

# Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

*Working to Make Bicycling a Part of Daily Life in Portland*

1120 SW 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Room 800  
Portland OR 97204



February 10, 2016

To: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation and Metro Council  
From: City of Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee  
Subject: Regional Flexible Fund Allocation

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on regional policy considerations for the Regional Flexible Fund Allocation; specifically on consideration of maintaining the 75:25 split in Step 2 funding for active transportation/green freight/economy. The Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee is a City-Council appointed volunteer committee charged with advising the City of Portland on matters related to bicycling. As regional considerations have great impact on Portland's transportation funding we feel obliged to offer our comments to JPACT and the Metro Council on this matter.

In short, our recommendation is to at least maintain the 75:25 split as currently provided and, ideally, to provide 100 percent of available Step 2 funding to active transportation. As we are aware about regional conversations about \$12 million in "extra" Step 1 funding we also recommend that significant funding be provided from that to active

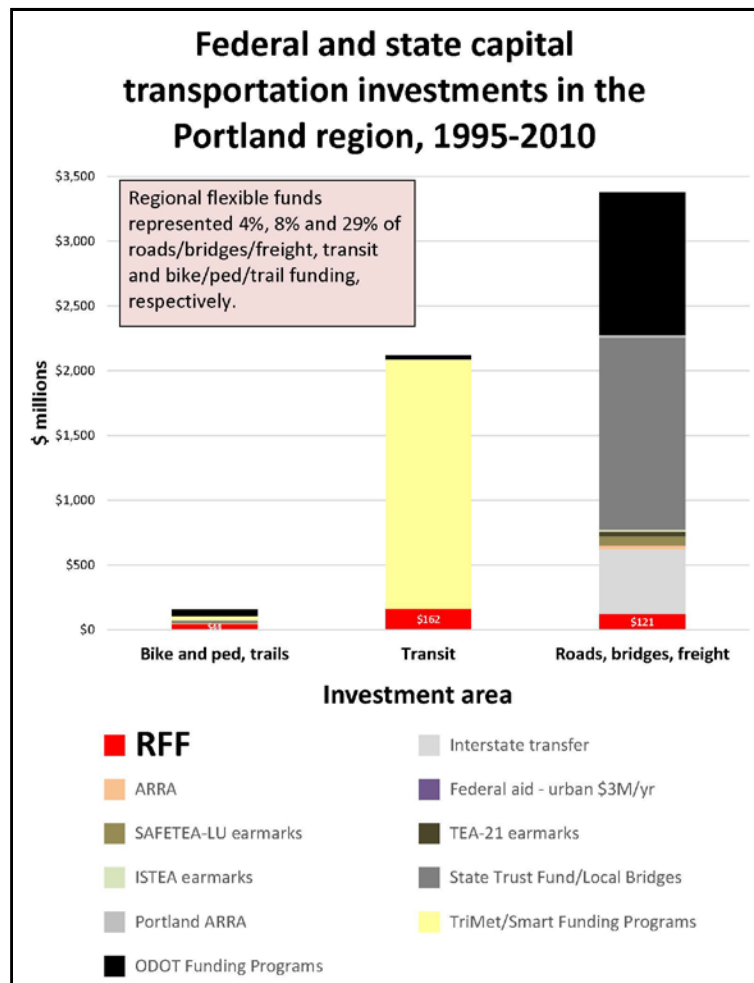
transportation, either through a proposed regional transportation bond or through transfer to Step 2. Our position is based on three pertinent pieces of information:

1. The relative importance of Regional Flexible Funds to overall regional funding for active transportation
2. The timeline by which various elements of the Regional Transportation Plan are expected to be completed, and
3. The regional performance of bicycle transportation since 2000 and its contribution to adopted regional goals and policies.

