

Hello,

I appreciate the opportunity to comment. We are at a pivotal time for our state (and as a nation) to make some generational changes that will alter the trajectory of our lives for generations.

With decreasing gas tax revenue, increasing construction and maintenance costs, and increasing vehicle sizes leading to increased traffic deaths it's becoming clear our current system is not sustainable. That's not even considering the negative equity, climate, and livability impacts car dependency has on our lives.

I'd love to see us completely change our transportation system and funding mechanisms to acknowledge these truths and move ourselves to a more sustainable and livable future. This could include:

1. Ditch the gas tax. It's already failing ODOT and cities and isn't going to get better.
2. Expand the vehicle mileage tax (OreGo) to ensure everyone pays their share of road use.
3. Expand fees based on vehicle weight to encourage reasonable sized vehicles and acknowledge the increased wear on roads from heavy vehicles. Either via the mileage tax or registration fees.
4. Dramatically increase public transportation funding. Make public transit so efficient, frequent, and safe that people have no reasonable excuse not to use it. Cars don't pay for themselves, why should public transit?
5. Encourage investment in non-car transportation infrastructure. We need to make it actually safe for people to walk, roll, bike, and get to transit. Grants, technical support, or other resources for agencies to build safe streets that serve the whole community.

These actions will create pushback and will be challenging. Many people can't even envision a future where folks aren't saddle with car ownership. But this work is crucial. It will make our communities safer and more vibrant. It will help us meet our climate goals. It will help ease our housing in affordability by reducing the invisible tax cars place on all of us, especially low income folks. This work will support more economic growth and housing development. The positives are plentiful, the negatives are hard to find aside from public change resistance. A generation from now we'll be proud of the hard decisions we make today.

Thanks for taking the time to hear me out.

Cheers,

Nic Westendorf
Beaverton, Ore.