

**2014-15 REGIONAL FLEXIBLE FUND ALLOCATION**  
**PROJECT NOMINATION NARRATIVE**  
**ARATA ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

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***PROJECT NARRATIVES SHOULD BE KEPT TO 12 PAGES TOTAL PER PROJECT***

## **Active Transportation & Complete Streets projects**

### ***Process***

1. Describe the process used to narrow potential project nominations to select the project(s) being put forward for funding consideration. *(Answer should demonstrate that the process met minimum public involvement requirements per Appendix A)*

The local process involved coordination with both local and regional agencies. East county local agencies proposing projects involved the City of Gresham, Fairview, Wood Village and Troutdale, and Multnomah County. Multnomah County is the road authority for eligible roads in the cities of Fairview, Wood Village and Troutdale, while Gresham is the road authority for roads within its city limits.

The first step of the process involved coordination with the different jurisdictions to identify projects to nominate. Considered projects included those listed in the RTP, local CIPs, and projects previously considered for ARRA funding. An initial list of 11 projects was identified. A public meeting to review projects was held on June 6, 2011 by the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC). EMCTC functions as County's coordinating committee on transportation with members representing the County, the Four East County cities and the Port of Portland. Public comments were sought through the County's website and the public open house, and a news release and meeting notices were issued advertising the meeting. Meeting notices and links to the website were also distributed to email lists and posted to local jurisdiction websites, blogs and social media sites were coordinated between the County and four East County cities. Contact information for distribution lists are attached.

The next step in the process involved an EMCTC special meeting that was held on June 13, 2011, to consider the 11 candidate projects, public comments received, and develop a short list of projects to submit to Metro Staff, TPAC and the RFF Task Force for review and comment. As part of this process, a matrix was prepared to aid in the decision making process. The matrix listed the RFF criteria provided in the RFF guidelines in order of priority and used a high, medium or low scoring system to indicate how the project met the criteria. This matrix served to guide the discussion, which led to shortening the candidate project list to 6 projects advanced for regional feedback.

At its July meeting, EMCTC discussed comments received from Metro Staff, TPAC and the RFF Task Force on the 6 projects. A matrix of the 6 projects was distributed to the EMCTC voting members to score projects by high, medium or low relating to how they met RFF criteria. The tabulated scores were

presented at the EMCTC's August 15<sup>th</sup> meeting to consider as final decisions were made on which projects to move forward for funding. EMCTC voting members voted to forward the Sandy Blvd from 238<sup>th</sup>-230<sup>th</sup> construction project (Green Economy and Freight Initiatives allocation) and the Arata Road (Active Transportation and Complete Streets allocation) for funding.

As part of the local process, public comments were received from the public and stakeholders for the candidate projects. Eleven letters of support for this project were received from a neighborhood church, the manager of a neighborhood mobile home park, Home Forward (previously known as the Housing Authority of Portland) representative and residents living near the project area.

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 Committee, and Utilities if critical to use of right-of-way) and how it impacted the project location and design.

Coordination with regional agencies occurred throughout the local process. The projects were reviewed by the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee, which is the coordinating committee with members representing the Port, ODOT, TriMet and Metro Staff. Public meetings were held where the projects were reviewed and discussed. Feedback received impacted the project location and design by including design elements for a mid-block crossing to serve the Fairview Woods and Oaks housing complex on Halsey so residents can safely cross south to access the Wood Village Town Center.

3. Provide a list of stakeholders consulted or targeted during your local process and provide a summary of comments received at your public meeting or other public engagement activities. Please include contact information.

A list of stakeholders consulted or targeted is attached. Comments were received in support of the project encouraging approval of the project. Stakeholders raised safety concerns on the heavily used facility and the need for improvements to provide for sidewalks, bike lanes and a crossing on Halsey Street. The need for street lighting for nighttime safety of users was also supported. Comments received also emphasized that this is a high density area with a diverse population of low income and minority citizens that cannot afford the cost of an automobile and rely on other modes of transportation such as walking, biking or taking transit.

