

Report to Congress for Future Water Resources Development (WRRDA 7001) Submission Package

Proposal Name: State Highway Improvement Impact Feasibility Study, Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane County Oregon

Submission Date: 08/10/2017

Proposal ID Number: 1cdde58f-31f6-497b-84da-de6bea869bd6

Purpose of Proposal: Lane County seeks the Corps collaboration with the environmental assessment of transportation infrastructure that crosses the southern edge of the Fern Ridge Reservoir located between the cities of Eugene, Oregon and Veneta, Oregon. Specifically, Oregon highway 126W is a two-lane facility which sits on an existing levy within the project as does the Coos Bay Rail Link, a short-line railroad which connects Eugene, Oregon to the International Port of Coos Bay. The Oregon Department of Transportation has been appropriated \$3M to undertake an environmental assessment of the corridor, the next step in a process which ultimately would replace the existing facility with a four lane highway. The environmental review the Oregon Department of Transportation proposes to undertake will almost certainly require a permit from the US Army Corp of Engineers. Given the number of key stakeholders involved in this project and the potential for impacts to the aquatic ecosystem and recreation facilities, the County is seeking a Congressionally-approved feasibility study. In addition to the ODOT facility, the State's Fish and Wildlife Department operates a wildlife area within the USACE project that will also be impacted, the Coos Bay Rail Link has been working to restore and improve their short line railroad since taking ownership of the line in 2008 and it has identified structures which would be impacted, and Lane County operates a park under an agreement with the USACE which will be impacted. The proposed feasibility study will endeavor to assess aquatic ecosystem impacts, identify potential mitigations necessary, and address recreation access if the transportation infrastructure to serve the public users of this facility over the next 50-100 years replaces that which now exists.

1. Administrative Details

Proposal Name: State Highway Improvement Impact Feasibility Study, Fern Ridge Reservoir, Lane County Oregon

by Agency: Lane County, Oregon

Locations: OR

Date Submitted: 08/10/2017

Confirmation Number: 1cdde58f-31f6-497b-84da-de6bea869bd6

Supporting Documents

File Name	Date Uploaded
ODOT Fern Ridge Corridor WR-RDA.pdf	08/10/2017
CBRailLink support WRDA.pdf	08/10/2017
Lane Co WRDA Section 7001 project map.pdf	08/10/2017
Prozanski-Holvey Joint Ltr on HWY 126.pdf	08/10/2017
Fern Ridge Letter Hwy 126 08-08-2017.pdf	08/10/2017
s.larson ltr - hwy 126 corridor.pdf	08/10/2017

2. Provide the name of the primary sponsor and all non-Federal interests that have contributed or are expected to contribute toward the non-Federal share of the proposed feasibility study or modification.

Sponsor	Letter of Support
Lane County(Primary)	Lane County is a general purpose government which provides vital services to almost 400,000 residents in western Oregon. One of the issues the County has been struggling with is a high rate of traffic fatalities which continues to climb. The County is attacking this problem on several fronts and has most recently adopted a Traffic Safety Action Plan. The plan emphasizes strategies that include enforcement, education, and engineering. On the engineering front, the County has identified key transportation corridors that require improvement. In 2013, Lane County adopted the Highway 126 Fern Ridge Corridor Plan which identified several preferred alternatives for improving this eight mile stretch of state highway, both of which involve expansion of the facility from two lanes to four lanes. Importantly, half of the corridor exists within the footprint of the US Army Corps of Engineers Fern Ridge Reservoir, and the road sits on earthen levies where it crosses the aquatic portions of the Reservoir. The recently-adjourned session of the Oregon Legislature appropriated \$3M to undertake an environmental review of the preferred alternatives, the next step in the transportation improvement project. Lane County is seeking a WRRDA authorization for a feasibility study to be undertaken concurrent to the state facility environmental impact work in order to ensure that expected impacts to the aquatic ecosystem managed by the USACE are addressed. This will ensure the most efficient use of taxpayer resources and serve to streamline the project's evolution as it moves into a construction ready stance. The feasibility study would secondarily address improvements to recreational access to the Reservoir which will also need to be addressed as the transportation infrastructure is improved.
Oregon Department of Transportation	Please see attached letter of support. ODOT and Lane County are working to develop a Memorandum of Understanding to use the NEPA funding as a financial show of support for the proposed WRDA project.

