

May 17, 2003

Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol St NE, Room 135
Salem, OR 97301

RE: TE and OBPAAC Committee's Enhance Program feedback

Dear Chair Egan and Commissioners,

The Joint Transportation Enhancement-Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (Joint Committee) thanks the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) for the opportunity to participate and provide feedback on the Enhance 150% lists. The Joint Committee is composed of 17 members from around the State of Oregon. The Oregon and Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (OBPAAC) members are appointed by the Governor to advise OTC, and the Transportation Enhancement (TE) Advisory Committee members are appointed by Director Matt Garrett and advise ODOT. The mission of OBPAAC is to improve walking and biking in the State of Oregon by serving as a public voice for active transportation and acting as a conduit for local efforts. The TE Committee, in comparison, assists in project selection and policy development for the TE Program which not only addresses biking and walking but seeks to enhance the cultural, aesthetic and environmental value of the transportation system.

The OBPAAC and TE committees, individually, have a long history of using selection criteria in reviewing and selecting projects. While the two committees are different in structure and purpose, they both represent interests in walking and biking. This past year, the committees joined efforts to oversee a combined solicitation and project selection process. The Joint Committee adopted and applied goals and Evaluation Factors. We used the same Evaluation Factors as a starting point to review and reflect on the 150% lists. For the Joint OBPAAC and TE solicitation process, criteria were applied at two stages: the Notice of Intent phase and the Application phase. In the recent Combined Solicitation, criteria played a key role in narrowing down the list of 155 project proposals to the 11 projects that we were able to fund.

Overall, the Enhance 150% lists seem to promote a multi-modal transportation system and reflect a balance between modes. The process allowed for many local voices to be heard; in turn, many projects on these lists will enhance the livability of communities. The 150% lists do reflect the Joint Committee's values on a *local* level. For example, a sidewalk in-fill project can provide economic development, connectivity and accessibility to people in that immediate neighborhood. Projects that provide sidewalks, bike lanes, bikeways, crosswalks and other safety features are important in the hearts of Oregon communities, and support our committees' missions. But in general, the 150% lists do not provide connectivity and mobility on a *regional or statewide* scale. The projects tend not to connect to regional corridors, jurisdictions or even to other modes, such as transit and rail.

Larger, more strategic projects, such as the Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail, spur tourism and economic development along the routes. Likewise, many small communities in Oregon have financially benefited from the tourism that a Scenic Bikeway or Scenic Byway designation brings to

their towns. Based on the information provided, the benefits of connecting communities did not appear to be a factor in the ACTs' project selection process. In future STIP processes, the committee would like to see a balance between localized projects and those regional projects that improve trails, enhancements and transportation corridors of significance.

We want to emphasize that the Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail are very important to the committee, based on their historic, multi-modal and economic development potential. The Joint Committee urges OTC to complete the multi-use network between Troutdale and Hood River by providing funding through the Enhance process or with the OTC 20% Discretionary Funds, or both. Projects on the Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail fit several of the new Transportation Alternatives Program criteria in MAP-21: scenic viewpoints, preservation of a historic transportation facility, and promotion of biking and walking.

Below are the answers to the questions posed to us by Jerri Bohard, Transportation Development Division Administrator, in her memo dated April 4th, 2013. Please note that much of our feedback is based on quantitative, versus qualitative, data. It was a challenge to comment on the quality of projects without reviewing the project applications, except for those projects that we had previously reviewed as part of the grant program or knew through first-hand knowledge of individual members.

1a. Do the lists indicate patterns or areas of emphasis that support the mission/charter of your committee? Please explain.

The Joint Committee used the Evaluation Factors developed for the 2012 TE-OBPAC solicitation as a framework for reviewing the 150% lists. We concluded that the lists strongly support the Community Benefits factor, which includes Economic Stability, and Safe and Healthy Communities. The lists did not reflect three other Evaluation Factors: Legacy Benefits, System Benefits and User Benefits. The Community Benefits factors are discussed below, and the other factors are discussed in response to Question 1b.

