



2017 FEDERAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

PROJECT REQUESTS

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

FEDERAL REQUEST

SR 432 Corridor Improvements – Phase II

\$5,320,000

SR 432 is a state route that connects industrial areas in Longview (including the currently developed Port of Longview property, the Port's Barlow Point expansion property, and the Mint Farm Industrial Park), unincorporated Cowlitz County, and northwest Oregon (including the Port of Rainier) to I-5. The SR432 Highway Improvements and Rail Realignment Study Concept Development Report completed in 2014 by a consortium of local agencies, WSDOT, and BNSF Railroad, projected significant growth in truck and rail traffic along this corridor and identified intersection and at-grade rail crossing improvements needed to prevent them from deteriorating to unacceptable levels of service and safety.

The City of Longview and its partners are seeking funding for the SR 432 Corridor Improvements – Phase II project to construct two closely connected improvements identified in the SR 432 Report:

SR 432/SR 411 Interchange Improvements

The first piece of this project is the SR 432/411 interchange because this is the geographically first highway bottleneck between I-5 and the SR432 industrial corridor. This project component will improve freight transportation by reducing congestion, directly benefiting companies receiving raw materials and transporting finished products, employees commuting to work in the area, and customers of businesses in the region. This project component will also improve vehicle capacity and safety issues that plague the intersection.

SR 432/California Way Intersection Realignment

The second piece is the realignment of the SR 432/California Way intersection. The improvements to this intersection will realign California Way to create a single intersection at SR 432/California Way/3rd Ave. The currently offset intersection will be eliminated, resulting in more efficient signal operation and turning and through movements. Realigning California Way will result in improved traffic and freight flow through the new single intersection.

In 2015, the Washington State Legislature approved \$85 million for improvements to the Industrial Way/Oregon Way intersection. While the state funding is a great start, the projected costs for all of the SR 432 corridor improvements exceed \$300 million. The City of Longview is requesting \$5,320,000 in FASTLANE grant funds, having already received \$4,180,000 in matching funds from the State and Cowlitz County, for total Phase II project costs of \$9,500,000. Account: FASTLANE

Longview Fire Department Ladder Truck**\$1,000,000**

The Aerial Platform Ladder Truck is vital not only for protection of the City of Longview, but it also protects the economic backbone of our community, the industrial waterfront along the Columbia River. There are at least 80 structures in the primary and secondary response areas for which an aerial device is an essential fireground and rescue tool. There are also major industrial developments with buildings and structures ranging from four to 14 stories in height. These structures do not have traditional access stairwells, making fire and rescue often impossible without the use of an aerial platform apparatus. The department's current ladder truck was purchased in 1998, has excessive maintenance issues and safety incidents and is in operation well past its useful life. An Aerial Platform Ladder Truck has the required versatility that our community can benefit from, and it is the only such Truck in Cowlitz County. Account: FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Longview Firefighter Personal Protective Equipment**\$257,937**

The Longview Fire Department requests federal funds to purchase new, safe, and interoperable Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA). An internal risk assessment identified SCBA replacement as a top priority due to the potential for firefighter injury. The department's current inventory of SCBA equipment is dated and prone to breakage and failure despite proper maintenance and regular inspection. At least one firefighter injury has occurred due to failing SCBA equipment during use, along with several "close call" incidents. All of the department's SCBA equipment is at least 10 years old and most is more than 15 years old. Account: FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant

Beech Street Extension**\$4,000,000**

This project will construct a public street approximately 2,000 feet in length from 14th Ave. to California Way, including curb, gutter, sidewalk, illumination, storm drainage, and intersection improvements. The new street will provide a connection between Oregon Way and California Way through a large mixed-use industrial/commercial area that lacks an east-west corridor. Development of the area has been difficult without direct access to public streets. The project will facilitate development of undeveloped and under-developed industrial/commercial land between Oregon Way and California Way, promoting opportunities to diversify and improve the economic stability and prosperity of the area. Account: Surface Transportation or Transportation Alternative Program

Columbia Heights Road**\$5,000,000**

This project will improve approximately one mile of Columbia Heights Road. The existing roadway is a 20-foot wide, winding urban collector in a steep hillside area paved with bituminous surfacing, with no sidewalk and very narrow shoulders, very limited street lighting, and no storm drainage system. Without sidewalk and with very narrow shoulders, Columbia Heights Road is a dangerous route for cyclists and pedestrians, especially for school children on their way to and from Columbia Heights Elementary School and Cascade Middle School. The scope of the project is to widen the existing roadway to 24 feet and provide curb, gutter, and sidewalk on one side of the roadway, and a wide shoulder with guardrails on the other side of the roadway. The project will also provide storm drainage and improve illumination. The benefits of this project will be to accommodate bicycle and pedestrian traffic and improve safety of the roadway. Account: Surface Transportation or Transportation Alternative Program

Biodiesel Bus Replacement**\$ 832,000**

The City is seeking federal funds to replace two buses that long ago exceeded their useful lives in order to maintain its timely and reliable fleet. As RiverCities Transit has increased the service provided to the communities of Longview and Kelso, its fleet has expanded and its vehicles are running more miles and are in service longer now than in years past. Funding will help the City purchase two low-floor replacement biodiesel coaches to replace 14-year-old buses that have exceeded 400,000 miles. Account: FTA Bus and Bus Facilities

POLICY AGENDA

Investment Package – Transportation and Water Infrastructure Spending

President-Elect Donald Trump has proposed a ten-year, \$1 trillion investment package to create American jobs and stimulate economic development. To date, the Trump plan relies on tax credits and public-private partnerships (P3s), not government spending, to spur infrastructure investment. For transportation projects, this generally means building toll roads and bridges. The City supports including federal spending within the investment package that ensures we can address the growing infrastructure backlog in our community and in communities around the country.

