

August 4, 2010

Ray LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Southeast Corridor Project: Connecting Communities TIGER II Grant Proposal

Dear Secretary LaHood,

The Bicycle Transportation Alliance wholeheartedly endorses the region's TIGER II grant proposal - Southeast Corridor Project: Connecting Communities. This proposal improves integration of freight, bike, pedestrian and transit modes and addresses several critical livability issues in our communities.

By creating new bicycle and pedestrian options, this project will provide cost-effective solutions to the problem that nearly 40% of all global warming pollution in Oregon, which comes from cars and trucks, increasing **environmental sustainability**. These connections also will reduce auto congestion around our neighborhood on busier arterials and ease the movement of freight into and out of the Central Eastside Industrial District and the Brooklyn Rail Yards—key employment generators around our neighborhood. Specific project elements include:

- **Livability:** The Clinton to the River Multi-Use Path provides a critical connection within the region's bicycle and pedestrian network, linking dense, vibrant neighborhoods with employment, educational institutions, the 21-mile Springwater Corridor multi-use path, the East Bank Esplanade and the future Willamette River Bridge. These improvements will transform the safety of pedestrian and bicycle connections in the neighborhood and to the new Willamette River Bridge and remove existing conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians and freight.
- **Economic Competitiveness:** By relocating SE Water Avenue this project will support new multimodal connections to educational institutions, employment, cultural attractions, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities while protecting freight mobility and creating redevelopment opportunities.
- **State of Good Repair:** The Oregon Pacific Railroad and Yard Improvements allow for the relocation of four steam engines from the Union Pacific Railroad's Brooklyn Yard, providing space for the expansion at that key intermodal facility—it also provides the needed right of way for the proper relocation of SE Water Avenue. These project improvements are critical to supporting freight movement in this industrial neighborhood. The 17,000 jobs located in the Central Eastside Industrial District are valuable for our city, region and state. 1,122

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businesses are located in this industrial sanctuary and will use this major artery to ship freight throughout the country.

- **Safety:** Rhine Pedestrian Bridge—Deals with immediate safety concerns with the existing substandard bridge and enhances bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between residential neighborhoods, schools, employment centers and light rail. This bridge crosses over a highly used by area high school students and crosses over a vital rail freight line.
- **Safety:** Lake Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge—Addresses the immediate hazard associated with illegal crossing on an adjacent freight rail trestle by establishing a vital link in the bicycle and pedestrian network. The new bridge would enhance access to schools, light rail and downtown Milwaukie's retail district.

Implementation of the Southeast Corridor Project will dramatically improve access and create more vibrant and livable communities by providing safer bicycle and pedestrian connections through a highly used and important vital industrial corridor. These modest investments also will improve freight operations within the Southeast Region by reducing travel times, and in turn reducing the sector's impact on the climate. Finally, this project will further support Portland's burgeoning green economy, attracting entrepreneurs interested in the amenities and access the Southeast Corridor will offer.

On behalf of the Bicycle Transportation Alliance, we strongly support TIGER II Grant Funding for the Southeast Corridor Project: Connecting Communities.

Sincerely,


Rob Sadowsky
Executive Director