Community Benefits: It appears that the Enhance process resulted in 150% lists that reflect Community Benefits by allowing local jurisdictions to have a voice about the specific needs in their community, regardless of how small. The Joint Committee defines a **Community Benefit** as a project that supports "livable communities, economic stability or development, environmental quality, conservation, long-term employment and healthy lifestyles." The lists contain several small-scale bike/ped projects that promote walkable, healthy communities. These projects might not have been as competitive in a larger statewide process; however they do promote significant benefits in communities across Oregon.

Economic Stability: Many communities are learning that bikeway and walkway projects lead to economic prosperity. A recent Travel Oregon draft report on bicycle tourism¹ estimates that bicycle tourism contributes approximately \$400 million dollars annually to Oregon's economy. In the towns in

¹ *Oregon Bicycle Tourism Study*, Travel Oregon, prepared by Dean Runyan and Associates (February, 2012)

Central Oregon and the Columbia Gorge, bike tourism accounts for almost 15% of all tourism dollars.² This analysis is only specific to biking and does not include the economic benefit of creating walkable “main streets” in Oregon. Research demonstrates that by creating a safe environment to walk, people are more likely to patronize shops and restaurants on those safe streets. Sidewalks are vital to local businesses.

The Joint Committee recognized the importance of investing in all modes to create an efficient transportation system. We realize freight serves an important role in commerce and Oregon’s economy on a macro-scale. But biking and walking are also a key part of Oregon’s economy, by facilitating and fostering economic development in a micro-scale in Oregon communities. When people bike and walk for transportation, not only is there a benefit to the local economy, but traffic congestion is also reduced because of fewer people driving single occupancy vehicles on the roads. Therefore biking and walking are key aspects of creating an efficient, economically-sound, multi-modal transportation system.

Safe and Healthy Communities: Bike and pedestrian projects that improve safety and connectivity create a healthy and safe environment for children, and provide healthy transportation choices for all ages and abilities. Programs that provide safe walking and biking for children are in high demand in Oregon. For example, the numbers of schools that participate in the Safe Routes to School program in Oregon continues to grow, and the number of kids who participate annually is approximately 30,000. Studies show that if safe and reliable routes are built (e.g. protected bike lanes, well-lit sidewalks), then more people are likely to bike and walk. Separated trail systems are also popular and effective, especially with pedestrians and cyclists considered “interested but concerned”. The safe environment that trails provide often makes them the first point of entry for people interested in walking and biking.

1b. Do the lists indicate patterns or areas of emphasis that raise concerns, given the mission/charter of your committee? Please explain.

Three of our key evaluation factors are: 1) Legacy Benefit, 2) System Benefit and 3) User Benefit.

Legacy Benefits: Projects with **Legacy Benefits** are those that reflect long-range plans, strategic thinking and the projects often cross multiple jurisdictions. Examples of projects with legacy benefits include the Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail, the Oregon Coast Bike Route on Highway 101, the designated Scenic Bikeways and Scenic Byways. These routes often cross multiple ACTs and multiple counties and cities.

Coordination, collaboration and planning are needed to successfully develop and fund these types of bike, pedestrian and enhancement projects. These projects could be funded and built in phases, but it requires a vision and strategy. The lack of strategic projects in the Enhance process may be due, in part, to the incredibly short time frame in which applicants had to submit projects. Regardless, it was unclear to us (based on the information provided) that the statewide importance of Oregon’s legacy routes was taken into account.

² *Id.*

System Benefits: **System Benefits** are defined by 1) a relation to existing bikeway or walkway systems, 2) connections to other modes or multiple modes, 3) connectivity by beginning, extending or completing a system, and 4) improving safety at key locations. Although the Joint Committee recognizes that some projects meet the criteria, such as the pedestrian crossing project in Florence on Highway 101, it was difficult to ascertain whether other bike and pedestrian projects provide system benefits. The Joint Committee supports projects that are part of a larger vision or plan to connect an entire system of bikeways and walkways, or those enhance and complete other systems such as Scenic Byways and Scenic Bikeways, and inter-city regional trails. Regardless of the mode, The Joint Committee values projects that connect to a system or a planned system.