3. State if this proposal is for a feasibility study, a modification to an authorized USACE feasibility study or a modification to an authorized USACE project. If it is a proposal for a modification, provide the authorized water resources development feasibility study or project name.

Feasibility Study

4. Clearly articulate the specific project purpose(s) of the proposed study or modification. Demonstrate that the proposal is related to USACE mission and authorities and specifically address why additional or new authorization is needed.

Lane County seeks the Corps collaboration with the environmental assessment of transportation infrastructure that crosses the southern edge of the Fern Ridge Reservoir located between the cities of Eugene, Oregon and Veneta, Oregon. Specifically, Oregon highway 126W is a two-lane facility which sits on an existing levee within the project as does the Coos Bay Rail Link, a short-line railroad which connects Eugene, Oregon to the International Port of Coos Bay. The Oregon Department of Transportation has been appropriated \$3M to undertake an environmental assessment of the corridor, the next step in a process which ultimately would replace the existing facility with a four lane highway. The environmental review the Oregon Department of Transportation proposes to undertake will almost certainly require a permit from the US Army Corp of Engineers. Given the number of key stakeholders involved in this project and the potential for impacts to the aquatic ecosystem and recreation facilities, the County is seeking a Congressionally-approved feasibility study. In addition to the ODOT facility, the State's Fish and Wildlife Department operates a wildlife area within the USACE project that will also be impacted, the Coos Bay Rail Link has been working to restore and improve their short line railroad since taking ownership of the line in 2008 and it has identified structures which would be impacted, and Lane County operates a park under an agreement with the USACE which will be impacted. The proposed feasibility study will endeavor to assess aquatic ecosystem impacts, identify potential mitigations necessary, and address recreation access if the transportation infrastructure to serve the public users of this facility over the next 50-100 years replaces that which now exists.

5. To the extent practicable, provide an estimate of the total cost, and the Federal and non-Federal share of those costs, of the proposed study and, separately, an estimate of the cost of construction or modification.

	Federal	Non-Federal	Total
Study	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000	\$6,000,000
Construction	\$0	\$0	\$0

Explanation (if necessary)

The non-federal study cost figure represents the \$3M appropriated by the state legislature to perform the environmental assessment of the state highway corridor. The estimated federal cost would cover the proposed feasibility study to examine the aquatic ecosystem impacts and address the recreational access issues which need to be considered in the event the two lane state highway is converted to a four lane state highway.

6. To the extent practicable, describe the anticipated monetary and nonmonetary benefits of the proposal including benefits to the protection of human life and property; improvement to transportation; the national economy; the environment; or the national security interests of the United States.

Oregon Highway 126W is the only connection between the metropolitan area of Eugene and Springfield with the coastal city of Florence and the Highway 101 which operates north-south along the Oregon Coast. Approximately 18,000 vehicles per day use this road. As the highway leaves Eugene, it is a four lane highway that quickly narrows to two lanes as it crosses the Fern Ridge Reservoir and connects to the city of Veneta, where it once again expands to three and sometimes four lanes. Data shows that in the last five years, 22 fatalities have occurred on this short stretch of roadway, and has made a contribution to the unfortunate ranking of Lane County as having the highest number of road related fatalities of any county in Oregon for both 2015 and 2016. As a result, the Board of County Commissioners adopted a Transportation Safety Action Plan on July 18, 2017. Expansion of Hwy 126W to four lanes would significantly improve the safety for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians. In addition, Hwy 126W is a freight route and serves as a key connection between Interstate 5 and the coast. The Coos Bay Rail Link is making improvements to its rail assets such that it can both expand the volume of freight being moved on and off shore and minimize truck traffic on Highway 101 and Highway 126W. Lane County's economic development work is focused on maximizing the partnership between Lane County and the International Port of Coos Bay. With over 60% of the Port's short line railroad located within Lane County, the County has continually worked with the Port to seek improvements to the line's infrastructure. Particularly with the closure of the Port of Portland's container capability, the importance of the Port of Coos Bay has increased from a state and national perspective. The current wooden trestles that exist within the Fern Ridge reservoir are not conducive to higher train speeds and additional volume the short line endeavors to move.

