

January 9, 2003

Mr. Steven H. Corey, Chair
 Oregon Transportation Commission
 355 Capital Street, NE, Room 101
 Salem, OR 97301-3871

Chair Corey and Members of the Commission:

Representing the Eugene-Springfield MPO, the Metropolitan Policy Committee appreciates the opportunity to work with the Oregon Transportation Commission and the Oregon Department of Transportation to secure funding for transportation improvements on the State highway system that form a critical part of our integrated local and regional transportation network.

In the fall of 2002, ODOT requested information from ACTs and MPOs regarding potential federal “earmark” funding requests that the local jurisdictions were considering submitting to federal congressional delegates for their consideration during deliberations on upcoming federal transportation funding legislation. The Eugene-Springfield MPO and the Lane County Board of Commissioners jointly submitted a priority list of potential state highway project funding requests. That list is shown below.

T3/NextTea Earmark List Lane County Board of Commissioners September 17, 2002						
Potential Earmark Projects	\$ Cost	Category	TSP	Readiness	Match	Comments
I-5/Beltline Phase 1	20,000,000 to 30,000,000	Interstate System	TransPlan Constrained	High	\$18 million OTIA, \$7 million PeaceHealth, \$7 million STIP	Requesting \$15 million for flyover and about \$10-15 million for Gateway/Beltline intersection right of way. Project is ready subject to Environmental Assessment approval winter 02-03.
Federal courthouse (Eugene) transportation system improvements	6,000,000	Highway System	Study	Medium	City of Eugene, Lane County and/or ODOT funds (\$1,500,000)	Federal Courthouse District Concept Plan, approved by the Eugene City Council, July 2002.
Beltline Hwy, Coburg Rd. to River Rd.	2,000,000	Project Development	TransPlan Constrained	High	Region Planning Funds	
I-5 Interchange at Coburg	10,000,000	Interstate System	Coburg TSP	Medium	\$2,500,000	Reconstruction of interchange as indentified in the adopted Coburg TSP and Interchange Refinement Plan. Environmental process needed.

As the table shows, the highest local priority for federal funding is for resources to move forward with Phase 1 of the Beltline/Interstate-5 interchange project. Recently, the “Beltline Decision Team” (BDT), comprised of local, state and federal government representatives, reached agreement on a set of recommendations for proposed actions to complete the

Revised Environmental Assessment (REA) for the project. One of the BDT's twelve recommendations included in the *Project Decision Summary* is an action by the Metropolitan Policy Committee. Specifically, recommendation #6 under the heading *Noise – Build a wall in the SW quadrant* states:

The Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) will request funding for wall construction as part of its federal funding earmark proposal.

Another action proposed by the BDT recommends that the wall be built as part of Phase 1 of the interchange project. Since construction on Phase 1 will likely commence within the time frame of the next round of federal earmark funding, this request would need to be part of the upcoming earmark proposal submitted during federal deliberations on reauthorization of the Surface Transportation Act.

At their December 12, 2002 meeting, the MPC members voted to support this recommendation and thus include the sound wall funding request in the local jurisdictions' list of federal earmark priorities. This letter is intended to inform our state partners at the OTC and ODOT of this additional local priority in accordance with the stated desire to keep all parties fully informed of state highway system funding requests.

We look forward to working with the Commission on the upcoming reauthorization process. Forming a partnership to package the necessary funding to support this critical project on the state highway system is in the best interest of all parties.

Sincerely,

Lyle Hatfield, Chair
Metropolitan Policy Committee

cc: Jason Tell, ODOT
Bob Pirrie, ODOT