User Benefits: To examine the **User Benefit** of a project, our committee inquires as to who are the potential users of the project, how would the travelers use it, how many people would use it, and why it would be used. In other words, will the project allow people to safely bike and walk? Based on the information provided, we believe this analysis was lacking in some of the project summaries, which made it difficult for us to evaluate. The project description typically did not provide context for the proposed improvement nor did it outline the positive and negative impacts to all the users. There are a few projects on the 150% that claim to include a “bike and pedestrian” component, but don’t actually appear to serve cyclists or pedestrians, or did not describe the needs of pedestrian and bicyclists in the area. Every multi-modal project that includes a bike and pedestrian component should fulfill a recognized need.

The Joint Committee did not analyze the projects’ potential negative impacts to bike and pedestrian travel because the information we received did not provide enough detail about bike and pedestrian travel in, on or around the roadway projects. The Joint Committee recommends for future STIP processes that applicants and ODOT conduct an analysis for every project regarding bike and pedestrian needs and travel patterns, similar to the analysis that is done for vehicle travel. If this analysis is done in advance, it will result in higher-quality projects for all modes, and protect the safety of our most vulnerable users of the transportation system.

2. *Do the lists, for the most part, reflect some of the priorities of your committee, such as the economy, mobility, safety, connectivity? For example: Does the overall mix of projects address major gaps in the system?*

Economic development is one of the key priorities of our Committee. For the TE-OBPAC grant program, we asked questions such as: will this project allow for pedestrians to walk and shop in a downtown? Does this project support bike tourism? Does this project provide enhancements for areas of historical or recreational importance which, in turn, supports tourism and travel?

Route connectivity is another of our top priorities. Our questions in this area are: Does this project fill a gap in the system? Does this connect existing biking or walking routes? Does this project connect to other modes or modal hubs?

For the 150% lists the answer to these questions is positive when analyzed on the *local* level but negative when analyzed at a *regional or statewide* level. Some projects on the lists provide economic

benefits and connectivity on local sidewalks and local bikeways. However, the lists do not strengthen economic development and connectivity for routes of regional or statewide importance, such as the Scenic Byway routes.

In summary, the ACT summaries gave the committee confidence that the ACTs made a thorough and sincere effort to choose multi-modal projects. The ACTs seem to appreciate and understand the contribution of biking and walking, but we are concerned that they may need better guidance or criteria to help select high-quality biking and walking projects. And as noted above, the Joint Committee would like to see an improved analysis of bike and pedestrian safety and connectivity impacts along with the analysis of positive and negative impacts for all projects.

3. *From your perspective, what are the benefits and/or drawbacks to the distribution of proposed projects on the state system as compared to the local system?*

The Joint Committee appreciates the need to balance state and local investments to create an efficient, multi-modal system. Based on quantitative data, the lists seem to reflect a balance between local and state projects. Regardless of who owns the facility (state or local governments), it is important to plan and invest strategically and across jurisdictions or ACTs.

4a. *Based on your previous work (e.g. identification of freight bottlenecks; review of projects in the recent TE-OBPAC combined project solicitation): Is there a project that you believe, in particular, satisfies statewide goals and the needs of your stakeholders or balances multimodal needs best? Why do you consider it exceptional?*

The Joint Committee supports many of the projects on the 150% lists. We identified three main issues for the ACTs to consider in selecting for the 100% list.

High-ranking projects from recent selection cycles: In particular, the Joint Committee agreed to endorse all the projects that ranked high during the recent TE-OBPAC Combined Solicitation, where we were only able to fund 11 projects out of 155 applications. We created a “Reserve List” and a “Tier 2 List” of projects that ranked high, but could not be awarded due to limited funds. These projects have all been previously evaluated in relation to goals and benefits, have undergone an initial technical review, and warrant being funded in the future.

