

**To:** Sam Haffner, Governor's Transportation Vision Panel Project Manager

**From:** Transportation for Oregon's Future Steering Committee  
Chris Hagerbaumer, Oregon Environmental Council  
Gerik Kransky, Bicycle Transportation Alliance  
Mary Kyle McCurdy, 1000 Friends of Oregon  
Adam Meyer, Oregon League of Conservation Voters  
Noel Mickelberry, Oregon Walks  
Chris Rall, Transportation for America  
Vivian Satterfield, OPAL Environmental Justice Oregon  
Rob Zako, Better Eugene Springfield Transit

**Re:** Comments - Preliminary Findings: Bike, Pedestrian, Transit, and Passenger Rail

**Date:** March 14, 2016

Thank you for acknowledging biking, walking, transit and passenger rail as essential components of Oregon's transportation future. Our work as a coalition of environmental, justice, and transportation-focused organizations is centered on making these modes of transportation safer, more convenient, and more accessible to all Oregonians. We look forward to working with your office, the legislature, and our thousands of members and supporters across the state to advance our shared goals.

**30-Year Vision:** The vision laid out in these preliminary findings is fantastic. Eliminating the *need* for personal automobiles is the right direction for our transportation system. This kind of change will be required to meet our climate change goals, improve public health, increase access to opportunity and keep our state freight network moving.

**Cross-Modal Recommendations:** The recommendations on cross-modal priorities rightly envision a network of transportation choices that enable people get where they need to go without a car. This approach could be made stronger by including network completion goals for existing streets. It is not enough to strive for complete streets during new construction projects; our transportation future will take place for the most part on our existing street network. We must retrofit our highways, arterials, and neighborhood streets to ensure they include sidewalks, bike lanes and safe crossings.

**Safe Routes to School, Education and Infrastructure:** We strongly support an increase in investment in Safe Routes to School. Safe Routes to School is a proven approach that combines street-level safety improvements near schools with school-based education and encouragement programs for students. When infrastructure projects and non-infrastructure programs are implemented at the same time, the number of families who walk and bike to school can increase by up to 43%—resulting in reduced congestion, improved health outcomes, improved academic performance and economic benefits that stem from these impacts. Please ensure that any increases in traffic safety education are matched with investments in safe places to walk, bike and access transit.

Setting a goal of completing Oregon's walking and biking network in 36 years is inadequate. Regardless of the cost, we must find a way to build significantly safer streets much sooner than 2052. This is an area where new technology or new thinking may be required. Consider how effective and affordable it would be to repurpose portions of existing neighborhood streets to create walking and biking paths without the need for new infrastructure. Please analyze the opportunity to meet local transportation needs with strategic street vacations. It is imperative that we consider new street classifications without private automobile access if we hope to affordably achieve the 30-year vision laid out in these preliminary recommendations.

**Intercity Heavy and High-Speed Passenger Rail:** Thank you for including high-speed rail recommendations in your vision for our transportation future. We strongly support maintaining our existing Amtrak Cascades service and securing stable, ongoing funding to make intercity rail service more frequent and reliable.

**Transit Funding:** Oregon needs significant annual transit funding. Just to maintain transit service levels proportional to population growth, Oregon transit agencies need \$364 million more in annual funding. To grow transit service and ridership, Metro's state-required climate smart strategy requires \$4.4 billion in transit capital funding and \$8 billion in operations funding by 2035. That's an average of \$620 million per year in the Portland region alone. The state of Oregon currently contributes about \$74 million statewide.

Oregon contributes proportionately much less funding to transit than most other states. While Oregon contributed a larger proportion of capital investment in 2010–2012, the state contributed less than half of what states contribute to transit nationally. Transit agencies need stable and reliable operations funding to have certainty that service they introduce can be sustained. The State of Oregon contributes only 3% of transit operations funding, compared with state contribution of 24% nationally.

**Conclusion:** Please continue to pursue aggressive new transportation funding options to ensure Oregon can meet the needs of our growing population without increasing pollution from cars and trucks and causing increased congestion on our roads. Taking these preliminary findings and ensuring that they form the core, not the margin, of the Oregon Legislature's approach to a 2017 transportation funding package will be critical to achieving success. We stand ready to support your work defining, funding, and building this transportation network of the future.