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Date: December 10, 2021
From: community leaders (listed below)
To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
% Paul Thompson

Re: Move projects between financially constrained and illustrative lists to better align Central Lane RTP with regional values and priorities

Dear members of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC):

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the *draft* Central Lane Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which was released on October 29, 2021.

As our designated representatives for the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), we urge you to direct your staff to make modest changes to the RTP prior to adoption, as detailed below.

The RTP has good goals and objectives reflecting regional values and priorities, including for transportation options, safety, equity, and climate change (Chapter 2).

But the planned projects don't do enough to advance those goals. Indeed, by its own estimation, the RTP fails to achieve some key outcomes and it is uncertain to what extent it advances others (Chapter 6).

Our region must do better. Now.

Fortunately, before adopting the RTP, MPC has an opportunity to tweak the plan to better align it with regional values and priorities. As the RTP itself explains (pages 89, 99–100), higher priority projects should be included in the financially constrained list (Chapter 5) and lower priority ones in the illustrative list (Appendix J).¹

We recommend moving lower priority projects to the illustrative list and higher priority ones to the financially constrained list.

Given the desire to adopt the plan in early 2022, it might not be possible to do so perfectly. But the perfect is the enemy of the good. MPC should make such changes now, confident that these can be reevaluated and if necessary revised in the future.

¹ "Federal law requires the planned transportation investments in the RTP be financially constrained based on reasonably foreseeable forecast[s] of future revenues. The forecasted revenues needed to fund the plan's projects and programs over the next 25 years are included in the Constrained List." (page 89)

"Overall, CLMPO has forecasted \$1.65 billion in revenues over the course of the plan horizon year of 2045. The total transportation costs, the Constrained list plus the Illustrative list in Chapter 5, are estimated at \$2.93 billion, leaving an approximate funding gap of \$1.2[8] billion." (page 99)

"The revenue shortfalls identified above can be addressed through either one of two primary means: a prioritization of needs (and the resulting movement of low-priority unfunded needs to a future project list, otherwise referred to as an illustrative list), or the development of new revenue sources." (page 100)

Building a successful community by bringing people together
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That said, in a memo sent 1-½ years ago (see attached), many of us called on MPC to take steps in this direction, specifically to slow climate change. We recommended, “Invest all available resources in supporting safe and practical active transportation, considering tactical urbanism to implement improvements faster.” But it has only been since late October when the draft RTP was released that we are able to translate that general recommendation into the specific ones you see here.

Move projects to illustrative list

We recommend moving the following four projects from the financial constrained list to the illustrative list, freeing up \$130.4 million.

If our goal is to reduce vehicle travel and greenhouse gas emissions, building new interchanges or adding lanes is a lower priority.

New Arterial Link or Interchange²

- **#30 Eugene-Springfield Highway (OR 126) at 52nd Street:** Construct interchange (ODOT, \$40 million, 2025–2029).
- **#27 Eugene-Springfield Highway (OR 126) at Main Street:** Construct interchange (ODOT, \$50 million, 2030–2034).

Added Freeway Lanes or Major Interchange Improvements³

- **#312 Randy Papé Beltline Highway, Roosevelt Boulevard to West 11th Avenue:** Add lanes on Beltline Highway and provide intersection improvements (ODOT, Eugene, \$28.1 million, 2030–2034).

Arterial Capacity Improvements⁴

- **#333 West 11th Avenue, Green Hill Road to Terry Street:** Upgrade to 5-lane urban facility with 2 lanes in each direction, a center lane, sidewalk, and multi-use path (currently a 2-lane roadway) (ODOT, Eugene, \$12.3 million, 2030–2034).

² See Table 23. Note that at this time we are *not* recommending moving to the illustrative list:

- **#512 Beltline Local Arterial Bridge, Beaver Street to Delta Highway:** Construct new 2-lane arterial bridge over the Willamette River connecting Green Acres Road with Division Avenue Include modifications to Beltline/Delta ramps consistent with the Beltline Highway Facility Plan (ODOT, Lane County, City of Eugene, \$118.8 million, 2025–2029).

