



April 13, 2006

The Honorable Gordon Smith  
404 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510-3704

Dear Senator Smith,

As Chair of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC), which acts as the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), I write to express the MPO's enthusiastic support for the transportation projects included in the United Front 2006 federal priorities for the Eugene-Springfield Metropolitan area. Detail on these projects is provided in the attached list. These projects include:

- Beltline Road Corridor Planning
- Interstate 5 and Franklin Boulevard/Glenwood Interchange Study
- Pioneer Parkway EmX Preliminary Engineering
- Communication Systems Upgrades
- West Bank Trail Extension

The Beltline Road Corridor Planning project will enable the region to develop solutions to its most persistent congestion problem. This segment of Beltline serves as both an important part of the state's freight system and access for critical parts of the region's economy.

The Interstate 5 and Franklin Boulevard/Glenwood Interchange Study will allow for a more thorough assessment of Franklin Boulevard and Glenwood's tremendous growth potential and impacts on this key multimodal corridor through heart of the Eugene-Springfield area.

The Pioneer Parkway EmX, the region's second Bus Rapid Transit corridor, connects the regional growth center in Gateway to the Franklin EmX which connects the Eugene and Springfield downtown areas. The Pioneer Parkway EmX Corridor request is for project development, including completion of preliminary engineering needed to apply for FTA New Starts funding.

Funding for the Communication Systems Upgrades would allow LTD to upgrade its communications system in a manner consistent with state guidelines for interoperability. This would help LTD to fulfill its responsibility in being prepared to serve the Lane County community during times of public safety emergencies.

The West Bank Trail Extension project closes a critical gap in the region's off-street bike path system, completing the West bank trail. This path extension provides both recreational and commute benefits for the region.

These priorities reflect a broad range of vital improvements to the region's transportation system. Each of them supports the region's overall transportation goals to provide an integrated transportation and land use system that supports choices in modes of travel and development patterns that will reduce reliance on the auto and enhance livability, economic opportunity, and quality of life.

Thank you for your hard work on our behalf. In particular, your securing funding in SAFETEA-LU for the Federal Courthouse Transportation Improvements in Eugene was critical in our ability to leverage other local funds and advance the project toward completion. The Courthouse District anchors the east end of what the City will be a revitalized retail and civic area.

Sincerely,

Bobby Green  
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

## **2006 United Front Federal Transportation Project Priorities**

### **Beltline Road Corridor Planning**

Lane County seeks \$3 million for pre-construction evaluation of traffic management and capacity for a key stretch of the Beltline Road transportation corridor in North Eugene. The section between Coburg Road and River Road, which includes the archaic interchange with the Delta Highway and a crossing of the Willamette River, has become the most congested and dangerous east-west arterial in the metropolitan area. Its significance escalated in 2005 with the announced plans to build a regional medical facility north on Delta Highway, less than a mile from Beltline Road.

### **Interstate 5 & Franklin Boulevard/Glenwood Interchange Study**

Local governments in Lane County seek \$1 million to expand the Interstate 5/Franklin interchange and bridge environmental study process to include Franklin Boulevard from I-5 to the downtown Willamette River bridges in Springfield. The Oregon Department of Transportation agreed to fund a \$2.75 million system planning level and an Environmental Impact Statement process that began in 2005. The \$1 million would make it possible to include the Franklin Boulevard section in Glenwood that is adjacent to the I-5/Franklin interchange.

### **Pioneer Parkway EmX Corridor**

Lane Transit District seeks funding to proceed with the development of the Pioneer Parkway EmX Project. EmX is the name given to LTD's bus rapid transit system. EmX is a rubber-tired system that uses exclusive transit lanes, signal priority, off-board fare collection, special vehicles, and other transit priority techniques to emulate light rail. The first BRT line, the Franklin EmX, is under construction with service scheduled to begin late this year. Pioneer Parkway will be the second EmX corridor. The two corridors will connect at Springfield Station in downtown Springfield. LTD's original request was for \$1.5 million for preliminary engineering work on the corridor. However, in response to a funding opportunity, LTD is now requesting \$8 million in federal funds for project development, including preliminary engineering.

### **Communications Systems Upgrade**

Lane Transit District requests \$2 million to upgrade its radio frequency communications infrastructure and related integrated systems. The upgrades will enable LTD to implement recommendations by the Oregon State Interoperability Executive Council through its "Guide for Short-Term Interoperability." Analysis of local disaster preparedness exercises revealed a shortcoming in the ability of Lane County's Emergency Coordinator to communicate effectively with LTD's dispatchers and field supervisors for the purpose of coordinating public transportation resources during a public safety emergency.

### **West Bank Trail Extension**

The City of Eugene requests \$1.2 million to construct an extension to the West Bank Trail to fill in a gap in the City's overall river trail system that would improve traffic safety and connectivity. The West Bank Trail extension will provide a much-needed link in Eugene's Ruth Bascom Riverbank Trail System. Because this portion of the bicycle and pedestrian trail is undeveloped, trail users are routed onto local streets where they must negotiate with motor vehicles to advance through the West Bank Trail System.



April 13, 2006

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
516 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington D.C. 20510 - 3703

Dear Senator Wyden,

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Thank you for all your hard work on our behalf. We very much appreciate your personal commitment to a healthy and vibrant transportation system in the Eugene-Springfield area.

Sincerely,

Bobby Green  
Chair, Metropolitan Policy Committee

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MPC SUPPORT LETTER FOR FY06 UNITED FRONT PROJECTS.DOC  
Last Saved: April 5, 2006

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