

W. B. a.

October 1, 2003

The Honorable  
Mayor of

Re: Regional Road Finance Meeting

Dear Mayor:

The Lane County Board of Commissioners has a long history of sharing Road Fund revenues with Lane County cities. Current programs include the County/City Road Partnership, Community Development Road Assistance program, Capital Project Partnership program and Assisted Housing Road program. Over the last couple years, we have heard from a number of cities that these programs do not fit your current needs. We have also heard that revenues available to cities are insufficient to address operation, maintenance and preservation needs of their road systems.

Now that the 2003 Legislative Session is completed, and decisions have been made on local revenue sources, the Board is interested in meeting again to explore countywide options for addressing road needs. I am inviting you to join the Board and representatives from other Lane County cities on October \_\_, 2003 in a discussion of regional approaches to road operation, maintenance and preservation needs. Please bring a City Councilor of your choice, your City Administrator and your Public Works Director if you desire. We will announce the location shortly.

There are three issues to consider as we enter these discussions.

First, the "County Payments" legislation ends in federal FY05-06. Although we are involved in efforts to ensure that the program is reauthorized, Congress is not likely to consider reauthorization for at least another year. Consequently, although the Board is willing to discuss short-term redirection of some County Road Funds, a dramatic change is not on the table until the County Payments reauthorization is resolved.

Second, it may be worthwhile to explore the efficiencies that could be achieved through alternative ways of delivering road maintenance services. Based on the results of a Jackson County/ODOT study, though, it appears that the savings realized by greater collaboration among our agencies will likely fall short of the revenue needed to fully fund road maintenance activities. This does not mean that alternative service delivery methods should not be discussed, only that alternative methods are not the answer to the entire expected revenue shortfall.

Third, given the size of the maintenance and preservation backlogs identified by Eugene and Springfield, it appears that the combined current revenue streams of all Lane County jurisdictions may be insufficient to address all road needs in the County. If this is the case, new revenues appear to be the only way to significantly close the funding gap. The Board is willing to entertain discussion of regional solutions to road revenues. This could include a countywide gas tax.

In preparation for the meeting, we have instructed our Public Works Director, Ollie Snowden, to contact your staff for information to help define the scope of the road finance problem locally. We would like to have a listing of all revenues, by category, used for road or road-related purposes in FY02-03. Likewise, we would like a listing of your road and road related expenses for FY02-03 categorized by Maintenance and Operations, Preservation and Modernization, with a listing of the programs/activities included in each.

The Board looks forward to

Sincerely,

Peter Sorenson  
Chair  
Lane County Board of Commissioners