³ See Table 24. Note that at this time we are *not* recommending moving to the illustrative list:

- **#638 Delta/Beltline Interchange:** Interim/safety improvements; replace/revise existing ramps; widen Delta Highway bridge to five lanes (ODOT, \$20 million, 2020–2024).
- **#821 Eugene-Springfield Highway (OR 126) @ Mohawk Boulevard Interchange:** Add lanes on ramps (ODOT, \$2 million, 2030–2034).

⁴ See Table 25. Note that at this time we are *not* recommending moving to the illustrative list numerous other arterial capacity improvements, including these costing at least \$10 million:

- **#789 Gateway/Beltline Road, International Way to Postal Way:** Improve intersections and realign Gateway (Springfield, \$20 million, 2025–2029).
- **#830 Franklin Boulevard, I-5 to RR Tracks south of Franklin Boulevard/McVay Highway:** Multimodal urban standards and intersection control improvements (Springfield, \$35 million, 2020–2024).
- **#899 McVay Highway, East 19th Avenue to I-5:** Construct 2 or 3 lane cross-section as needed with sidewalks, bicycle facilities and transit facilities consistent with Main Street/McVay Highway Transit Feasibility Study and Springfield TSP project T-3 (Springfield, \$47 million, 2030–2034).
- **#119 Franklin Boulevard, Alder Street to Walnut Street:** 4 travel lanes, central planter strip and bus lanes, roundabouts, and shared use paths on both sides (Eugene, \$43.5 million, 2025–2029).

Move projects to financially constrained list

We recommend moving all 16 multi-use path projects from the illustrative list (Appendix J) to the financial constrained list, for a cost of just \$28.3 million.

If our goal is to increase the share of walking and bicycling trips, we need to invest in safe routes for these modes.

Multi-Use Paths without Road

- **#1001 Coburg Loop Path: Armitage Park Connector, McKenzie View Road intersection at Coburg Road north:** A 10' wide hard surface, multi-use path (Coburg, \$0.9 million, 2040-2045).
- **#911 New multi-use path, South 2nd Street to South B Street:** Construct a new multi-use 12-foot wide path (Springfield, \$0.6 million, 2040-2045).
- **#912 New multi-use path, South 2nd Street to Island Park:** Construct a new multi-use 12-foot wide path along the Mill Race (Springfield, \$3.1 million, 2040-2045).
- **#814 I-5 Path, Willamette River Area Path to By-Gully Path:** Construct a new multi-use 12-foot wide path (Springfield, \$1.7 million, 2040-2045).
- **#812 By-Gully Path Extension, Pioneer Parkway to 5th Street:** Construct a new multi-use 12-foot wide path (Willamalane, Springfield, \$0.2 million, 2040-2045).
- **Extend EWEB Trail Pioneer Parkway to Don Street:** Construct a new multi-use 12-foot wide path in the EWEB powerline corridor (Springfield, \$0.9 million, 2040-2045).
- **Springfield Christian School Channel Path, Dornoch Street to Laura Street:** Construct a new multi-use 12-foot wide path (Springfield, \$1.3 million, 2040-2045).
- **#112 16th Avenue Connector, Fern Ridge Path to Jefferson Street:** Multi-Use Path (Eugene, \$0.2 million, 2040-2045).
- **#221 Augusta Street Path, Laurel Hill Park to 30th Avenue:** Multi-Use Path (Eugene, \$1.4 million, 2040-2045).
- **#551 West Bank Path (B). Hileman County Park to Beltline Highway:** Multi-Use Path (Lane County, \$6.8 million, 2040-2045).
- **#426 Fern Ridge West Connector, Royal Street to Fern Ridge Path:** Multi-Use Path (Eugene, Lane County, \$0.1 million, 2040-2045).
- **#699 Willamette McKenzie Path, Beltline Road to Armitage Park:** Multi-Use Path (Eugene, Lane County, \$9 million, 2040-2045).
- **#426 Fern Ridge Path #3, Royal Avenue to Fern Ridge Reservoir:** Multi-Use Path (Eugene, Lane County, \$1.6 million 2040-2045).

On-Street Lanes or Routes with Road

- **#833 McVay Highway, I-5 to Franklin Boulevard:** Striped Lane (Springfield, \$0.2 million, 2040-2045).

On-Street Lanes or Routes without Road

- **#157 Jefferson Street, 5th Avenue to 28th Avenue:** Striped Lane (Eugene, \$0.2 million, 2040-2045).
- **#266 Washington Street, 5th Avenue to 13th Avenue:** Striped Lane (Eugene, \$0.1 million, 2040-2045).

In haste,

Phil Barnhart

Oregon State Representative (2001–2019)

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July 7, 2020

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

Metropolitan Policy Committee
c/o Paul Thompson
Lane Council of Governments
859 Willamette, Suite 500, Eugene, OR 97401

Re: Need to act now to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation

Dear members of the Central Lane MPO policy body:

We are writing to you as policymakers responsible for our regional transportation system.

We know that Oregon is already experiencing statewide impacts of a changing climate:

In August 2018, Portland and the Willamette Valley experienced some of the worst air quality on the planet owing to smoke from wildfires near and far. Ranchers in southern and eastern Oregon reported significant economic losses caused by lack of water from a low winter snowpack and a hot and dry summer. Climate change touches all corners of Oregon, but our frontline communities are most vulnerable. These include the economically disadvantaged and those who depend on natural resources for their livelihood: rural residents including Native Americans.¹

Oregon is no longer gaining ground in its greenhouse gas emissions reduction efforts. Emissions from electricity and gas use stayed flat or declined while transportation emissions are rising.²

We know what we need to do.^{3, 4} Indeed, we in Oregon have since the late 1980s.⁵ Now scientists are telling us we are almost out of time.⁶ We need to roll up our sleeves and act.

Regionally, we need to transform to a multi-modal, low-carbon transportation system:

- **Transportation actions:** Make it more attractive for people to carpool, ride the bus, bicycle, use an e-scooter, walk, telecommute, etc. and less attractive to drive alone.
- **Land use actions:** Encourage compact mixed-use development in central areas and close to major transit corridors to result in fewer or shorter motor vehicle trips.

At your last meeting, you discussed your desire for more funding for such transportation actions and that Central Lane MPO doesn't have authority to take land use actions.^{7, 8}

One can always lament the lack of money. But especially in this time of COVID-19 with budgets stretched thin, it is risky to expect more funding any time soon. Rather we need to do as much as we can with the funding we have.

Moreover, while Central Lane MPO as a body might not be authorized to *decide* land use, you can certainly *discuss* land use, aiming to coordinate separate actions taken by cities and Lane County. Indeed, under federal law MPOs are required to undertake a "continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3-C)" planning process.⁹ In particular, federal regulations explicitly call on MPOs to consider land use as it relates to transportation.¹⁰

Although there are many actions we could take, we urge you to prioritize these four:

1. **Compact urban development:** Public transit cannot cost-effectively serve urban sprawl. And investments in active transportation serve only those who live, work or shop close enough to take advantage of them. Although Central Lane MPO cannot *decide* on where or how to do transit-oriented development, missing middle housing or ADUs, you can and must *discuss* the need for such development as part of a “continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive (3C)” planning process, communicating with your separate councils and boards. Moreover, cities and Lane County can make such decisions—without the need for any more funding.
2. **Parking:** When we reduce the number of motor vehicle trips, we will need less parking. Begin planning for that now by reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements and by charging parking for more of its full impacts reducing the supply and increasing the cost of developable land on our community. Moreover, revenues from parking can be reinvested in other transportation options.
3. **Active transportation:** We have heard that at current funding levels it could take decades to build out planned pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure. We don’t have that long. Invest all available resources in supporting safe and practical active transportation, considering tactical urbanism^{11,12} to implement improvements faster. When offered funding to support people driving more, say thanks but no thanks, as it would take us in the wrong direction.
4. **Integrated planning and measuring:** The next update of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) must *address*—if not necessarily *decide*—not only transportation but also land use and climate change, as the three issues are inextricably interrelated. Moreover, the plan must provide for regular measurement to know how successful we are in meeting greenhouse gas reduction targets.¹³

