

Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol Street NE, MS 11
Salem, Oregon 97301-3871

February 16, 2022

Esteemed members of the Oregon Transportation Commission,

As the state's three largest Metropolitan Planning Organizations, representing more than two thirds of the state's population, we deeply appreciate the Oregon Transportation Commission's open process as you begin implementation of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). This is an unprecedented opportunity and a responsibility; at this moment you have the opportunity to prove to the public that comprehensive infrastructure investments will change their lives. We look forward to being your partners in implementing this bill and demonstrating to the public the value of thoughtful, intentional infrastructure investments.

While each of our agencies has sent individual letters highlighting specific policy and project asks for our regions, there are areas of overlap where we all feel strongly enough we wanted to highlight them as a group. In alignment with the Commission's discussion at your January 20th meeting, these requests focus on needs that will advance ODOT's Strategic Plan, the Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities collaboration between ODOT and DLCD, and the priorities outlined by the Administration as they implement the IIJA. As you consider the best way for the state to use its increased IIJA funds, we ask that you consider the following proposals:

- 1.) Invest more in comprehensive safety and multi-modal treatments on urban arterials - both ODOT-owned urban arterials and expressways as well as non-ODOT urban arterials -- that experience high crash rates and lack necessary multimodal facilities.**

The last two years have exacerbated existing traffic safety problems across the state. In some regions, the number of people killed has more than doubled compared to pre-pandemic levels. The data show that Oregonians continue to suffer from fatalities and serious injuries in the same places, on the same roads, over and over.

In addition to safety, ODOT's Strategic Action Plan emphasizes the need to invest in multimodal solutions and address systemic barriers to opportunity; investing in sidewalks, separated bicycle facilities, transit facilities and safety crossings is a necessary step to encourage people to get around using different modes, and to begin

to undo decades of investment that have left BIPOC and low-income communities living and working near roads where they are more likely to experience traffic violence. These investments will also promote the kind of urban transportation system envisioned in the proposed changes to Oregon's Transportation Planning Rule to reduce greenhouse gases.

To enact progress to these two objectives, we encourage ODOT to:

- 1.) Substantially increase the amount of funding dedicated to safety investments, through the Great Streets bucket and the ARTS program, to address known safety problem areas and barriers for safely walking and bicycling, and fund appropriate solutions on ALL urban federal-aid roadways, regardless of road ownership.
- 2.) Allow the ARTS program to invest in more comprehensive safety treatments up and down entire roadways where the data demonstrate that the safety problem is beyond hotspots.
- 3.) Dedicate additional, specific funds to address long-standing maintenance and safety issues on ODOT-owned urban arterials and expressways, with the goal of facilitating jurisdictional transfer as appropriate.
- 4.) Make all federal-aid roadways in Oregon eligible for Great Street funds – both those owned by ODOT and those owned by local governments - and prioritize investments to projects that support the goals for GHG reduction and equity in the new Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules.

2.) Support implementing required plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation system.

With the upcoming decision by LCDC on the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules, local jurisdictions in all of the state's metropolitan areas will be asked to develop plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector. Oregon Metro was required to undertake this work seven years ago and developed their Climate Smart Strategy. This impending rule as proposed will require the other metropolitan areas in the state to develop their own scenario plans to meet GHG reduction targets. This is important work and must be done well, and with the urgency that our climate crisis needs. In order to do that, metropolitan areas will need funding and support to develop and implement their plans, and in the case of those who already have them, increase accountability and speed up implementation. Planning is valuable, and it is most valuable when it is swiftly and effectively used to direct funding and advance the priorities it identifies. We ask for the OTC's help in ensuring that the climate-planning work is followed by investment.

3.) Support local transportation needs and projects.

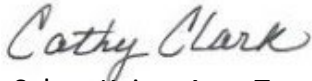
All of our regions have major, ongoing, urgent projects, which without further support, hinder the ability to achieve the goals outlined in ODOT's Strategic Action Plan. We have highlighted those needs in our individual letters to you, but they include addressing foregone maintenance and safety issues and improving transit on ODOT-owned urban arterials in the greater Portland region; active transportation and

enhanced corridor and rapid-bus investments in the Eugene-Springfield region, and transit centers, active transportation and safety on arterials, and select Enhance projects in the greater Salem-Keizer region. To truly realize progress of the goals in the SAP, the Oregon Transportation Plan, and the Climate-Friendly and Equitable Communities rules, ODOT and the OTC need to work with the MPOs to see these critical urban area needs are met. This may require a renewed commitment for collaboration between ODOT, MPOs, and local governments in order to overcome the financial and policy silos that can inhibit meaningful investment, innovation and collaboration.

We appreciate your time and consideration and look forward to working with you and supporting you as you implement the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act for Oregon.

Sincerely,

Mayor Cathy Clark, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cathy Clark".

Salem Keizer Area Transportation Study (SKATS) MPO

Brendalee Wilson, Executive Director
Central Lane MPO
Lane Council of Governments

Councilor Shirley Craddick, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Shirley R. Craddick".

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation
Metro Regional Government