden Administration has been very clear that fighting climate change is a key priority, and this includes efforts to protect clean air and clean water from climate pollution and other toxics. This is likely to begin with a focus on undoing many of the Trump-era environmental rollbacks, but will also include additional efforts to strengthen the Clean Water and Clean Air Acts, incorporate an environmental justice lens onto federal decision processes, and better account for the cost of externalities, such as climate pollution, in federal rulemaking. The Department of Interior is also expected to act as a strong steward, with a focus on supporting access to and preserving the long-term health of our public lands.

- **Clean Air, Clean Water, and Wildlife Habitat:** Our region has invested heavily in protecting water quality 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. Metro supports regulatory action and funding efforts that increase access to open spaces, reduce air, water, and climate pollution, and protect vulnerable habitat.
- **Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Products and Product Disposal:** Metro supports legislative efforts to ensure 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, particularly when the product involves the use or disposal of toxic substances. 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. 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, recycling, and disposal.
- **Open Space Preservation and Access:** The COVID 19 pandemic and the increased vulnerability to natural hazards due to climate change have both demonstrated the need for open space to facilitate safe, accessible outdoor recreation and protect natural systems that increase community and ecosystem resiliency and recovery. Metro supports efforts to increase funding for state, regional, and local entities to protect and preserve open space.
- **Willamette Falls:** As a key partner in the Willamette Falls Legacy project, Metro has successfully negotiated continued public access and development of a riverwalk in partnership with the new property owner; the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde. The restoration and redevelopment of the abandoned mill site will require significant time and funding. Metro will support efforts led by the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Willamette Falls Trust to pursue federal funding efforts to support projects such as Phase 2 of the Riverwalk, cleanup of environmental contaminants on-site, restoration of key habitat, protection of economic development opportunities, public access, and co-development of facilities that can be used by Tribal members and the public. Metro also supports

funding efforts to resolve long term issues with the Willamette Falls Locks, which are under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers.

METRO COUNCIL 117th CONGRESS FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE ISSUES TO TRACK

Metro's Federal Legislative Issues to Track are policies that the agency supports, but either are not top priorities or are not expected to have a lot of opportunity for Metro to engage in during the 117th Congress.

- **Disaster Preparedness:** Metro supports policy and funding 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. This includes investment in transportation and waste removal infrastructure, long-term planning efforts, and policies to support other immediate and long-term recovery needs, such as those identified in the regional Emergency Transportation Resiliency Plan.
- **Waste Prevention Innovation and Authority:** Metro supports efforts to align federal policy with best practices in waste prevention and recycling, but any efforts to create standard guidance, whether administrative or legislative, must support the role of states and localities to innovate and go beyond what is federally required.
- **Species Conservation:** Metro supports efforts to protect and restore wildlife habitat, to recover threatened and endangered species, and to create a better future for wildlife, both in Oregon and globally.
- **Conservation Education:** Metro supports efforts to provide stable and reliable funding for conservation education.
- **Tools to Advance Better Land Use Planning:** The federal government has limited tools to engage in land use planning, but Metro supports efforts to advance sustainable, equitable land use planning at the national level.
- **Brownfields:** As a regional partner in brownfield cleanup, Metro supports legislative efforts and funding efforts to expand brownfield cleanup efforts, particularly in urban areas, and in areas where the pollution impacts disproportionately hurt communities of color.
- **Clean Up of Portland Harbor:** Metro will monitor developments and work with regional partners to support the cleanup of the Portland Harbor and address its Superfund status, as well as policy changes in the Water Resources Development Act that may have implications for efforts to clean up and revitalize properties in the Portland Harbor.
- **Recycling and International Agreements:** As international agreements, trade negotiations, and other international concerns impact our region's waste and recycling operations, Metro engages in these conversations when necessary and productive.
- **Diesel Emission Reductions:** Metro supports continued efforts to reduce reliance on diesel fuel, particularly for garbage and recycling collection vehicles, construction

vehicles, or public transit vehicles that travel disproportionately in communities of color.

- **Firearms and Public Facilities:** Metro supports legislation that increases Metro's authority to regulate the carrying of firearms on Metro properties and public venues, and opposes legislation that limits or reduces that authority.
- **Human Resources, Agency Operations:** Metro tracks and may weigh in on federal policy and regulatory changes that impact employees, worker pay, work place environment, and other agency operations. Metro supports policies that advance paid family leave, living wage jobs (including a \$15/hour federal minimum wage), paid sick leave, and programs that support equitable hiring, training, and compensation practices.