### ***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*)

Arata is a ¾-mile-long collector located in the cities of Fairview and Wood Village. Multnomah County has jurisdiction of this road. In 2008, using a TGM grant, Multnomah County and the cities of Fairview and Wood Village developed The Arata Road Concept Plan for a multi-modal street design for Arata

Road. Arata Road is a heavily used corridor that is near priority destinations. Community concerns on safety due to the lack of bike and pedestrian facilities in this area have consistently been raised. This Active Transportation project will significantly improve safety by removing vehicular conflicts and will provide increased bicycle, pedestrian and transit access to key destinations in both the Fairview and Wood Village Town Centers. This project serves high density residential areas and underserved communities and will allow residents to be able to walk, bike or access transit to take safely and easily to centers, business and employment areas. This project is identified in the Regional Transportation Plan, Multnomah County Capital Improvement Plan and the cities of Fairview and Wood Village's TSPs. The project was identified as a priority by the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee after public outreach, including a public open house held on June 6, 2011.

### ***Project definition***

#### **Base project information**

1. Corresponding RTP project number(s) for the nominated project (if applicable).  
RTP # 10387 and 10398
2. Project sponsor agency: Multnomah County
3. Contact information: Jane McFarland, Principal Planner  
Multnomah County Land Use and Transportation Program  
Phone: 503-988-5050 Extension 29620  
Email: Jane.mcfarland@multco.us
4. Description of project extent, design elements and how measurement of project effectiveness after construction is to be completed. *(Metro staff is available to help design measurement methodologies for post-construction project criteria performance)*

This Active Transportation Project is the first phase implementing the Arata Road Concept Plan by constructing sidewalks, bike lanes, lighting, landscaping and drainage improvements on the south side of Arata Road between NE Wood Village Boulevard and NE 238th Avenue. It will also enhance a 500-foot long multi-modal path within a portion of unimproved County right of way (ROW) that connects Arata Rd. with Halsey St. to the north.

The project will remove current conflicts between modes along Arata Rd., including school buses, by constructing six-foot bike lanes on the south side of the travel lanes, and a 6-foot curbed sidewalk separated from the bike and motor-vehicle lanes by vegetative buffers. The project features decorative lighting and drainage improvements to remove and treat standing water on the road and shoulders. A multi-use path on the Wood Village Boulevard Right-of-Way will enhance the primitive asphalt path between Halsey and Arata that connects a significant public housing complex located on Halsey to the destinations south of Arata. Also included in the design are crossings located at the intersection of Arata and Wood Village Boulevard, and at Halsey Street to the Fairview Woods and Oaks housing complexes to help pedestrians and cyclists safely cross over to the pathway that leads south to Arata. A pedestrian

refuge and pedestrian activated flashers will assist users in crossing Halsey, a busy arterial. Other project elements include way-finding signage for cyclists and pedestrians, potentially multi-lingual to better serve the high rate of Spanish-speakers in the neighborhood.

Measurement of project effectiveness can occur through conducting before and after bike and pedestrian counts to measure use of the facilities. Safety can be measured before and after through tracking incidents for the project area. Surveys may also be conducted before identifying issues, and after evaluating relief resulting for the project (i.e. safety improvements, user experience, and access improvements). Potential partnerships with the Home Forward (formerly the Housing Authority of Portland) and area housing development managers can also help with outreach efforts for the project.

5. Please provide a purpose and need statement for the project you're nominating.  
*(The purpose and need statement should address the criteria as they apply to the project area -e.g. 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)*

This project will substantially improve active transportation opportunities for pedestrians and bicyclists within the Fairview and Wood Village Town Centers. Currently Arata Road provides an unsafe environment for pedestrians and bicyclists from the adjacent neighborhoods with significantly above average concentrations of EJ and underserved populations. The project will substantially improve pedestrian and bike safety along Arata Road with the addition of sidewalks, lighting, and landscaping. These elements will contribute to traffic calming along this heavily used collector by establishing a streetscape that identifies the neighborhood environment Arata Road will be transformed from a two-lane road with substantial sidewalk gaps and no bike lanes into an active transportation corridor connecting dense and diverse residential areas with commercial and civic amenities in the Fairview and Wood Village Town Centers and two regional bus routes: #12 and #77. Immediately south of the project area is a major retail development anchored by Fred Meyers, Lowe's and Kohl's stores.

