



May 20, 2019

Salem-Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS)
100 High St. SE, Suite 200
Salem, OR 97301

Chair Clark, Vice Chair Kylo and Members of the SKATS Policy Committee:

On behalf of the Safe Routes Partnership, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment on the draft Regional Transportation Systems Plan (RTSP) for 2019 – 2043. The Safe Routes Partnership advocates for policies that support regional investments in active transportation and healthy community design. We share several of the priorities identified in the RTSP, including minimizing traffic-related deaths and injuries, providing a multimodal system, supporting Safe Routes to School (SRTS) programs, and increasing access for people who walk, bike and wheel. As SKATS considers approval of the draft RTSP, we respectfully ask for the Policy Committee to consider the following recommendations:

- **Elevate focus on safety** – The Salem-Keizer area has made tremendous progress towards establishing a regional Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program, and we're excited to continue assisting with this development. In addition to supporting SRTS and reducing crashes, the RTSP should elevate its focus on safety when discussing congestion mitigation and traffic flow. More safe travel options need to be provided, and car speeds should be carefully managed with posted speeds and infrastructure design. The RTSP and subsequent TIPs should prioritize projects that will increase safety for people who are walking, biking and wheeling.
- **Advance commitment to equity** – Increase public engagement efforts to focus on impacted communities and prioritize projects that provide equitable outcomes. People with lower incomes and people of color are less likely to have access to infrastructure for safe walking and biking, and are disproportionately at risk of being injured or killed in motor vehicle crashes, especially as pedestrians. To turn these inequities around, we must focus on prioritizing and working with communities where investments and policy changes are needed most.
- **Broaden data collection** – The region has captured ample data on car travel, which is reflected in the RTSP, but there is very limited information available on other mobility use. Consider developing a regional mobility counting program that captures not only vehicle data, but people who are walking, biking and wheeling throughout the region. This data will not only support SKATS in future planning and projects, but also enhance local efforts to improve mobility.
- **Promote health-related outcomes** – Promote walking, bicycling and transit as positive alternatives to single occupancy car travel. Focus on projects that will improve air quality, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and provide opportunities for physical activity during travel.

Thank you for the chance to provide input as you consider adoption of the 2019 – 2043 RTSP. We look forward to working with SKATS on future active transportation projects and initiatives in our region.

Sincerely,

Becky Gilliam

Becky Gilliam
Pacific Northwest Regional Policy Manager, Safe Routes Partnership
becky@saferoutespartnership.org