

Greetings,

I write to provide testimony to the transportation committee that held a hearing in Bend on September 12.

I concur with many of the witness statements that ODOT needs to focus more on moving people and goods, and less on moving automobiles. Planning professionals frequently remind us that no city has ever overcome congestion by building new automobile capacity. Perhaps ODOT should do more to reduce opportunities for automobile capacity while increasing people mobility.

Most cars have the capacity for 5 people plus some cargo. Very little of that capacity is ever used. Even adding one person, who would otherwise be driving, to each car would result in substantial reduction in congestion. There is currently an excess of unused capacity rolling down our streets and highways. If airlines flew with 50% of their seats empty, they would go broke. It's no wonder ODOT can't keep up. It is subsidizing an inefficient transportation modality. To encourage utilizing wasted capacity, tax the empty automobile seats and empty pickup trucks.

Alternatively, fund transit systems that get people out of their cars, and onto busses, bikes and light rail.

Our transportation problems are not lack of capacity. The problem is that we don't take into consideration the capacity currently wasted.

If it cost extra to drive around in mostly empty cars and trucks, people would modify their behavior, fossil fuel consumption would decrease, and less real estate would be dedicated to parking spaces, roads and highways.

ODOT should redirect funding to mass transit. For central Oregon that means light rail. Initially it should be between Redmond and Bend. Future planning should extend light rail north to Madras and south to LaPine, and east to Prineville and west to Sisters.

Stop planning to move more cars around on highways we can't afford to build and maintain. Start planning to move people efficiently, safely, conveniently, and affordably.

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