

July 13, 2010
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Land Conservation and Development Commission
635 Capitol Street, Suite 150
Salem, OR 97301-2540

Dear Commissioners:

Thank you for taking the time to review our correspondence. The Lane County Board of Commissioners learned just recently that you are scheduled to hear from Eugene/Springfield/Lane County/LCOG (E/S/LC/LCOG) staff on Thursday July 22. As the subject of the agenda item for this region is the status of our transportation system plan (TSP) and work plan progress, we felt it important to touch bases with you regarding our observations, concerns, and hopes for the remainder of the work plan efforts.

First, with respect to the work plan timeline, it is clear that we are not on schedule. Our work plan expects that between the 1st quarter of 2010 through the 3rd quarter of 2011, regional transportation planning will be progressing in coordination with long-range land use planning efforts.

This concerns us because at this check-in point, it does not appear that our transportation planning is in sync with long-range land use planning efforts. The only transportation work plan element that has come before us is what has been characterized as “housekeeping” - the extension of the TransPlan horizon out to 2027, removal of completed projects and addition of 4 ODOT projects. This Board has no knowledge of any progress towards meeting, or policy alternatives related to performance measures, alternative standards, or VMT reduction.

We are also concerned the transportation planning element that staff expects to check back in with you about a year from now cannot possibly be coordinated with the land use planning work currently underway.

We think a shorter turnaround time for checking in, albeit still behind schedule, is in order if our region is sincere about really coordinating the transportation and land use planning efforts. We hope you will agree, that having us meet with you and your staff again within the next 3 months (6 months at the longest), would help us get closer to our goal of coordinating our transportation and land use planning efforts.

Secondly, we are pleased to observe in the DLCD report (we just learned about) our region is making some progress and meeting some of the alternative performance measure benchmarks for 2010. However, our progress towards not just meeting, but also reporting on 2010 benchmarks for the location of new housing and employment in nodes is not on schedule.

This concerns us a great deal. We understand the approved work plan requires the evaluation of additional actions to achieve the adopted performance measures and benchmarks. Yet, we have no knowledge of additional actions being considered to address what we understand to be the TPR requirement for reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) through implementation of our approved alternative standards. We have yet to be given the 2005 VMT results.

Considering the expectation in the work plan we look at a range of actions that could be taken to meet TPR requirements, we believe it would be quite disappointing to find ourselves near the latter part of the TSP update timeline (as we are already behind schedule) without a range of options to consider. While we realize amendments to the performance measures themselves may be in order, we do not anticipate our only options to the performance measures will simply be minor or non-substantive revisions to the plan.

Our hope on this matter is that an expedited schedule be considered for reporting on 2005 and 2010 VMT. We desire an 'early as possible' exploration into possible substantive amendments/revisions to the alternative performance measures and benchmarks, if necessary.

Our Board is interested in coordinated planning, and have made it clear we are not comfortable waiting to the end of the process to participate. We look forward to learning more from you regarding how best to ensure the TSP update does not continue to fall behind the cities UGB expansion work, and that a range of viable and/or substantive amendments or revisions to the performance measures be available for review.

In closing, we wish to acknowledge our intent, as a partner in one of Oregon's six major metropolitan areas, to do our part towards helping achieve reductions in GHG emissions. In order to understand our role, however, we need to have baseline data informing us of where we were in 2005 and where we are now. We are not only committed to complying with state policy and direction geared toward reducing GHG emissions, but also see ourselves as being at the inception of regional efforts in this regard.

We recognize the purpose of the alternative performance measures is to help establish the success, or lack thereof, of land use and transportation strategies meant to reduce reliance on the automobile and increase transportation choices. What we hope will result from this July 22 meeting is a strong message that you are as interested as we are in expediting the analysis of and reporting on the status of actual VMT over the past 10 years, and the consideration of any substantive revisions and/or amendments to benchmarks and performance measures be a sooner, rather than later, process.

We sincerely thank you for your efforts to ensure our region stays on track in meeting our responsibilities to help reduce VMT and GHG emissions, while at the same time, providing for livable communities and a range of transportation choices.

Sincerely,

Bill Fleenor, Chair
Lane County Board of Commissioners