



TO: Ways & Means Capital Construction Subcommittee
FROM: Brian Sjothun, City Manager
City of Medford
DATE: May 18, 2017
RE: SB 5530 – request for project funding

The City of Medford and our regional partners respectfully ask for your support of our request for Lottery Bonds funding for the South Stage Overcrossing Project.

We are requesting \$15 million to be used as the needed State match for our federal request from the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) program. Our local match is \$14 million.

Clearly, if we do not receive the Federal grant, any approval you provide for State lottery bond proceeds would be rescinded.

The proposed South State Overcrossing Project will provide needed connectivity for the southern portion of the City. Strong future employment and residential growth is anticipated on both sides of the freeway and this Overcrossing will be a vital link. An east-west connection for auto, bicycle and pedestrian uses will support this future growth and provide connectivity that does not now exist between the two sides of the freeway for three miles. The location of this Overcrossing will also allow for connection of two regional trail networks, the north-south Bear Creek Greenway and a trail system currently being developed that starts at the Greenway and runs east up to the City parks in the eastern foothills. The project also provides a vital link to the two north-south arterial roads that form a ring around the valley and reduce demand on the Interstate as well as Highway 62 and Highway 140.

I provide more details on the project, the funding plan and the outcomes in the next pages. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns.

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South Stage Road Overcrossing

The City is seeking federal funds to support the South Stage Road Overcrossing project, which would connect both sides of Interstate 5 and Bear Creek by providing a connection for freight, auto, bicycle and pedestrian travel that currently does not exist for three miles.

Support Economic Growth in Southern Oregon

With strong future employment and residential growth expected on both sides of the freeway, the overcrossing will be a vital link to support economic activity in Medford and surrounding areas with an estimated regional benefit totaling \$191.2 million. Once constructed, the project will connect major employers on the west side of Interstate 5 with a planned employment campus on the east side and the largest area of undeveloped and developed housing in the City. This will provide economic relief to Medford and Jackson County, which as of August 2016 had unemployment rates of 6.7%, considerably higher when compared with the state (5.4%) and national average (5%).

The project will reduce congestion on the Interstate, Highway 62, and Highway 140 by creating a critical connection to the two north-south arterial roads that form a ring around the valley. The location of the overcrossing will also allow for connection of two regional trail networks, the north-south Bear Creek Greenway and a trail system currently being developed that starts at the Greenway and runs east up to the City parks in the eastern foothills.

Increase Freight Mobility

In the United States, Interstate 5 is the third most heavily traveled truck corridor and 2.3 million trucks per year pass through Medford. However, there are only two connections for local and interstate traffic to cross the Interstate along a 6.5 mile section of the freeway next to the urban center of Medford. Congestion around these interchanges presents the risk of forcing traffic to queue on the interstate itself, causing costly delays. The strategic location of the overcrossing will reduce congestion and improve access to the interstate for freight from a planned employment campus on the west side of the Interstate and major existing regional employers such as Harry & David.



Project Partners

- City of Medford
- City of Phoenix
- Jackson County
- Rogue Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Bear Creek Greenway Foundation
- Harry & David

By the Numbers

- **Regional Benefit:** \$191.2 million
- **Travel Time Savings:** 5.4 million hours over 20 years (\$11.5 million)
- **Construction Jobs Created:** 906
- **Permanent Jobs:** 448

Funding Request

- **Estimated Total Cost:** \$50 million
- **Federal Request:** \$21 million
- **State Request:** \$15 million
- **Local Match:** \$14 million
- **Benefit Cost Ratio:** 4.2

Improve Local Transportation

In order to get from the downtown and western portion of Medford to the southeast quadrant of town, travelers must pass through either the intersection of Barnett Road and Highland Road by the South Medford Interchange, residential streets, or detours in excess of five miles. By creating an alternate east-west route, the new direct and convenient connection will relieve pressure on the interchange while providing important redundancy for accident events or other closures of the existing route.

Ensure Safety and Seismic Resilience

Geologists have found that the Cascadia Subduction Zone, which runs along the west coast of Oregon and Washington, is long overdue for a large magnitude earthquake. Such an event could wipe out critical infrastructure along Interstate 5, including the 3,222-footlong viaduct that cuts through the heart of Medford. The South Stage Road Overcrossing would provide an alternate route for traffic in case of such a natural disaster and collapse of the viaduct or other infrastructure in the region.

Additionally, emergency vehicles of all types will be able to shorten response times. The new connectivity will allow a secondary route to ambulance travel from the southwest portion of the urban area to the Rogue Valley Medical Center in the event of congestion or the closure of Barnett Road. This shortened response time and increased flexibility will result in lives saved.