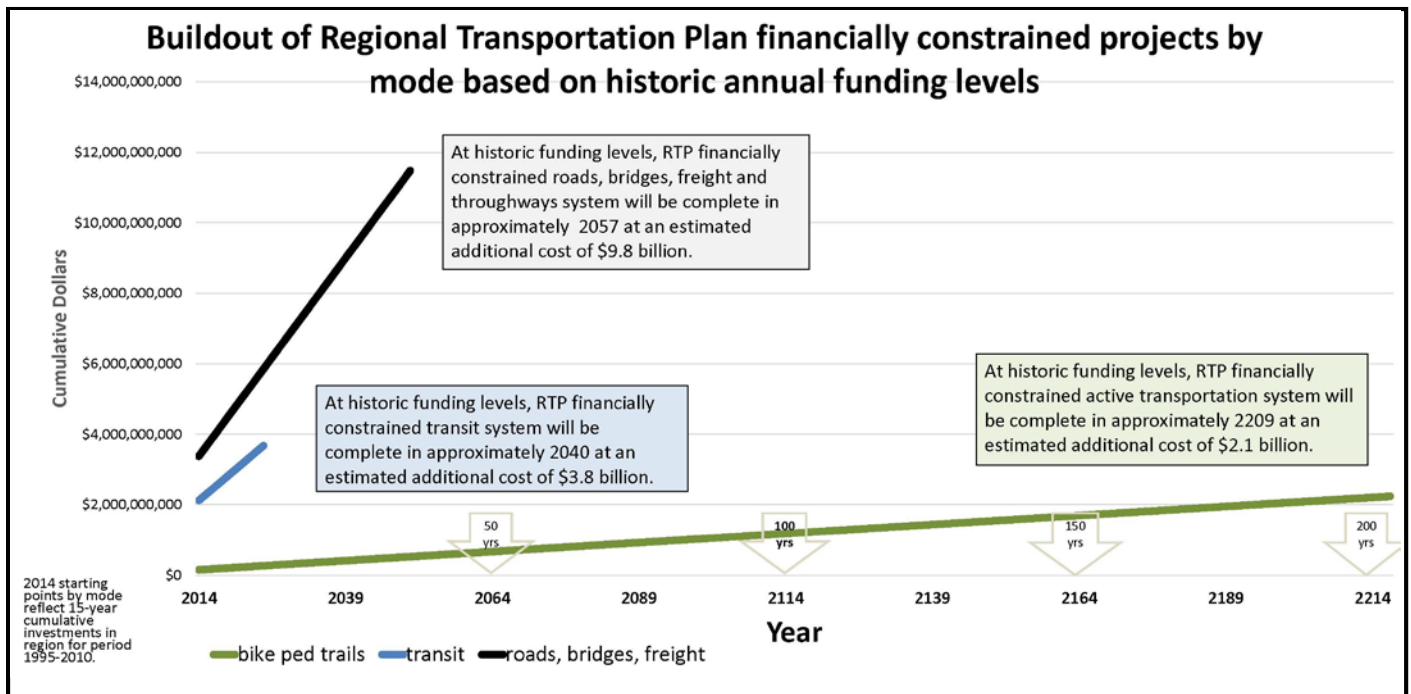
This letter addresses these three points.

## Importance of RFF to active transportation

The graph to the right is based on information in Metro's Regional Active Transportation Plan (Appendix 5). It demonstrates two things. First is the small amount of funding that has been spent in the region on active transportation. Second is that Regional Flexible Funds represent fully 29% of all funding spent



on active transportation in the period 1995-2010. Regional Flexible Funds are the most important, reliable source of funding for regional active transportation capital projects.



