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Oregon Transportation Plan
Oregon Department of Transportation
Planning Section
555 13th Street
Salem, Oregon 97301-4174

Subject: PTAC Comments on Oregon Transportation Plan
(Public Review Draft Nov 17, 2005)

Dear Ms. Curtis and Ms. Gassaway:

Public Transportation Advisory Committee (PTAC) members wish to thank you for presenting to the committee and for providing members an opportunity to comment on the Public Review Draft of the Oregon Transportation Plan (Plan).

PTAC compliments the Plan for the thoughtful work researching "Challenges, Opportunities and Vision for the Transportation System." PTAC members concur that is important to emphasize the Plan's "Key Initiatives."

The beginning of the Plan is broad, comprehensive and well articulated. Members feel that the goals could be more specific but, on the whole, make sense and lead in the right direction. Members support the visionary recognition of the fundamental tie between land use and transportation. Members note the funding scenarios appear to largely ignore this good work and focus on the current shortcomings of the budget and capital expansion. Members note that the implementation strategies would greatly benefit from a rewrite to better reflect goals, policies, and especially the visions and opportunities.

Members appreciate the largely positive transit discussion. It is of statewide importance, especially in the largest populations centers. It is noted that Portlanders avoid 40% of congestion delay because transit is in operation.

Members appreciate strong support for a transportation system that provides mobility alternatives for seniors and people with disabilities. Members feel this plan starts from

a good foundation and the work will provide helpful guidance as communities plan for public transportation needs.

There were several areas in the plan where members had specific suggestions. PTAC members wish to comment on the following areas of the plan:

1. PTAC members are concerned about the Investment Strategy Framework and particularly suggest reconsideration of the first table that describes the Investment Strategy Levels. Members suggest correcting the illustration for Investment Strategy Level 1 on page IV-13. This table says that ODOT will increase \$8.1 million in Special Transportation Program (STP) transfer funds for the State Highways system by removing it from Public Transit "modernization" use. The rationale is that the funds that are used in transit modernization (a lower priority) could default to be used for highway preservation (a higher priority).

There is a problem with this illustration. The funds referred to are erroneously labeled for transit "modernization" when they are in fact used for preservation by replacing old, high mileage special transportation vehicles. This transit preservation is as urgent a requirement as highway preservation.

Members suggest that if these tables are to be used as illustration the tables should be further researched to make sure that they reflect a thorough understanding of investment impacts on the systems. We understand that the final Plan will be corrected for this error.

2. Members suggest that "silo'd" modal plans may no longer be an appropriate way to recognize and plan for the interrelation of the transportation infrastructure.
3. Members are concerned that the plan shifts emphasis to freight movement and economic development; members caution that these not imply a policy of increased build-out to add capacity for highways, but that it is clear that capacity improvement be achieved through systemic best management practices.
4. Members suggest that the plan be stronger and clearer about the need to integrate features accommodating mobility for people with disabilities and designs for an aging population in system improvements through the implementation of this plan.
5. We also suggest there be more detailed information on implementing the "Initiatives". Plan initiatives suggest new processes may be needed to achieve the goals. As noted above, additional material on the implementation process is needed.
6. The Plan needs more detail to be able to serve the multitudes of subordinate planning efforts that rely on its framework.

7. On page IV-2, Under Implementation Framework, Role of coordinated state agencies, "Department of Human Services" should be added to the list of state agencies.
8. On pages IV-6, 7, Under "Implementation Through the Planning Process", requirements for approved, public transit plans developed locally in consult with human services agencies, need to be included. This planning is now required by Federal Transit Administration before approval of funds for transportation programs serving elderly, people with disabilities, and low income clients.

Committee members wanted to also share more specific or technical comments in this review of the draft. Those comments include the following:

- One of the most important statements in the Plan is on page I-8, in the first paragraph under Congestion: "Accidents, stalled vehicles and other incidents cause about 50 percent of the travel delay." Members would like to see more in the later portions of the Plan about how this might be avoided without needing costly capital improvements.
- Transportation Implications section, second paragraph, first sentence, page I-9: important to recognize that high freight and through traffic and high density congested areas often coincide so cannot be fully separated. In order to support the high density (which in the long-run helps the statewide transportation system be more efficient) requires limited-location greater tolerance of congestion for through and freight movement.
- Unpredictability of World Oil Prices and Supply, first paragraph, I-9: the time period of "less than 25 years" is overly optimistic. "Peak oil" is likely in far less (0-10 years), though impacts will more likely be spread across a longer time-frame.
- Several references to a 40% reduction in buying power over time – some say "inflation alone" and some refer to both inflation and greater efficiency of vehicles (reducing gas tax receipts). The plan should be clear about which it is. Suggest stating assumed inflation rate to be clear.
- Transportation Financing section, third paragraph, page I-13. The third sentence seems to refer to OTIA taking away funding. This should be more clearly stated so that all can see the choice we made in funding OTIA with future revenues and its impacts on future funding availability.
- The Vision, second paragraph, fourth sentence, page I-18, change to: "Community design supports walking, bicycling, and transit wherever appropriate while allowing travel by car and truck for those that must."
- The Vision, page I-18, suggest adding the following concept: Minimize our reliance on non-renewable resources and ensure that transportation energy needs are not reliant on sources where political instability jeopardizes transportation and world security.
- The Vision, last paragraph, second sentence, page I-19, at the end of the sentence, change to: "... across traditional jurisdictions and add capacity only

when needed and with a “just-in-time” philosophy that maximizes cost-effectiveness of expenditure of scarce public resources”

