

Resolution Number 2005 – 01
Endorsing a Multimodal State Transportation Funding Package

Whereas, an efficient and adequately funded transportation system is critical to ensuring a healthy economy and livable communities throughout the state of Oregon; and

Whereas, the Governor and the Oregon Legislature have effectively begun to address critical transportation needs with the passage of the Oregon Transportation Investment Acts (OTIA); and

Whereas, these acts have provided new transportation investment for the Central Lane MPO area; and

Whereas, Oregon's highway funding per mile is among the lowest of all western states; and

Whereas, connecting Oregon's people and businesses with local, domestic and international markets is critical for a healthy economy; and

Whereas, population growth in the region and state continues to outpace the nation, and freight volumes in Oregon are expected to double in the next twenty years; and

Whereas, the region, through its local transportation system plans, has identified multiple project and funding needs for all modes of transportation; and

Whereas, a large percentage of the needed transportation improvements called for in the Regional Transportation Plan remain unfunded; and

Whereas, there is also a funding shortfall to maintain, operate and improve the existing city, county and state road system; and

Whereas, additional funding to meet these transportation needs will create or sustain thousands of jobs and help stimulate the economy of the region and the state; and

Whereas, without additional investment in Oregon's transportation infrastructure, increasing congestion will cost Oregon businesses and motorists tens of millions of dollars each year; and

Whereas, it is in the interest of local governments within the Central Lane MPO area to jointly seek additional funding for the identified transportation deficiencies;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved that the Metropolitan Policy Committee endorses a state legislative funding proposal for a multi-modal transportation program as shown in Exhibit "A" including:

1. A funding package for road operations, maintenance and modernization.
2. A funding package for transit, freight and passenger rail, marine and aviation projects.
3. Funding through the ODOT budget for elderly and disabled transit service, bus replacement and transportation demand management.

ADOPTED by the Metropolitan Policy Committee on this _____ day of _____,
2005.

Ann Ballew, Chair
Metropolitan Policy Committee

Attest:

George Kloeppe
Executive Director
Lane Council of Governments

Exhibit A to Resolution 2005 - 01

The Central Lane MPO intends to seek support from the Governor and the Oregon Legislature for development of a multi-modal transportation finance legislative package, including

1. A funding package for road operations, maintenance and modernization.
2. A funding package for transit, freight and passenger rail, marine and aviation projects.
3. Funding through the ODOT budget for elderly and disabled transit service, bus replacement and transportation demand management.

These concepts are described in more detail below. The Central Lane MPO does not support the use of lottery funds for the purpose of funding this package either through an increase or redirecting of those funds.

1. Road Infrastructure Package:

The Central Lane MPO 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.

2. Non-Road Infrastructure Package:

As all modes of transportation are critical in providing a healthy transportation network and a healthy economy, the Central Lane MPO 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 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, the Central Lane MPO supports identification of passenger and freight rail, transit, marine and aviation projects that merit public investment.

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

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

Elderly and Disabled Transportation Services:

Throughout the country transit providers are struggling to meet the increased demand for paratransit services for the elderly and people with disabilities. The aging of the ‘baby boomer’ generation purports to further amplify the issue within the next ten to twenty years. Even as one of the most progressive transit properties in the country in regard to accessibility within the fixed-route environment Lane Transit District (LTD) has also experienced growth within the elderly and disabled sector at a per ride cost that is from four to six times greater than the cost of an average bus ride. At the same time operations funding for these services has been stagnant, at best. Cutbacks in human services programs have pushed people off of supported transportation services and reduced the level of cost-sharing between human services and public transit agencies.

In FY93 LTD reached full compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and contributed \$203,000 from General Fund revenue to support the local *RideSource* paratransit service that year. In FY04 the General Fund contribution reached \$914,000. As good as the ADA has been for opening up transportation opportunities previously denied to people who use mobility devices or experience other disabling conditions the cost of meeting the demand has been staggering.

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. The Special Transportation Fund must grow in order to allow transit providers to pursue cost-saving strategies while striving to meet the demand for transportation for people who are unable to transport themselves without some assistance.

Efforts to increase the coordination of transit services with human service programs must continue. Support for demand-management strategies that encourage the creation of a range of service options for people with disabilities is needed. Transit systems should be rewarded for creating integrated rather than segregated transit services.

Bus Replacement

The Central Lane MPO 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 recommended 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.

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