



June 1, 2006

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Petra Schuetz

Subject: Item 4.c – ODOT Transportation Enhancement Program – Letter of Endorsement for Local Applications

Action Recommended: Review draft letter of endorsement for local Transportation Enhancement Program applications and approve for submittal to ODOT.

Background

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program provides federal highway funds for projects that strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, or environmental value of our transportation system. The funds are available for twelve activity types. Typical projects include sidewalk and streetscape construction, bike lanes and shared-use paths, viewpoints and interpretive sites, and historic preservation of transportation-related structures and buildings.

TE funds are for special activities not normally required on highway or transportation projects. This can include stand-alone projects or eligible activities within larger projects, but not routine or customary elements of construction and maintenance, or required mitigation.

Transportation Enhancement provides reimbursements for qualified expenditures as a project proceeds and local matching funds are required (minimum is 10.27%). Further, the minimum project size is \$223,000 (including local match unless the applicant gets an exception before applying). This round of TE project funding is for activities that can be ready for contract in 2009 and 2010.

Who is eligible?

Three types of applicants are eligible for Transportation Enhancement reimbursements:

- Tax-funded public agencies that can enter into a contract with ODOT.
- Private entity or non-profit organization – only in partnership with a public agency. The public agency must agree to take legal and financial responsibility for the project.
- ODOT offices.

There is also a maximum number of applications from different types of applicants including the following:

| Type of Applicant | Maximum Number of Applications |
|--|--|
| Federal agency or Indian tribe. State agency including ODOT. District or local agency other than city or county. | 1 in each ODOT district from each agency |
| County government | 1 per county 2 per county if population in unincorporated areas is over 50,000 |
| City government | 1 per city: population less than 50,000 2 “ “ 50,000 - 100,000 3 “ “ 100,000 - 300,000 4 “ “ over 300,000 |

The proposed projects must meet a set of criteria which come from federal legislation and program guidance. Further, ODOT policy requires that projects must also comply with transportation plans and comprehensive plans in effect for the project area, as well as statewide plans such as the Oregon Plan, Oregon Transportation Plan, and Oregon Highway Plan.

The criteria include:

- Project proposals must have a clear relationship to surface transportation facilities such as highways, roads, bikeways and walkways, canals and ferries, or public transportation.
- Project proposals must be “over and above” normal projects or activities—not routine or customary elements of a construction or maintenance project, nor required mitigation.
- Project proposals must be within the scope of the following 12 activities:
 1. Provision of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists
 2. Provision of safety and educational activities for pedestrians and bicyclists
 3. Acquisition of scenic easements and scenic or historic sites (including historic battlefields)
 4. Scenic or historic highway programs (including the provision of tourist and welcome center facilities)
 5. Landscaping and other scenic beautification
 6. Historic preservation

7. Rehabilitation and operation of historic transportation buildings, structures, or facilities (including historic railroad facilities and canals)
8. Preservation of abandoned railway corridors (including the conversion and use of the corridors for pedestrian or bicycle trails)
9. Inventory, control and removal of outdoor advertising
10. Archaeological planning and research
11. Environmental mitigation (i) to address water pollution due to highway runoff; or (ii) reduce vehicle-caused wildlife mortality while maintaining habitat connectivity
12. Establishment of transportation museums

For additional details on qualifying work within each activity see “Requirements and Eligibility by Type of Project” at www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/LGS/enhancement.shtml or consult federal guidance posted at www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/TE and www.enhancements.org.

2006 Applications

The available funding for this cycle is \$11 million statewide. A Notice of Intent was due March 23, 2006 for each project. There were four applications from the Central Lane MPO area for consideration.

