

Suggested Two-Minute Testimony to the Oregon Transportation Commission

Chair Van Brocklin and Commissioners:

With these new transportation funds, this commission has been given a historic opportunity to provide a substantial boost to transportation projects throughout the state. The Mid-Willamette Valley region is home to 540,000 people (an increase of over 51,000 people in the last decade) and has 3 counties, 33 cities, and the Confederate Tribes of Grand Ronde. Our growing region has numerous transportation projects -- on both the state and local road system -- that need funding assistance to make our transportation system more equitable and safe, and strengthen the region's and state's economy.

The regional transportation boards of MWACT and the Salem-Keizer MPO have deliberated on this topic and both have submitted letters to your Commission of their priorities.

MWACT's priorities are in **THREE CATEGORIES**:

1. **ADDITIONAL "ENHANCE" FUNDS** to complete projects on the state and interstate system. This includes completing the **I-5 INTERCHANGE AT AURORA/DONALD**; more funds for Phase 2 of the **NEWBERG-DUNDEE BYPASS**; funds for developing an interchange on **HIGHWAY 22 AT HIGHWAY 51** in Polk County (where thousands of vehicles every day make left turns across oncoming 70 mph traffic); and funds for **OR18/VALLEY JUNCTION to FORT HILL** near Grand Ronde.
2. Additional funds for **TRANSIT SERVICES IN BOTH URBAN AND RURAL AREAS**, which benefit Oregonians without access to private transportation, in addition to reducing greenhouse gases.
3. Additional funds for **FIX-IT and SAFETY**¹ projects

The SKATS MPO has **FOUR RECOMMENDATIONS**:

1. Support **ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION** (sidewalks, sidewalk infill, bicycle projects), **PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION**, and **SAFETY PROJECTS**, especially in communities with a higher proportion of BIPOC persons²

¹ ODOT report – In 2019 (latest data available) Marion County had 2,765 fatal and injury crashes. Among counties, Marion County had the 3rd highest number of F & I crashes in the state, but had the highest crash rate (8.41 crashes/1000 population) for any county with more than 500 crashes.

² 2020 Census – City of Salem has Oregon's 2nd largest Hispanic population (41,302 persons, which is 24% of the city's population)

2. Provide capital funding for **CONSTRUCTION OF TRANSIT CENTERS** to make transit more efficient, convenient, comfortable, and safe for all riders.
3. Develop a new program and/or **FUNDING FOR LOCAL PROJECTS THAT REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**, particularly for active transportation and transit projects.
4. **ALLOW CITIES AND COUNTY TO COMPETE FOR ENHANCE FUNDS**, particularly for projects that demonstrate advancing multiple of the goals of Oregon Transportation Plan and the Commission's Strategic Action Plan, such as economic vitality and addressing climate change.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.