

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2018

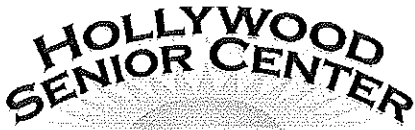
Dear TriMet Board and Advisory Council Members,

The Hollywood Senior Center was encouraged to see the 2017 Oregon Legislature approve Transportation Funding Bill HR 2017. On behalf of the Hollywood Senior Center and the thousands of seniors and adults with disabilities we support, we ask today that TriMet prioritizes and invests in the quality of life and well-being of seniors and older adults with disabilities by allocating \$5 million a year of State Special Transportation Funds to support accessible transportation services provided by community partners like Ride Connection.

Transportation is essential to the independence of older adults living in the Hollywood Senior Center's service area. Access to transportation options is critical in achieving our mission of assisting low-income seniors in remaining independent including living in their homes and accessing vital services and programs. Transportation is a key enabler for seniors to have access to opportunities to thrive as they age. Transportation is critical for seniors to maintain access to friends, family and the wider community. Each year, the Hollywood Senior Center conducts listening sessions in the N/NE Community. Transportation remains the top need and priority for those we support. Results from our N/NE Listening Sessions, client satisfaction surveys and our growing transportation assistance wait list illustrate the gap in transportation assistance and services within the safety net system. The inability of seniors to access accessible transportation remains a key barrier for older adults in N/NE Portland. This disparity only builds as seniors face the increasing cost of living on a fixed income. A \$5 million a year investment of State Special Transportation Funds will dramatically reduce the service gap for vulnerable individuals with special needs who may not be able to otherwise drive or ride fixed route services to go grocery shopping, reach healthcare appointments, and stay connected through life-long learning and socialization at Senior Centers.

Every day, the Hollywood Senior Center works with Ride Connection and its' Service Partners to arrange for door-to-door transportation for our clients. Clients like Leeta Liles, who at 73 is legally blind depends on this transportation assistance to get her to weekly medical appointments. For other clients like Mr. Ly Khac Ly, Ride Connection has enabled him to stay connected to his peers and improve food security, bringing him weekly to the Hollywood Senior Center for more than 15 years to play Bunco and eat at our meal site. Our clients need these transportation services to thrive. Unfortunately, we know too well that there are many seniors and adults with disabilities that Ride Connection and transportation partners are unable to provide rides to. With growth in demand along with the inflation of costs and wages, service providers have been left with no other option but to decrease services and turn down an increasing number of rides for vulnerable customers.

Allocating funds from HB 2017 to accessible transportation services would benefit those reliant on these services. These funds make it possible for seniors and adults with disabilities to get to



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medical appointments, go grocery shopping and decrease the isolation they so often experience.

We're grateful for the Legislature's support of HB 2017. This is an incredible investment and opportunity to improve transportation services for vulnerable populations. We ask that you continue to support older adults and people with an allocation of \$5 million of State Special Transportation Funds to support accessible transportation services provided by community partners like Ride Connection.

With great appreciation,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amber Kern Johnson".

Amber Kern Johnson  
Executive Director