

Good evening, I'm Bruce Borgerson, and I'm the Chair of the Transportation Commission

Before summarizing the Commission's work over the past year, I would like to provide some context. First, a reminder of our mission, which states that Ashland supports a multi-modal approach to transit, one that, I quote, "ensures that we will have the opportunity to conveniently and safely use the transportation mode of our choice, and allows us to move toward a less auto-dependent community."

Achieving this goal in Ashland entails unique challenges. We are blessed with a scenic mountainside location; a thriving tourism-based economy; and a bustling, fully occupied downtown business district. However, in addition to some steep and uneven topography we also have a century-old street layout with a limited grid network as well as a state highway running through the heart of town with no realistic options for a bypass.

When you consider these factors, it's clear that simultaneously improving access for all modes of transportation, automobiles included, can be difficult and perhaps even impossible. That said, the commission has been working diligently to accommodate the demands of all modes while focusing on safety and equity.

At our monthly meetings, much of our time is spent listening to citizen input, evaluating the traffic impact of new developments and making recommendations when appropriate, and reviewing the monthly traffic accident reports.

In addition, major projects over the past year included designing and implementing the Traffic Calming Program which is now posted on the city web site. This program provides a procedure for residents to address excessive speed on neighborhood streets, with low-cost remedies that can be applied in the short term as well as long-term infrastructure changes should the short-term solutions fall short.

Last year we also completed our work on the Transit Expansion Feasibility Study, and we saw two components come to fruition: Ashland-Medford express route and micro-transit pilot project.

Ongoing commission work includes participation on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Downtown Revitalization project; a bicycle map development project focused on transportation in the city core; a safety-oriented countermeasure program targeting problematic intersections and corridors; and continuing evaluation and support of the bike share program.

Last year we also started work on an update to the Transportation System Plan, and this will be a major focus of our efforts through the coming year. Last month we concluded our recommendations on the scope of the proposal and that involved significant changes. For

example, we have requested that the TSP specifically factor in the effects of transportation on climate change. This includes review of the Climate and Energy Action Plan and placing a member of the Climate Policy Commission on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Also, although this round is technically only an update, we expect it to reflect a clear shift in emphasis and direction, charting a route away from overdependence on privately owned, fossil fuel motor vehicles. This can and should include the traditional alternatives of pedestrian, active cycling and fixed route public transit. However, we also need to be mindful of emerging transportation technologies. Certainly the RVTD Ashland Connector, with on-demand, door to door service, is a major step in the right direction. We also have the emergence of electric-powered micromobility: e-bikes, e-scooters and Segway-type vehicles, both privately owned and shared. These new, climate-friendly options have excellent potential for replacing full-size automobiles, but they also can create problems and conflicts which we hope to nip in the bud with advance planning and regulation.

Our target time line is to complete the TSP update within 12 to 14 months. During this time, the Commission will be working with the consultant to ensure that all interested and affected residents will have an opportunity to participate in planning for the future of transportation in Ashland.

Any questions?