Active Transportation & Complete Streets Projects

Name of Project Portland Central City Multi-Modal Safety Improvements
(project name will be adjusted to comply with ODOT naming convention if necessary)

Project nomination narrative

Project nomination narratives provide in depth process, location and project definition details and serves as the nomination form for project funding consideration.. **Project narratives should be kept to 12 pages total per project.** The narrative form is available electronically at: http://www.oregonmetro.gov/regionalflexiblefund. Please complete the following:

Project Definition

Base project information

1. Corresponding RTP project number(s) for the nominated project (if applicable). 10232, multiple others
2. Project extent or area description. Portland Central City, as defined by the Portland Comprehensive Plan
3. Purpose and need statement (The purpose and need statement should address the criteria as they apply to the project, for example: increase non-auto trip access to essential services in the X town center, particularly for the high concentration of Y and Z populations in the project area).
   The purpose of this project is to plan for and address safety and access issues resulting from competing demands on transportation infrastructure in Portland's central city. Planning for and investing in active transportation modes along with freight, transit and vehicular access will help the region attain its economic, climate, and social equity targets by providing a truly multi-modal central city. Today, the City of Portland and its many stakeholders are faced with a multitude of modal plans and competing, sometimes overlapping policies. The result is a lack clarity on how to balance these competing demands with extremely limited space in the region's most important economic and social service hub.

   This project will result in a strategy that identifies a multi-modal transportation network that complements adjacent land uses, preserves capacity for important uses, and accomodates and encourages the already signifcant active transportation use in the central city today. The project will then identify and fund priority investments in active transportation.

   The project will also fund the preliminary development of a new greenway trail south of the Marquam Bridge, providing access to the new transit bridge serving South Waterfront. The development of this trail segement is expected to yield significant increases in bicycle and pedestrian traffic to downtown Portland as well as increase demand for adjoining trails.

   Taken all together, the suite of projects funded through this grant will be one of the most

significant investments in active transportation this region has experienced in several years. Given the nearly 30,000 bicyle trips that occur within downtown Portland each day, and a pedestrian mode share of nearly 50% for downtown residents, identifying a safe, coherent network that provides access to employment, education and social services is a sound investment in the heart of Metro's 2040 growth concept. Beyond accomodating growth and achieving modal targets, however, lies a more serious issue of safety on the corridors leading in to and out of Portland's central city. Fourteen of the top twenty high crash intersections for bicycling (1999-2008) are within the proposed project area, and account for 94 (74%) of the 127 reported crashes that occurred at those 20 top locations. Similarly, six of the top twenty high crash intersections for walking (1999-2008) are within the proposed project area, and account for 44 (31%) of the 140 reported crashes that occurred at those 20 top locations. Crash data from 1999 to 2008 shows a disturbing trend that, if left unchecked, will result in declining active transportation use in the central city while walking and bicycle trips continue to grow in significant fashion in Porltand's neighborhoods to the east and west. As the largest trip destination in the region, the importance and need for this timely project which aims to create a safe and accessible network is evident.

4. Description of project design elements.
   The project will use the current guidelines for the development of transportation facilities including the NACTO Bikeway Design Guide, Freight Master Plan, Pedestrian Master Plan design guidelines and other best practics to create as much separation between people walking or bicycling and automobile traffic.
5. Description of post implementation measurement of project effectiveness (Metro staff is available to help design measurement methodologies for post-construction project criteria performance). Portland consistently collects use and safety (crash) data throughout the city. This includes local traffic counts (both public and private), police crash reports, State of Oregon Crash Database, as well as census data for means of transportation to work.

Map of project area

1. Provide a map of the project consistent with instruction in Exhibit B

Project sponsor agency

1. Contact information for:
   - Application lead staff

   Dan Bower, Division Manager – Active Transportation
   1120 SW 5th Ave, Suite 800 Portland, OR 97204
   503-823-5667
   Dan.Bower@portlandoregon.gov

2. Describe whether the lead agency has recently led or failed to deliver a federal aid transportation project, and how the agency currently has the technical, administrative and budget capacity to deliver the project. The Portland Bureau of Transportation is one of the few local agencies in the state that are fully certified by ODOT to deliver federal aid projects and has extensive experience with delivering such projects, from project development

through design engineering and construction. The bureau currently has the staff capable to provide all the administrative services related to project management and all technical services related to design engineering, and construction management. .

