



June 28, 2021

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20590

RE: Franklin Boulevard RAISE Application

Secretary Buttigieg:

The Cities of Eugene and Springfield, Oregon, in partnership with the Lane Transit District, are working in tandem to honor our responsibility to serve the public by addressing one of our highest transportation priorities: the Franklin Boulevard corridor. To make this possible, we request your consideration of our joint application for RAISE grant funding. Our project will transform an unsafe and unwelcoming former state highway that is overdue for repairs and was built for the past into a vibrant, multi-modal corridor thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of the present and future.

Franklin Boulevard plays a critical role in our state's transportation system as the primary east-west route connecting the Cities of Eugene and Springfield (Oregon's second largest metro area) to the Cascade mountain range in the east, to the Pacific Ocean in the west, and to Interstate 5. This project will invest in people by investing in a place—values we share with RAISE. Benefits of the project will be enduring for years to come.

The project will improve the **state of good repair** for a road that has seen little change in half a century, while increasing **safety** and access. This will be accomplished by: (a) the construction of accessible pedestrian and bicycle facilities where there are network gaps, and (b) **innovative** design that combines roundabouts with bus rapid transit and multimodal features that reduce the number and severity of crashes while serving the mobility needs of our community.

The Franklin Boulevard project will elevate the **quality of life** for residents and visitors by increasing access to transportation options and connectivity to employment, education, services, businesses, and recreation. Increased access and connectivity will serve to advance **economic competitiveness** by supporting land use plans for mixed use redevelopment and saving people travel time and transportation costs while continuing to connect our employment industries to national and global markets.

Supporting the development of walkable, transit-oriented, climate-friendly neighborhoods, and empowering residents and visitors with a range of travel options to and through the heart of our region will improve **environmental sustainability**. These upgrades will reduce the level of greenhouse gas emissions from motor vehicles that contribute to harming our climate and threatening our future.

In September 2020, our country experienced an epidemic of wildfires. This national disaster did not spare our region. Our nearby rural areas were devastated and the lives of people in our region thrown into disarray. Because Franklin Boulevard (OR 126B) is the primary east-west route that connects our two cities to our surrounding rural areas, Franklin Boulevard served as the most direct route to get to

and from last year's Holiday Farm Fire in east Lane County. The OR 126 corridor continues to be used for fire cleanup efforts that are still underway. Transforming the corridor will reduce levels of suffering and will better serve climate adaptation response needs more broadly.

For these reasons and many more, we urge you to fund our joint application. This project is a top priority for our region, which is why our region has already invested \$15.5 million in the corridor and identified additional local matching funds for the RAISE request. RAISE funding would facilitate the construction of the next significant phase of this regionally significant, much needed project.

Highest regards,



Mayor Lucy Vinis
Eugene, OR



Mayor Sean VanGordon
Springfield, OR

