

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene-Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support for the I-5/Beltline interchange phase 1 construction. MPC's support for this project has not changed since the last letter the MPC sent you in February of 2003. This project is consistently the number one ranked large project by MPC and the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) has continued to keep the project as one of their nine statewide priority projects they are supporting for reauthorization funding.

The reauthorization request is for \$28 million to combine with existing Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) funds to implement the flyover bridge in the phase 1 portion of the project.

Last year the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) signed the Revised Environmental Assessment (REA) and the project is ready for construction. With the signing of the REA, design work has begun and ODOT is targeting the 2005-06 construction season to begin phase 1 of the project using state funds that does not include the flyover bridge. The EA study and design work could not have been accomplished without the TEA-21 funds you secured for the Environmental Assessment and design funds.

Thank you for all your hard work on this project and for your consideration during this reauthorization process for construction funds for the I-5/Beltline interchange.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene/Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support for the Courthouse District Transportation Improvements in the vicinity of the Wayne Morse Federal Courthouse in downtown Eugene.

The total transportation project costs will be \$7.6 million. Construction and related funding needs are scheduled to occur in two phases. Phase One (estimated \$1.7 million) would begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2003 to ensure that the Phase One transportation improvements are completed by the time the courthouse is constructed, and Phase Two (estimated \$5.9 million) would begin in Federal Fiscal Year 2005.

In July of 2002 the Eugene City Council adopted a Concept Plan for the Courthouse District. The Courthouse District transportation improvements will fulfill the following goals of the Concept Plan:

- Create a special place around the courthouse
- Connect the Courthouse District to the core of Downtown
- Contribute to the vitality of the core of Downtown

Thank you for your consideration during this reauthorization for construction funds for the two phases of transportation improvements to serve the new federal courthouse and the Courthouse District.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene-Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPCs support for the I-5/Franklin/Glenwood interchange study.

The reauthorization request is for \$5 million to conduct an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) study for the I-5/Franklin/Glenwood interchange system. The EIS will be coordinated with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) environmental study needed for the permanent bridge project across the Willamette River on I-5. Currently ODOT is building a replacement bridge over the Willamette River and will soon begin a study to assess alternatives for building a permanent I-5 bridge over the Willamette; funds for an EIS will ensure that an interchange at the new bridge crossing will be evaluated.

Now is the time to conduct a comprehensive EIS study to determine how and where an interchange fits within the community and with a permanent bridge over the Willamette River. MPC also supports an EIS process that includes a large community outreach effort to review and comment on alternatives and impacts.

Thank you for all your hard work and for your consideration during this reauthorization process for EIS funds for the I-5/Franklin/Glenwood interchange.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene/Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support of the Beltline Highway Corridor Study requested by the City of Eugene.

Federal funding of \$2.4 million is requested for a study to identify short-term strategies to manage the Beltline Road corridor, particularly the section between Coburg Road and River Road, and to plan for major investments to improve this section of urban freeway. Total cost of the study will be \$3 million. This state-owned, four-lane facility currently has 81,000 vehicles per day crossing the Willamette River Bridge, which is located in the section of the Beltline Road between River Road and Coburg Road. Because of the number of complex transportation facilities in the corridor study area, including a major bridge structure, a freeway connection with Delta Highway, and connections with several of the region's major arterial roadways, a facility study is needed to evaluate alternatives and develop recommended long-range improvements to this section of Beltline Highway.

Beltline Highway is one of the region's most important transportation facilities, linking Interstate 5 and north Springfield with key employment centers and neighborhoods in north and west Eugene. Beltline also provides the main connection between I-5 and two other state highways in the area: Highway 99, and Highway 126 west. Other major transportation improvements such as the proposed reconstruction of the I-5/Beltline interchange and the recent improvements to the western segments of Beltline, highlight the need to address this central part of Beltline for capacity and safety reasons.

The proposed corridor study is included in our adopted regional transportation system plan, *TransPlan*. Thank you for your consideration of federal funding for this important project.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene/Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support for the I-5 Interchange project at the City of Coburg.

Lane County requests \$10 million in funds for preliminary engineering, environmental assessment process, and construction of this project. The City of Coburg has major employers providing family-wage jobs. Recent estimates are that there are about 3,500 employees working at two major RV manufacturers. Currently, the shift changes at these major employers are creating safety and operational problems on I-5 and on the adjacent arterial network. In the morning commute, the northbound off-ramp has vehicles queuing back into the northbound through lanes creating safety problems for through traffic. In the afternoon, there are long queues of vehicles leaving the site, which take about an hour to clear, even with staggered shift changes.