7. Does local support exist? If 'Yes', describe the local support for the proposal.

Yes

Local Support Description

This project has been worked on since 2011, with the inception of the Highway 126 Fern Ridge Corridor Plan. The City of Veneta and Lane County have prioritized improvements to the corridor in both their state and federal legislative work. Significant public involvement was required within the auspices of the corridor plan and in particular the unsafe nature of this roadway is well known locally. Given the number of stakeholders involved operationally within the footprint of the USACE project, it is clear that they will need to be a collaborative partnership organized to move the project to a construction ready stance. The proposed feasibility study will be that vehicle and the stakeholders are prepared to work together.

8. Does the primary sponsor named in (2.) above have the financial ability to provide for the required cost share?

Yes

Other Non-Federal Sponsors Letter(s) of Support

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ODOT Fern Ridge Corridor WRRDA.pdf

Additional Proposal Information

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CBRailLink support WRDA.pdf



August 8, 2017

U.S Army Corps of Engineers
Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works
441 G Street NW
Washington DC 20314-1000

To Whom It May Concern:

The Oregon International Port of Coos Bay is in support of Lane County's Water Resources Reform and Development Act, section 7001 application to seek a feasibility study within the Fern Ridge Reservoir which would examine future impacts from a state highway reconstruction project.

The Port owns the rail line between Eugene, OR and Coquille, OR that is served by the Coos Bay Rail Link, a short line railroad which connects our Coos Bay, Oregon facility with the metropolitan area of Eugene-Springfield, connecting to the national railway network. The rail line crosses some portions of creeks that drain into the Fern Ridge Reservoir and runs largely parallel with Oregon State Highway 126W. Our facility in some cases shares the same levy as the state highway, and in other cases is built on wooden or steel trestles.

Since obtaining the rail line, our goal has been to continually improve the line. Given the environmental challenges associated with this section in particular, and the possible need to secure special permits from the US Army Corps of Engineers to improve our infrastructure, we believe a USACE project feasibility study focusing on aquatic ecosystem restorations would be the best opportunity for the Port to evaluate improvements it may be able to perform to support our continued operations and modernization goals.

Sincerely,

John Burns
Chief Executive Officer

125 West Central Avenue, Suite 300 | P.O. Box 1215 | Coos Bay, Oregon 97420-0311
Phone: 541-267-7678 | Fax: 541-269-1475 | email: portcoos@portofcoosbay.com | web: www.portofcoosbay.com

State of Oregon | Tokyo, Japan – Oregon Japan Representative | Phone: 81-3-5430-0771 | Fax: 81-3-5430-0775

Representatives Offices: | Seoul, Korea – Korea Representative Office | Phone: 82-2-753-1349 | Fax: 82-2-753-5154