We the undersigned call on you to not just talk the talk but to walk the walk—quickly.

We will be watching and supporting you in this shared journey.

In haste,

Phil Barnhart

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¹ *Fourth Oregon Climate Assessment Report*, Oregon Climate Change Research Institute, January 2019, www.occri.net/ocar4.

² *2018 Biennial Report to the Legislature*, Oregon Global Warming Commission, www.keeporegoncool.org/reports.

³ *Central Lane Scenario Planning Final Report*, June 2015, www.lcog.org/367/Central-Lane-Scenario-Planning.

⁴ *Oregon Statewide Transportation Strategy (for Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions)*, March 2013, www.oregon.gov/ODOT/Planning/Pages/STS.aspx.

⁵ In 1988, Gov. Neil Goldschmidt created the Oregon Task Force on Global Warming (OTFGW), charging representatives from 12 state agencies to review current scientific knowledge, to assess global warming impacts on Oregon, and to report on how state agencies proposed to respond. In 1989, the Legislature adopted Senate Bill 576, directing state agencies to develop a strategy for reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% below 1988 levels by 2005. In 1990, OTFGW reported that climate change was a “serious threat” and recommended nine general actions the state should take. In addition, ODOT proposed five actions, including actions to make the transportation system more energy-efficient and to coordinate land use with transportation; and DLCD proposed six actions, including actions to support compact urban growth and energy-efficient forms of transportation. See *Report to the Governor and Legislature*, OTFGW, June 1990, digital.osl.state.or.us/islandora/object/osl:12803.

⁶ “The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released a shocking report *Global Warming of 1.5°C*. An equally accurate but more evocative title could have been *We’re Almost Out of Time*.” The Brookings Institution, 10/16/18, www.brookings.edu/opinions/were-almost-out-of-time-the-alarming-ipcc-climate-report-and-what-to-do-next.

⁷ Metropolitan Policy Committee, 6/4/20, Item 6b: LCDC Report, www.lcog.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Agenda/_06042020-670?html=true.

⁸ Metropolitan Policy Committee, 6/4/20, Minutes, www.lcog.org/AgendaCenter/ViewFile/Item/3158?fileID=11671

⁹ 23 U.S.C. §134(c)(3), www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/23/134.

¹⁰ “The MPO shall consult, as appropriate, with State and local agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation, and historic preservation concerning the development of the transportation plan. ...” 23 CFR §450.324(g), www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/23/450.324.

¹¹ “European countries have also embraced tactical urbanism, an action-based approach using short-term, low-cost, and scalable interventions, to promote alternatives to public transportation and private cars.” COVID-19 made cities more bike-friendly—here’s how to keep them that way, World Economic Forum, 6/19/20, www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/06/covid-19-made-cities-more-bike-friendly-here-s-how-to-keep-them-that-way.

¹² A Tactical Urbanist Response to COVID-19, TransAlt, 4/8/20, medium.com/@TransAlt/a-tactical-urbanist-response-to-covid-19-3f15f81f47c7.

¹³ LCDC has set a target for the Central Lane area to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from light vehicles by the year 2040 by 20% per capita below 2005 levels. See OAR 660-044-0025: Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Targets for Other Metropolitan Areas, oregon.public.law/rules/oar_660-044-0025.