

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Clackamas County Board of County Commissioners (BCC)

FROM: Dan Johnson, Director, Department of Transportation and Development

RE: Letter of Support for ODOT Region 1 Great Streets Application for Hwy 26 through Rhododendron

DATE: March 7, 2023

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**REQUEST:** Submit a letter of support for the ODOT Region 1 application for the 2024-2027 Great Streets Grant Application for the *Rhododendron Safety Improvements and Multimodal Access Enhancement* project.

**BACKGROUND:** Great Streets is an ODOT funding program that address safety improvements and increases access to walking, biking, and transit. For this program, ODOT's regional staff will submit project proposals in coordination with local communities and transportation agencies. The primary objective of proposed projects must be to improve safety and multimodal access on state highway corridors that also act as community main streets. Project selection will focus on fewer and more impactful projects. Regions have been encouraged to submit projects in larger urban areas as well as smaller communities.

The *Rhododendron Safety Improvements and Multimodal Access Enhancements* project will construct multimodal improvements consisting of sidewalks, bike lanes and a pedestrian crossing along a one-half mile stretch of US Hwy 26 through the Rhododendron unincorporated community in Clackamas County.

Currently, there are no pedestrian and bicycle improvements along US Hwy 26 in Rhododendron making it difficult for residents and visitors to access community destinations such as the post office, the grocery store and restaurants. There have been a number of studies and planning projects conducted to address transportation network deficiencies in the area. These include the adopted the 2015 Active Transportation Plan (ATP), which includes Principal Active Transportation (PAT) Route #P9: Sandy to Mt. Hood. This PAT Route identifies upgraded pedestrian and bicycle facilities along this section of highway as a priority project, noting that it would be a "terrific asset" for the Mt. Hood Villages. Following ATP adoption, the Villages at Mt. Hood Pedestrian and Bikeway Implementation Plan was adopted, which sets the vision for the development of a connected multimodal system within the Mt. Hood Villages. Pedestrian, bicycle crosswalk accommodations in Rhododendron were identified a high priority project in that plan.

The Rhododendron Great Streets Grant Application resulted from several planning projects and extensive engagement with the community. This foundational work has identified US Hwy 26 safety and multimodal improvements as a needed improvement.

Staff respectfully recommends the Board sign the attached letter of support for the ODOT Region 1 Great Streets application.

Respectfully Submitted,

*Dan Johnson*

Dan Johnson- Director

Attachments:

Attachment 1: Letter of Support: Rhododendron Safety Improvements and Multimodal Access Enhancements project



Grant Review Committee  
ODOT-Mill Creek Building  
555 13th Street NE  
Salem, OR 97301

March 7, 2023

**Re: 2024-2027 Great Streets Grant Application**

Dear Grant Review Committee:

Clackamas County strongly supports the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) 2024-2027 Great Streets grant application for the *Rhododendron Safety Improvements and Multimodal Access Enhancements* project. This project will construct multimodal improvements consisting of sidewalks, bike lanes and a pedestrian crossing along a one-half mile stretch of US Hwy 26 through the Rhododendron unincorporated community in Clackamas County.

Currently there are no pedestrian and bicycle improvements along US Hwy 26 in Rhododendron making it difficult for residents and visitors to access community destinations such as the post office, the grocery store and restaurants. Clackamas County has recently conducted multiple planning efforts designed to address transportation network deficiencies. First, the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) adopted the Active Transportation Plan (ATP) in 2015, which includes Principal Active Transportation (PAT) Route #P9: *Sandy to Mt. Hood*. This PAT Route identifies upgraded pedestrian and bicycle facilities along this section of highway as a priority project, noting that it would be a "terrific asset" for the Mt. Hood Villages. Following ATP adoption, the BCC adopted the *Villages at Mt. Hood Pedestrian and Bikeway Implementation Plan*, which sets the vision for the development of a connected multimodal system within the Mt. Hood Villages. Pedestrian, bicycle crosswalk accommodations in Rhododendron were identified a high priority project (project ID numbers R2, R4 and R5).

The Great Streets grant application is consistent with both the ATP and the *Villages at Mt. Hood Pedestrian and Bikeway Implementation Plan*. Importantly, the later project updated The Mount Hood Community Plan (Chapter 10 of the Comprehensive Plan) which contains policies related to land use and transportation for Rhododendron and other Mt. Hood Villages. Policy 10.F.3 states: "Recognize the *Villages at Mt. Hood Pedestrian and Bikeway Implementation Plan* as the guiding document for the development of a connected multi-modal system with the Villages of Mt. Hood."

Finally, the county recently worked with the Rhododendron community on the *Rhododendron Main Street Redevelopment Concept Plan*. This unique public-private partnership resulted in a redevelopment plan and associated streetscape improvements for two underutilized parcels on the south side of US Hwy 26. During the yearlong project, the project team heard from hundreds of community members and gathered extensive feedback that shaped plan recommendations. Community involvement included 116 responses to a “community preferences survey” and 239 responses to a second survey that contemplated “design alternatives.” Through this public engagement process, crossing improvements and safe, connected multimodal improvements were the number issue identified by the Rhododendron community.

The Rhododendron Great Streets Grant Application resulted from several planning projects and extensive engagement with the community. This foundational work has identified US Hwy 26 safety and multimodal improvements as a needed improvement. Clackamas County fully supports this project, and we look forward to improving access and connectivity along US 26 through Rhododendron.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,