

Portland Clean Energy Community Benefits Fund (PCEF) Roundtable

Key Takeaways

Transportation Decarbonization Meetings #1, #2 & #3

February 9, 2023, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

February 23, 2023, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

March 2, 2023, 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

Key Takeaways

- Need to have a primary focus on public transit and active transportation (walking, biking, scooters, etc.) to reduce personal vehicle miles traveled.
- Need to increase accessibility to public transportation and other alternatives that reduce greenhouse gas emissions including expanding services for folks with disabilities such as paratransit services.
- Need community education programs for accessing transit, biking, and general decarbonization.
- Transition to electric vehicles can be a short-term goal, but mode shifting to alternative transportation methods that come with co-benefits of community resiliency and vision zero needs to be the long-term vision.
- Converting rideshare drivers' cars to electric can reduce greenhouse gases and increase wages of priority populations because there are much higher profit margins for rideshare drivers with electric vehicles. However, there is concern around incentivizing rideshare that locks us into a system of corporate exploitation of workers/drivers and lack of protection for riders/customers.

Existing Conditions

- The low-income fare program currently being implemented leaves out huge numbers of folks.
- The youth transit pass program at TriMet doesn't extend over the summer, middle schools don't have access, and it comes with little to no education to use it.
- There's an increase in electric vehicle (EV) adoption but it's not benefiting frontline communities.
- Current feasibility of EVs relies on lithium mining. We need to recognize the impact this has on communities of color.
- People in mobility devices have difficulty switching to other transportation methods like biking. There are some programs for subsidizing Uber and Lyft to make them more accessible to disabilities.
- Get Around and other carsharing programs have pulled out of cities, including Portland, because of lack of density making it difficult for them to remain profitable.
- Air pollution and its health impacts are being increasingly talked about. Unsurprisingly the people most impacted tend to be people of color.

- Many high schools and trade schools have career tech programs that are often built around automotive mechanics; Benson HS now a bike mechanics program.

Desired State

- Infrastructure to make biking and e-biking comfortable & affordable such as:
 - Subsidizing transit fares and e-bike rebates
 - Bike gear and clothing distribution for low-income communities
 - Secure, abundant, bike parking
 - Bike-Valet
 - E-cargo bike library
- Expanded transit hours to support people who don't work 9-5 jobs, often priority populations.
- Increased EV charging infrastructure and affordable utility rates.
- Using a Participatory Budgeting Process to allocate resources to strategic program transportation projects

Barriers

- Lack of existing data & lack of funding to collect data.
- Potential lack of alignment between City bureaus and existing permit requirements.
- Complex applications with ambitious goals and burdensome requirements
- Lack of political will and leadership in transportation decarbonization.
- Biketown's program for high school students only applies to those 16 and older and reducing that age would require changing the state law.

Key opportunities

- Explore partnerships with unions, other workplace and labor organizing groups to develop and support transportation choices (e.g., bike buddy/trains or carpool, route planning/guiding).
- Municipal Bikeshares as opposed to privately funded bikeshares.
- Transportation wallet has built programs and systems that are ready to scale.
- Job development benefits of training people to be bicycle repair-people.
- "Bike trains" organized by community groups and individuals to help get families out of cars by providing safety in numbers and accountability for behavior change.
- Opportunities from the national bipartisan infrastructure bill which includes a carbon reduction program. There is \$80 million coming to Oregon. These funds can be unlocked for neighborhood efforts to actualize these goals.
- Electrifying freight is a potential opportunity as they make up 24% of emissions and around 5% of vehicle trips. There are already some entrepreneurs doing this that need funding.