In the first phase of review, the Committee used the Evaluation Factors, mentioned above, to assess whether the projects fit within the program goals. These goals are quite similar to the “Benefits” evaluated for the STIP Enhance process. During the second phase, we evaluated projects based on project benefits as well as technical merit, applicant capacity, readiness, and confirmed financial and community support.

The Joint Committee endorses eight of the 150% List projects (below) based on their high ratings in the TE-OBPAC process, and also one project from the 2010 TE selection process:

Reg.	Applicant	Project Name	Comment
2	Marion County	Hayesville Dr NE: Happy Dr-Fuhrer St	TE-OBPAC Reserve List
2	Corvallis	Pedestrian Crossings (Corvallis)	Adds to a project awarded in the TE-OBPAC solicitation
1	Tigard	Fanno Creek Trail: Woodard Park – Grant Ave	TE-OBPAC Tier 2 List
1	TriMet	Barbur-99W Corridor Safety & Access to Transit	TE-OBPAC Tier 2 List (for PE/ROW only)
2	Depoe Bay	US 101-South of Bridge Streetscape	TE-OBPAC Tier 2 List
2	Benton County	Corvallis-Albany Trail: Scenic Dr – Springhill Dr.	TE-OBPAC Tier 2 List
2	Astoria	OR202: Dresden Ave – 4th St Sidewalk	TE-OBPAC Tier 2 List
3	Roseburg	Downtown Roseburg – I-5 Multi-Modal & Streetscape Project	TE-OBPAC Tier 2 List
2	Amity	Nursery Avenue (Hwy 153) Improvements, Phase 2	TE Reserve List (2010-2012)

Routes of Statewide Importance: The Joint Committee endorses projects that support routes of statewide importance, including projects on or relating to the Historic Columbia River Highway and State Trail, Oregon Coast Bike Route on US 101, and others that support Oregon’s Scenic Bikeways and Scenic Byways programs. Strategic, system-based investments in these areas will promote healthy, active transportation at the local and regional level, and support economic growth through tourism. Below are four examples from the 150% lists:

Reg.	Applicant	Project Name	Comment
1	ODOT Reg. 1	Historic Columbia River Highway State Trail: Shellrock Mountain Crossing	HCRH has high statewide priority.
2	Waldport	US 101: Seawall/Bridgeview Trail	Safety improvement on narrow section of US-101 (Scenic Byway & Coast Bike Route)
2	ODOT Reg. 2	US101/OR126: Pedestrian Crossing Improvements (Florence)	Adds to previous pedestrian safety efforts in high-use area
2	Oregon Parks & Recreation Dept	Banks-Vernonia State Trail Corridor Enhancements	Comprehensive proposal. Statewide significant trail and Scenic Bikeway

STIP Enhance Goals: The Committee urges the ACTs to consider additional projects that best fit the collaboration, integration, and effective investment goals of the STIP Enhance selection process. Some examples are described below.

- The sidewalk and bike lane connection projects in Monmouth, Newberg and Silverton improve local travel in high-use areas and also benefit State Highways. The Silverton project is on a Scenic Byway Tour Route. The Monmouth and Newberg projects provide access to schools.
- The Gable Road project in Columbia County also provides school access and demonstrates city and county collaboration to complete a large, comprehensive project. The Sisters-Black Butte Ranch path will expand an extensive trail system in the Sisters area and provide connections to schools.
- The Commute Options project in Region 4 is a non-construction project that has potential to make a real difference in encouraging people to bike and walk, based on success of similar projects in Eugene and Portland.

Please note that our support for these projects is based on the project summary information or members' prior knowledge and therefore is subject to technical review.

4b. *Is there a specific project that concerns you? What concerns does it raise?*

The Joint Committee did not single out a specific project of concern based on its Evaluation Factors. This was due, in part, to the limited information that we had about all of the projects. Instead, our members raised technical, eligibility and financial concerns about specific bike and pedestrian projects and asked the Active Transportation staff to work with Area Managers to address them. The Active Transportation staff is currently doing that work. As mentioned in question 2(b) above, the Joint Committee expressed concern about the following issues:

- Projects labeled as serving the bike and pedestrian mode that may have minimal benefit to biking and walking;
- Project summaries that are not clear about whether bike and pedestrian needs exists; and
- Projects with a highway component that may have unidentified negative impacts on biking and walking.

