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July 24, 2018

Attn: HB 2017 Transit Advisory Committee

RE: HB 2017 Special Transportation Infrastructure Funds (STIF)

Aging Services Advisory Council advises Multnomah County Aging, Disability, & Veterans Services Division on issues of importance to people with disabilities, veterans, and older adults. Transportation access is vitally important for maintaining independence and well-being and continues to be an issue facing our community.

Aging, Disability, & Veterans Services Division conducted extensive community outreach in Summer 2016. Of the nearly 500 people staff spoke with, 89% were racial, ethnic, or cultural minorities and 68% provided responses in language other than English. When asked "what's important to you", transportation elicited the greatest amount of the responses at 26% - more than nutrition, caregiver support, abuse prevention, or any other category. People with limited English were nearly twice as likely to indicate transportation coordination and resources as important compared to people responding in English. Every group we spoke with indicated that they need more transportation resources.

A plan currently exists in our region which details the projects that will help us meet the demand for services for seniors and people with disabilities. We support further implementation of the Coordinated Transportation Plan that was updated by TriMet in 2016 with assistance from the Special Transportation Fund Advisory Committee (STFAC).

*"As a Social Worker who works with seniors across the Metro and rural areas, transportation is vital to quality of life and wellness for older adults. I often work with older adults who live alone and do not have people around to help them get to and from the grocery store or go to places where they can meet up with friends or others for social engagement. So in addition to the vital need for low cost/free transportation services to get adults who have only Medicare insurance to their doctor's appointments, the need for transportation for all other functions in life are equally important. I once worked with a woman in her 70's who used to be able to walk to the Safeway near her house, but there came a time when due to progressive Alzheimer's dementia she was not able to do this. Ride Connection volunteers took her weekly to the grocery store and helped her with this*

*important part of her routine until we were able to get her additional services through Aging and Disability Services (Medicaid), Impact NW, and a legal guardian.” Nicole W, social worker with local medical provider*

We know that existing funding levels do not meet current demand, and with an increasingly older and more disabled population, will certainly not meet future demand. Additional funds are needed to support the demand for service, preserve existing service and fill the gap in funding. There is a need for community transportation that enhances ADA service because while equally important, fixed route and ADA Paratransit do not meet the needs of all riders.

Thank you for your consideration,

Aging Services Advisory Council

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