- **Delta Ponds Multiuse Path – (Eugene)** This project links Eugene’s Willakenzie neighborhood with Goodpasture Island Road and the riverbank trail system to the west. This connection was identified as a needed improvement for safe access to the island and riverbank during the 1979 update of the Eugene Bikeways Master Plan. Delta Highway discourages use of walking and bicycling for short trips. Adding a safe, inviting and comfortable connection between the neighborhoods and the river will encourage more bicycling and walking and increase the use of these non-polluting forms of transportation. The project will construct a 12’ wide multi-use path and a grade separated structure at Delta Highway that will provide access between the east and west neighborhoods bordering Delta Highway with connections to the Ruth Bascom Riverbank Trail System. The proposed crossing of Delta Highway and the approach to the multi-use path will meet all ADA requirements. The City of Eugene will request \$1,000,000 in federal transportation enhancement funds for the Delta Ponds path and bridge with a local match of \$103,000. Other federal and local funds will be used to complete the Delta Ponds multi-use path.
- **Spring Connector Multiuse Path– (Eugene)** This project will enhance the commute to Lane Community College (LCC) for students and staff who choose to bicycle to the campus. The path and connecting streets offer a safer and more pleasant alternative to bicycling on the shoulder of 30th Avenue, a major roadway with posted speeds of 45-55 mph and carrying 15,000 vehicles per day. The path will also provide access between two neighborhoods that are completely separated from each other by the busy roadway and a forested

area. Each year, requests are received by the Public Works Department for completion of this short bicycle/pedestrian connector for use by neighbors, students, and hikers. The well-worn trail through the woods along the general alignment of the Spring Connector is an indicator of the need and desire for a legitimate connection. The Spring Connector will be a 1,500' long bicycle and pedestrian facility. The path will be built to city and state standards. The path will be 12' wide with reinforced concrete on a crushed rock base, with 2' unpaved shoulders and 3' shy distance on each side. Lighting will be provided along its full length. Eugene requests \$714,509 of federal transportation enhancement funds for the Spring Connector Path and will provide a local match of \$81,779.

- **Commerce Connector Multiuse Path – (Eugene)** This project will provide a 10 foot concrete multi-use connector path with 2 foot shoulders from the Fern Ridge Path to a large developed commercial area near Commerce Street and W. 11th Avenue. Two bicycle and pedestrian bridges will be constructed to span the Amazon Channel and wetland areas. This project will provide pedestrian and bicycle access from a nearby well used multi-use path along the Amazon Channel that connects West Eugene with downtown Eugene. Workers and shoppers will find a convenient, scenic and safe off-street travel route while avoiding nearby roads with high average daily traffic. Eugene requests \$752,847 in federal transportation enhancement funds for the Fern Ridge Path-Commerce Street Connector path and bridges with a local match of \$86,167.
- **South A Pedestrian Enhancement – (Springfield)** This project addresses the eastbound part of a couplet that skirts the south edge of Springfield's historic Downtown business district. The existing width and character of the street is a barrier that discourages pedestrian travel on South A and hurts businesses on the south side of the street. In 2005 Lane Transit District opened its new Springfield Station on the south side of South A at 4th Street. Transit users must cross South A to access the station from the Downtown area. Two new developments are in site plan review on the north side of South A. Springfield is proposing to continue the planted curb extension on South A from the transit station to include two additional blocks, from 5th Street to 7th Street. Decorative pedestrian level lighting is also proposed for the curb extension and for a short distance north along intersecting streets between 4th and 7th. Continuing the existing curb extension east to 7th street would extend the traffic calming effect through the heart of the Downtown business district, improving the pedestrian environment on South A, and reducing a barrier to economic growth south of South A. The project will also benefit the anticipated 250 performing arts students and 75 residents of the mixed-use apartment complex who will make daily use of South A in the area covered by this project. Springfield requests \$556,326 and will commit \$63,674 in cash match for the project.

More detailed descriptions of these projects are well defined in the Notices of Intent that are attached (Attachments 1-4). All four Notices of Intent have received preliminary approval from ODOT to proceed with the final application process. Final applications are due June 30, 2006.

Staff Recommendation

At the May 25, 2006 meeting, TPC approved a unanimous recommendation to MPC to endorse all four Transportation Enhancement project applications.

If approved, MPC needs to submit a letter of endorsement for some or all of the project applications prior to June 30, 2006. A draft letter of endorsement is attached for approval (Attachment 5).

Attachments: Attachment 1 – Notice of Intent: Delta Ponds Multiuse Path (*Eugene*)
Attachment 2 – Notice of Intent: Spring Connector Multiuse Path (*Eugene*)
Attachment 3 – Notice of Intent: Commerce Connector Multiuse Path (*Eugene*)
Attachment 4 – Notice of Intent: South A Pedestrian Enhancement (*Springfield*)
Attachment 5 – Draft MPC Letter of Endorsement to ODOT

