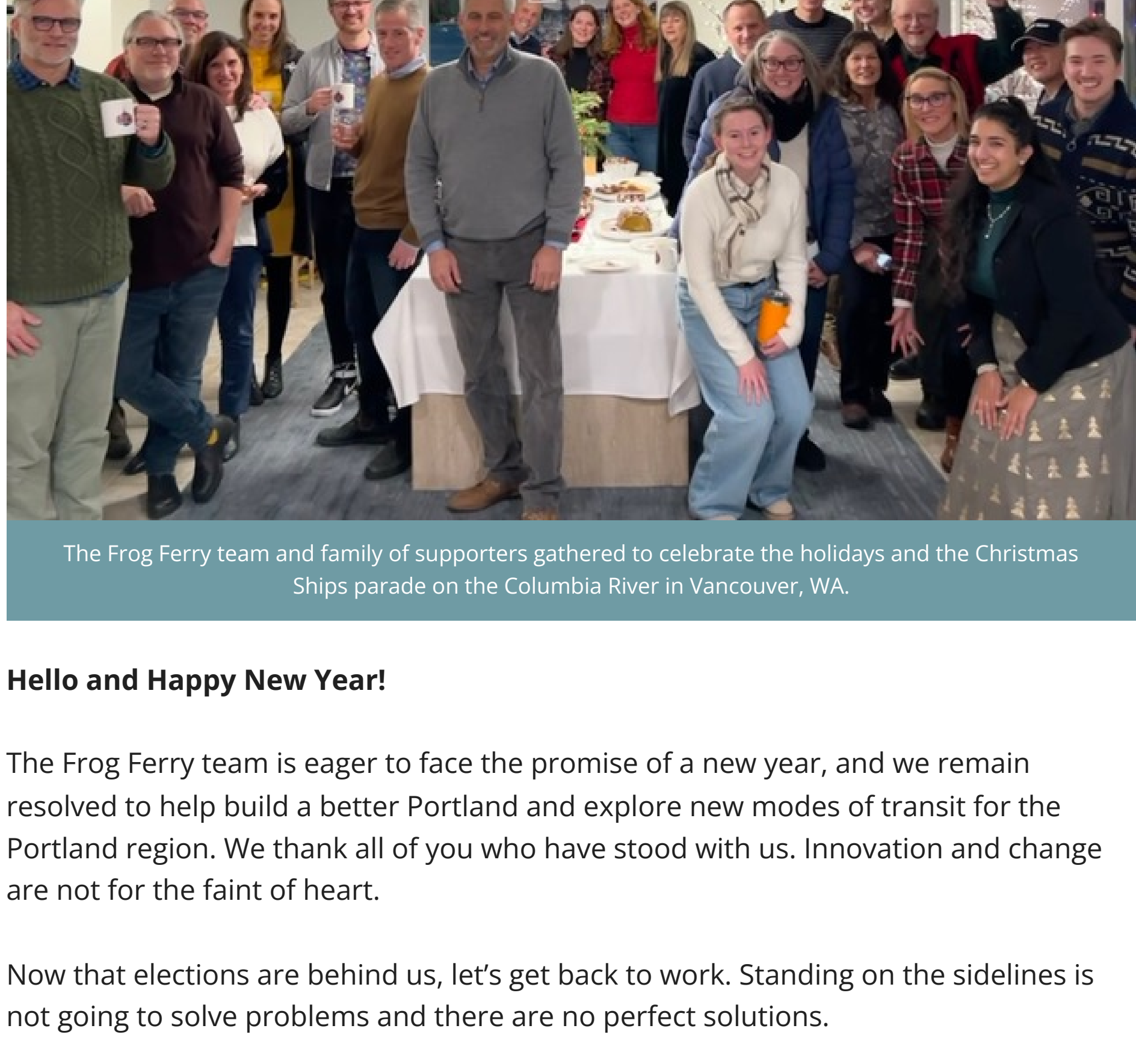


**Be the Change in 2023; Let's help build a better Portland.**



The Frog Ferry team and family of supporters gathered to celebrate the holidays and the Christmas Ships parade on the Columbia River in Vancouver, WA.

