



MARION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Board Session Agenda Review Form

Meeting date: January 19, 2022

Department: Board of Commissioners Agenda Planning Date: 1/6/2022 Time required: 30

Audio/Visual aids: Zoom Remote Presentation, Power Point

Contact: Tanisha Bush Phone: 503-302-8440

Department Head Signature: [Handwritten Signature]

TITLE: Federal Agenda Presentation

Issue, Description & Background: The Federal Agenda for 2022 includes policy and grant initiatives beneficial to the county and its community partners. Marion County has continued to engage the services of CFM Advocates to assist with the development of the county's 2022 Federal Agenda and to promote the county's interest in Washington, DC.

Financial Impacts: N/A

Impacts to Department & External Agencies: N/A

Options for Consideration: 1. Approve the 2022 Federal Agenda. 2. Do not approve the 2019 Federal Agenda.

Recommendation: Approve the 2022 Federal Agenda.

List of attachments: Draft Federal Agenda

Presenter: Tanisha Bush, Marion County Government Relations Manager Kirby J. Garrett, Vice President Federal Affairs Michael Skipper, Federal Affairs Manager

Copies of completed paperwork sent to the following: (Include names and e-mail addresses.)

Copies to: Tanisha Bush



Marion County 2022 Federal Agenda

COUNTY INITIATIVES

North Santiam Canyon Economic Distress Relief Plan

The Omnibus Parks and Public Lands Management Act of 1996 authorized \$15 million to support the Economic Development Plan for the Opal Creek Wilderness and Scenic Recreation Area. However, funds to implement the plan were never delivered until just last year when the Fiscal Year 2022 Appropriations legislation finally included \$2 million in partial funding. Marion County is strongly supportive of ongoing efforts by the State of Oregon to secure the remainder of this long-delayed funding through the appropriations process. Once secured, these funds will support many specific investments for economic development projects in the region that were outlined in the 2014 North Santiam Canyon Economic Opportunity Study updated by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments. Meanwhile, wildfires decimated residences and infrastructure throughout the Canyon in 2020, exacerbating the need for federal support. The Canyon community is not sitting idly by and is collaborating with Marion County on the following initiatives:

- ***Rural Broadband Deployment*** ***\$3,000,000***
Broadband internet is essential for rural areas to overcome geographic and economic challenges. Currently, households and businesses in the North Santiam Canyon (NSC) are paying the same rates for internet access as their counterparts in urban areas but are getting much less. Connections are not adequate for reliable credit card transactions, let alone data-rich video services. Marion County is leading a coalition of cities and residents to make the deployment of high-speed, reliable internet access a reality for the NSC.
- ***Wastewater Infrastructure*** ***\$5,000,000***
The lack of wastewater (sewer) infrastructure in the NSC remains a barrier to economic development. The existing infrastructure is inadequate and cannot accommodate new users, preventing growth of local businesses, homes, and facilities. The cost of deploying wastewater infrastructure in the NSC is exponentially higher than normal due to the unique geology and water source protection requirements of the region. None of the local communities have the ability to finance individual, large scale sewer projects without outside support. Marion County is working with these communities to develop a solution that meets current and future needs of the region, and to pursue federal funding for infrastructure deployment. The Beachie Creek and Lionshead Wildfires in September have added significant urgency to the need for sewer systems in order for the cities to build back in a sustainable way while maintaining their small community's character.
- ***Detroit Lake Marina Excavation*** ***\$2,500,000***
In recent years, Detroit Lake has routinely failed to reach the seasonal depth of 1,542 feet necessary to support a full recreation season. As the primary outdoor recreation destination in the North Santiam Canyon, area businesses depend on a recreation season of May 1st to October 1st to maintain solvency year round. Approximately 60% of annual revenue for these businesses is generated in the month of August alone. Detroit Lake and Kane's Marinas lay upon shallow shelves, requiring the marinas to close their docks increasingly earlier as water is drained from the lake. In partnership with the marinas, Marion County is seeking funding for strategic excavation to mitigate seasonal economic risk and extend boat recreation season by approximately two months.
- ***North Fork Road Improvements*** ***\$2,815,385***
Marion County is seeking funds to improve safety along the NSC's North Fork Road and repair damage caused by last year's wildfires. North Fork Road provides all-season access to the Opal Creek Scenic Recreation Area, Opal

Creek Ancient Forest Center, Bull of the Woods Wilderness Area, BLM and County Parks, private timber lands, youth camps, fishing, camping areas, and well over 100 private homes. The area serves tens of thousands of recreationists annually, but the constant threat of landslides and lack of guardrails along the roadway pose an unceasing risk to the safety of travelers and threatens to undermine the entrance to this popular scenic recreation area. The County plans on requesting funds from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to mitigate landslides and build guard rails along the roadway and install fee kiosks at the entrance to North Fork Road and Gates Hill Road.