Increase the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit by 50%

The Housing Tax Credit is the most federal successful tool for encouraging private investment in the production and preservation of affordable rental housing production. It has financed nearly 3 million affordable apartments since 1986, providing homes to approximately 6.5 million low-income households since then, while transferring risk from the government to the private sector.

Despite the growing need for affordable housing, viable and sorely needed such developments are turned down each year because the cap on Housing Tax Credit authority is far too low to support the demand. In 2013 – the most recent year for which data is available – state Housing Tax Credit allocating agencies received applications requesting more than three times their available authority. Congress has not increased Housing Tax Credit authority in 16 years. To make a meaningful dent in the affordable housing supply gap, we urge Congress to pass Senator Maria Cantwell’s legislation to increase the cap on Housing Tax Credit authority by at least 50 percent. Such an expansion would support the preservation and construction of 350,000 to 400,000 additional affordable apartments over a ten-year period. There is ample developer and investor appetite for Housing Tax Credits to support such an increase.

Protect Smaller CDBG and HOME Entitlement Communities

The City supports inclusion of report language in the FY18 House Appropriations bill that protects small entitlement communities from the Obama Administration’s reform efforts. If small communities are eliminated from the CDBG and HOME programs, Longview would lose approximately \$500,000 per year in critical housing and economic development resources. In addition, the City supports full funding for the CDBG and HOME programs in FY18.

SAFER and Assistance to Firefighter Grant Funding with a Focus on Crude-By-Rail

The City supports maintaining funding levels for these critical public safety programs. In addition, the City supports reprioritizing crude-by-rail training and equipment grants as high priority items within the AFG program. Today, crude-by-rail communities and their first responders lack the equipment, training, and operational support they need to meet the public safety challenges posed by derailments. Under current AFG criteria guidelines, these types of funding requests will not get funded.

Crude-By-Rail Transport

On May 1, 2015, the Department of Transportation released the final rule on Enhanced Tank Car Standards and Operational Controls for High-Hazard Flammable Trains. The rule focused on safety improvements that are designed to prevent accidents, mitigate consequences in the event of an accident, and support emergency response.

However, the City of Longview supports Congressional action to address the rule’s shortcomings, which include:

- No immediate phase-out of DOT 111 and CPC 1232 tank cars, which have poor safety records and remain a threat.
- The braking standard timeline is six years, which is too long.
- No increased volatility standards were included.

Internet Sales Tax

The City supports the Marketplace Fairness Act and the Remote Transaction Parity Act, which would provide states and local governments with the authority to require out-of-state sellers to collect sales tax. At a time when our cities and towns face on-going budget challenges under lingering recessionary impacts, having the authority to collect sales taxes owed on Internet or out-of-state purchases is essential. The Washington State Department of Revenue estimates it would generate \$650 million for Washington local governments and \$1.3 billion for the state itself over the next five years. Over the 2015-2017 biennium, Longview would receive \$156,446 in sales tax revenue.

Extend and Make Permanent the Alternative Fuels Credit

The City of Longview supports a permanent extension of the Alternative Fuels Tax Credit as the City is transitioning vehicles in its fleet to a propane blend that reduces emissions and saves on operating expenses. In 2016, the City began the fleet conversion by purchasing three alternative fuel propane paratransit mini-buses, purchasing new and replacement propane capable sedans and pickup trucks, and installing propane conversion kits and fueling equipment at the City's fueling facility. The lifetime Alternative Fuel Tax Credit savings for the three paratransit vehicles alone is approximately \$40,000. In addition, 90,000 fewer pounds of carbon dioxide will be produced over their useful lives.

FY 2018 Program Levels

Maintain adequate funding levels for TIGER, BYRNE Justice Assistance Programs, Economic Development Administration, and Assistance to Firefighters funding.

Police Equipment Funding

The City strongly supports funding for Byrne Justice Assistance Grants or the restoration of the COPS Technology program. There are very few funding options at the federal level to help police departments purchase equipment despite the fact that federal regulations continue to require costly upgrades. Federal funds for equipment upgrades are important especially for police departments with cash strapped budgets.

Regulatory Concerns and Unfunded Mandates

Waters of the U.S.: The potential concerning impacts of the proposed rule released by the EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that would amend the definition of "waters of the U.S." and expand the range of waters that fall under federal jurisdiction.

FEMA and Endangered Species: A recent National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Biological Opinion concluded that FEMA must change its implementation of the National Flood Insurance Program to better protect endangered species within floodplains. NMFS's recommendations, as written, would require FEMA to go above and beyond its legal authority, amending and issuing new regulations that would subject communities to excessively restrictive floodplain development standards.

Americans with Disabilities Act: The City supports the objective of ADA to prohibit discrimination against people with disabilities. However, the strict nature in which the regulations are applied can be costly and sometimes provide little to no real benefit. The City supports common sense implementation of ADA regulations with room for flexibility when dealing with unique circumstances.

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