

**Joint Policy
Advisory
Committee on
Transportation**

JPACT Multi-Modal Transportation Funding Concept

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JPACT intends to seek support from the Governor and the Oregon Legislature for development of a multi-modal transportation finance legislative package, including:

1. Road Infrastructure Package:

JPACT recommends the adoption of a state road finance package to fund operations and maintenance of the existing system as well as modernization of the road system to address congestion and foster business expansion and economic development. While there has been significant progress through the adoption of OTIA I, II and III, urgent needs remain unfunded. In particular, maintenance and operation of the existing city, county and state road systems have fallen behind, threatening the condition of the existing system. In addition, urban road investments are vital to support economic development and recovery and reduce the backlog of congestion.

Even with the new revenues generated by OTIA I, II and III, Oregon still ranks lowest among western states in per capita and per mile transportation funding. Nationally, Oregon now ranks 46th in registration fees, 34th in title fees and 13th in gas taxes. In addition to considering these traditional funding sources, we support efforts to explore more creative options for meeting our outstanding Highway Fund needs. Such options might include bonding against increased federal funds, indexing the gas tax or instituting a title fee for vehicles added to the statewide fleet.

2. Non-Road Infrastructure Package:

As all modes of transportation are critical in providing a healthy transportation network and a healthy economy, JPACT also recommends the adoption of a funding package to support non-Highway Fund modes of passenger and freight transportation improvements as well as additional investments in transit. While other states have aggressively invested in rail, marine, aviation and transit infrastructure, these modes have received relatively small investments here in Oregon in recent years.

We are therefore encouraged that the Governor, under the banner of “Connect Oregon,” has recently asked the Oregon Transportation Commission to undertake an assessment of the state’s need for investment in its multi-modal transportation system. Because there are multiple projects in each of these modes that would significantly benefit the public and provide economic returns for the state and region, JPACT supports identification of passenger and freight rail, transit, marine and aviation projects that merit public investment.

The region and the state have benefited significantly from past investments in light rail and passenger and freight rail infrastructure, marine terminals, and airports. Additional funding for future projects that support a diverse, efficient and healthy transportation network, including the continued development of the Portland region’s light rail system, is essential in order to address both short-term and long-term economic and livability needs.

3. Elderly and Disabled, Bus Replacement and Transportation Demand Management:

JPACT recommends continued funding within the ODOT budget for elderly and disabled transit service, bus replacement and transportation demand management.

Elderly and Disabled

Transit providers are struggling to meet the demand for complementary paratransit services for the elderly and people with disabilities. TriMet's annual General Fund contribution to door-to-door (LIFT) operations has increased 484% since FY92, from \$3.1 million in FY92 to \$18.0 million a year in FY04. LIFT operating costs will continue to increase because Oregon's population is aging faster than most other states. In fact, by 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau projects Oregon will have the 4th highest proportion of elderly in the nation. JPACT supports growing the Special Transportation Fund to allow transit providers to pursue cost-saving ideas while continuing to meet the increasing demand for elderly and disabled transportation.

Bus Replacement

JPACT supports growing ODOT's Mass Transit Vehicle Replacement program from \$2 million to \$4 million. Constrained budgets are forcing transit providers across the state to keep high-mileage vehicles in service for up to 25 years even though the FTA standard is 12 years. With 35% of fixed route buses in fair or poor condition statewide, transit providers are experiencing increased maintenance costs and reduced reliability. The situation is equally bad for the paratransit fleet.

Transportation Demand Management

In the 2003-05 ODOT budget, \$1.5 million was committed to support an aggressive effort to promote demand management to encourage reduced reliance on the automobile, thereby decreasing the need for highway expansion. In order to produce the greatest impact, these ODOT resources are coordinated with similar funding commitments from the region. These resources need to be continued.