



February 28, 2017

House Committee on Transportation Policy
Representative Caddy McKeown, Chair
900 Court Street NE, Room 431
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: Support for HB 2745

Dear Representative McKeown:

Karen Friend, a Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council representative, attended the City's August 23, 2016 City Council Work Session and October 11, 2016 City Council meeting to share the importance of the requested changes to ORS 190.083 regarding public transportation funding in Central Oregon. The City of Madras is supportive of a structure so that communities will have the opportunity to independently develop transit funding while retaining the regional Cascades East Transit (CET) system under COIC governance. The City of Madras supports the specific components of this concept that include:

- Allow eligible ORS 190 organizations authorization to propose property tax funded operating levies for transit operations within areas served by the organization, when authorized by the city council and/or county commission within the proposed taxing boundary.
 - Limited to ORS 190 organizations that are direct recipients of federal transit funding.
- This legislation would grant eligible ORS 190 organizations the authorities and powers of transportation districts, as defined within ORS 267.
- COIC's board of directors would be authorized to serve as the governance body of the property tax funded system.
- Only upon action by both the COIC board of directors and the city council(s)/board of commissioners within a proposed taxing boundary, would COIC proceed in proposing a voter approved operating levy. The election process would mirror and align with the existing processes for establishing an operating levy within a district.

- Levy must be expended within the geographic area approved through the vote, and can only be used for the purposes specified in the measure.
- Allows authority to propose different rates in different communities, allowing for the tailoring of service levels and local investment to align with community needs and priorities.

Furthermore, the City recognizes and welcomes the benefits associated with this concept, including:

- Protects current coordinated system from fragmenting into multiple transit districts which could be an outcome if one City needed property tax before other Cities were ready.
- Retains one government entity with one management staff and one board, creating economies of scale, and allowing for local representation from each community.
- Promotes regional cooperation of equitable use of dollars for transit instead of a competitive environment and turf issues.
- Assures development of each city's transit aligns with each city's plan for development.
- Allows each city to choose funding tool for transit including, but not limited to property tax.

This change will benefit Central Oregon regionally while maintaining control at the local level to expand transit funding at the appropriate time when each community sees fit.

Sincerely,



Royce Embanks
Mayor