

April XX, 2019
Rian Windsheimer
Region 10
Oregon Department of Transportation
XXXX
Portland, OR 97XXX

Subject: Bike and Pedestrian Facilities, Stafford Road to OR-99E Project

Dear Mr. Windsheimer:

The purpose of this letter is to request a seamless, low stress bicycle and pedestrian facility spanning the length of the Stafford Road to OR-99E project area.

The Opportunity

Only 11 miles of I-205 within Oregon are currently without a parallel multi-use path. This new facility would be a continuation – and a major step toward the eventual completion – of the existing I-205 multi-use path, which travels 16.5 miles through 5 cities and 15 neighborhoods, from Vancouver, WA to Gladstone. Approximately 1,180 people per day, or 430,000 per year, use the path to get to work and school. The path directly serves three MAX light rail lines and is a major component of the Portland region's active transportation network.

Continuing the I-205 multi-use path south to Stafford Road would bring transportation options to the growing communities of Oregon City, West Linn and Stafford.

More than 63,000 residents live in Oregon City and West Linn. Many of people travel daily between the two cities but are unable to do so by bike due to a lack of facilities. The Oregon City Arch Bridge allows bicycles to use the vehicle lane, but most riders opt not to do so due to high vehicle traffic volumes and speeds. Average Daily Trips (ADT) on the Arch Bridge is over 14,000 per day. The NACTO guide recommends protected bike lanes on roadways with the Arch Bridge's vehicle speeds and ADT.

The Stafford Road area is exurban/rural and currently has a relatively low population, but the area is designated as a rural reserve and will soon be annexed by neighboring cities, meaning that it is on the verge of rapid urbanization. Now is the time to build multi-modal transportation improvements in Stafford. The multi-use path will be the east-west active transportation spine for current and future Stafford residents, connecting commuters west to Tualatin and I-5, and east to West Linn and Oregon City.

The Expectation

We expect the Oregon Department of Transportation to seize the opportunities like the Stafford Road OR 99E project to expand Oregonians' transportation choices by providing safe and convenient facilities for all road users. Our expectation is founded in a body of adopted law and adopted policy.

ORS 366.514 requires the inclusion of facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists wherever a road, street or highway is built or rebuilt. It applies to ODOT, cities and counties and requires spending reasonable amounts of their share of the state highway fund on facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists. These facilities must be located within the right-of-way of public roads, streets or highways open to motor vehicle traffic.

The Mission Statement of the Oregon Department of Transportation is “We provide a safe and reliable multimodal transportation system that connects people and helps Oregon’s communities and economy thrive.”

The 2016 Oregon Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan supports including bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the I-205 project:

- Strategy 8.2A recommends “adding critical connections” and “completing the system.” This project meets the plan’s definition of a “critical connection.” The I-205 multi-use path is unequivocally part of the state active transportation system, but it has yet to be completed.
- Strategy 8.4A recommends that, “when developing or redeveloping a roadway, take advantage of funding not specifically targeted at a pedestrian or bicycle project to add to or enhance the adjacent pedestrian or bicycle system.” The I-205 widening project is an ideal opportunity to include pedestrian and bicycle improvements in a larger project.
- Other relevant strategies:
 - Strategy 2.5C: develop paths as safe alternative routes that help complete the network
 - Strategy 2.5D: regional paths are critical connections
 - Strategy 8.2C: identify strategies to utilize development projects for filling gaps

The Proposed Action

We would be satisfied with any of the alternatives identified in the “Concept Alternatives Evaluation” memo by HDR, dated October 25, 2016. The type of facility should be separated from motor vehicle traffic, either in the form of a multi-use path or as a pair of one-way cycle tracks.

Specifically, we request the following:

1. Within the project area from Stafford to West Linn:
 - a. either a multi-use path along Borland Road,
 - b. or a multi-use path adjacent to I-205
2. Within West Linn city limits we request the following improvements along Willamette Falls Drive:
 - a. A multi-use path from Borland Road to 16th Street,
 - b. A pair of one-way cycle tracks and associated streetscape improvements from 16th Street to 10th Street,

- c. A multi-use path from 10th Street to Sunset Drive, continuing along Sunset Drive to OR-43, Willamette Drive, and a new bicycle and pedestrian facility over the Willamette River.
- 3. A new bicycle and pedestrian facility over the Willamette River. Any of the seven options (Alternatives A – F) included in the Concept Alternatives Evaluation memo would be satisfactory.

Next Steps

We urge ODOT to seize the important opportunity offered by the I-205 Stafford Road – OR 99E project to demonstrate ODOT's commitment to multimodal transportation. ODOT should waste no time or effort seeking to avoid implementing law and policy that support bike and pedestrian facilities in this project.

Sincerely,