

COVID RECOVERY: TRANSPORTATION FRAMEWORK



Connecting people to opportunity
and each other is, and always will be, essential.

In response to the global COVID pandemic, TCC developed a just recovery framework for transportation to help ensure policy decisions center equity and support transit agencies, the riders they serve, and workers who make it possible.

CENTER RACIAL EQUITY

During recovery we must center racial equity to address long standing disparities and build a fair transportation system.

PRIORITIZE TRANSIT IN A JUST ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Transit moves our economy
and communities.

FILL THE FUNDING GAP

For transit to thrive long-term, we need to fill the funding holes due to COVID and other existing needs with sustainable, progressive revenue sources.

CENTER RACIAL EQUITY

During recovery we must center racial equity to address long standing disparities and build a fair transportation system.



THE FACTS

1. COVID has underscored that people of color disproportionately count on transit as a lifeline.

- Ridership has remained highest on routes that serve communities of color.¹
- Though Metro ridership has dropped off in wealthy and white communities, on some routes ridership has remained higher than 70% of pre-COVID levels.²

2. Health disparities due to the transportation system have been exacerbated by COVID.

- Asthma, air pollution in communities of color make Black, Indigenous, and People of Color more likely to die from COVID.³

3. For transit, biking, and walking to be viable options for all communities, we must eliminate inequitable enforcement and remove policing from transportation

- The traffic stop is the most common police interaction.⁴ Across all modes, locally and across the nation, failure to show proof of payment, broken tail lights, jaywalking, and other minor traffic infractions have resulted in altercations with the police that ended in civilian death.



OUR PRIORITIES

- ✓ Ensuring agencies use equity analyses and equitable community engagement practices to center those most at risk when making service changes.
- ✓ Developing project selection frameworks at the state and region that would change the way we fund transportation projects and programs to emphasize emissions reductions, environmental justice, health, and safety.
- ✓ Pushing for the widespread adoption of equity policies, the hiring of equity staff, and the creation of resourced equity advisory boards at transportation agencies.
- ✓ Identifying policy and budget actions to remove harmful outcomes of policing and enforcement in transportation, including upstream solutions that make transportation safer, cleaner, easier, and more affordable.

PRIORITIZE TRANSIT IN A JUST ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Transit moves our economy and communities.



THE FACTS

1. Transit moves essential workers.

- In Washington State, 34% of essential workers take transit to get to their jobs.⁵

2. Investing in transit creates more jobs, faster.

- Recovery dollars spent on public transportation produce 70 percent more job hours than money spent on highways.⁶

3. Transit connects people to opportunity.

- Commuting time has emerged as the single strongest factor in the odds of escaping poverty. The longer an average commute in a given county, the worse the chances of low-income families there moving up the ladder.⁷
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4. A car-centric recovery will result in increased pollution, congestion and disparities in transportation access.



OUR PRIORITIES

- ✓ Ensuring new funding, including federal stimulus money, invests in transit, teleliving, biking, walking, and rolling infrastructure, networks, and programs.
- ✓ Continuing intersectional coalition building across business, labor, environmental, and social justice advocates.
- ✓ Hosting a weekly COVID call with advocates and agency staff across Washington.

FILL THE FUNDING GAP

For transit to thrive long-term, we need to fill the funding holes due to COVID and other existing needs with sustainable, progressive revenue sources.



THE FACTS

1. COVID has further decimated funding for transportation, nationally and in Washington State.

- TransitCenter estimates that transit agencies will see a \$26-\$40B annual shortfall due to COVID-related declines in fare and tax revenue.⁸

2. Transit funding is volatile and regressive

- The most recent projections for King County Metro estimate an unprecedented loss in sales tax revenue and farebox collections totaling \$280 million in 2020, and up to \$615 million 2020-2022.⁹
- Local funding comprises 87% of transit funding statewide – primarily sales tax.¹⁰

3. A huge portion of state dollars are forbidden from transit and active transportation spending.

- The State's 18th Amendment, adopted in 1944, still prohibits the use of gas tax on multimodal transportation projects.¹¹
- Only 2% of all transit funding is provided by the state.¹²



OUR PRIORITIES

- ✓ Pursuing federal and state relief funding for transit operations, cleaning costs, backfill for revenue losses.
- ✓ Seeking more and more flexible recovery funding by shaping new statewide and local revenue ideas, such as the Road Usage Charge and Congestion Pricing, to be progressive and sustainable.
- ✓ Supporting local ballot measures for transit funding.
- ✓ Working across agencies to ensure that cuts from budget shortfalls do the least amount of harm.

Endnotes

1. <https://seattletransitblog.com/2020/04/28/metro-ridership-shifts-hint-at-the-future/>
2. <https://kingcountymetro.blog/2020/08/07/covid-19-update-summer-ridership-remains-steady-masks-required-when-riding-transit/>
3. https://www.medrxiv.org/content/10.1101/2020.04.05.20054502v2?fbclid=IwAR3ZhanNrDMOmO7Sr3aHLAaXSSaLTHbH02mym1rCvrBx8q2ZqfWU_iAUos
4. <https://openpolicing.stanford.edu/findings/>
5. <https://transitcenter.org/2-8-million-u-s-essential-workers-ride-transit-to-their-jobs/> (see appendix)
6. <https://smartgrowthamerica.org/app/uploads/2020/04/SGA-T4A-Lessons-from-the-2009-Stimulus.pdf>
7. <https://www.businessinsider.in/theres-a-link-between-unreliable-transportation-and-sustained-poverty/articleshow/47191399.cms>
8. https://transitcenter.org/estimated-financial-impact-of-covid-19-on-u-s-transit-agencies-26-38-billion-annually/#_ftn6
9. <https://kingcountymetro.blog/2020/06/11/metro-plans-september-service-change-amid-budget-challenges/&sa=D&ust=1600724250185000&usg=AFQjCNEWcMTolxBbQ8tCQ7Xj5j7WVHMAQQ>
10. Washington State Transportation Commission
11. <http://leg.wa.gov/JTC/trm/Documents/TRM%25202017%2520Update/7%2520-%252018th%2520Amendment-Final.pdf&sa=D&ust=1600459541991000&usg=AFQjCNHAnj80lH39mRouGWg4YVcGyqRtWA>
12. Washington State Transportation Commission