- Goal I, last sentence, page I-19, add “... with connectivity among modes and places as well as supports land uses that reduce reliance on unsustainable technologies and transportation uses.”
- Goal 3, last sentence, page I-20, add: “...in a safe, energy efficient, and environmentally sound manner that supports land uses and activity which enhance Oregon’s economy.”
- Goal 4, page I-20, add the following concept: “minimize health-threatening emissions and impacts”
- Goal 6, page I-20, in the explanatory sentence, add: “... to achieve state goals without jeopardizing local communities to achieve their goals”
- Key Initiative, first bullet under A, page I-21, add to second sentence: “... and passenger facilities (ports, airports and rail terminals) and those facilities connecting population centers where the majority of Oregon’s economic activity occurs”
- Key Initiatives, 5th bullet under A, page I-22: regional air service statement is so nebulous it provides no guidance.
- Key initiatives, last bullet under A, page I-22, last sentence: should be stricken because it refers to enhancement in a section that is supposed to deal with maintenance.
- Key initiatives, pages I-21-22: mention is made of triage in initial statement, but no details given.
- Key initiatives, section C, second bullet, page I-23, add at end: “... and land use proposals that might seriously negatively affect the state highway system performance.”
- Key initiatives, section D, first bullet, second to last sentence, page I-23, add: “... and streamline transportation system management where appropriate, beginning with ODOT’s system of district, region and statewide responsibilities.”
- Key initiatives, page I-24: North-south highway and rail super corridor, if anything like Texas’ current concept is silly and unworthy of this document. Either need to explain why this belongs or delete.
- Key initiatives, page I-24, 2nd bullet under potential investments: so broad it provides no guidance.
- Public Transportation section, pages I-28-29, third paragraph, first sentence, delete the following: “..and, to a lesser extent...” because passenger fares are a significant portion of funding for some transit operations.
- Same paragraph, last sentence, add “... to support transit improvements in Oregon, especially for elderly and disabled without other transportation options”
- Strategy 1.1.4, add bullet: “Increase crash and incident management efforts to reduce the substantial portion of related congestion (50%)”
- Add Strategy 1.3.4: “Strategically transfer jurisdiction of roadways or sections of roadways that serve largely local movements to the appropriate level agency or jurisdiction.”
- Strategy 2.1.1: Specifically mention “managed lanes” as another technique. Also add the need to encourage and allow pedestrian- and transit-oriented development on and near state transportation facilities.

- Strategy 2.1.3 needs more emphasis on incident management and response. In final sentence add "Develop protocols and implement methods for alternate routing..."
- Strategy 2.1.4, add to end of first sentence: "...and improving or removing crossings where appropriate to the use and surrounding urbanized development.". Also, add walking and biking as modes that should be supported with road patterns and signalization.
- Add Strategy 2.1.8: Manage and/or provide incentives for freight to leverage lower congestion during non-peak hours and provide alternatives and information about those alternatives for freight specific movements.
- Strategy 2.2.4 should specifically utilize a state-wide VE, not just project specific (e.g., Missouri DOT is "right-sizing" facilities to be able to afford more without compromising safety)
- Add Strategy 2.2.6: "Reduce or eliminate use of metal-studded tires in the Willamette Valley."
- Strategy 3.1.2, amend to read "... and landowners to protect economically viable industrial land from other uses near key transportation corridors..."
- Strategy 3.1.8 should focus efforts on those facilities that move the greatest volume of high-value goods.
- Strategy 3.1.10, add "...with other modes, while ensuring safety and avoiding potential for spills in environmentally sensitive areas".
- Goal 4, first paragraph, second sentence, amend to read: "Sustainability means pursuing economic and community objectives in a way that ensures that natural resources and habitat are preserved and that the economic and community values of future generations are not jeopardized."
- Goal 4, first paragraph, add a new bullet: "Provide transportation infrastructure to support development in areas that can sustain it while avoiding infrastructure in the more sensitive areas"
- Strategy 4.1.2, first sentence, add "...cleaner energy supply that minimizes reliance on unstable foreign sources."
- Strategy 4.1.5, lifecycle cost analysis should be preferred not just "considered."
- Strategy 4.2.1, amend to read: "Coordinate private and public resources to provide transportation improvements and services that help stimulate active and vital downtowns and main streets and ensure that regulations and ODOT practices allow and encourage these."
- Strategy 5.1.3, add bullet regarding incident management and emergency response.
- Add Strategy 5.1.12: "Ensure adequate funding and staff for Oregon Highway Patrol."
- Add Strategy 6.1.7: "Consider alternate budgeting practices that ensure cost-effective strategies and comprehensive decision making on budget priorities."
- Policy 6.2, add to end of paragraph "... including cost responsibility and recognize the balance of public good that should be paid for with broader-based funds."
- Strategy 6.2.4, add "Pursue revenue where use of a transfer of land does not yield a specific transportation benefit. For projects that yield a clear benefit

supporting the OTP, consider use of that land as strategic use of resources that may not require monetary compensation.”

- Goal 7 overview, last bullet, amend to read: “... to meet needs for the safe and balanced movement of people and goods...”
- Strategy 7.1.2, add to last sentence “... projects of statewide significance recognizing the need to balance local goals with state-wide goals.”
- Strategy 7.1.5, add to first sentence: “... to facilitate community development and promote development that encourages bicycling, walking and other modes.”
- In the Investment strategies section, all of the good discussion of land use, transit, alternative modes is lost in the shuffle. Consider a rewrite of this section that better reflects some of the possibilities presented in earlier sections.

Again, Public Transit Advisory Committee members thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important work.

Sincerely,

Bob Lowry, Chair
Oregon Public Transportation Advisory Committee

Cc:

Members, Public Transportation Advisory Committee
Martin W. Loring, Administrator Public Transit Division ODOT