**Hello and Happy New Year!**

The Frog Ferry team is eager to face the promise of a new year, and we remain resolved to help build a better Portland and explore new modes of transit for the Portland region. We thank all of you who have stood with us. Innovation and change are not for the faint of heart.

Now that elections are behind us, let's get back to work. Standing on the sidelines is not going to solve problems and there are no perfect solutions.

**Choice:** There is a clear need for each one of us to "Be the Change."

While we are all aware of climate events and the need for urgent and necessary changes, we all hold the power of choice: how will each of us decide how to respond to climate change?

We are always looking for volunteers who share a belief in building a better future Portland. At Frog Ferry, we choose a growth mindset, one with a more functional and equitable community filled with citizens willing to advocate for environmental health. Our Frog Ferry supporters understand the need to foster innovation and they directly impact our capacity to bring a passenger ferry service to our region.

**How can you help?** Community health is a team sport. Each of us can engage with one another, elected leaders or with vital organizations more substantively. This is a crucial time to come together to build community—especially for those who want to address the climate emergency now rather than shifting the burden to the next generation.

- Attend a meeting in your neighborhood, at your City Council, or for special projects. Portlanders, please don't wait for things to improve. Your city needs you. Please re-engage.
- Share your voice; write a letter of support or provide public testimony (written or oral).
- Find a worthy nonprofit that represents your values and donate your time, skills, or funding.
- Be intentional in providing grace to others, despite differences.
- Write to City Council and share your support: <https://www.portland.gov/government>
- Donate to a cause that strikes your fancy. Here's [ours](#).

**Climate Goals:** The United Nations Climate Change Conference put the transition to electric vehicle transportation at the forefront of addressing climate emissions, resulting in a global memorandum of understanding for zero-emission medium and heavy vehicles. The new goal is net-zero emissions by 2050 with an interim goal of 30% zero-emission vehicle sales by 2030. Oregon has set a goal of reducing climate-warming emissions by 50% by 2035. We are one piece of the puzzle to achieve those goals.

**Decarbonization/Net Zero:** There is a trend of organizations purchasing carbon off-sets to "green" an organization and the oversight of such programs are being questioned. As we consider the breadth of transportation projects in our region, the majority are road-related and will lead to greater capacity and inevitably more CO2 emissions. Purchasing carbon credits is another exercise to cut their carbon footprint while delivering far fewer benefits than promised. Bloomberg Green reports in a U Cal Berkeley paper that 82% of promised carbon offsets are essentially fraudulent. Jim Hourdequin, a timber executive is calling out carbon off-sets, including some of his own projects, as shortchanging the environment. "I want carbon offsets to be respected as a solution. The future of this market is going to be about behavior change. We're all going to have to design projects that are going to change practices and remove CO2 from the air."

**Revolution:** The ferry initiative is revolutionary, but not ground-breaking. Other river cities continue to build and grow their ferry operations. The City of Portland has river transit in its Central City 2035 Plan and Regional Transportation Plan as well as in Metro's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (to build community resilience). After 5 ½ years of work, we can see the power and threat of a green ferry to the status quo planning in the Portland metropolitan area. With entrenched systems and organizations, it's often left to small grassroot nonprofits like ours to shine a spotlight on what's possible. We're willing to do the heavy lifting and have done most of the work at no public cost.

**Pilot Project:** Cathedral Park to RiverPlace: For risk-averse communities and public agencies, launching a pilot project can be an effective way to try something new. Pilots or "demonstration projects" are an opportunity for hands-on "learning by doing" and allow communities to navigate legal, operational, and political challenges before committing to a long-term plan. Instead of jumping to a full deployment, a pilot project can engage stakeholders early on and build momentum towards a larger-scale, needs-driven deployment. For more information about our proposed pilot project, visit <https://frogferry.com/pilot/route-and-schedule/>.

**Together:** We are all in this together and share one planet. Wherever you live, the climate emergency and need for building a more resilient and prosperous community is a shared goal. We are going to continue to share the streets, river, schools, coffee houses, air, water, and gathering spaces together and for our community to thrive, we need to foster understanding through active engagement, data, and making thoughtful personal choices. Let's bring cost effective, environmentally friendly solutions to Portland this year!



