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Date: April 20, 2022

From: Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST)

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC)

Cc: Transportation Planning Committee (TPC)

**Re: Evaluating RTP strategies to better link goals with investments**

Dear Metropolitan Policy Committee members,

Thank you for your productive discussion during your March meeting of regional transportation investment priorities.<sup>1</sup>

As we noted in our recent Resolution for a Better Central Lane RTP,<sup>2</sup> federal law calls on you to undertake a process that is not only continuing and comprehensive but also cooperative.<sup>3</sup> Different jurisdictions, while each representing their own interests, should also work together to find better ways to advance regional interests, especially when it comes to federal and state funding not earmarked to a particular jurisdiction.

We appreciate that there is tension between the individual interests of cities and regional planning. We see that you are grappling with how to better balance these interests. But as you know from your United Front efforts, cooperation is the pathway to accessing federal and state funding needed for transportation options, traffic safety, and healthy communities that the residents and businesses of our region want and need.

As BEST has noted before, the adopted 2022–2045 RTP<sup>4</sup> includes good goals (see Chapter 2):

- Goal 1: Transportation Choices
- Goal 2: Safety, Security and Resiliency

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<sup>1</sup> MPC March 3, 2020, <https://govhub.ompnetwork.org/sessions/239577/metropolitan-policy-committee-meeting-march-3-2022>.

<sup>2</sup> BEST, Resolution for a Better Central Lane RTP, <https://www.best-oregon.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Resolution-for-a-Better-Central-Lane-RTP-2022-03-02.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> “The process for developing the plans and TIPs shall provide for consideration of all modes of transportation and shall be continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive to the degree appropriate, based on the complexity of the transportation problems to be addressed.” 23 U.S.C. § 134(c)(3).

<sup>4</sup> 2022–2045 Central Lane RTP, <https://www.lcog.org/thempo/page/regional-transportation-plan>.

Building a successful community by bringing people together to promote transportation options, safe streets, and walkable neighborhoods.

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- Goal 3. Healthy People and Environment
- Goal 4. Equity
- Goal 5. Economic Vitality
- Goal 6. Reliability and Efficiency
- Goal 7. System Asset Preservation

We agree with Mayor Vinis in her reluctance to get “into the weeds” of individual projects. But we also believe that the goals and objectives above are too high-level to determine investment priorities. As Mayor Vinis suggested, some middle-level policy that is focused on strategies, rather than individual investments, is where policymakers should concentrate their ongoing discussions.

One easy to implement suggestion is to treat the project categories already in the adopted RTP as strategies (see Chapter 5):

**Constrained Projects: Auto**

Table 23: New Arterial Link or Interchange	\$208,800,000
Table 24: Added Freeway Lanes or Major Interchange Improvements	\$50,100,000
Table 25: Arterial Capacity Improvements	\$192,920,000
Table 26: New Collectors	\$238,800,000
Table 27: Urban Standards	\$135,618,000
Table 28: Study	\$10,115,000
Table 29: Transit Oriented Development Implementation	\$6,200,000
<b><i>Auto Subtotal</i></b>	<b><i>\$842,553,000</i></b>

**Constrained Projects: Transit**

Table 30: Buses and Bus Maintenance	\$264,250,000
Table 31: Frequent Transit Network	\$360,000,000
Table 32: General Stops and Stations	\$83,075,000
<b><i>Transit Subtotal</i></b>	<b><i>\$707,325,000</i></b>

**Constrained Projects: Bike/Ped**

Table 33: Multi-Use Paths Without Road Project	\$70,094,825
Table 34: Multi-Use Paths With Road Project	\$9,300,000
Table 35: On-street Lanes or Routes With Road Project*	NA (part of larger project)
Table 36: On-street Lanes or Routes Without Road Project	\$31,797,500
<b><i>Bike/Ped Subtotal</i></b>	<b><i>\$111,192,325</i></b>

<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b><i>\$1,661,070,325</i></b>
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BEST recommends the MPC work with staff to assess how well each project category does, or does not, advance the strategic goals of the RTP. Just as Commissioner Joe Berney stated at the March MPC, any single project *could* be made to fit these goals.

In more detail, BEST and our partners recommend that MPC consider the following questions:

1. **Impacts of Categories:** How effectively does each project category advance each of the RTP’s seven goals?

Consider developing a matrix of categories vs. goals, assessing on, say, a qualitative 3- or 5-point scale the expected impact of such investments. For example, to what extent would a New Arterial Link or Interchange be expected to advance Goal 3: *Healthy People and Environment* or Goal 4: *Equity*. Alternatively, which project categories do the most to advance each goal?

	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3	Goal 4	Goal 5	Goal 6	Goal 7
Category A	↑	↓	—	↓	—	↑	—
Category B	↓	—	↑	—	↑	↓	—
Category C	—	—	↓	↑	↓	—	↑

*Sample matrix for illustrative purposes only.*

2. **Investment Priorities:** Noting how much is planned to be invested in each category, do these amounts reflect how effectively each category advances the goals?

Or are the amounts invested in each category determined by external factors, e.g., how much funding is expected for each category? If so, would the MPC advocate for a different allocation of funding?

It was also noted in the March MPC discussion that climate and greenhouse gas emissions are not a separate RTP goal but are included under Goal 3, *Healthy People and Environment*. To cooperate on climate planning amongst cities, Lane County, state, and federal governments, the MPC could also evaluate whether projects are contributing to the region's shared climate goals.

BEST and our partners plan to contribute our independent analysis of planned spending in the 2045 RTP, with the aim of promoting public transparency for how funds are currently being allocated in the Central Lane region.

For BEST,

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