Location

1. Describe how you identified the travel corridor/area for the project and how regional and local data relevant to the project criteria support this location as your top priority(s). (See page 11 for criteria relevant to prioritizing project location) There are a number of factors that support the Portland's Central City as our top priority for making multi-modal safety improvements. They are: crash data (detailed elsewhere in this application); the high potential of the Central City to be a bicycle-friendly area and its underperformance (as identified in Portland's Cycle Zone Analysis); its function as the largest trip destination in the region; the concentration of high-population dense residential neighborhoods in close proximity to the Central City and the benefit that offers to achieving local and regional goals (detailed elsewhere in this application) and the high proportion of underserved communities that will benefit from this project (detailed elsewhere in this application). Feeding into this background are the common complaints among Portland residents of how they feel "abandoned" by the city's bikeway network once they access the Central City and how that creates a barrier to increased use.

   Also feeding into this is the recognition of international best practices, in which the design and investment in the central cities of bicycle-friendly communities acknowledge the important role they play as attractors of employment and retail trips. The centers in those cities reflect the highest levels of investment in active transportation in order to create bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly environments that welcome people arriving and traveling by those modes. All the data points to the central city as a area that deserves investment; it provides the bulk of social services in the region, contains multiple census tracts below the poverty level, has the highest crash rates of any part of the region and is the single most important employment center in the region. Portland's Central City reflects high levels of investment in transit, motor vehicle and pedestrian travel. It is time to begin the serious consideration and investment needed to create a central city that is safe, accessible and a thriving destination for people arriving and traveling by all modes.

Highest priority criteria

1. Describe how the project improves access to priority destinations mixed-use centers, large employment areas, schools, and essential services for EJ/underserved communities. (See maps/data on Metro FTP site).

   Metro's 2040 plan identifies Portland's central city as the largest, single most important destination in the region. It's a mixed-use center that is a large employment area, contains schools--including Oregon's largest university--and provides the densest network of essential services for all communities. This project will significantly improve the viablity of accessing these services using active transportation including providing safe and reliable connections to transit. As the hub for essential services in this region, it's essentential that the central city be accessible for low-cost, healthy transportation choices for all people.

2. Identify the safety issues in the project area. How does the project design address safety in the area? (See bike/pedestrian crash map/data on Metro FTP site).

As noted above, the project area includes a high proportion of the City of Portland's top crash locations for both people walking and bicycling. Overall, in the decade from 1999 through 2008 there were approximately 488 recorded bicycle crashes in the Central City and 475 recorded pedestrian crashes (source: City of Portland data). The lack of adequate crossing treatments for people walking and bicycling as well as the overall absense of separated bikeways and appropriate intersection treatments contributes to these crashes. These inadequacies reflect designs and operations considered outdated when compared to national best practices.

In addition, bikeways inadequate to handle the large volumes of people bicycling in downtown Portland create safety problems. Among the more common are people passing slower cyclists by unexpectantly leaving the bicycle lane into auto traffic and people bicycling passing slower cyclists within the narrow space for bicycling. While these types of safety problems may only rarely directly lead to crashes (there have been reported crashes of the second type on the Hawthorne Bridge pathway), they lead to discomfort of people riding bicycles and unpredicatablilty for motorists. This sense of discomfort or perceived lack of safety is a barrier to increased bicycle use, which is contrary to both city and regional policy and goals that are intended to encourage increased non-automotive transportation.

Similar to other cities across North America, Portland is working to implement bikeways that provide more width for cyclists and more physical separation between those bicycling and those driving. Such facilities reflect best practices in national and international design and are increasingly being used in a growing number of US and North American cities. Safety (and the perception of safety) is the guiding principle for this project. The facilities that will be built will go beyond the standard AASHTO 5 foot bike lane designs and will reflect more the separation and intersection designs that Portland has begun to implement elsewhere in the city.

3. How does the project serve traditionally underserved (minority, low-income, limited English speaking, youth, elderly, disabled) communities? Explain how your project responds to data identifying concentrations of underserved communities and what project elements address the transportation needs of these communities. (See Transportation Equity maps/data on Metro FTP site for help identifying concentrations of EJ and underserved communities and how well they are served/not served).

   Portland's Central City shows a high concentration of significantly above average and above average Paratransit LIFTs, a high concentration of transit ramp deployments, above and significantly above average concentration of low-income populations and residential pockets with above average concentrations of elderly residents. Despite having good access to active transportation and transit facilities, the central city also displays a high concentration of roadways identified as barriers to non-auto travel. By improving conditions for multi-modal transportation this project will improve transportation options for the high concentrations of underserved communities that both come to the central city seeking services as well as those who live in the central city. A principal focus of this project is to improve conditions for

walking, bicycling and transit by addressing those roadways that currently serve as barriers to increased use of active transportation and in doing so, providing a low cost transportation solution that provides the access and mobility these populations demand.