Lewis and Clark College Environmental Studies student, Grace Blunck, discusses the benefits of ferry transit. Frog Ferry Founder, Susan Bladholm, was a featured speaker.

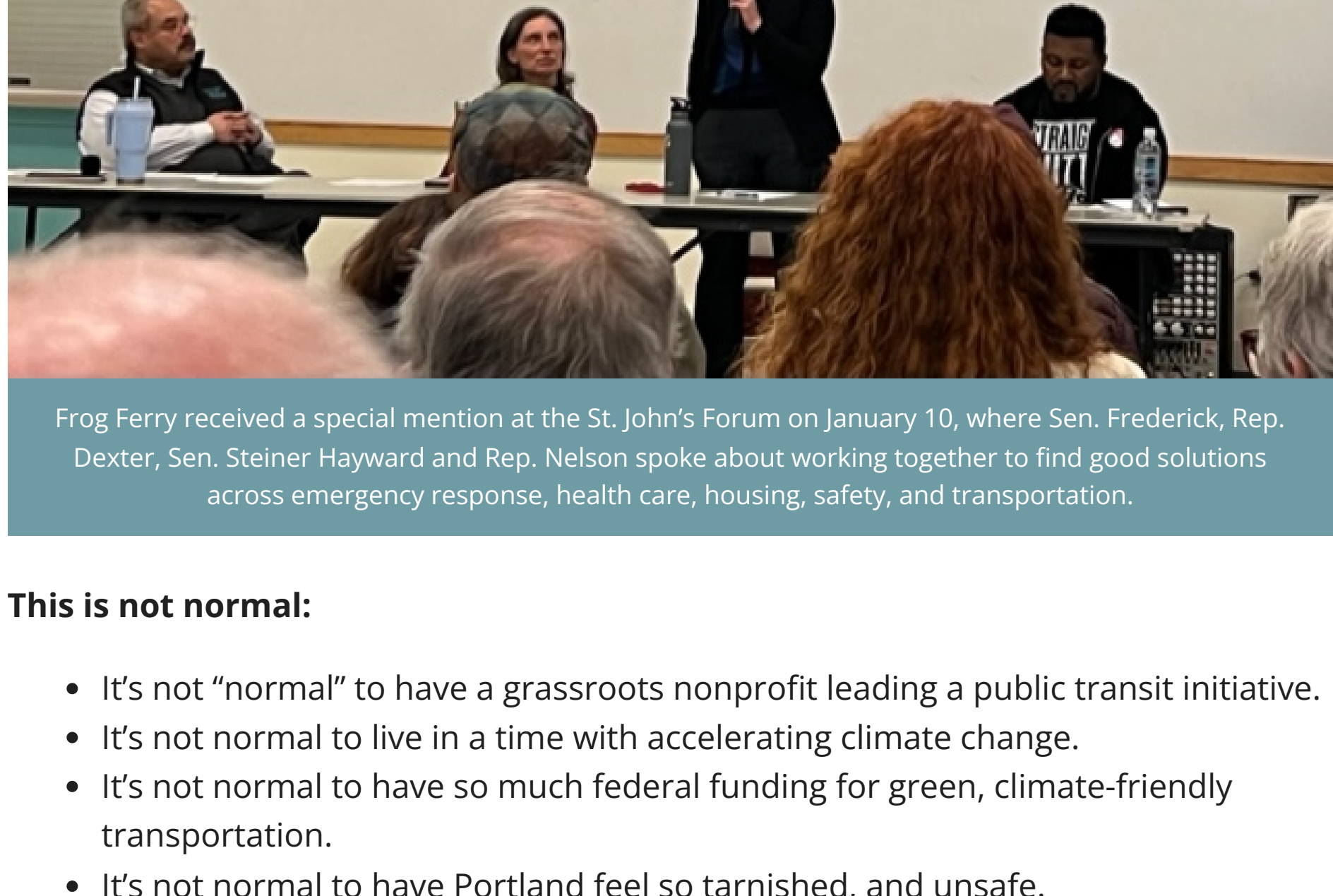
**Letter from Susan:**

Happy New Year! Michelle Obama's new book, "The Light We Carry," suggests that we get to work, knowing that where we spend our time and energy matters. The pandemic, political unrest, wars, and climate change are unlocking a boldness in many people driven to bring positive change.

