



Oregon

John A. Kitzhaber, MD, Governor

Department of Transportation

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File Code:

Council President Tom Hughes
Metro
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232-2736

Council President Hughes,

I am writing to express ODOT Region 1's endorsement of the *Southwest Corridor Plan and Shared Investment Strategy*, which marks the completion of Phase 1 of the Southwest Corridor Plan. In the coming year, I will ask my staff to participate in the refinement and analysis of High Capacity Transit alternatives, local connections, and transit-supportive multimodal projects that may be studied as part of an FTA project. ODOT staff will continue to work with project partners as they develop local plans, policies, and implementation strategies informed by the Southwest Corridor Plan.

ODOT has a strong commitment to improving safety, active transportation, and access to transit in the Southwest Corridor. To that end, we recently funded construction of several early opportunity projects to be delivered over the next two to three years. These projects center on OR-99W and include crossing improvements, bike lane markings, sidewalks/walkways, enhanced illumination, and transit stop accessibility improvements. The first of these projects has already been completed, and we hope the others will offer the corridor's communities some immediate benefits while longer-range planning efforts continue. Together with implementation of TriMet's Southwest Service Enhancement Plan, which will improve the corridor's transit service in the near-term, we are working together to improve safety and access to transit right away.

Determining the future of OR-99W will be one of the Southwest Corridor Plan's central policy decisions. Currently, this route is focused on providing vehicle mobility. As the project partners collectively look ahead, we will need to make choices for OR-99W—will the highway carry added transit service or will High Capacity Transit travel on a separate alignment, how will pedestrians and cyclists access improved transit service, and how will all modes of travel move safely through the corridor?

In the longer-term, High Capacity Transit is the crucial element needed to achieve the land uses envisioned by the Southwest Corridor's communities. Successfully planning and implementing a High Capacity Transit project will involve tough decisions and require focused effort. During the coming year, I understand Metro will convene project partners in the development of a funding



strategy. This work is equally important to the technical analysis that will be performed during the refinement phase. The ability to raise non-federal matching funds is essential for securing federal funds and determining the overall budget for constructing High Capacity Transit in the corridor.

To make these decisions, the project partners will need clear information outlining the tradeoffs different alternatives represent between transit performance, traffic impacts, cost, and impacts to property and the natural environment. This conversation must meaningfully engage all of the corridor's communities and stakeholders, and reconcile the varied desires expressed during Phase 1. My staff and I look forward to working with Metro and TriMet to develop and communicate the analysis needed to support this conversation.

We look forward to participating in the refinement of High Capacity Transit alternatives in this important corridor.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jason Tell', with a stylized flourish extending to the left.

Jason Tell
Region 1 Manager
Oregon Department of Transportation

Cc: Councilor Bob Stacey – Metro
Councilor Craig Dirksen – Metro