



MULTNOMAH COUNTY OREGON

Release: July 29, 2005

Contact: Shelli Romero, Office of Commissioner Maria Rojo Steffey, 503-988-4435

Oregon's Congressional delegation secures \$7 million in federal funds for the Sellwood Bridge

The U.S. Congress today approved legislation that included funding for transportation projects in the Portland area, among them, \$7 million for the Sellwood Bridge. The federal funds are part of the Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (TEA-LU) of 2005, legislation that reauthorizes funding levels for federal highways, highway safety and transit programs. The bill will now be forwarded to the President for signature into law.

“Securing federal funds for local transportation projects is no easy task and I am delighted that these funds are being made available for the Sellwood Bridge. I applaud the hard work of our entire Oregon Congressional delegation who joined together to bring aid to the Sellwood Bridge, an important connector for the Portland metropolitan region and our economy,” said Multnomah County Commissioner Maria Rojo de Steffey. Rojo de Steffey is leading the county’s efforts to secure funds to replace or repair the structure.

Multnomah County applied for federal funds under the TEA-LU legislation to initiate the first phase of construction for the Sellwood Bridge. With other funds already secured, the County anticipates beginning environmental work on the Sellwood Bridge project later this year including the launch of a comprehensive public involvement process. The decision to replace or repair the bridge will be made during the environmental work.

“The Sellwood Bridge helps move people, goods and services in our region and given its condition, a positive step needs to be taken toward its repair. These funds will enable Oregonians to benefit from this great bridge well into the future,” says U.S. Senator Gordon Smith.

“The Sellwood Bridge is a major transportation artery for the region and the \$7 million in new federal funding we are announcing will help address the major structural problems that have limited traffic on the bridge,” U.S. Senator Ron Wyden said.

“Addressing the needs of the Sellwood Bridge is essential and will increase the safety and access of users including bicyclists, pedestrians, commuters and people who rely on the bus as an alternative means of transportation,” said U.S. Congressman Earl Blumenauer.

The Sellwood Bridge is the busiest two-lane bridge in Oregon and one of the only river crossings in the southern part of the metro region. It carries 30,000 vehicles a day. But the bridge has numerous structural and design deficiencies and has reached the end of its service life. It is limited to loads of 10 tons and has a sufficiency rating of two out of a possible score of 100. Replacing or rehabilitating the Sellwood Bridge is the county’s top transportation priority.