



OREGON RAIL HERITAGE FOUNDATION  
PO Box 42443 Portland OR 97242-0443 ~ www.orhf.org

August 6, 2010

Secretary of Transportation Ray La Hood  
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 Oregon Railroad Heritage Foundation (ORHF) is a non-profit organization whose mission is to secure a permanent home for the City of Portland's three steam locomotives. ORHF is coordinating with TriMet and other partners to locate a restoration facility and interpretive center in Southeast Portland adjacent to the planned Southeast Corridor Project. A capital campaign for that project is proceeding. The success of this project depends on both attractive public access and proximity to the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry (OMSI).

The Connecting Communities TIGER II grant proposal builds on ORHF's and other existing and planned investments in this corridor. Public institutions such as OMSI rely on community access by public transit, evidenced by TriMet's history of strong weekend transit ridership. Such transit access to the planned ORHF facility would be used by volunteers and visiting members of the public. ORHF further believes that there will be considerable synergy created between this rail heritage interpretative facility and modern, adjacent rail operations represented by light rail, streetcar, and both shortline and mainline railroads. This location will become a very popular recreational and education destination, accessed by rail transit from all directions.

The Southeast Corridor Project is already a catalyst for the coordinated reconfiguration of the Oregon Pacific Railroad yard and its integration with the new ORHF facility. The relocation of the steam locomotives to this new home in turn will facilitate the expansion of the Union Pacific Railroad's Brooklyn intermodal facility. These projects, linked to the Southeast Corridor Project, will provide an educational facility, improved rail freight facilities and support for the 17,000 jobs located in the Central Eastside Industrial District.

Some specific beneficial features of the Southeast Corridor Project: Connecting Communities TIGER II Grant Proposal include:

- The relocation of SE Water Avenue at a new light rail, streetcar and bus transit hub, facilitating new multimodal connections to the OMSI, PCC and ORHF educational institutions. This relocation supports the redevelopment of this district while preserving and strengthening existing employment sites and educational institutions. Integrated plans for this district around a new light rail station will promote walk, bike and transit access to these destinations.

- The Clinton Street to the River Multi-Use Path will provide a critical link in 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. Coordinated planning of these modes with street and truck access will make the district safer for all. This vital bicycle and pedestrian connection along and across the Willamette River will encourage active transportation choices, improving the livability of the neighborhood and reducing carbon emissions.
- Other pedestrian and bike improvement to the southeast will also improve access to the OMSI District and ORHF's new home. The Rhine Pedestrian Bridge, for example will replace a substandard pedestrian that many are afraid to use. The Kellogg Lake Pedestrian and Bicycle Bridge will provide an attractive alternative to the hazardous trespassing across freight rail trestle. The new bridge would enhance access to schools, light rail and downtown Milwaukie's retail district.

The integration of freight, bike, pedestrian and transit modes in this corridor will address several critical community livability issues. The project proposal will provide cost-effective solutions to global warming and reduce greenhouse gas emissions as called for in Portland's Climate Action Plan. The Oregon Rail Heritage Foundation will benefit from improved community access, reduce reliance on parking and support for its mission of promoting Oregon's Rail Heritage.

With this important opportunity to strengthen the region's livability, the Oregon Railroad Heritage Foundation strongly encourages you to fund the Southeast Corridor Project: Connecting Communities.

Sincerely,



Doyle McCormack  
Board of Directors, President