



November 1, 2006

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Petra Schuetz

Subject: Item 4.d – Transportation Enhancement Applications

Action Recommended: Approve letter to ODOT Transportation Enhancement Program prioritizing local applications.

Background

The Transportation Enhancement (TE) program provides federal highway funds for projects that strengthen the cultural, aesthetic, or environmental value of our transportation system. 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.

In late winter 2006, by consensus, TASC and TPC discussed, prioritized and submitted to MPC for endorsement four projects without priority. At the June 2006 meeting, MPC unanimously endorsed the following four applications from the Central Lane MPO area:

- **Delta Ponds Multiuse Path – Eugene**
- **South A Pedestrian Enhancement – Springfield**
- **Spring Connector Multiuse Path – Eugene**
- **Commerce Connector Multiuse Path and Bridge – Eugene**

The available funding for the 2006 cycle is \$11 million statewide. Final applications were due June 30, 2006. Detailed descriptions of the four projects are provided below.

The public comment period for TE applications is October 1 through November 30, 2006. Final project selection will take place in January 2007 with approval by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in February or March 2007. The public comment period presents an opportunity for MPOs to prioritize the final applications within their respective boundaries. There are no formal criteria for this process, but agencies may submit letters to, “support a specific project, or explain which projects are most important on a statewide basis. ODOT will consider local priorities in deciding which projects advance to the TE Advisory Committee for final evaluation and selection.” The ODOT TE Program Manager further clarified:

If your MPO is willing to rank the four projects from Eugene and Springfield, that will be most helpful -- but I know that may be difficult. It is also helpful if they identify some priority groupings (high-medium-low or high-higher-highest...). Or, as a third option-- they can supply specific statements about why they support each project, what it accomplishes at the local or regional level.

Staff Recommendation

In an effort to use all opportunities to leverage support for the Central Lane area projects, at its October 26, 2006 meeting TPC unanimously approved a motion to:

Recommend to MPC to prioritize the applications noting that all four applications are important projects, but that the number one highest priority projects are both the Springfield South A Pedestrian Enhancement and the Eugene Delta Ponds applications. Further, the two remaining Eugene applications are of equal priority unless otherwise determined by Eugene staff.

On October 27, 2006 Eugene chose to differentiate their priority of the remaining projects giving the Spring Connector Multiuse Path project priority over the Fern Ridge - Commerce Street Multi-use Path and Bridge project.

In summary, the following reflects the TPC recommendation for prioritization:

#1. Delta Ponds Path & Bridge (Eugene)

The Delta Ponds Path & Bridge project leverages a nearly \$5M investment partnership in Eugene to enhance the Delta Ponds natural area and link the Ruth Bascom Riverbank Trail System to Eugene neighborhoods and commercial employment centers for non-motorized users while bridging over the physical barrier of Delta Highway.

#1. South 'A' Street Pedestrian Enhancement (Springfield)

The South 'A' Pedestrian Enhancement Project builds on previous enhancements constructed with the relocation of the Lane Transit District Downtown Springfield Station to this area of South 'A' Street. The project improves pedestrian safety and comfort in the vicinity of the LTD Springfield Station by extending traffic calming measures through the heart of the Downtown business district, enhancing safe highway crossing opportunities for transit users and other pedestrians, and contributing to Downtown redevelopment opportunities along South 'A' Street.

#3. Spring Connector Multiuse Path (Eugene)

The Spring Connector Multi-use Path project represents a continuing funding request from multiple federal sources (Including TE grants and federal earmarks) to implement a planned direct connection between Eugene neighborhoods through a natural setting to a popular transportation corridor and Lane Community College for non-motorized users.

#4. Commerce Street Multiuse Path and Bridge (Eugene)

The Fern Ridge - Commerce Street Multi-use Path and Bridge project will provide desirable and safe access for non-motorized users connecting the parallel Fern Ridge Path System to one of Eugene's commercial employment centers.

If desired, MPC needs to submit a letter discussing prioritization for project applications prior to November 30, 2006. A draft letter is included as Attachment 1.

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. Specific information on the comment period can be found at http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/HWY/LGS/enhancement.shtml#Public_Comment.

Project Details

- **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.

Attachments: Attachment 1 – Draft MPC Letter of Prioritization to ODOT