



Rogue Valley
Metropolitan Planning Organization
Regional Transportation Planning

Ashland • Central Point • Eagle Point • Jacksonville • Medford • Phoenix • Talent • White City
Jackson County • Rogue Valley Transportation District • Oregon Department of Transportation

August 22, 2025

Oregon State Legislature
900 Court Street NE
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Members of the Oregon State Legislature,

On behalf of the Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (RVMPO) Policy Committee, we write to emphasize the critical need for sufficient transportation funding to address the pressing challenges in our region. As a federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization, we oversee regional transportation planning for ODOT and the cities of Ashland, Central Point, Eagle Point, Jacksonville, Medford, Phoenix, Talent, and unincorporated Jackson County. Our region's growing population and aging infrastructure require immediate investment.

We face significant challenges, including cost inflation for transportation labor and construction materials. The National Highway Construction Cost Index currently shows inflation at 80%. The declining purchasing power of the gas tax, the state's primary revenue source overall, is eroding the scale of investments, hindering the ability of ODOT and local jurisdictions to deliver basic operations and maintenance services.

Oregonians across the state rely on a safe, well-functioning, and accessible transportation system. But our existing funding structure can no longer support the level of service and reliability Oregonians have experienced for decades, nor can it deliver the modern, safe transportation system Oregonians deserve. State funding is an essential component of the revenue that ODOT and communities across Oregon, both rural and urban, rely on to maintain and operate the transportation system. State transportation funding has not kept up with the costs of services.

ODOT

The Oregon Department of Transportation is experiencing a funding crisis driven by flattening and declining gas tax revenues, inflation and restrictions on available funding. This crisis could result in the largest layoff in Oregon state government history. Only new funding or having the flexibility to use existing funding in new ways can prevent layoffs and service reductions for travelers, freight haulers, and people waiting in line at DMV.

Delaying maintenance on highways may reduce spending in the short term, but it will lead to higher costs down the road. Routine work like repairing pavement, clearing drains and culverts and maintaining signs and guardrails prevents small issues from becoming major ones. When this work is reduced or deferred, roads and bridges deteriorate faster, leading to more frequent closures, more expensive fixes and greater risks for travelers.

The structural revenue issue impacting ODOT is not limited to state highways. As the state considers a path forward, we believe it is essential to consider the needs of the entire system and work together with cities, counties, public transit and other partners.

City and County Road Maintenance

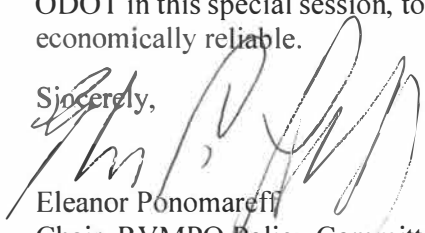
Local roads across our region face deteriorating conditions due to deferred maintenance and insufficient state-shared revenue. Potholes, crumbling shoulders, and outdated drainage systems jeopardize safety and increase long-term repair costs. Funding for the preservation and maintenance of our regional transportation system is greatly needed. We continue to uphold the importance of maintaining the existing 50/30/20 split of the State Highway Fund to provide the money needed to preserve and maintain the system.

Transit System

The Rogue Valley Transportation District (RVTD) provides essential services to our communities, including seniors, low-income residents, students, and workers. However, any reductions in state funding will make it difficult to maintain service frequency, modernize fleets, or meet rising demand. Enhanced transit is vital to our economy and environment.

In conclusion, the RVMPO stands ready to collaborate on solutions. We urge swift action by the Legislature to pass a bipartisan transportation funding proposal, including accountability measures for ODOT in this special session, to ensure that Oregon's transportation system remains safe and economically reliable.

Sincerely,



Eleanor Ponomareff
Chair, RVMPO Policy Committee

CC: Governor's Office, ODOT Direct