

## **OREGON METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION CONSORTIUM: 2017 OREGON TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION PRIORITIES**

The Oregon MPO Consortium (OMPOC) is a partnership of Oregon's eight Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), working together on matters of mutual interest and statewide significance and representing approximately 70% of Oregon's population. OMPOC calls for the Oregon Legislature to be truly visionary for all of Oregon in crafting a transportation package in 2017. It is important that the effort provides not only significant support for the state's transportation system in the near term, but also creates a solid and lasting foundation for ongoing support.

OMPOC feels that not only is the need obviously great, but that the time is right to raise additional sustainable revenue to support all modes of transportation in Oregon. Consideration needs to be given to a full spectrum of measures, including directing more funding and authority to local communities, and enhancing traditional highway or gas tax approaches. Revenue sources that support transit capital and operations, bicycle and pedestrian improvements, special needs transportation, passenger rail improvements, seismic preparedness, and more – as well as highway and road improvements, operations, and maintenance – must all be part of the mix.

### **Priorities:**

To begin to address the initiatives listed below, it is clear that new revenue is essential. There are established funding sources that **need to be increased**, such as the gas tax. Be bold – do as many other states in the nation have already done in recent years, front-load a significant increase of at least 30 cents per gallon to the state gas tax (and/or other equivalent revenue increases) to address the tremendous backlog in the maintenance and preservation of our existing transportation assets and allow for improvements towards a true multimodal transportation system providing options for all users. A slow incremental increase in the gas tax may only end up finding the state falling further behind. Furthermore, immediately index the state gas tax to inflation and fuel efficiency.

OMPOC's top transportation priorities for the 2017 Oregon legislative session are:

- **Transit funding.** Increase support for stabilizing and fully funding transit operations as well as providing funds for new system build out, paratransit services, and transit student youth passes. Include funding for expanding accessible services, especially with the aging population in Oregon. Such funding should also recognize transit's contributions to roadway congestion reduction.
- **Active transportation.** Support increasing investment in active transportation infrastructure and programs. Expand funding eligibility for bicycle and pedestrian projects beyond existing "in the right of way" constraints. Support programs such as Safe Routes to School, which create safe walking and biking environments. Expand programs, including Safe Routes to School, to include middle school and high school students to reflect the needs of our local communities.
- **Healthy air quality.** Federal funding provided through the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program to address transportation-related air quality issues is insufficient. Create a matching fund to provide state dollars on a one-to-one basis to augment the federal funding for addressing air quality concerns in the state.

## OMPOC Additional Points

*OMPOC member organizations also support continued discussion on the following initiatives:*

1. **Prioritize Safety and Universal Access.** It is important to prioritize safety and universal access to the transportation system above and beyond reducing congestion or any other consideration. We would like to see cost effective investments that focus on increasing mobility of people in an equitable manner. There should be more of an emphasis on, and support for, the Mayor's Challenge, Vision Zero, complete streets, mobility hubs, and ADA improvements.
2. **Freight Rail.** There should be more emphasis in supporting freight rail. Freight rail presents significant opportunities for improving the movement of freight in Oregon, which is vital to Oregon's economy, while at the same time providing congestion relief on the state's highways.
3. **Jurisdictional transfers.** This topic needs to be explored by local jurisdictions along with the state to ensure that the level of funding would be adequate to make the arrangements work from the local perspective. Adequate funding is critical; funding needs to cover costs to modernize and maintain the facilities in question.
4. **Inter-city Transit.** Intra-city transit is often the focus of transit discussions at the state level, but inter-city transit improvements are just as often overlooked. There is a need for the metropolitan areas across the state to expand, operate, and maintain robust inter-city and inter-metro transit services. Inter-city transit investments will be cost effective and help achieve the state's greenhouse gas reduction goals.
5. **Improve Efficiency and Coordination in the Provision of Special Transportation Services.** The state estimates that between the Oregon Department of Transportation, the Department of Human Services, and the Oregon Health Authority, hundreds of millions of dollars are spent annually providing special transportation services, with significant opportunities for improving coordination and efficiency among providers. The opportunities for improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness, and service to the end users in this area should be emphasized in the Legislature's deliberations.
6. **Innovations in Transportation Revenue Generation.** Pave the way for true and rapid innovations such as implementing Pay-As-You-Drive concepts. The state should prioritize and accelerate a program for full implementation of pay by the mile for high efficiency vehicles. Indeed, new federal legislation (the Fixing America's Surface Transportation, or FAST, Act) provides incentives for states to do so.