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July 18, 2018

Via Email

**Mike Quilty, Chair, and Metropolitan Planning Organization Members
Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
PO Box 3275
Central Point, OR 97502**

**Re: June 27, 2018 Letter to the MPO from the Jackson County Commissioners;
RVT's 2018-2021 RTP STP Funding Pursuant to Alternative Measure 7
Mandate to reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled in the Rogue Valley**

Dear Chair Quilty and MPO Members,

On behalf of the Rogue Valley Transportation District I am writing this regarding the letter submitted by Jackson County and agenda item 6 on the July 24, 2018 RVMPO Policy Committee meeting agenda.

For reasons I hope to make clear below, we believe creating space for this discussion is premature as the direction of the MPO Policy Committee made in April of 2017 made it clear that the committee would continue funding transit through a "vouchsafe" Intergovernmental Agreement to provide steady RVT funding outside of Alternative Measure 7 (see attached meeting minutes). In addition, and as resolved in November of 2017, any discussion about Alternative Measure 7 funding generally should wait until the Transportation Rule Amendment is finalized.

Here is the context of the recent history regarding the funding and the county's interest in this discussion. The most recent commitment of this funding to RVT was approved in August 2016, after the passage of RVT's 5-year levy and the commitment lasts through 2021.

On January 23, 2017, John Vial, Karl Welzenbach, Julie Brown and Mike Baker met to talk about RVT's Alternative Measure 7 funding (AM7 funding) and came up with a recommendation proposing that the MPO adopt an Intergovernmental Agreement (subject to review every 3-5 years or some term) that would reflect the following:

1. 50% of the STP funds to go to RVT in perpetuity
2. Current amount is frozen in perpetuity
3. Extend current arrangement (50% of STP funds) for a given time (3-5 years)
4. Freeze sum at a given level (suggested that we take the average of the last three years) and any increases to go into a pot to fund bike, pedestrian, and transit projects. This amount is equal to the last three-year average \$928,580.

A copy of the notes circulated after the meeting is attached. This proposal was presented as a discussion item to the MPO Policy Board on April 25, 2017 and it was resolved:

"It was agreed that Karl Welzenbach will work with Julie Brown and Paige Townsend to draft an IGA agreement to solidify funding for RVTD that is currently provided under Alternative Measure 7. The draft will be reviewed /discussed at the May 23 RVMPO Policy Committee meeting, and brought - with incorporated revisions/changes - for a vote to the June 27 Policy Committee meeting." April 25, 2017 MPO Policy meeting minutes.

Thereafter, the RVMPO experienced some challenges around our Congestion Mitigation Air-Quality (CMAQ) funding and changes in the Transportation Rules. For unknown reasons, staff (from both agencies) did not move the request forward and it didn't come up again until November 2017, when Commissioner Strosser initiated a discussion under the "other business" section of the agenda to discuss RVTD's AM7 Funding. At that meeting, the consensus was to table the matter until the new DLCD rule was made clear which was anticipated to happen in May or June. A copy of the relevant portion of the minutes are attached.

With that context, then, the next step would be for staff to draft such an IGA that can be presented to our governing bodies.

But there is also the AM7 issue itself. The two triggers for the county's continued desire to have a discussion about RVTD's funding - the temporary 5-year levy and HB 2017 appear to be related to the coupling of the commitment to fund RVTD with AM7 in 2001 which was based upon RVTD's financial forecast then. Further discussion about AM7 is premature, however, because we do not yet know what will be the superseding mandate of the Transportation Rule amendment. We speculate, however, that the duties that will be imposed upon the County and the cities of Medford, Ashland and Central Point will require regional coordination to satisfy VMT reduction goals. So, it is most reasonable to wait and learn what those duties will be before opening a discussion about AM7.

Finally, and most importantly, please understand that the funding available through HB 2017 will only be available for expanding service. That means that if RVTD must cut service because the levy terminates and the MPO redirects the STP funds to bike paths and sidewalks instead, the state STIF funds may well not be available for our community. The legislature was particularly concerned with avoiding the use of the state funds to supplant other local funding. Unfortunately, efforts to supplant are underway in many corners of the state.

Whether VMT reduction is a state mandate or a value based goal in your community, you know that you can count on RVTD to accomplish that goal in a cost-effective and professional manner. The consistent funding of RVTD to meet VMT goals for almost 20 years demonstrates that it is the appropriate response, not that it was a begrudging requirement due to some "condition" that had not been met. At least that is how RVTD views it.

I will propose that we table the discussion until the Transportation Rule Amendment is resolved, Department of Land Conservation Development (DLCD) staff is able to make a

presentation about the rule to the MPO Policy Committee and the staff present the IGA requested by the policy committee.

The District looks forward to moving beyond the suggestion that this local funding is given reluctantly or resentfully.

Sincerely,

Sent without signature to avoid delay

Tonia Moro
RVTD Board Chair

Attachments

cc: RVMPO Policy Committee Members
Julie Brown, RVTD General Manager
RVTD Board of Directors

