



October 3, 2007

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Paul Thompson

Subject: Item 4.d – Letters of Support for *ConnectOregon* II Applications

Action Recommended: Approve Letters of Support.

Issue Summary

ConnectOregon is a lottery-bond-based initiative first approved by the 2005 Oregon Legislature to invest in air, rail, marine and transit infrastructure. This key strategy ensures Oregon's transportation system is strong, diverse, and efficient.

ConnectOregon is focused on improving the connections between the highway system and the other modes of transportation to better integrate the components of the system, improve flow of commerce and remove delays.

The first major funding initiative targeted at multimodal (non-highway) transportation, *ConnectOregon* is helping make the most of the public's investment in Oregon's transportation system. It is a valuable addition to the significant investments Oregonians have made recently in the highway network (OTIA I, II and III and the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)). *ConnectOregon* is already attracting and sustaining business and jobs in Oregon and ensuring Oregon is connected to world markets.

In 2005, the Oregon Legislature authorized \$100 million for Oregon's Multimodal Transportation Fund to invest in air, rail, marine and transit infrastructure. This first authorization, also known as *ConnectOregon* I, currently has 41 projects. All the projects in this first program are, at the very least, in the design phase with seven under construction and three near completion. Read more about *ConnectOregon* I and the projects currently underway here <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/CO/COI.shtml>.

The 2007 Oregon Legislature approved a second authorization of \$100 million for the *ConnectOregon* program. Also known as *ConnectOregon* II, this second authorization will build on the success of *ConnectOregon* I and will continue to improve the flow of commerce, remove delays and improve safety. Read more about *ConnectOregon* II project eligibility, selection criteria and timelines here <http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/COMM/CO/COII.shtml>. A *ConnectOregon* II FAQ document is included with this memo as Attachment 1.

Discussion

The deadline for *ConnectOregon* II applications is November 21 and one of the things applicants are asked to include in the application submittal is a letter of support from affected local governments or other entities. As with the *ConnectOregon* I applications, the MPO is asking the MPC to approve letters of support for *ConnectOregon* II applications submitted for projects within the MPO area. The Lane County Board of Commissioners will consider approval of letters of support for projects in Lane County *outside of* the MPO area.

The *ConnectOregon* II process occurs on a quick timeline. As a result, as of the writing of this memo, the only *ConnectOregon* II application within the MPO area known at this time is a City of Eugene application for the train depot: Eugene Depot Phase 2 – Platform and Vehicular Improvements. Attachment 2 provides a draft letter of support from the MPO for this application. It should be noted that the Eugene Depot *ConnectOregon* II application is essentially the same as a *ConnectOregon* I application submitted by Eugene. That *ConnectOregon* I application received MPC's unanimous support for a letter of endorsement in February 2006. Eugene staff will be present at the October 11 MPC meeting to provide additional information and answer questions regarding the application.

MPO and Lane County staff have solicited requests for letters of support from public and private entities throughout Lane County. Should additional letters of support be requested from the MPO for projects within the MPO area, staff will bring the additional letter(s) to either the October 11 or November 8 MPC meeting for approval.

Requested Action

Approve letter of support for City of Eugene *ConnectOregon* II Grant Application for Eugene Depot Phase 2 - Platform and Vehicular Improvements.

Attachments:

Attachment 1: *ConnectOregon* II FAQ

Attachment 2: Letter of Support for City of Eugene *ConnectOregon* II Grant Application for Eugene Depot Phase 2 - Platform and Vehicular Improvements