



## BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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April 30, 2020

US Department of Transportation  
Office of the Secretary  
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE  
Washington, DC 20590

Attn: Howard Hill, Policy Analyst

Subj: I-5: Aurora-Donald Interchange Improvement Project, Marion County, Oregon

Re: Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)  
2020 BUILD Grant Application

Dear BUILD Grant Selection Committee,

Yamhill County is pleased to support the design and construction of the I-5: Aurora-Donald Interchange Improvement project and ODOT's request for \$25 million in grant funding to complete the project through the United States Department of Transportation's (DOT) Better Utilization Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) Program. This project is desperately needed. The interchange is a key element of the surface transportation system in northern Marion County, with far-reaching impacts to commercial, industrial, agricultural and commuter mobility in Marion, Yamhill and Clackamas Counties. The I-5: Aurora-Donald Interchange is the only freeway access for an 11 mile stretch of I-5 and is a vital link between the rural county road network and the interstate highway system. Local residents report to ODOT and Marion County that they routinely wait 10 minutes or more at the freeway off ramps during rush hour traffic. On an average day, vehicle queues extend onto the northbound and southbound freeways creating extremely hazardous conditions. Relentless congestion and safety issues at this interchange have stifled economic development in northern Marion County for years.

The preferred interchange solution is the construction of a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI), which requires improvements to the interstate highway infrastructure maintained by ODOT and the surface road network maintained by Marion County. Currently available funding is only sufficient to construct the freeway improvements, which will not result in a functional DDI. Authorization of the requested BUILD funds will enable ODOT to construct the necessary surface road improvements necessary to achieve a fully functional DDI.

Completion of the I-5: Aurora-Donald Interchange Project, including the achievement of a fully functional DDI, will benefit commercial, industrial and agricultural entities and economic development in the following ways:

**1. Durable traffic safety enhancements and congestion relief**

- The accident rate at the I-5: Aurora-Donald Interchange is more than twice the average number for rural interchanges in Oregon. This project will eliminate backups onto I-5 and crossing vehicle movements on Ehlen Road, the two largest contributors to crash activity at this location.

B.D. 20-145

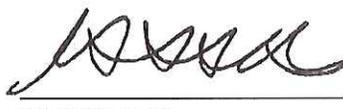
- The interchange has an existing combined Level of Service of F (Failing). The new DDI will achieve a Level of Service of A (Excellent) immediately, and these benefits will endure with a Level of Service B (Good) more than 20 years after construction is complete.
2. **Shovel-Ready Construction** – Design of the Diverging Diamond Interchange has already passed the 30% design mark and right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in May 2020. Obligation of construction funding will occur in federal fiscal year 2021 and construction will be completed by 2024.
  3. **Realize Infrastructure Benefits Now** – Existing local funding is not sufficient to build the full DDI. It is estimated that it may take up to 10 years to secure local funds needed to complete DDI construction. Approval of ODOT’s BUILD grant request achieves the economic benefits of full build-out **NOW**.
  4. **Efficient Use of Public Funds** – Completing the DDI construction in a single project will eliminate approximately \$5 million in temporary construction consisting of temporary traffic signals, temporary pavements, temporary bike/pedestrian facilities and other temporary features, that would be needed to make a new non-DDI interchange operable on a temporary basis. Approval of ODOT’s BUILD grant request will eliminate wasteful spending.
  5. **Fully Leverage Local Funding Resources** – ODOT is offering more than \$34 million in local matching funds, a match rate of almost 58% of total project costs, to leverage the available BUILD funding to reliably achieve a complete project.

Yamhill County supports the successful completion of the I-5: Aurora-Donald Interchange Improvement Project without reservation. The pending improvements will positively affect the entire transportation system of northern Marion County and are desperately needed.

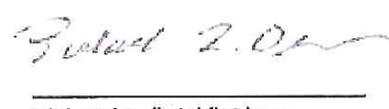
Respectfully,



Casey Kulla  
Chair



Mary Starrett  
Vice-Chair



Richard L. "Rick" Olson  
Commissioner

Accepted by Yamhill County  
Board of Commissioners on  
4/30/2020 by Board Order  
# 20-145