

Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization

From: carleen reilly [carleenr@gmail.com]

Sent: Friday, April 01, 2011 3:58 PM

To: Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization; PIERCY Kitty; ZELENKA Alan; BOZIEVICH Jay K; LEIKEN Sid W; EYSTER Michael (SMTP); greg.evans@ltd.org; gary.gillespie@ltd.org; CHICKERING Sonny P (SMTP); *Eugene Mayor, City Council, and City Manager; HANDY Rob M; SORENSON Pete; STEWART Faye H; Tom.Schwetz@ltd.org; REES Cosette (SMTP)

Subject: Support for W. Eugene (and River Road) EmX

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee, Eugene City Council, Lane County Board of Commissioners, Lane Transit District

From: River Road Community Organization Executive Board

Dear MPC members and local officials,

The River Road Community Organization (RRCO) Executive Board urges you to support the W. Eugene EmX line, and also expedited planning for future EmX lines serving all of Eugene's major arterial corridors and neighborhoods, including River Road. We have been impressed to see how effective bus rapid transit systems around the U.S. have been at increasing transit ridership. We believe EmX is an important investment in healthier transportation options, and a cost-effective step for a community of our size toward the new generation transit system we need. EmX on River Road has long been a priority for our community organization.

In addition to making transit itself a more attractive travel alternative, we are excited about the bike and pedestrian enhancements that accompany EmX lines, and the potential for more attractive and functional streetscapes and neighborhoods as streets are redesigned. We look forward to these enhancements along River Road, and believe that W. 11th and other arterials and neighborhoods can benefit from these kinds of improvements, too.

As for the choice between the W. 6th/7th or the W. 13th alignment for the W. Eugene line, we support EmX running on either or both streets. We look forward to the day when a 6th/7th line will continue on to River Road. If a 6th/7th segment is built first, either as part of a W. 11th route or a Highway 99 route, that should reduce overall capital costs of completing a line to River Road. However, we understand there is also a flip side--that shorter transitway projects that serve fewer riders are ranked lower in the competition for federal grant funding. There is already strong competition for federal transit funds, and it would be dismaying if funding for a final segment out River Road (or Highway 99) is jeopardized because the 6th/7th segment is built as part of a separate project.

Yet, we know that many details of routing and funding options remain to be considered. Other federal funding sources may be available for shorter EmX segments, or a River Road EmX may be built out in tandem with a Highway 99 line or as part of a loop that might serve a large enough area to be competitive for federal funding. In any case, we hope that MPC representatives and local elected officials will keep the bigger picture in mind, and support options that will help all of Eugene's neighborhoods get EmX service as soon as possible. The whole system needs to be built before the full benefits can be realized. Also, it is important that the system be cost-effective to operate, improve the

livability of individual neighborhoods, and provide a speedy and quality service that attracts a significant increase in ridership. Route alignments and transitway configurations need to be built with these larger goals in mind.

Thank you for supporting EmX to West Eugene now, and for supporting steps to bring EmX to River Road and other Eugene neighborhoods and activity centers as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

RRCO Executive Board members: Carleen Reilly and Ray Neff (Co-chairs), Bev Barr, Jon Belcher, Kate Kelly, Michael Lambros, Stefan Ostrach