

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation
Washington, D.C.
May 1-2, 2019

JPACT appreciates the work that the Oregon delegation has done and continues to do to advocate for more robust, flexible and locally directed federal funding for our transportation system. The region understands that there is significant uncertainty at this time regarding the prospects for additional federal transportation funding, whether there will be opportunities to modify federal policy, identify project priorities, and the timing of potential legislative action. Nevertheless, we wanted to provide you with the region's perspective on both policy changes and project priorities, should the opportunity arise for legislative activity in either or both of these areas.

Attached to this memo you will find more in depth discussion of policy changes supported by the region and additional detail regarding safety, highway and transit priority projects the region is eager to advance, should the opportunity arise. Following is a brief overview of those recommendations.

I. Policy Recommendations

- a. Highway Related Policy Recommendations. Should the opportunity arise to address the highway related sections of federal transportation policy, the region would like to recommend the following policies:
- Implement increased long-term, stable funding that supports maintaining and upgrading the federal highway system.
 - Continue flexible and multi-modal grant and funding opportunities, including the BUILD and INFRA programs to provide dedicated, discretionary funding for projects that address critical highway and bridge needs.
 - Incorporate innovative financing mechanisms, including Build America Bonds and the TIFIA program, recognizing that these provisions are helpful adjuncts to, but do not replace the need for, robust federal funding.
 - Continue development of the multi-modal National Highway Freight Network through dedicated funding.
 - Support local and state flexibility in developing, piloting and implementing congestion pricing and other projects to optimize system performance.
 - Ensure federal programs recognize the important role of local governments in designing, designating and implementing changes to the NHS.
 - Continue the sub-allocation of formula funds to local and regional jurisdictions, including CMAQ, TAP and some portion of STBG funds.
 - Expand federal financial assistance in facilitating jurisdictional transfer of orphan highways.
 - Recognize the critical need to address seismic resiliency on key regional facilities.

b. Transit Related Policy Recommendations. Again, should the opportunity arise to address the transit related portions of federal legislation, the region would like to recommend the following:

- Provide robust funding for the transit title, proportionate to highway resources, with particular focus on the Sec. 5309 Capital Investments Grant programs.
- Recognize the past performance of agencies in delivering Capital Investment Grant (CIG) projects on time and on or under budget when making risk assessments and setting contingency levels for New and Small Starts projects.
- Strengthen language directing the Administration to process CIG project reviews and execute grant agreements in a timely fashion.
- Expand the maximum federal contribution for Small Starts projects to reflect changes in project costs since 2015.
- Seek additional funding and program eligibility to support the transition of bus fleets away from carbon based fuels to low or no emissions strategies.
- Support continued innovation in customer-oriented technologies such as the MOD Sandbox to further integrate multimodal trip planning, booking and payment.

II. Project Recommendations

a. Highway Related Project Recommendations. The region has identified a number of road projects that would provide important benefits to the region. Our top three priorities for federal funding if the opportunity arises are:

- **I-205 Abernethy Bridge.** \$156m in congressionally directed funding to complete the expansion and seismic retrofit of the Abernethy Bridge.
- **Barbur Boulevard Viaducts.** \$160m in congressionally directed funding to complete the design and construction of two 85 year old timber viaducts on Barbur Boulevard in Portland. The reconstruction would also facilitate construction of the SW Corridor light rail project. The region also seeks language that would direct FTA to consider the cost of the viaducts as non-Section 5309 match for the SW Corridor Light Rail Project.
- **Portland Area Safety Improvements.** \$25m in congressionally directed spending to construct bike and pedestrian safety improvements on approximately multiple corridors around the region, including but not limited to Tualatin Valley Highway, Farmington Road, 82nd Avenue, McLaughlin Blvd. Division St., and N. Lombard Avenue.

In addition to these three projects, the region has identified a number of additional investments that it would like to recommend for further consideration, should resources allow (these projects are not listed in priority order):

- **Ross Island Bridgehead.** \$70m to reconfigure the road network at the west end of the Ross Island Bridge in the South Portland/Lair Hill neighborhood to accomplish multiple transportation and land use objectives.

- **Burnside Bridge design and engineering.** \$150m for design and engineering to create a resilient multimodal lifeline crossing over the Willamette River in the event of a major earthquake.
- **Basalt Creek Parkway.** \$23m to continue work on a new road in the 850-acre Basalt Creek Planning Area between the cities of Tualatin and Wilsonville identified in regional plans as a significant employment growth area.
- **Airport Way & 82nd Ave.** \$87m to construct a grade separated interchange to address congestion and delay at the intersection of 82nd Ave., Airport Way and the Red Line light rail project.

b. Transit Related Project Recommendations. The region appreciates the long-standing support of the delegation in advancing Small Start and New Start projects through the Capital Investment Grant process. We have one non-legislative request related to the Division Transit Project and two recommendations should there be an opportunity for congressional directed project spending.

- **Division Transit Project.** TriMet expects to submit the project for an \$87.5m, 50 percent federal share Small Starts Grant Request in September of 2019. The project has received a Medium-High rating from FTA. TriMet anticipates a favorable decision from FTA, but will ask the delegation to engage with FTA to communicate its support for the project after submittal of its application.
- **Red Line Light Rail Improvement.** \$150m in Small Starts funding to extend direct airport service from Beaverton to the employment centers near the Hillsboro Fairplex in Washington County. The project will improve system-wide performance and ridership with increased service through the purchase of up to 8 additional low-floor light rail cars, single-tracking and improving connections to the Gateway Transit Center.
- **Battery Electric Buses.** \$25m in congressionally directed funding to assist TriMet in the conversion of its diesel bus fleet to zero emissions battery electric vehicles. TriMet has committed to convert its entire 660 vehicle fleet to non-diesel buses by 2040, however funding has only been identified only for the first 80 vehicles.