



March 10, 2009

Dear Mayor Piercy,

This letter is in response to your February 25th R-G letter requesting ideas to address our transportation needs. You wrote that, "As a community, we are on a journey toward a safe, efficient and sustainable local transportation system." We, the undersigned, believe that meeting those goals will require a multifaceted approach that include significant investments in our alternative and mass transit infrastructure as well as leadership from the City to inspire a city-wide shift to more sustainable transportation methods.

Specifically we suggest three broad and audacious programs as well as specific possible steps to bring about immediate and long term results.

### 1. Go Electric!

The first step towards sustainability is to begin a rapid shift away from the inherently unsustainable fossil-fuel transit approach. By switching to a fuel source (electricity) that can be generated locally, we can stop the economic drain that sends our dollars to unstable regions of the world, and instead invest in local generation and local green collar design and manufacturing jobs. Specific steps the city can take include:

- \* Promote the use of the electric car through city **fleet purchases**, and give purchase preference to the budding **Lane County EV industry**.
- \* Allow any totally electric car to **park for free** in any designated regular city parking space.
- \* Install free charging stations and "EV only" parking spaces in high profile locations.
- \* Identify local industry talent capable of **electrifying some portion of LTD's bus fleet**, including at least the EmX fixed routes
- \* Examine the possibility of **high speed electric commuter trains** on the region's existing rails.
- \* Invest as a region in transportation R&D; for example Eugene could host a **UO/OSU/Industry collaborative research facility**. See the attached Sustainable Housing-Transit center proposal for the 10th and Olive site that details how this can be accomplished.
- \* Allow **neighborhoods to designate certain roads** as "electric vehicles and bicycles only".

## 2. Become the #1 Cycling City in the World

Eugene already has an extensive network of bicycle paths and routes, as well as a passionate and dedicated community of cyclists, and is nationally recognized as a leader in per capita bicycle commutes. Even so, Eugene lags far behind cities in Europe and Japan in making cycling a safe and enjoyable alternative to driving. We quote *Green Change*, "Commuters in Northern Europe have been lured out of their cars by bike lanes, secure bike parking and easy access to mass transportation. At the same time, steep automobile taxes, congestion-zone fees and go-slow rules have made inner-city driving a costly pain in the neck. In the Netherlands, where such carrot-and-stick policies have been in place for decades, 27 percent of all trips are by bike." Specific steps Eugene can take to be on the cutting edge of cycling friendliness include:

- \* Per your recommendation at the 2007 Pedestrian Bicycle Summit, shift more traffic signals to **prefer cyclist flow**, and designate specific streets as strategic bicycle/pedestrian boulevards.
- \* Apply more city resources to **bicycle education and outreach**, including proper cyclist rules of the road, signage on specific bikeways and online resources.
- \* Keep the bike lanes clear. Eugene's bike lanes are often obstructed with leaves and other debris. The city should take an active role in keeping **key city bike lanes free of debris, especially leaves**.
- \* Develop **nodal secure bike parking facilities** that include protection from the elements, such as those provided by Bikestation, a national corporation. The Director of Bikestation has agreed to do a preliminary study of our area to determine our needs. Fund such a study at not more than \$5,000.
- \* **Implement a pilot Bike Share Program**. Attached is Eric Selker's proposal for a UO bike share program - if successfully implemented it could be expanded to the entire metropolitan area.
- \* Support a state **vehicle weight fee**. Wear and tear from miles traveled is partly covered by the gas tax, but does not properly account for the weight of excessively heavy passenger vehicles and personal trucks. We propose a registration or annual fee based on gross vehicle weight (GVW). At ten cents a pound, a 5000 lb truck or SUV would be assessed \$500 and a 30 lb bicycle would cost \$3. Heavy vehicles would finally be paying for the potholes they create.

## 3. Lead by Example

Eugene's elected leaders and employee staff can be incentivised to set an example the rest of the city can look to. Consider implementing programs that reward use of alternative transportation options and which reduce health care costs. Specific examples could include:

- \* Implement a program similar to **Edmond, OK's very successful "Wellness Wins" program** that includes recognition for city workers who bike and walk to work. Their Director reported to us that they have community support with no dissenting voices.
- \* Work with health insurance providers to **reward healthy lifestyle choices**, matching measured fitness and wellness activity with a lowering of employee premiums. It is time for health care providers and insurers to support healthy choices with financial incentives drawn from the savings of a healthy lifestyle.
- \* Expand the **Mayor's Carbon Challenge**. Challenge citizens to improve health, reduce pollution, keep dollars in the city, reduce wear on streets, and cut our dependence on foreign oil by walking and biking for errands, to school and to work. Provide prizes, awards, themes, and good old friendly competition. Consider as a model the Mayor of Copenhagen who shakes the hand of those who lead by example and bike to work.
- \* **Improve organizational efficiency**. At present, agencies involved in addressing our transportation problems include Lane County, The Lane Council of Governments, the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization, The City of Eugene, LTD & LRAPA. These groups have generated the Lane County Roads Advisory Committee, the Transportation Options Advisory Committee, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and the Citizens Advisory Committee. Consider a Lane metro transit summit to bring voices from all the stakeholders together to improve the transit development process.

Thank you for considering our response to your solicitation. Many of our ideas are low tech solutions that can bring immediate results. Some will take time to develop. And a few will meet resistance from those who cling to a way of life that led to the problems we face. The challenges of global climate change, rising health care costs and economic instability are an opportunity to make a substantial shift to a more sustainable transportation system and a better community.

People don't fear change. They only fear the unknown that change can bring. To address such concerns, we offer our skills and energy to develop these proposals as progress toward a more stable and predictable future.

Signed,

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Eric Selker, Professor of Biology, University of Oregon

Mark Frohnmayer, Founder and Chairman, Archimoto

Joseph McKinney, President, Oregon Roads

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