- **Public Safety Radio System**

\$12,000,000

The Beachie Creek Wildfire caused significant damage to two Marion County radio sites, one of which was completely destroyed. Together, the sites provided 100% of the public safety radio coverage for the upper North Santiam Canyon. Restoring this public safety radio system is critical to supporting emergency response, but the damage incurred will require system-wide improvements as the aging technology has fallen out of compliance with new standards and replacement equipment is no longer manufactured. To maintain a cohesive county-wide radio system, Marion County is seeking funding for new permanent radio equipment at both sites and replacement of equipment at several sites throughout the county.

- **Santiam Canyon Housing Recovery**

The Beechie Creek/Lionshead fires of 2020 burned nearly 200,000 acres of land in the Santiam Canyon, destroying thousands of structures and homes in the towns of Detroit, Gates, and Mill City. Marion County stepped up to lead the government's response to the wildfires and has been closely coordinating with FEMA, the State of Oregon, and neighboring jurisdictions to help residents rebuild. While much progress has been made, the recovery process will be long. Marion County urges Oregon to coordinate closely with the county and community partners on the use of its \$400 million in federal disaster recovery funding to best address the needs in the canyon.

Wintel Road Reconstruction and Bridge Replacement

\$3,716,857

Wintel Road is a 3.97-mile local road that features several wildlife viewpoints as it passes through the Ankeny Hill National Wildlife Refuge. An approximately one-mile section of the road is in poor condition due to subgrade failure, including Bridge 47C76 which spans the Sidney Ditch. The bridge is one of seven timber bridges in the Refuge area nearing the end of its useful life due to timber decay, section loss, and substandard bridge and approach rails. Without improvements, both the road and bridge are at risk of becoming unusable. Marion County is requesting funding from the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) to complete road reconstruction and bridge replacement simultaneously, reducing inconvenience for users and ensuring easy, uninterrupted access to the Refuge viewing turnouts.

McKay/Yergen/Ehlen Roads Safety Corridor Project

\$3,000,000

Located on the National Highway System, the McKay/Yergen/Ehlen Road Corridor has been a high priority for Marion County for several years due to high crash rates. As a result, the corridor was chosen this year as the first non-state facility to be designated as a "safety corridor" in Oregon. Federal funds would be used to construct left-turn lanes at major intersections within the corridor, which is the primary need based on the crash trends. Most of the length of this 7-mile corridor has a 55-mph speed limit, so separating slowing, turning vehicles from the path of faster vehicles would reduce rear-end and turning crashes. Reducing these crashes at higher speeds is especially important, as they are more likely to result in more serious injuries or fatalities.

Interstate 5 Aurora-Donald Interchange Reconstruction

\$32,000,000

The Aurora-Donald Interchange provides a major access point for northern area of Marion County to Interstate 5, the most important north-south highway in the state and a major freight corridor. The interchange is charged with facilitating on and offramp traffic to Ehlen Road, a major east-west road that provides I-5 access to north Marion County communities and indirect access to communities in Clackamas and Yamhill counties. Unfortunately, the interchange has been rendered obsolete since its original construction in the 1960's. Its antiquated design consistently causes dangerous backups from the offramp terminals onto the Interstate, especially on the southbound ramp where Ehlen road has an adjacent intersection with another road.

With I-5 traffic between Salem and Portland having already grown substantially over the past ten years and truck traffic projected to grow by 40% along this corridor in the near future, reconstructing this interchange is a high priority of the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Transportation Commission, Marion County, and Oregon Department of Transportation. While the project has \$28.4 million in state funding available for the project, preliminary analysis shows that additional funding is needed to complete all the necessary improvements. Together with its partners, Marion County will be pursuing additional federal funding to enable full completion of this critical public safety and freight mobility project.

POLICY PRIORITIES

Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund Flexibility

Marion County received \$67.6 million from the \$350 billion Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund authorized under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). However, current ARPA restrictions exclude needed projects that could have a lasting impact on our community for generations to come. Marion County is strongly supportive of the bipartisan State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial Fiscal Recovery, Infrastructure, and Disaster Relief Flexibility Act, which would provide additional flexibility to strengthen the Recovery Fund in the following ways:

- Allow counties to allocate up to \$10 million in ARPA Recovery Funds for the provision of government services without being required to calculate revenue loss.
- Allow \$10 million (or 30 percent) of a jurisdiction's ARPA Recovery Fund allocation to be used for infrastructure-related activities.
- Allow ARPA Recovery Funds to provide emergency relief from natural disasters and their negative economic impacts, including temporary emergency housing, food assistance, financial assistance for lost wages, or other immediate needs.