The Joint Committee would like to reiterate that projects advancing to the 100% list should be solution-driven, taking into account the need for safety of all users and the connectivity of a system. Research shows that in order to attract a wide range of bike and pedestrian users to a system, that system must be low-stress, safe and fully connected. Projects that improve connectivity for one mode may create a barrier for other modes. Therefore the needs and benefits of projects for all modes should be evaluated in project applications.

5. *What statewide considerations should be kept in mind in the OTC review of the lists?*

Biking and Walking Continue to Increase

Overall, the 150% lists reflect the high demand for biking, walking and other types of enhancement projects that the Joint Committee would expect. In the past, ODOT's grant programs for biking and

walking, such as Transportation Enhancements and Safe Routes to School were oversubscribed as much as 9 to 1. In the recent TE-OBPAC solicitation we were only able to fund 11 projects out of 155 proposals. So it comes as no surprise to our members that the demand for these projects is reflected in the 150% lists.

The Joint Committee believes the demand for these types of projects will only continue to increase, as biking and walking become more popular in Oregon. In large cities and small towns across Oregon, the percentage of people biking and walking to work continues to increase. Based on the National Census Data, all of the communities in Oregon surveyed exceed the national average of walking and biking by 5 to 20 times. Corvallis is number 1 in the nation for biking to work and number 2 for walking to work, and Eugene is number 2 for biking to work.³ With respect to rural Oregon, our state has more Scenic Bikeways than any other state. This is good news for Oregon as active transportation continues to be a key factor in improving healthy communities in Oregon.

Importance of Clear Criteria

It was difficult to tell from the information provided if and how the ACTs applied the “benefits” in the application. It appears that each ACT applied the benefits differently and at different times in the process. The Joint Committee suggests that in the future, there be a clearer connection articulated between the “benefits” and the projects on the 150% Lists. Not only would this provide more statewide consistency, but it would make it easier for the Joint Committee to evaluate the lists.

A related concern is accountability. The 150% lists may include applicants that are behind schedule on projects previously awarded through ODOT’s other funding programs. In the past, both committees have not accepted applications from those with late or inactive projects. We suggest that the ACTs take into account the project delivery status and capacity of the applicants. Also, in the past, both committees have reviewed projects based on technical merit and design standards. Although we understand that the Enhance projects on the 150% lists are now part of the STIP process, there is still a concern that appropriate scope and high-quality design standards will be applied.

Lack of “Other” Enhance Projects

The Committee noticed that the 150% lists include few if any projects for Transportation Enhancement activities other than bicycle and pedestrian facilities. This may be because potential applicants from recreation, conservation and historic preservation agencies did not apply to the Enhance process. In the future, more outreach is needed to let these organizations know that their projects are eligible for Enhance funds. In addition, the ACTs would benefit from education about the historic and cultural value of these types of transportation projects.

³ *American Community Survey*, U.S. Census Bureau, annual survey data, years 2009-2012.

Overall Enhance Process

The Committee would like to take this opportunity to provide some initial feedback on the project selection portion of the Enhance process; although we realize that the process is not complete. The primary question is: how can we improve strategic thinking and planning around project selection? The Joint Committee would like to see a stronger connection between strategic transportation planning, at the state, regional and local level, and the projects selected by the ACTs.

The Joint Committee thanks ODOT Staff in the Active Transportation Section for their work, both in preparing this evaluation and on past grant solicitations. Both committees, OBPAC and TE, have greatly benefited in the past from staff feedback on policy and technical issues. In the future, we recommend more staff input in the beginning of the process (identifying existing plans and priorities for bike, pedestrian and enhancements) and also at the 150% lists stage to identify technical issues prior to the Joint Committee review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "John E. D. Oberst". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "A. J. Zetser". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned below the first signature.

The Chairs of the Joint TE-OBPAC Committee