Thank you for your consideration of federal funding for this important project.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene/Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support for the Bus Rapid Transit Phase II Corridor, from downtown Springfield to the Gateway area. The corridor is referred to as the Pioneer Parkway BRT Corridor. This project complements highest priority road project, reconstruction of the Interstate 5 interchange at Beltline Road.

The total cost of BRT Phase II is estimated to be \$38.6 million, including vehicles. With an 80% federal share, Lane Transit District will be seeking \$30.9 million for this project. The increasing support for a decreased federal share is very troublesome for the future of this and other transit projects. Transit should enjoy the same match ratio as highway and road projects, and small high-intensity projects such as BRT should be encouraged over the high cost of light rail.

Lane Transit District has worked with its local government partners to choose the second BRT corridor and is currently working on the required alternatives analysis and has initiated the environmental assessment process. Environmental review should be complete by Spring 2005 with construction able to begin in 2006.

Thank you for your support of this project.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene-Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPCs support for Bus Rapid Transit Vehicles.

Lane Transit District requests \$4 million to purchase five specialized vehicles for use on the Franklin Corridor (Phase 1) of its Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system. The Franklin Corridor BRT service will require five vehicles for normal operation, with four vehicles in service and one vehicle acting as a “spare” or replacement when one vehicle is being serviced. The vehicles needed to operate the corridor will have a hybrid-electric propulsion system and a sleek, rail-like appearance.

Lane Transit District has been a national leader in the development of the bus rapid transit concept, as well as an advocate in the development of a hybrid-electric domestically manufactured BRT vehicle. MPC supports this effort to serve our community transit needs in an innovative and environmentally responsibly way.

Thank you for your consideration for funding for BRT vehicles for the Franklin Corridor during this reauthorization process.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene/Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support of the Rivers to Ridges Bicycle and Pedestrian Paths - four bikeway projects proposed by the cities of Eugene and Springfield. This area is well known for its bikeway system that gives residents transportation options not available in most other communities. However, the system has several gaps that these paths could help eliminate.

The Delta Ponds Path will link Eugene's fast growing Willakenzie neighborhood with commercial area along Goodpasture Island Road and with the riverbank trail system. Delta Highway presently creates a major barrier for the neighbors.

The South Bank Trail extension will provide a much-needed link between Eugene and Springfield on the south side of the river, offering a route separated from other traffic.

The Middle Fork Willamette River Path will connect Willamalane Park District's historic Dorris Ranch with Clearwater Park, offering Springfield residents a close by riverside outdoor experience.

The McKenzie River Path, which will provide the only off-street connection between east Springfield streets and downtown, must first have a NEPA study conducted to select the route with the least negative impact on an environmentally sensitive area.

Implementation of priority bikeways was a condition for approval of TransPlan by state and federal urban planning officials. These path projects, integral to TransPlan, will continue this metropolitan area's efforts to compete the bikeway system. Thank you for your consideration of federal funding for these important projects.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

February 12, 2004

Oregon Congressional Delegation:

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Eugene/Springfield area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express MPC's enthusiastic support for the Eugene Depot and Multi-modal Center project.

Eugene is the southern terminus of the Pacific Northwest High-Speed Rail Corridor, and the multi-modal project will enhance the effectiveness of the rail program, while preserving historic features and providing safe, convenient facilities for depot users. The City's Council-approved goals are to facilitate transfer of ownership that benefits the public, rehabilitate the existing historic train depot, provide multi-modal access to the depot, accommodate current and future passenger needs, and create a civic destination.

The current Phase 1 project in progress is acquiring land, rehabilitating the historic Passenger Depot, and providing a master plan in collaboration with a wide group of parties for the site as a regional transportation center.

The City of Eugene requests \$5.9 million to implement Phase 2 of the Multi-modal Transit Center Project to improve areas around the buildings to enhance access to transportation services and provide a civic destination. This work includes a "Depot Drive" vehicular and pedestrian loop as well as improved pedestrian areas around buildings and a public plaza. Also included would be an overpass to the north of tracks to Skinner Butte Park.

Thank you for all your hard work on this project in securing funding for Phase 1 and for your consideration during this reauthorization for construction funds for Phase 2 of the Eugene Depot and Multi modal Transit Center project.

Sincerely,

Bonny Bettman
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee