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February 25, 2021

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

House Committee on Housing
State Capitol Building
900 Court Street NE
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: HB 2558 ... and best practices for developing bus rapid transit

Dear Chair Fahey and Members of the Committee:

Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation is a broad coalition of local community leaders. We came together in 2012 to support the Eugene City Council in approving Lane Transit District's EmX bus rapid transit line in west Eugene. This third segment of BRT in the Eugene-Springfield area was constructed with \$95 million in federal and state funding. Service launched in September 2017 and has been getting people efficiently to work, school, shopping and other destinations.

Because BRT requires a significant investment of public funding, it is essential to ensure such monies are invested well.

The BRT Planning Guide by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy¹ synthesizes best practices. Chapter 33:

“introduces transit-oriented development (TOD) as the method to combine [transit] and land development so that they support and reinforce each other, while giving rise to better streets and cities. ...”

“Low-density settlement patterns did not generate sufficient ridership, resulting in poor service, if any public [transit] service at all. ...”

“Solutions to car-dependent urban development, insufficient public [transit], and degraded pedestrian realms lie in the revamping of public [transit], the restoration of urban public realms where people want to be on foot, and the curbing of excessive traffic and parking. The solutions come from bringing people and activities closer together in functional, walking- and cycling-oriented places that can be effectively and efficiently linked by rapid public [transit]. ...”

“TOD is land development that is specifically designed to integrate, work with, and prioritize the use of public [transit] for daily urban mobility needs. Mere closeness to public [transit] stations is not sufficient for a development to qualify. TOD specifically denotes a proactive orientation towards public [transit] through particular land use and design characteristics known to facilitate and prioritize walking, cycling, and other non-motorized and intermediary modes of access to the stations.”

Building a successful community by bringing people together
to promote transportation options, safe streets, and walkable neighborhoods.

Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation • PO Box 773, Eugene, OR 97440 • 541-343-5201

info@best-oregon.org • www.best-oregon.org • www.facebook.com/BetterEugeneSpringfieldTransportation

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"Key attributes of TOD include the optimized development intensity and land-use mix within the walkable zone around the public [transit] stations; a complete, easily accessed, well-connected, and well-protected system of walkways; safe cycling and secure cycle parking conditions; and the minimization of the impact of vehicular traffic and parking. When synthesized through high quality design, these elements have been proven to result in attractive and successful urban forms, where access to public [transit] is short, easy, pleasant, and safe, and eventually, the public [transit] supports a high and sustained ridership at stations."

A transit agency should not be required to pursue BRT. Indeed, in many cases it is appropriate to make investments that do not rise to the level of BRT or another kind of "fixed guideway corridor"—and hence that would not be subject to HB 2558.

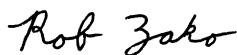
But when a transit agency, working with local governments, opts to pursue BRT, it makes sense to "combine [transit] and land development so that they support and reinforce each other, while giving rise to better streets and cities."

As we understand it, HB 2558 aims to do just this. In particular, in line with the best practices from the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, the bill:

- Requires local governments to allow—but not demand—the development of residential multifamily buildings of no less than three floors and no fewer than 45 units per acre; or to amend local comprehensive plan, land use regulations and zoning maps to allow for—but not demand—the development of residential multifamily buildings of five floors or fewer to achieve a density of no less than 45 units per acre.
- Prohibits local governments from establishing parking minimums for development projects allowed by this Act.

We trust that transit agencies and local governments seeking significant public investments in BRT and other kinds of "fixed guideway corridors" will commit to following best practices for transit-oriented development to ensure success.

For BEST,



Rob Zako, Executive Director
541-343-5201
rob@best-oregon.edu

¹ Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, *The BRT Planning Guide*, 4th ed. (2017), <https://brtguide.itdp.org>.