



April 2, 2008

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee
From: Susan Payne
Subject: Item 4.e: Connect Oregon II Project Prioritization

Action Recommended: Review Connect Oregon II projects and recommend MPO's priorities

Summary

Connect Oregon II is a \$100 million lottery bond-based State initiative to invest in air, rail, marine and transit infrastructure. The program is focused on improving the connections between the highway system and other modes of transportation to better integrate the components of the system, improve flow of commerce and remove delays. Significant weight is placed on providing *statewide* economic benefit. Highway projects are not eligible.

The application period for funding closed in November 2007. Projects have undergone several review steps by ODOT staff and Modal Committees (Aviation, Marine, Rail, Transit and Freight), and are now ready for review at the regional level.

Projects within ODOT Region 2 will be prioritized on April 11, 2008 by the All Area Regional Review Committee composed of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs) and Lane County. The Lane County Board of Commissioners will meet on April 9 to consider Lane County staff recommendations. On April 10, MPC's priorities will be communicated to Commissioner Stewart who will represent Lane County at the meeting.

Regional priorities will be submitted to a Final Review Committee for consolidation into one list and will then be provided to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) which will hold a public hearing in May 2008. OTC will select grant recipients in June 2008. Project implementation will be ongoing from June 2008.

Background

Seventy-eight project applications were received from throughout the State, 69 of which were found to be eligible. Grants and loans are available for municipalities, cities, counties, governing organizations and other transportation-related entities including private companies. Grants require at least a 20% out-of-pocket monetary match with higher match receiving higher priority. Attachment 2 lists the 24 applications in Region 2, totaling \$53.5 million.

Five projects from within Lane County were submitted, totaling \$2.57 million in grant funds; two are inside the MPO area (Table 1). Each of the five ODOT Regions will receive at least \$10 million.

Table 1. Connect Oregon II applications for projects within Lane County

Application Name	Project Name/Description	Mode	Total Connect Oregon Funds Requested	Match Proposed	Match % of Project Cost	Total Project Cost
City of Eugene	Eugene Depot Transit Access	Transit	\$408,000	\$886,000	68%	\$1,294,000
Union Pacific Railroad	Eugene Yard Crossing	Rail	\$384,477	\$96,119	20%	\$480,596
Lane Transit District	Veneta Transit Center	Transit	\$656,000	\$164,000	20%	\$820,000
City of Creswell	Creswell Airport Fire Suppression	Air	\$743,440	\$427,960	37%	\$1,171,400
Port of Siuslaw	Maple Street Landing & Dock	Marine	\$378,000	\$1,389,000	79%	\$1,767,000
Region 2/Area 5 Total Request			\$2,569,917			

In October 2007, MPC provided a letter of support for the City of Eugene Depot project, the only project for which such a letter was requested from the MPO.

Connect Oregon II requires a multi-step evaluation and review process, as described in Attachment 3. ODOT staff and the Modal Committees completed their work on March 11 and released their ratings of all projects. With this information, the Lane County Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) reviewed all Lane County projects at their meeting on March 19. The following project priority was recommended to the Board of County Commissioners for consideration at their meeting on April 9:

1. Creswell Airport Fire Suppression
2. LTD Veneta Transit Center
3. Eugene Depot Transit/Passenger Access
4. Port of Siuslaw Maple St Landing and Dock
5. Union Pacific Railroad Yard Crossover

Three projects are of specific interest to the MPO area: the City of Eugene Depot and UPRR Yard projects which lie within the MPO, plus the LTD Veneta Transit Center project, the benefits of which accrue substantially to the MPO area.

LTD has provided a letter of endorsement (Attachment 5) for the City of Eugene Depot application. This endorsement looks forward to improvements in multimodal connectivity for the benefit of the region.

Recommendation

The details of all rankings by all reviewers to date for these three projects (Attachment 4) were reviewed by TPC at their meeting on March 27.

- TPC concurred with the Tier Ratings and Justifications documented by the RAC and County Staff – both projects within the MPO were found to be of Tier 3.
- TPC also considered key characteristics of these projects (Attachment 1).

Based on the policies of the Regional Transportation Plan, leveraging of funds, community vision, and the factors outlined in Attachment 1, TPC recommended to MPC the following priorities for the two MPO projects:

1. Eugene Depot Transit Access
2. Union Pacific Railroad Yard Crossover

TPC further recommended that MPC provide a letter of strong support for the LTD Veneta Transit Center project based on the RTP policy set and the potential of the project to help alleviate congestion in the commercial West Eugene area. A draft letter is included for MPC review (Attachment 6).

MPC's recommendations will be conveyed to Commissioner Stewart with Attachment 1, updated as necessary to reflect MPC comments.

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Attachments:

1. Project Summaries and Key Characteristics
2. Connect Oregon II applications within ODOT Region 2
3. Evaluation and Selection Process
4. Tier Ratings and Justifications for selected MPO area projects
5. LTD Endorsement letter for Eugene Depot project.
6. Draft letter of endorsement for LTD Veneta Transit Center