

Thank you for considering my comments on the Oregon Transportation Package coming in 2025 as a part of your outreach and hearings.. First, I cannot thank you all for focusing on this topic of funding as it is critical to the public safety and economic well-being of the state. Investments in transportation pay back in terms of jobs, opportunities and people coming home safely each day.

Here are a few thoughts for your consideration and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or wish any clarifications.

- While gas tax (user fee) may be eroding due to EVs, reduced VMT and inflation - it should not be discounted as an effective "carbon tax" and very cost effective to implement. While the public seems to vent displeasure with taxes, if you can craft a nexus between a sizable increase and what you will do with the funds - the public has demonstrated time and again support for such initiative. Tolling has such negative public sentiment that politically to push that ahead in the face of tremendous head winds - and extensive costs to administrate, support and sustain it seem unmerited. Major bridge tolls (I-5 & I-205 over the Columbia where there are no other impacted routes) to fund specific enhancement have had luke warm public support and would seem a reasonable safe harbor to start. Beyond that, why frustrate everyone with more technology and labor intensive means to collect user fees.
- Another approach would be to focus on "if it rolls, it pays" strategies that collect some funding from all vehicle sources from the easiest means to collect them as possible. For example, EVs with a registration fee - we already have that, urban vehicles with a VMT fee applicable at the DEQ inspection/registration, micromobility tax on third party systems at point of sale or wholesale shipment, real estate transfer fees at the point of house sales when houses are sold at 10% above purchase price for walk networks, All of these have systems in place to collect the funds today without new labor/technology intensive systems....which maybe will become simple in the future but are not today and we should not fund figuring that out.
- Please include a program to support local agencies discretionary access to fund filling gaps in the pedestrian walk network (trail/sidewalks). This network is woefully disconnected and for modest local investments, piggybacked on road maintenance efforts, could be strategically filled out if funding were available. For example, when a road is overlaid, we now upgrade the curb ramp access - why not expand this to fill sidewalk gaps. Most of the time these are small cost, high value improvements to projects if done collaboratively as a funded mandate rather than the current unfunded nature which results in no action at all (and missed cost effective opportunities). Because these would only need to be built once this could lean into a "cut once" policy that funds local agencies that demonstrate collaboration of infrastructure maintenance and improvement rather than the siloed project approaches that stop at project limits. Grants, funding set asides, or programs - coming up with a means to fill the gaps in the walking networks for communities (off-street and sidewalk) are good for rural AND urban Oregon.
- In the Portland area, fund freeway completion of the 30+ year old network plan for the region. This is not major widening - simply extending auxiliary lanes to logical system junctions and building (expensive) ramp braids to address placing of interchanges placed too closely together. For example on OR 217, completing the long planned three lanes plus auxiliary lane facility + ramp braids should be a priority. There are parts of three lanes in place and since the Westsider corridor days this has always been planned. Small auxiliary lanes and braids can improve safety and performance of the lanes we have. For example on US 26 from Murray to OR 217 having an auxiliary lane from Murray to OR 217 and braiding the Cedar Hills ramp would improve operation and safety at this point. Further to the east continuing the OR 217 on-ramp lane to Sylvan/Canyon rather than drop it 1/4 mile short again would improve operation and safety

without more through lanes. Same at I-205 and I-84 - carrying a lane from I-84 to the airport and braiding ramp - no new through lanes just safer, better operating existing lanes via Aux lanes and braids.

- While this is small - it has big impacts to residents of the state - setting a statewide policy of ZERO obstructions to minimum 6-foot wide sidewalk. PERIOD. Marginalizing walking networks wastes investments made to serve the public. People cannot pass in less than 6-feet whether single individuals or those who are large, with umbrellas, in wheelchairs, using a walker or cane, with dogs or strollers, skateboarding - someone gets forced to the street and many persons with disabilities or who are aged cannot do that and several times this is not safe. If we want better health, safety, climate resilience and connected communities this is a simple change to effect that today.
- Finding a way to run Amtrak or WES trains from Portland ***non-stop*** to major destinations in the AM and PM peaks - one train each way - would help I-5. For example, either from Union Station or Vancouver to Seattle non-stop at 5 AM and back at 6PM, During the day the trains can stop at all the other points.....just one train each way AM and PM non-stop - it would compete with driving travel times (without stops and without high-speed investment you could get there in less than 3 hours which is not possible driving). This would help reduce I-5 demand. Same should be done between Eugene-Salem-Portland maybe using WES trains.
- With the examples of US 101 north of Manzanita and old US 30 in the Gorge - we need to focus investments on "fix it first" priorities. If regions want more capacity - let them pay for that. The state needs to focus on:
 1. FIX IT FIRST
 2. SAFETY
 3. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES
 4. FILLING GAPS AND CONNECTIVITY

Thank you for considering my comments.

Randy