Overall, this project will expand transportation choices for minority and low income people in the project area. Demographic data from Metro's Equity Analysis shows significantly above average concentrations of EJ/underserved populations and above average concentrations of non-white people within the Arata Rd corridor. The block groups on either side of Arata have a relatively high Latino population and a high percentage of renter-occupied housing. There are three large mobile home parks located along Arata Rd., each with over 100 units. To the north on Halsey are Fairview Woods and Oaks Apartments, one of the region's largest subsidized housing projects managed by the Housing Authority of Portland (now Home Forward). There is a considerable existing need for this project. Currently, many people walk and bike along the gravel shoulders of Arata. There is also need to reduce the conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians with motor vehicles, including speed reduction. It is a major school bus pick-up/drop-off route for low-income/minority students in the Reynolds School District and is heavily used by residents, primarily women and children, walking to the town center and to escort their children to and from the school bus. (The nearest elementary and middle-schools are over 1.5 miles away.) There are approximately 5 school bus stops located on Arata Road serving approximately 350

students. Safety is a major concern; an incident occurred where a Reynolds student was hit and killed while standing on the side of Arata Road. This project supports long-term employment goals by providing a high quality and safer connection between workers and the jobs in the nearby Town Centers and employment areas north of I-84 in the Columbia Cascade River District. This project also provides a “last mile” connection, as Arata Road is the last collector within the Fairview/Wood Village Town Center without bicycle or pedestrian facilities and is optimally located to accommodate active transportation. The proposed enhancements will contribute to increased safety and comfort as well as increased use. Arata connects to bus service on 223rd Ave. and to bus service on Halsey St. via an asphalt bike/pedestrian path on the Wood Village Blvd. right of way. Both connections will be enhanced with lighting and an improved surface along the asphalt path to Halsey St.

### Highest Priority Criteria

6. 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)*

This project serves dense, low income, ethnically-diverse neighborhoods and will connect with the commercial and civic amenities of Wood Village and Fairview. Metro data shows significantly above average concentration of EJ and underserved populations south and above average populations north of Arata. Arata Road is a major school bus pick-up/drop-off route for low-income/minority households for Reynolds School District. This project will support long-term employment within the town center, providing a high quality connection between workers and the jobs in the nearby town center. Improving this segment will also increase multimodal access between Arata's residential areas to employment areas north of I-84, particularly the business parks and industrial areas to the east of 223rd. This project will also create a safer connection for Arata Road residents to reach the TriMet bus routes, #12 and #77 on 223<sup>rd</sup> Ave. and Halsey St.

7. 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)*

Safety is a major concern on Arata Road. Currently there are no sidewalks or bicycle lanes and many people walk and bike along the gravel shoulders of Arata, and the primitive asphalt path between Halsey and Arata that connects a significant public housing complex located on Halsey to the destinations south of Arata. It is a major school bus pick-up/drop-off route for low-income/minority students in the Reynolds School District and is heavily used by residents, primarily women and children, walking to the town center and to escort their children to and from the school bus. (The nearest elementary and middle-schools are over 1.5 miles away.) There are approximately 5 bus stops located on Arata Road serving approximately 350 students; an incident occurred where a Reynolds student was hit and killed while standing on the side of Arata Road. The project design will improve school bus pick-up/drop-offs, remove standing water from roadway, and reduce the conflict between bicyclists and pedestrians with motor vehicles by adding bicycle lanes and sidewalks along the south side of Arata Rd from Wood Village

Blvd to 238<sup>th</sup> Dr. Safety and access for users will also be substantially improved by providing crossings with pedestrian activated flashers at the intersection of Wood Village Boulevard and Arata Road, and at Halsey and the Wood Village Boulevard Right-of-Way.