Map Document

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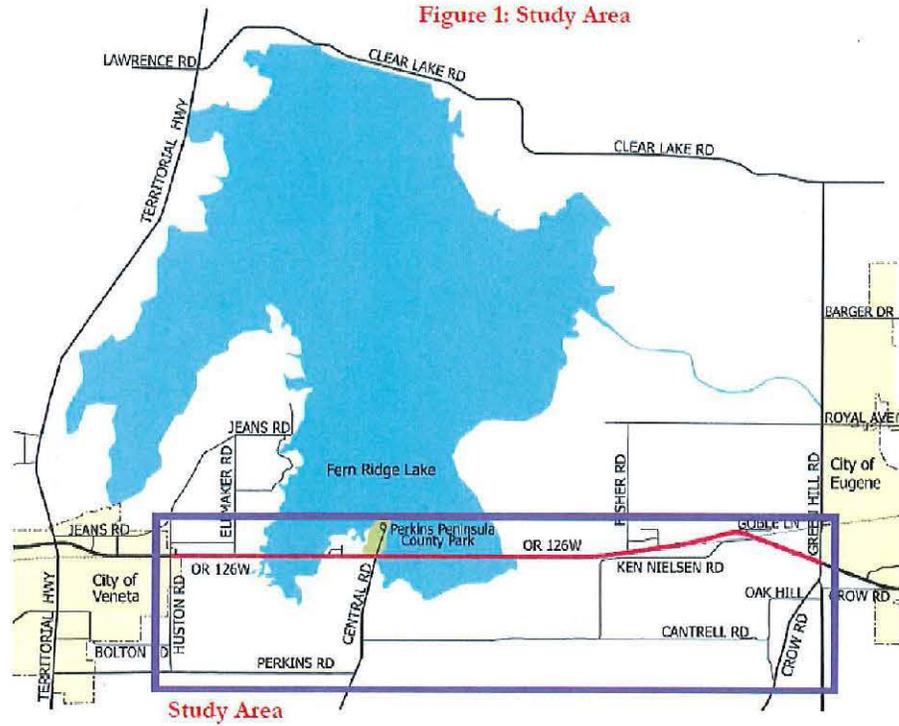
Lane Co WRDA Section 7001 project map.pdf

Project Name: Fern Ridge Reservoir State Highway Improvement Feasibility Study

Location: OR 126W, located in un-incorporated Lane County

Prepared by: Alex Cuyler, Lane County Intergovernmental Relations Manager,
alex.cuyler@co.lane.or.us, 541-682-6504

Figure 1: Study Area



Additional Proposal Information

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Prozanski-Holvey Joint Ltr on HWY 126.pdf

FLOYD PROZANSKI
STATE SENATOR

SENATE DISTRICT 4
503-986-1704 - Capitol
541-342-2447 - District
Email: sen.floydprozanski@state.or.us



OREGON LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
900 COURT ST NE
SALEM, OREGON 97301

PAUL HOLVEY
STATE REPRESENTATIVE

HOUSE DISTRICT 8
503-986-1408 - Capitol
541-344-5636 - District
Email: rep.paulholvey@state.or.us

August 8, 2017

U.S Army Corps of Engineers
Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works
441 G Street NW
Washington DC 20314-1000

To Whom It May Concern:

As state legislators representing the involved area, we urge prioritized development of a feasibility study to examine maximizing benefits of a project improving existing transportation infrastructure of both Oregon Highway 126 West and the Coos Bay Rail Link (where they meet the Fern Ridge Reservoir and adjacent wetland areas). We are very familiar with shortcomings of the transportation infrastructure that meets the Reservoir's southern side and adjacent wetland areas, and we have been briefed on the Water Resources Development Act, Section 7001, with respect to non-federal initiation of project feasibility studies or project modifications. We believe it to be a necessary step to ensure that this work can be carried out with the most efficiency.

In particular, we are seeking a collaborative partnership between the myriad of stakeholders that exist along this unique corridor, including the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coos Bay Rail Link, the Lane County Parks Department, and the City of Veneta. During the 2017 Oregon Legislative Assembly, both of our offices worked to ensure that ODOT would receive an appropriation of state funds to allow them to begin the needed environmental reviews necessary prior to any future plans for construction.

We will continue to monitor ODOT's work in on environmental reviews. We believe that these efforts can be maximized if the Section 7001 proposal is delivered to Congress with a recommendation for inclusion in the next WRDA authorization.

