

Priority

The League will help draft and support passage of a comprehensive, multi-modal, and statewide transportation funding and policy package with an emphasis on street, road and highway preservation and maintenance.

Background

Maintenance and preservation needs have outpaced the resources available for streets, roads and highways in Oregon. In its March 2016 Infrastructure Survey Report the League identified \$3.7 billion in capital needs for highway and non-highway transportation projects (\$2.6 billion highway/\$1.1 billion non-highway). In addition, for the 120 cities that participated in the survey, the report shows an aggregated street budget shortfall for operations and maintenance of approximately \$217 million per year. Safety and disaster resilience were cited as major challenges and needs by most cities. Cities also expressed support for a voluntary jurisdictional transfer program (the sensible alignment of highway facilities and management responsibility) with the availability of adequate funding to facilitate the transfer and to maintain the asset.

Given the threat that inadequate funding represents to investments already made in the transportation system, the League will insist on a transportation package that increases and makes more sustainable the ability of all government jurisdictions to preserve and maintain these assets through the following:

1. Providing for a significant increase in resources available for the preservation and maintenance of city streets, including:
 - Substantially increasing the state gas tax and licensing and registration fees;
 - Indexing the state gas tax;
 - Continuing efforts to identify and implement alternative funding mechanisms (VMT, tolling, public-private partnerships, etc.);
 - Disaster resilience and seismic upgrades for all transportation modes;
 - The completion of transportation projects begun but not yet completed due to lack of funding or changes in funding criteria;
 - Providing additional funding for voluntary jurisdictional transfer;
 - Funding transportation enhancements such as bike-ped facilities;
 - Increasing funding for the statutory Special City Allotment program while maintaining the 50-50 percent ODOT/city split; and
 - Repealing the referral requirement (2009 Jobs and Transportation Act) on cities seeking to create/increase local gas tax.

2. Addressing statewide needs relating to intermodal transportation including:
 - Additional funding for transit operations and capital projects;
 - Additional funding for freight rail capital projects and operations (*ConnectOregon*, short-line rail and transload facilities); and
 - Additional funding for passenger rail operations, equipment and capital projects (federal matching money and AMTRAK Cascades).

3. Avoiding:

- Any preemption of local government ability to self-generate transportation revenues for street maintenance and preservation;
- Change the dedication of State Highway Fund dollars to highway, road and street projects contained in Article 8, Section 3a of the Oregon Constitution;
- Reduction of cities' 20 percent share of the State Highway Fund;
- Creation of unfunded mandates requiring cities to undertake specific programs, such as greenhouse gas reduction scenarios; and
- Further complication of the planning and regulatory process that currently governs the project delivery.

Outcome

While supporting a systems approach to transportation funding, the League's primary objective will be to obtain more adequate funding for the preservation and maintenance of existing streets and roads within cities – i.e. the protection of investments already in place.