8. 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)*

The project serves large concentrations of EJ and underserved communities. Metro data shows significantly above average concentration of EJ and underserved populations south and above average populations north of Arata. The area serves high density areas. There are three large mobile home parks located along Arata Rd., each with over 100 units and a large subsidized housing complex on Halsey Street. Several letters of support from residents of Fairview Woods Apartments, the subsidized housing complex, expressed that an upgrade to the temporary pathway from Halsey to Arata Road, with the addition of sidewalks and lighting along Arata would make it safer, easier and more direct to walk to essential services like Fred Meyer. Home Forward, formally the Housing of Authority of Portland, echoed the importance of this project, emphasizing a great need for these improvements since this area serves a diverse population of low income and minority citizens that cannot afford the cost of an automobile and rely on other modes of transportation including walking, bicycling and transit. Other letters of support including one from the Pastor at Wood Village Baptist Church suggest that the addition of sidewalks and bike lanes on Arata will greatly serve the needs of the communities who live near the project area.

#### High Priority Criteria

9. 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)*

Outreach to the project area was conducted as part of the local process. Stakeholders contacted included managers of the surrounding mobile home parks, apartment complexes and subdivisions, business owners, and church leaders. Comments from stakeholders and residents were received in support of the project as part of the nomination process. The project was identified as a priority by the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee (EMCTC) after public outreach, including a public open house held on June 6, 2011.

10. 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 project will remove current conflicts between bicyclists, pedestrians and motor vehicles, including school buses, by constructing separated facilities including sidewalks and curbs, a bike lane and installing a vegetative buffer from the travel lane along the south side of Arata Road. . It will also enhance a 500-foot long multi-modal path within a portion of unimproved County right of way (ROW) that connects Arata Rd. with Halsey St. to the north.

11. 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*)

This project provides a "last mile" connection, as Arata Road is the last collector within the Fairview/Wood Village Town Center without bicycle or pedestrian facilities and is optimally located to accommodate active transportation. The proposed enhancements will contribute to increased safety and comfort as well as increased use. Arata connects to bus service on 223rd Ave. and to bus service on Halsey St. via an asphalt bike/pedestrian path on the Wood Village Blvd. right of way. This connection will be enhanced with lighting, crossings and an improved surface for bike and pedestrian use providing for a safe facility for users.

12. 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*)

There is currently high pedestrian use of Arata Rd., even under adverse conditions. Metro data also shows that this area has above average concentration of LIFT Paratransit events and has instances of over 16 monthly bus ramp deployments. The proposed enhancements will contribute to increased safety and comfort as well as increased use. Sidewalk and bike lanes will improve user experience and safety. Arata also connects to bus service on 223rd Ave. and to service on Halsey St. via an asphalt bike/ped path in the Wood Village Blvd. right of way. This will be enhanced with lighting, improved surface and crossing that will provide for safer access and north-south connection.

13. 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*)

The project is located within the Wood Village and Fairview Town Centers. Surrounding the project area is a mix of commercial and high density residential uses including three mobile home parks and a large housing subdivision located along Arata Rd, and Fairview Woods and Oaks Apartments, a large subsidized apartment complex located north on Halsey.

Priority Criteria

14. 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)*

Outreach/education/engagement elements have been occurring and will continue to occur as the project moves forward. Staff has engaged in outreach to stakeholders in the project area and letters of support for the project have been received encouraging funding. Education and outreach will continue with stakeholders as the project moves into the construction phase by continuing to build on the established relationships with stakeholders. Staff will work with managers of the mobile home parks and other residential complexes, and business and civic leaders to inform them of design, and construction schedules. Education, engagement and outreach will include efforts to reduce impact to stakeholders during the construction phase of the project by notifying the impacted project area of construction. Education and engagement components may include bike and pedestrian safety education, which could include way-finding signage for cyclists and pedestrians, potentially multi-lingual to better serve the high rate of Spanish-speakers in the neighborhood. In addition, the school district will be notified of any project schedules to minimize impact to the bus routes along Arata Rd.

15. 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.

The County has developer funds that can be applied to this project. This project also leverages private investments made as part of the development of housing along Arata and Wood Village Blvd.

16. Describe how the project may help reduce the need for road and highway expansion.

This criterion is not applicable to this project.