

September 2, 2020

Metropolitan Planning Committee
Central Lane MPO
859 Willamette St #500
Eugene, OR 97401

SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT ON AGENDA ITEM 7.1

Dear MPC Members:

I encourage you to move forward with planning for greenhouse gas emission reduction and efforts to implement the Statewide Transportation Strategy (STS) for Greenhouse Gas Emission reduction. As explained below, (1) this is work that the MPO is allowed and encouraged to do under federal law; (2) significant additional work remains to be done; and (3) funding from the state is available to support this work.

Federal law, rules and guidelines allow and encourage MPOs to conduct scenario planning and plan for GHG reduction as part of Regional Transportation Planning, While MPOs can not make “land use decisions” or mandate land use changes, federal rules allow and encourage MPOs to consider and evaluate a range of alternatives and actions for meeting transportation needs as they prepare regional transportation plans. This includes considering changes to land use plans and development patterns and other actions such as changing parking regulations or implementing TDM programs. FHWA considers “scenario planning” that evaluates a broad range of alternatives a “best practice” and MPOs around the country have over the last decade engaged in such work.

Significant additional work is needed to meet GHG reduction targets

While the Central Lane MPO conducted high-level scenario planning for GHG reduction five years ago, substantial work remains to put in place regional and local plans, programs and actions that will actually accomplish needed GHG reductions. The Central Lane Scenario Plan was a good start, but the “preferred scenario” it laid out was not adopted and existing plans fall well short of meeting GHG reduction targets. Further, it is clear that much more planning is needed to convert the high-level strategies, like expanding transit, into specific plans and investments that will actually increase transit service and ridership. Similarly, the CLSP simply *assumed* that the region would meet its goal of tripling (i.e. increasing by 300%) the share of trips made by bicycle - no analysis has been done to determine what additional plans, programs or

actions would be needed to accomplish that goal. Clearly, more detailed work is needed.

Funding is available to support planning for GHG reduction and implementation of the Statewide Transportation Strategy

As you know, Governor Brown has - through EO 20-04 - directed state agencies to ramp up their efforts to plan for GHG reduction and implement the Statewide Transportation Strategy (STS). Earlier this month, the Oregon Transportation Commission voted to provide up to \$5 million of additional funding to support metropolitan planning work for GHG reduction and STS implementation over the next 3-4 years. While details for awarding these funds remain to be worked out, it is clear that state funding to support additional work is available.

As we should all know by now, dramatic action to reduce GHG emissions is needed to avoid truly catastrophic changes to earth's climate. Past planning work, including the Central Lane Scenario Planning effort, shows that we can reduce emissions and that the actions we take can make our citizens and communities safer, healthier and more prosperous. Accordingly, I encourage you to make GHG reduction and implementation of the Statewide Transportation Strategy a priority for MPO planning work.

Sincerely,

Robert Cortright

Salem Oregon
23cort@gmail.com