How do we translate purpose into action? We're doing just that; visit <https://frogferry.com/about/research/> to see several of the plans we've delivered, and what we need next to produce an Operations Plan for the Pilot Project.

I recently had the benefit of taking a yoga class at the edge of the Pacific Ocean and the instructor talked about how surfers live for the "edge"—that slim line of a wave that builds in power to whisk them towards shore. Frog Ferry has been living on a narrow edge since its inception, but 2022 was a particularly narrow, razor's edge of existence for us. Now, we clearly need to determine whether Portland City Council will partner with us to lead Portland into a bolder and brighter direction. Can our City Council create a wave of safety, prosperity, resiliency, and community vibrance?

We've delivered a lot of work, (working with the public agencies), and the data is clear; a ferry operation makes excellent sense for Portland, is cost effective, is time efficient (we can put a boat on the water within two years whereas a new bridge will take an estimated 25 years), and the time and cost is nearly negligible for the City, as our team is willing and ready to move forward to solicit funding, complete the Pilot Project Operations Plan, hire an operator, build out the existing docks, and get a boat built. Most new transit projects are in the billions—with a capital "B." A pilot project will be around \$12M, with a capital "M." Building out a full 7 vessel, 10 dock electric ferry operation would cost an estimated \$50M—to move 1M passengers a year.



Global PDX conference "Climate Catalysts" panel in October, 2022: Matt Glazewski, Julie Kuchepatov, Susan Bladholm and Clarence Edwards.

When you start something new, you don't have a roadmap and you can't always see where you're heading. We have the data, the industry technology continues to rapidly advance, unprecedented federal and grant funding is available, and we have a remarkable, tight-knit team. I view myself as a convener and curator, helping to pull together an expert team, our board, neighborhood leaders, our subject matter experts (decarbonization, transit planning, emergency response, marketing, ticketing, customer experience, ferry feasibility studies, research, graphic design, social media, digital experience, community engagement, media relations, government affairs...the list goes on)- feeling comfortable with the fact that I am not an expert in ferry planning or operations. We can lean on our amazing team to create something important and needed for our region-while doing it the Portland-way. Unlike other public ferry operations across the country which typically have a public agency contract with ferry consultants that outlines the infrastructure needs to stand up an operation, we are a grassroots effort that chose to start with the Community Benefit (Plan), Customer Experience (Plan), and the Frog Ferry Brand (Plan)- which foundationally reflects the drive to provide "Joy in the Journey." Our group comprised of our board, volunteers, ferry industry experts, and neighborhood leaders have been driven by creating something important and necessary for Portland and we are ready to get back to work.

**Where do we go from here?**  
All paths point to the need for Portland City Council to become an active partner.

As a nonprofit, we were awarded our 501(c)(3) status specifically because we are doing the work a public agency cannot/will not do. Public transportation is funded by federal and state sources going through a process to "designated recipients", comprised of large public agencies, transit agencies such as TriMet, tribes, municipalities, or ports. As a nonprofit, we cannot apply directly for those funds. We have appealed to all the designated recipients in our region and the City of Portland is our most likely partner.

Much like the Portland Streetcar, the City owns the rails and railcars, and the nonprofit board runs the organization, which contracts operations to TriMet. For Frog Ferry, our board oversees the organization, but we need the City to work with us to apply for state and federal funding while Frog Ferry oversees the contracting of operations (which will not be TriMet, as they don't operate ferries).

For many years, we have asked for oversight and a partnership by the City's Office of Management and Finance (for the grant applications and reporting) and for key City bureaus to work together with one another and Frog Ferry on the upgrades to existing docks, access/wayfinding to docks, home port siting, shoreside charging infrastructure, and the regulatory requirements.

**Why bother? Why not give up?**

We believe Portland needs help in many areas. We can help lead the work for this small, but significant project to get residents back downtown and out on our river-leaving their cars behind. And, our amazing supporters and stakeholders continue to fire us up.

