



# CITY OF CORNELIUS

April 13, 2006

Mr. Jason Tell  
ODOT-Region 1 Manager  
123 NW Flanders Street  
Portland, Oregon 97209

**RE: Draft 2008-11 STIP; OR8: Minter Bridge Rd./Forest Grove Preservation Project**

Dear Jason,

The City of Cornelius understands that your staff is scoping an \$8.8 million preservation project on OR8 from Minter Bridge Road to Forest Grove for possible inclusion in the 2008-2011 STIP. We join the Cities of Hillsboro and Forest Grove and respectfully request that you assure inclusion of full funding for the project in both the Draft and Final STIP Preservation program. If only part of the project can be funded we urge you to assure that the OR8 Couplet through Cornelius will be included in the final project limits. In support of this request, the City offers the following information for your consideration.

Cornelius is a small community of about 10,000 residents situated on OR 8 between Hillsboro and Forest Grove. We are an OECDD recognized Disadvantaged Community with a high proportion of poor, minority and transit dependent citizens. TriMet serves our community with a high frequency route (the #57) running on OR8 with 15-minute headways. OR8 bisects much of the City as a couplet (Adair Street westbound; Baseline Street eastbound).

Operation and appearance of the highway dramatically and, in many respects, adversely impacts life in our small town. It carries about 40,000 vehicles per day, and, because it is an NHS Connector Route, the volume of single-unit trucks, buses and multi-unit trucks traveling the highway *exceeds 30 percent*. The vast majority of this traffic simply rumbles through our City and, for decades, the highway has been managed by ODOT almost solely to maintain this through-travel function.

In an effort to better incorporate this State highway into the fabric of our community and build a healthy central business district, Cornelius developed and adopted, in 1999, the Main Street Master Plan. We revised this Plan in 2002 and, with ODOT and Metro assistance, revised the City's Transportation System Plan in 2005 to reflect the Main Street objectives. We petitioned the Oregon Transportation Commission to designate the 10<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue section of the highway as a Special Transportation Area. This

designation was awarded in August 2005. We secured funds from Washington County to reconstruct the OR8: 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> Avenue Split Intersection and have just completed this project. It reconstructed one of the worst sections of the highway in our City.

As you are aware, we are in the middle of designing the OR8: 10<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> Avenue Main Street Improvements (Adair) and anticipate bid letting in August 2006. That project will endow the highway with significant new multi-modal features and will greatly improve pedestrian access, illumination, drainage and safety along ten blocks of highway frontage by closing open ditches and rectifying significant access problems. We have obtained funds to reconstruct the OR8/10<sup>th</sup> Avenue Intersection at both Adair and Baseline Streets and hope to complete this project by 2008. That project will reconstruct other very poor pavement sections in the City and relieve a bottleneck where the highway intersects with a County designated freight route. In all, Cornelius will have spent over \$9.0 million dollars on these projects that provide direct benefit to the highway.

None of these City secured improvements of OR8 have received any ODOT funding, though they will dramatically enhance the highway's operation, safety and appearance, particularly the westbound couplet (Adair Street). Unfortunately, the brand-spanking-new sidewalks, street trees, decorative lights and other pedestrian amenities that will soon line the downtown blocks can't help but accentuate the dilapidated road base. The city is struggling to bootstrap the downtown core and the sorry state of the road will retard this effort. More significantly, many highway pavement sections in Cornelius are nearing the end of their design life and are beginning to deteriorate. With a new six-acre commercial center, anchored by a Walgreen's, opening at 20<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and a new Walmart Super Center slated for opening in 2007 at 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, demands on the road base will only increase. Patching the worst segments will avoid rapid disintegration but major restoration is needed now and will certainly be required by 2010 if ODOT hopes to avoid outright reconstruction of the facility at much higher cost.

Deferring simple maintenance *now* promises much more significant disruption of the Main Street district just when the City expects to see private business investment gaining momentum. The road will have to be maintained. Its simply a matter of whether that maintenance is managed by ODOT to *help* the City achieve its economic development goals, or in a way that *retards* those goals for the next six years and then dumps dirt, dust, noise and grime all over them.

As a final consideration you should be aware that we are requesting Transportation System Enhancement Program funding for pedestrian amenities along Baseline Street (the OR8 west-bound couplet) from 10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue. We hope to dovetail that project with the preservation work. Success or failure in that effort is not contingent on award of the preservation project. However, clearly, there exists an opportunity to leverage the benefit of either award with the other.

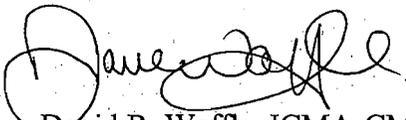
The STIP Update materials distributed by ODOT do not seem to indicate any opportunity to present public testimony on which projects ought to be included in the Draft STIP. It is unclear even who is responsible for making these decisions. We endorse the comments

submitted by the Washington County Coordinating Committee requesting that opportunities be created now to address these decision makers and that receiving testimony be a piece of all subsequent winnowing exercises leading to adoption of the Final STIP.

We are a small community reaching for something better. We have received little from ODOT over the years. Now would be a really good time to help out; to preserve the highway before it requires costly reconstruction later. Please do the work now so the City's economic development is helped and not hindered.

Your partner in community development,

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David R. Waffle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "W".

David R. Waffle, ICMA-CM  
City Manager

Cc: Richard Meyer, Development and Operations Director  
Terry Whisler, Project Manager

drw/stip 041406