



*The League of Women Voters of Oregon is a 101-year-old grassroots nonpartisan political organization that encourages informed and active participation in government. We envision informed Oregonians participating in a fully accessible, responsive, and transparent government to achieve the common good. LWVOR Legislative Action is based on advocacy positions formed through studies and member consensus. The League never supports or opposes any candidate or political party.*

December 8, 2020

To: Chair Van Brocklin and Commission Members  
Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC), [OTCAdmin@odot.state.or.us](mailto:OTCAdmin@odot.state.or.us)

Re: Distributions for the 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program – Oppose

Concern: Funding distribution for the 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) does not reflect Oregon’s urgent need to accelerate equity-focused, emissions-reduction policies.

Because the League of Women Voters of Oregon believes that climate change is an existential threat facing our nation and planet, LWVOR supports climate goals and policies that are consistent with the best available science and that will ensure a stable climate system for future generations.

Governor Brown’s Executive Order 20-04 directs ODOT to 1) prioritize “GHG emissions reductions in a cost-effective manner; 2) prioritize actions to help vulnerable populations and impacted communities adapt to climate change impacts; and 3) consult with the Environmental Justice Task Force when evaluating climate change mitigation and adaptation priorities and actions.” ODOT’s Strategic Action 2021-2023 Plan calls for similar priorities and goals including electrifying Oregon’s transportation system, implementing a social equity engagement framework and transformative technologies, and improving active and public transportation access. Both call for significant emissions reductions, focusing on social equity.

What role can STIP investments play to reach ODOT and state goals? Funding for any capital investment project should have to justify its adoption based on social equity and focused through the vaunted “climate lens.” These considerations cannot be tacked on as an afterthought.

In looking at what are presented as the final choices for Scenario selection, scheduled for OTC adoption on Dec 11, Scenarios 2A, 2B and 3B each total \$1,267,000. The total STIP budget has been reported as roughly \$2.2 billion. What projects account for the remaining \$1 Billion? Are there restrictions on projects that can be developed with this federal and state funding?

Certainly, “Fix-it” and “Safety” are the basics. There are sound fiscal reasons to protect existing infrastructure and to use the data you have to address dangerous road conditions and fatal crashes. Definitely, install ADA curb cuts. But the jockeying for primacy among the “lesser silos” is a competition for scarce resources. We’re told that it is an accomplishment that the “non-highway” component has risen by 50% this year. It now accounts for 10 to 12% of the proposed STIP budget.

The conversation seems to revolve around a false choice of stealing from one small pot to enrich another, instead of viewing the whole STIP budget in light of transportation’s 40% share of state greenhouse gas emissions. When it comes to “enhancing” highways, we recommend enhancing options to transition from ICVs to ZEVs, walking, biking and public transit. (Please refer to our November 20, 2020 Comments.)

Please go back to the drawing board and make this plan responsive to the intent of the EO, the priorities and goals of ODOT, and the imperatives of the climate crisis facing all of our communities. Climate change is not a footnote, it’s the main character in this next chapter of our century.

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