A passenger ferry service aligns with the Portland Climate Action Plan (City of Portland), the Regional Transportation Plan (City of Portland), the Comprehensive Economic Development Plan (Metro/GPI) and the overall goals for social equity, climate action, education, community resilience. We didn't come up with a novel new idea, a passenger ferry operation has been included in City plans for 20 years.



Frog Ferry received a special mention at the St. John's Forum on January 10, where Sen. Frederick, Rep. Dexter, Sen. Steiner Hayward and Rep. Nelson spoke about working together to find good solutions across emergency response, health care, housing, safety, and transportation.

**This is not normal:**

- It's not "normal" to have a grassroots nonprofit leading a public transit initiative.
- It's not normal to live in a time with accelerating climate change.
- It's not normal to have so much federal funding for green, climate-friendly transportation.
- It's not normal to have Portland feel so tarnished, and unsafe.
- It's not normal for all of us to cut ourselves off from proven, equitable transit solutions that would better connect us to greenspaces.

Let's work together to create a better new "normal" for Portland that embraces the opportunity to connect with our rivers, our downtown, with new technology, with new ways of traversing the region, and with one another.

**Let's light up 2023 with grace, kindness, and a determined intention to build a better future Portland.**

As Ms. Obama says, "Operating with integrity matters. It will matter forever. It is a tool." Integrity is in our toolbox and always will be. And like Michelle, when others go low, we will continue to go high. We are staying tough, speaking our truth, and exist to serve all Portlanders in effort to make our community better. If you've read this far, thank you. I am grateful for your consideration and interest.

- Susan

If you want to make a difference, consider helping us out by writing a letter of support to [susan@frogferry.com](mailto:susan@frogferry.com) and providing testimony.



Frog Ferry leadership: Amy Snyder, Allison Tivnon, Nina Byrd and Susan Bladholm.

**FAQs**

Since our last newsletter we have continued to receive questions about the status of our organization and efforts. We have provided answers to key questions below.

**Q: What is the status of the ODOT STIF grant contract with TriMet?**

**A:** Our contract with TriMet concluded on June 30, 2022. Out of a \$500K grant awarded by ODOT in 2021, only \$100K was passed through by TriMet. Frog Ferry received a memo from TriMet leadership in July 2022, stating that there are no outstanding issues between the two organizations.

**Q: Is Frog Ferry still in operation?**

**A:** Yes, Frog Ferry is still working to realize our vision of bringing a passenger ferry service to the Portland-Vancouver region. We realize the tremendous impact that a ferry service can have on revitalizing our region and contributing to climate goals outlined by our state and city leaders. We remain a strong grassroots organization, thanks in large part to the time and expertise volunteered by our supporters.

**Q: What will the path forward look like for Frog Ferry?**

**A:** We look forward to engaging in discussions with Portland City Council to find a productive path forward to access federal ferry funds and share in project oversight. If the City of Portland can truly partner with us on an FTA application, we stand a good chance of receiving the millions of dollars that could help improve our docks and fund our pilot demonstration vessel and operations. With a true partnership from the City of Portland, we will be eligible for additional sources of funding from local grants and foundations.

**Q: How soon can the pilot demonstration project take place?**

**A:** FTA funding applications are typically due early September. If the award is made to Frog Ferry in Spring 2024, we could have a boat in the water in 2025.

**Q: What happens if City Council doesn't step up?**

**A:** Unfortunately, there is not a path forward for a public ferry operation without a public agency involved. At this time, we do have an interest in pursuing a private business model with higher ticket prices.

**Q: How can I support Frog Ferry?**

**A:** We are always looking for volunteers to join our efforts. We welcome any outreach to volunteer for one of our working committees including operations, marketing, or finance. Additionally, we would love to speak with you if you are willing to provide testimony to City leaders about the benefits of a green mode of transit in our region. Simply write to your [Portland City Commissioners](#) and tell them you want to see a ferry operation happen. There are numerous opportunities to provide live or written testimony throughout the year. Finally, we welcome any financial contributions to help keep our organization running and pay for critical services and outreach tools. Donations can be made with the button below or on our website.

[Donate Now](#)