Aurora Airport Runway Expansion

As one of the busiest state-owned airports in Oregon, the Aurora Airport facilitates nearly 95,000 aircraft operations each year and supports economic activity throughout the area. However, the airport is inhibited by a current runway length that is inadequate for modern corporate and private aircrafts. Marion County supports the State of Oregon's plans to address this by adding 1,000 feet to the existing runway for a total of 6,000 feet as called for in the airport's FAA-approved master plan. The FAA previously approved inclusion of the runway expansion, but the agency is now insisting on unnecessary, additional studies that are already contained in the Master Plan and are beyond the Oregon Department of Aviation's budget. Marion County supports the State and other stakeholders' request for FAA to remove this duplicative and burdensome requirement and pave the way for this much needed project.

Detroit Fish Passage – The potential impact of fish passage construction on the region's water supply, recreation, regional/local socioeconomics, and fish and wildlife habitat cannot be overstated. In light of the importance of the North Santiam Watershed and Detroit Reservoir to the livelihood of communities within Marion County, the county supports the preferred alternative in the Draft EIS to avoid draw down of Detroit Reservoir and continue operation of the dam based on the normal rule curve. Implementation of any other alternative, or modification of the preferred alternative, could have a devastating impact on the communities within the county.

Secure Rural Schools Reauthorization – Marion County supports a long-term reauthorization of the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act. Of the approximately 750,000 acres of land in Marion County, 206,000 acres (27%) is owned and managed by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). In FY 2020, Marion County received a total of \$1,089,250 in SRS funding. Stabilizing and regulating funds from these national forest lands is a priority for Marion County as it grapples with unemployment and economic limitations, especially in rural areas.

Support Responsible, Sustainable Solutions for the O&C Lands and USFS Forests – Marion County supports reform of federal forest management policies, including the management of O&C forest lands, to help provide long-term financial certainty. The 2.4 million acres of O&C forest lands are of critical importance to the health of communities across 18 Western Oregon counties. Marion County supports a timely, responsible and sustainable plan for the O&C lands that

provides legal certainty and will revive timber production generating economic growth, jobs and financial stability to these counties. Additionally, the responsible management of the 206,000 acres of U.S. Forest Service land in Marion County would provide additional jobs and stable revenue streams to fund schools, law enforcement, and other county operations.

Opioid and Methamphetamine Funding – Opioids, prescription and illicit, have become the main driver of drug overdose deaths in the United States, while methamphetamines have recently resurged in Oregon and across the country. Marion County is taking steps locally to address the prevention and treatment of these growing threats, but more assistance is needed. Although bipartisan legislation in 2018 provided additional tools to confront the opioid crisis, the county supports additional federal funding and coordination like equipping police officers with naloxone (Narcan) to help Marion County and other communities combat the challenges of both opioids and meth.

Repeal Inmate and Juvenile Corrections Exception for Federal Health Benefits – Under current law, governments are prohibited from billing federal programs like Medicaid for the health services provided to jail inmates prior to adjudication. Marion County supports legislation that would address the inmate exception for both juvenile corrections and adults in custody pending disposition of charges and ensure their continuity of care.

Protect EDA (including the IMCP Initiative), FLAP, EPA Brownfield, CDBG, BUILD, BYRNE Justice Assistance Programs, State Criminal Alien Assistance Program and USDA Rural Development Community Facilities and Water Programs
Marion County supports maintaining funding levels for these critical infrastructure and public safety programs.

Waste-to-Energy – Recognition as Clean Energy – Waste-to-Energy power plants like the facility in Brooks, Oregon, provide clean, renewable energy and a sustainable alternative for waste disposal. If the EPA chooses to revise emission standards for existing power plants under the New Source Performance Standards/Emission Guidelines, it is critical that EPA recognize the long-standing international treatment of Waste-to-Energy (WTE) as a greenhouse gas mitigation technology and that WTE be included in the compliance "toolbox." Furthermore, WTE is classified as a source of renewable electricity under the Energy Policy Act of 2005 due to its myriad of environmental benefits. The county opposes any effort by special interests to restrict its well-founded renewable classification.

Wild and Scenic River Designations – The Santiam River is a cherished asset of Marion County that supports our local communities while drawing countless outside visitors each year. The river and its tributaries support recreation, fish and wildlife habitat, flood risk management, generation of renewable hydropower, potable water, irrigation, storage, and navigation. Given the essential benefits provided to our communities, Marion County has strong concerns about proposals to undermine the long-successful, balanced management approach currently employed between state, federal, and local partners. Marion County is concerned that federal wild and scenic designations would replace this collaborative effort with unintended restrictions that would negatively impact the health of our rural economies without added benefit to the Santiam River and other local waterways.

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