High priority criteria

1. Describe any outreach that has been conducted with EJ/underserved communities to date. (Targeted outreach to these communities may be facilitated by Metro during the regional public comment period for comments on project scope. Additional outreach during project development phases (final design, preliminary engineering, etc.) may be a condition of funding approval.

   The projects ultimately selected for investment will stem from inclusive planning efforts including the devleopment of the Regional Transportation Plan, Portland's Transportation System Plan and all the modal plans that informed these efforts. Given the significant EJ/underserved communities that will be served by this project, however the planning and project development phase will necessarily include both outreach and inclusion of EJ/underserved communities, much to the benefit of the project and its potential users. We envision this effort including inclusion on advisory committees and decision making bodies as well as targed efforts to reach the multitude of social service agencies that have clients living in the central city, as well as regional service providers that are located in the central city.

2. Describe any conflicts with freight/active transportation you've identified in your project area. How does the project design address or provide mitigation to these conflicts?

   The purpose of this project is to resolve issues asked in this important question. To date, the City has stalled on both freight and active transportation projects because of perceived conflicts to each mode. Through a stakeholder driven planning process, our goal is to build on adopted plans and develop a multi-modal network strategy throughout the central city that reflects the very real tradeoffs associated with investing in either mode. A successful project will result in a transportation plan that provides access and mobility to all users, and potentially prioritizes access depending on adjecent land uses or priority mobility corridors. Given that context, we will draw on the lessons of partner cities and nations, explore innovative techniques for providing seperation and legibility, and ensure the design of any active transportation facility does not unfairly impede the movement of freight.

3. Does the project design include "last mile" connections? Please explain. (Last mile connections create safe and comfortable biking and walking routes that directly connect transit stops to nearby origins and destinations, and can include the provision of secure and convenient bicycle parking at stations).

   Yes. The project will connect existing investments in light rail, bus transit, bike share, streetcar, carshare, and tram with high quality active transportation infrastructure. Any user should have access to all destinations within Portland's central city through a combination of these modes at the conclusion of this project.

4. Describe how the project will lead to an increase in non-auto trips through improvements in the user experience. (See Appendix C for design elements that improve the user experience). The region's experience with bicycle transportation has been "build it and they will come." This has been well-demonstrated by the recently-released data from the Oregon Household Activity Survey, as well as by US Census data from 1990-2011 for the commute trip. It is especially clear in Portland where, in general, those areas of Portland that rank the highest in Portland's Cycle Zone Analysis (which was the basis for Metro's Cycle Zone Analysis in development of its Active Transportation Plan) are those areas with the highest levels of bicycle use. This correlation to the quality of bikeways--and thus the quality of the user experience--has been repeatedly demonstrated in cities throughout the US, North America and the world, and recorded in transportation research in refereed academic journals.

   Previous and emerging research similarly demonstrates a user preference for bikeways that provide physical separation from motor vehicles along corridors, and separation in either time or space at intersections. Improving the quality of facilities to enhance not only the safety but also the comfort of the user is both recognized and demonstrated to be a foundation for increasing non-auto trips. For this reason Metro is rightly focused on the quality of the user experience that will result from these projects.

   It is this construction of the highest quality facilities that is integral to Portland's efforts to encourage increased non-automotive transportation. This strategy is clearly identified in Portland's Bicycle Plan for 2030, which was passed by Portland City Council in February 2010. The central city is a key element of the city's overall strategy and is the reason why the 2030 Bicycle Plan proposed that large areas of the central city by classified as "Bicycle Districts," with an emphasis on bicycle-friendly design throughout. While this project is not intended to implement the bicycle district concept, it indicates the significance of the central city in Portland's bikeway planning.

   The central city is important for two reasons and these two reasons figure prominently in how this project will contribute to decreased automobile use. First, the central city is a primary destination for the city and the region and currently has many roadways identified both anecdotally and in Metro's mapping as "barriers to active transportation." This project, by addressing the highest priority active transportation roadways in the central city will remove those barriers. Second, active transportation principally serves short trips. Creating better conditions for active transportation in the central city will serve both residents and visitors to the central city and will also serve residents within short trip distances of the central city. Those areas within 3 miles of the central city include some of the most dense of Portland's and the region's residential areas. Each percentage point decline in automotive mode split and subsequent increase in active transportation mode split reflects more actual trips than in less densely populated areas. In this way, improvements to active transportation conditions in the central city carry, as they must, a disproportionate share of the region's and city's auto trip reduction goals.

