

CITY OF SPRINGFIELD, OREGON

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR / CITY COUNCIL

SPRINGFIELD



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January 9, 2003

Hon. Peter Sorenson
Chair, Board of County Commissioners
Lane County Courthouse
125 E. Eighth Avenue,
Eugene, OR 97401

Dear Commissioner Sorenson:

I, and elected representatives from all of the Cities in Lane County, met with the Board of County Commissioners, on October 30, 2002, to discuss potential solutions to persistent financial difficulties facing the cities funds dedicated to operations, maintenance and preservation of municipal streets and roads. At that time, the clear consensus of your board was that it was not then timely to consider either of the two solutions that required action by the County: 1) a local fuels tax; or 2) a local vehicle registration fee.

On that occasion, I made it clear that the City of Springfield understood the concerns of the Board, and did not challenge their decision that County action was not appropriate at that time. I assured the Board that, as for Springfield, our Council was prepared to shoulder the burden for resolving our own situation without support from other levels of government, and show the leadership necessary to act in the best interests of the City of Springfield.

On December 9, 2002, our council took the first step in implementing a local solution: we adopted an ordinance imposing a Transportation System Maintenance Fee. We acted promptly because of our concern that the Legislative Assembly would act, during the upcoming session, to pre-empt local governments from acting in their own best interest to craft solutions suited to their localities. Our colleagues in the City of Eugene, likewise motivated by the concern for preemption, acted in a similar fashion that same day.

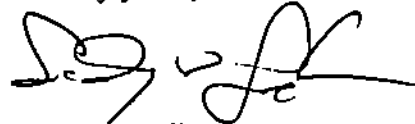
I was surprised, and troubled, that members of the Board expressed vehement displeasure with the decision of the cities to act. I fear that it creates the appearance of an unseemly spectacle of officials of one level of government appearing to inject themselves into the affairs of another level of government. I believe it is important to promptly dispel any such notion, and reassure the public that all levels of government are working together to find a solution to this pressing concern. At the October 30 meeting the Board indicated it would be prepared to entertain further discussions at a future time.

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With that in mind, in my State of the City message, I called for joint discussions involving the municipal governments in Lane County and the Board to discuss alternative methods of distributing to the resources that are available to all of the jurisdictions to assure equitable funding of critical maintenance and preservation needs. I am convinced that our citizens recognize that they are citizens of both the County as well as the several cities, and that they will no longer tolerate bickering among the jurisdictions about "whose" money is being applied to what efforts. When asked, they will be quick to point out that it is their money that has only been entrusted to local government to provide them the services they expect.

I would appreciate an opportunity for Mayor Torrey and I to meet with you in the very near future to agree upon a process for holding that conversation among all of the local governments in the County. I will have my staff be in touch with your office next week to arrange such a meeting.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Leiken', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sidney W. Leiken,
Mayor

c: Jim Torrey
Mike Kelly