

September 4, 2008

To: LCOG Executive Committee

From: Byron Vanderpool,
Government Services Director

Subject: Legislative Priorities

As a preface to the September 25 Legislative Dialogue (Committee agenda item 2), a letter will go to the members of the Lane County delegation reflecting broad legislative interests from the LCOG membership. That will, of necessity, be quite general. What follows, however, is a list of priorities that have been developed within LCOG's Government Services Division, as well as through broader discussions with regional groups such as the Mayors' Meetings. They are presented to the Executive Committee and Board for consideration and possible communication with our delegation and with the Legislature as a whole

Background:

- LCOG is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Eugene/Springfield/Coburg metropolitan area. As such, it is responsible for compliance with federal transportation regulations, as well as coordinating with state and local transportation entities including the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT.) In addition, LCOG provides local planning services throughout Lane County, and assists cities and Lane County in meeting their state transportation requirements. Ironically, the positive improvements in fuel economy have allowed more miles to be travelled on our roads while less revenue is collected from existing fuel taxes. As our transportation infrastructure ages and is subject to increased use due to population growth and shifting freight priorities, local governments and the State find themselves unable to generate the necessary funding for basic transportation operations and maintenance.
- LCOG was a leader in the drafting and implementation of the historic Senate Bill 100, which has guided land use planning in Oregon for over 30 years. LCOG provides a wide variety of planning services to cities and Lane

County. As the State of Oregon reviews the current state of land use planning in Oregon and charts a new course for the future, LCOG is prepared to assist in the review and implementation of a new planning direction for the next 30 years.

- As the world faces changes in energy availability and climate change, and cities and counties cope with growth, transit services rank high in importance for maintaining a high quality of life for our citizens. The dilemma of record-high ridership, and the need to cut back services due to revenue shortfalls, make improvements to transit funding a high priority.

LCOG Government Services Legislative Issues:

- ❖ State and Local Funding for Transportation.
- ❖ The Big Look.
- ❖ Enhance Transit Funding.

State and Local Funding for Transportation

- Provide more funding for State and local transportation systems, in particular, for local transportation operations and maintenance.
- Do not preempt local governments' ability to generate local revenue for transportation purposes.

The Big Look

- LCOG members are very interested in seeing the report from the Big Look Committee as soon as it's available.
- As an agency, LCOG is particularly interested in the Big Look's recommendations regarding regional planning and coordination.
- LCOG would be pleased to provide a forum for discussions with the State on land use planning in Lane County.

Enhance Transit Funding

- As is more fully described in the attached memorandum [[LTD summary of legislative agenda.pdf](#)] from the Lane Transit District (LTD), the LTD Legislative Committee recommends three actions from the State Legislature:
 - Provide \$25M-\$30M for expanded EmX services.
 - Plug the gap in RideSource (paratransit) service funding.
 - Change state law to allow LTD to increase its revenues.