



Oregon Department of Transportation

NEWS RELEASE

Northwestern Oregon: Region 2

Clatsop, Tillamook, Yamhill, Polk, Marion, Linn, Lincoln, Benton and Lane Counties

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Final Phase of Environmental Planning Begins for West Eugene Parkway

EUGENE--Officials with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have approved a re-evaluation report for the West Eugene Parkway (WEP) that will allow the project to advance to a Supplemental Final Environmental Impact Statement (SFEIS) and the next phase of required environmental planning.

The re-evaluation of the 1997 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) for the WEP is based on the project's updated travel demand and traffic projections (changed from 2015 to 2025), recent rare plant and wetland surveys and the project's current proposed design. The report assesses anticipated benefits and impacts from the proposed Parkway, compared with alternatives, benefits and impacts considered in the 1997 SDEIS.

The project's SFEIS will update the 1997 SDEIS to reflect changes in the project area over the past seven years. These changes include ODOT's 1999 selection of the preferred alternative and updating the environmental analysis to reflect existing conditions and the project's new design year of 2025. The analysis and documentation for the SFEIS will be conducted and prepared over the next year and will result in project commitments to mitigation and a decision regarding the future of the project. The SFEIS should be ready for publication about a year from now. The Bureau of Land Management and the US Army Corps of Engineers are Federal Cooperating Agencies for the West Eugene Parkway SFEIS.

The proposed West Eugene Parkway would be an approximately 5.8-mile, four-lane urban arterial connecting Highway 99 to Highway 126. The purpose of the Parkway is to:

- Provide a major access-controlled east-west connecting arterial for intra- and inter-regional and citywide travel through the western half of the City of Eugene, between Highway 126 to the west and the I-5/I-105 corridor to the east;

- Improve access to the West Eugene industrial area via direct connections with only strategic crossroads, thereby supporting orderly and planned growth
- Better link West Eugene residential areas with downtown, thereby supporting orderly and planned growth;
- Implement an important part of the area-wide roadway system as envisioned in the Eugene-Springfield Metro Area Transportation Plan (TransPlan); and
- Relieve congestion and improve safety on West 11th Avenue, by removing most intra- and inter-regional and some local traffic from the busiest and most hazardous section of West 11th Avenue.

Detailed technical analyses and extensive agency, jurisdiction and public discussions have taken place regarding the West Eugene Parkway for over 20-years. Lane County, the cities of Eugene and Springfield, the Lane Transit District and the Lane Council of Governments recently amended local plans to include the West Eugene Parkway. In addition, in November 2001, City of Eugene voters approved a ballot measure in support of the West Eugene Parkway, reaffirming voters' approval of a 1986 ballot measure that also supported the Parkway.

A Public Open House will be held in early 2005 and an opportunity for formal public testimony will be provided in late 2005. For more information check the project website at www.odot.state.or.us/region2public/ or contact Karl Wieseke, the Project Manager (503) 744-8080 and Lou Torres, the Region 2 Public Information Officer (503) 986-2880.

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