Respectfully,

Floyd Prozanski

Paul Holvey

Primary Sponsor Letter of Support

(As uploaded)

Fern Ridge Letter Hwy 126 08_08_2017.pdf



JAY BOZIEVICH

Lane County Commissioner
West Lane District
jay.bozievich@co.lane.or.us

August 4, 2017

U.S Army Corps of Engineers
Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works
441 G Street NW
Washington DC 20314-1000

To Whom It May Concern:

I write today to express support for the Lane County application to seek a US Army Corps of Engineer's feasibility study involving future transportation improvements along the southern edge of the Fern Ridge Reservoir in unincorporated Lane County, Oregon.

I am the elected County Commissioner for the West Lane District, and my constituents have long demanded improvements to the existing Hwy 126W between Eugene and Veneta. I was an advocate for the new funding provided by the Oregon Legislature during their last session and was pleased to see the new appropriation of \$3M for environmental work on Oregon Highway 126W. This investment builds on the 2013 Corridor Plan for that facility. Formal involvement by the US Army Corps of Engineers is now sought, and I believe the Section 7001 application is the best way to accomplish this involvement as we enter the next stage of planning which is necessary prior to seeking actual construction funding.

The Fern Ridge Reservoir is a valuable asset in my District. I have been impressed with the USACE's management of this project, and in particular value the Portland District's collaboration with respect to recreation and wildlife efforts that Lane County and the State of Oregon have been involved with. I have been somewhat critical of the Corps flood management operations, and believe that there is need to utilize more recent rainfall data within the overall scope of the Corps Willamette Valley operations to ensure that recreation opportunities are maximized. I think the proposed feasibility study would provide the Corps with an opportunity to participate with key stakeholders about how recreation and aquatic ecosystem improvements can be incorporated into the transportation infrastructure improvements that we hope to realize over the next decade.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners continues to prioritize improvements to Hwy 126W. It is the sole connection between the metropolitan center of Lane County and the coastal communities that I represent, and we look forward to a robust partnership with the Corp as this effort evolves.

Sincerely,

Jay Bozievich, Commissioner
West Lane County

Additional Proposal Information

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s.larson ltr - hwy 126 corridor.pdf

U.S Army Corps of Engineers
Assistant Secretary of the Army of Civil Works
441 G Street NW
Washington DC 20314-1000

August 8, 2017

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Veneta City Council and the Veneta community I'm writing to endorse Lane County's request for funding of a feasibility study to examine the benefits of a project improving the existing transportation infrastructure along the Highway 126 corridor and the additional benefits those improvements could have for the Fern Ridge Reservoir.

ODOT has been awarded three-million dollars in funding to begin the environmental assessment phase for improvements to Highway 126. The highway is severely constrained by wetlands and federal property ownership. This is an "Access Oregon" state highway route and a designated freight route, connecting Highway 101 and the central coast to the southern Willamette Valley and the I-5 corridor. The highway and the Coos Bay Rail Link are vital economic links to the harbors in Coos Bay and North Bend on the south-central Oregon Coast.

While not fully understanding the Water Resources Development Act, and in particular the Section 7001 process, we are fully aware of the importance of the partnerships that exist along this constrained corridor, a corridor shared by one federal agency (US Army Corps of Engineer), a municipal railroad (Coos Bay Rail Link) two state agencies (Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and Oregon Department of Transportation) a county park (Lane County Parks Department) and one municipality that calls the Fern Ridge Reservoir home, the City of Veneta. All of the partners have a strong commitment to expand economic opportunities and commerce within the region, but we also share an equal commitment to environmental stewardship of the Fern Ridge Reservoir and the surrounding habitat.

We hope you can share in our vision for the Highway 126 corridor and take this opportunity to work with Lane County and the Oregon Department of Transportation as they begin the needed environmental reviews that are necessary prior to any future plans for construction. We feel their work could be maximized if the Section 7001 proposal is approved for consideration.

Sincerely,



Sandra H. Larson, Mayor
City of Veneta