

DRAFT Board of County Commissioners Letter

October 6, 2026

Chair Julie Brown
Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol Street NE, MS #11
Salem, OR 97301-3871

Dear Chair Brown, Vice Chair Beyer, and Commissioners:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment regarding ODOT's new 10-Year Capital Investment Plan (CIP), the draft statewide project list, and the Major Projects Stage Gate Framework. Over the last 18 months, ODOT staff have presented multiple times at Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation (R1ACT) meetings, met with County staff to address technical questions, and shared information about the approach to creating the CIP and the draft statewide project list. We want to thank Amanda Pietz, Policy Data and Analysis Division Administrator, and her staff for their numerous presentations, engagement, and technical conversations.

The County supports the concept of a 10-Year CIP and believes that this approach will help the state of Oregon create a pipeline of critical projects for funding and construction. We also appreciate the simultaneous conversation that has occurred regarding clearer planning around design, cost estimates, and phasing of major projects so that the state legislature and the OTC have the necessary information to make decisions about which projects to advance. These are well represented in the proposed Major Projects Stage Gate Framework and advancing this item would significantly improve the development, design, and construction of major projects.

However, the County was disappointed to learn that major projects with costs over \$100 million are separate from the draft statewide project list and not formally included within the CIP. This approach was not shared with County staff as part of ODOT's engagement or with the R1ACT as they decided which five projects to submit to ODOT as priorities for the region, impacting the regional prioritization process. Moreover, this standard was applied unevenly, with some projects being categorized as major projects over \$100 million despite having multiple stages with independent utility that could be funded in phases for under \$100 million.

This stance is detrimental for planning purposes as it holds back smaller, lower cost components of a larger phased project from advancing in favor of moving the entire project forward, which is unlikely to occur in the current funding environment. Additionally, it may make it harder for these smaller phases to be incorporated into the future CIP given limited funding and the potential need to replace or otherwise impact another project's placement on the statewide project list and within the CIP more generally.

ODOT should evaluate each of the eight major projects over \$100 million to determine whether they have smaller phases with independent utility that could be separated and included within this first iteration of the CIP. Moving forward, we strongly encourage ODOT to be as transparent as possible with local and regional stakeholders regarding the placement of projects – whether over or under the \$100 million threshold – within this CIP and as part of future updates to the plan. We also would like to see ODOT consider projects with phases that have independent utility as separate items that can be funded over a longer time frame and with smaller investments instead of being grouped with major, single-phase projects. The Major Projects Stage Gate Framework is a great starting point but more refinement regarding the phasing of projects as described in the “Entering Advance Design” section would be beneficial.

We look forward to seeing the final CIP and working with the R1ACT and ODOT on both implementing this plan and preparing the first update in the coming years. As this planning process continues and the CIP is used by decision makers, we hope the OTC and ODOT continue to maintain clear, transparent engagement with local and regional stakeholders and maintain ongoing technical discussion and coordination between State, regional, and local staff.

Sincerely,

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