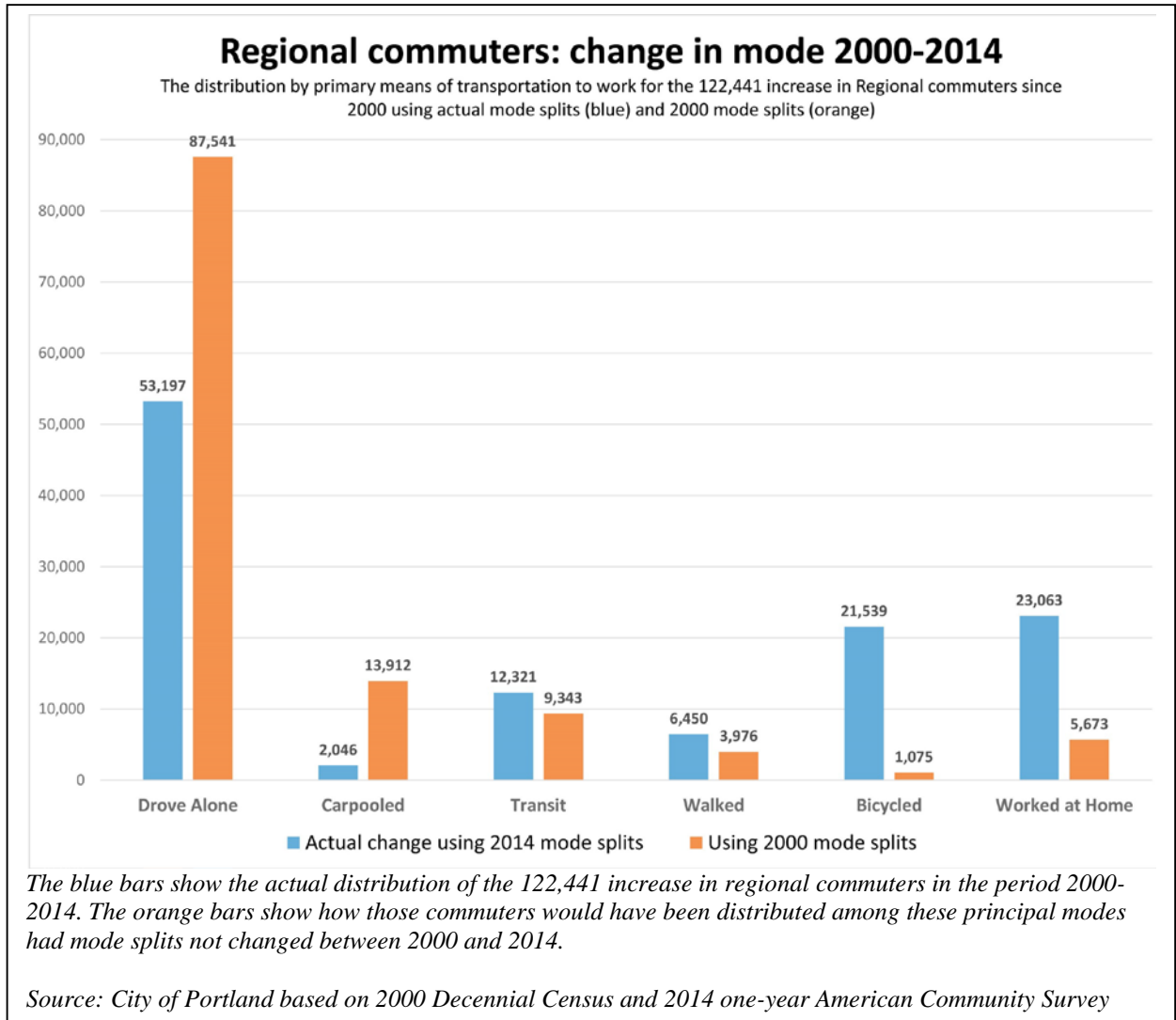
**Existing slow timeline for completion of regional active transportation networks**

The above graph is also based on information from Metro’s Regional Active Transportation Plan (Table 10 in the plan). It shows that the 2014 financially constrained RTP projects for transit, roads-bridges-freight-throughways, and active transportation will require 27 years, 44 years and 208 years, respectively to complete at current funding levels. As will be demonstrated below, bicycle transportation has been instrumental in achieving many of the region’s goals. Because of that, this timeline—and anything that threatens to further slow it down—is a disservice to achieving adopted regional goals.

**Since 2000 bicycle transportation has been the principal means of transportation limiting drive-alone commuting**

Before changing a funding program it is appropriate to ask how well the current program has performed. Data provided by Portland’s Bicycle Coordinator—displayed below—suggests that the relatively small investments made regionally in active transportation have had the highest return on investment for all modes.

The data demonstrates that bicycle transportation is the principal means of transportation that has minimized the potential number of drive alone commuters. Regionally, the number of commuters increased by more than 122,000 in the period 2000-2014. Of that increase, only 53,000 were drive-alone commuters. More than 21,000 were bicycle commuters (with another 26,000 who worked at home). Had mode splits in 2014 been what they were in 2000, then the number of drive alone commuters would have increased by 87,500. Bicycle transportation was the means of transportation that contributed the most during this time period to limit drive alone commuters to only 43 percent of the total increase in commuters.



Minimizing drive alone commuting is consistent with the region’s Six Desired Outcomes and many of our Climate Smart Strategies. We encourage JPACT and the Metro Council to work toward increased funding for bicycle transportation and to not just preserve the existing Regional Flexible Fund split, but to instead expand it to provide all funding to active transportation. That includes considerations about the “extra” \$12 million currently in Step 1 funding. That is consistent with the Region’s goals.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of Portland’s Bicycle Advisory Committee,

Heather McCarey, Vice Chairperson  
Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee

C: Commissioner Steve Novick, Portland City Council  
Director Leah Treat, Portland Bureau of Transportation