5. Does the project serve a high density or projected high growth area? Please explain. (For high growth areas, explain how the project is coordinated with growth plans to focus or orient future development to maximize use of the project). Yes. Portland's central city is both a high density and high growth area as defined by the Metro 2040 Growth Plan.

Priority criteria

1. Please describe the outreach/education/engagement element of the project nomination (Metro Regional Travel Options staff is available to help design an effective and appropriate level of education and marketing for your project nomination). This project will not fund an explicit outreach or education effort, however the project will be managed by the Active Transportation Division within the City of Portland. The Active Transportation Division, with the help of Metro, runs the nation's largest transportation demand management program and has developed multiple award winning encouragement programs. As with all projects coordinated by Active Transportation, this one will include community appropriate outreach materials and communications targeted at leveraging the investment and encouraging use of the new facilities by all users.

2. Are there opportunities to leverage other funds or investments with this project? Describe any opportunities you have identified and how you plan to coordinate with other project(s) or leverage other funds. There are several other projects occuring within the central city including the opening of Portland Milwauke Light Rail in 2015, Multnomah County maintenance and upgrades of several bridges including the Hawthorne Bridge, a major bicyle route, and the launch of bike share in Portland scheduled for 2014.

3. Describe how the project may help reduce the need for road and highway expansion. A Portland Bureau of Transportation analysis of the Oregon Household Activity Survey's (OHAS) data for the City of Portland--combined with residential growth projections for the city--indicate that by 2035 city residents can be expected to take more than 1.1 million more daily trips than in 2011. If the city's mode split in 2035 remains at the same levels as in 2011 (the OHAS survey year for Portland), then city residents will take more than 800,000 daily automobile trips than they did in 2011. This represents an increase of 47%. For this reason, achieving the city's, county's and region's goals for active transportation is critical if the city is to not experience the congestion and other ill-effects that will arise if most of that increase in traffic is borne by the private automobile.

   The central city is a key element of the city's overall strategy and is the reason why the 2030 Bicycle Plan proposed that large areas of the central city by classified as "Bicycle Districts," with an emphasis on bicycle-friendly design throughout. While this project is not intended to implement the bicycle district concept, it indicates the significance of the central city in Portland's bikeway planning. The Central City is important for two reasons and these two reasons figure prominently in how this project will contribute to decreased automobile use. First, the Central City is a primary destination for the city and the region and currently has many roadways identified both anecdotally and in Metro's mapping as "barriers to active transportation." This project, by addressing the highest priority active transportation

roadways in the Central City will remove those barriers. Second, active transportation principally serves short trips. Creating better conditions for active transportation in the central city will both serve residents and visitors to the Central City and will also serve residents within short trip distances of the central city. Those areas within 3 miles of the Central City include some of the most dense of Portland's and the region's residential areas and are also the areas where trip distances are the shortest (based on TAZ analysis). Because of the population density proximate to the central city each percentage point decline in automotive mode split and subsequent increase in active transportation mode split reflects more actual trips than in less densely populated areas. In this way, improvements to active transportation conditions in the central city carry, as they must, a disproportionate share of the region's and city's auto trip reduction goals.

Process

1. Describe the planning process that led to the identification of this project and the process used to identify the project to be put forward for funding consideration. (Answer should demonstrate that the process met minimum public involvement requirements for project applications per Appendix A) The universe of projects to be considered in this project will derive from two sources: the planning phase (Phase I) of the project itself and the existing Regional Transportation Plan, City of Portland Transportation System Plan, and modal plans such as the Portland Bicycle Plan for 2030, which have been adopted by Portland's City Council. Each of these processes included significant public involvment.

2. Describe how you coordinated with regional or other transportation agencies (e.g. Transit, Port, ODOT, Metro, Freight Rail operators, ODOT Region 1, Regional Safety Workgroup, and Utilities if critical to use of right-of-way) and how it impacted the project location and design. At this stage of the project, the coordination has included communication with the City of Portland Freight Coordinator, planners at TriMet, the Portland Business Alliance's Transportation Committee, the Portland Bicycle Advisory Committee, and the Pedestrian Advisory Committee. As the project evolves and designs are advanced, staff will work closely with all parties.