LCOG Takes Major Role in Public Outreach for I-105 Construction

The Eugene-Springfield area has entered a multi-season transportation infrastructure and construction cycle that includes large-scale projects such as the I-105 Improvement Project, which will have a major impact on traffic congestion. In the last several months, key collaborative efforts among the region’s transportation service providers have included regional project coordination and communications planning to help mitigate the negative affects on our community.

LCOG is assisting the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and has partnered with the Commuter Solution’s Congestion Mitigation Program to leverage local resources in multi-layered and proactive public outreach and communications strategies. A successful communications plan will help reduce traffic and parking problems, improve safety and security, reduce stress, promote positive relations with affected populations, and support overall demand management efforts in the region.

Central to the I-105 Improvement Project outreach is the website designed by LCOG’s Creative Services, www.keepusmoving.info, that highlights project scope, construction updates, environmental information, driving alternatives such as bike, transit, and pedestrian travel, and various downloads for public use in communications efforts.

The overall focus of the outreach project is to determine, recommend, and implement communications efforts to address traffic congestion and delay areas along and adjacent to the I-105 Improvement construction area well in advance of major community impact. These efforts consist of two elements: providing information to the public and affected businesses.

See I-105 page 3
LCOG Board Explores Regional Issues

Spring, as with its sister seasons of the year, stimulates in each of us unique reflections and activities. So, suddenly it seems, we note that daylight hours have lengthened and we have turned our attention to baseball, barbeques and budgets. What? Budgets? Yes, in the public sector, spring carries a powerful reminder that one temporal chunk of our civic life is coming to an end and another will soon begin. In order to dutifully prepare and plan for the start of a new fiscal year, an honest assessment of the past is needed.

My observations this month dwell not so much upon the dollars and cents of a budget analysis, nor even upon the work program tasks accomplished and anticipated. Rather, let me use this space to highlight one aspect of LCOG’s annual cycle that truly represents a change from years past.

It was nearly two years ago that the LCOG Board of Directors implemented operational changes aimed at strengthening the organizational partnership and more precisely assigning the policy-making roles of elected leaders. The Board reduced the number of full Board meetings from ten to six per year, and through amendments to its Bylaws assigned more extensive tasks to the agency’s six-member Executive Committee. For its part, the Board chose to assume responsibilities at a higher policy level. Based upon the realignment of functions, the 27-member Board of Directors committed itself to more deeply consider regional issues and to pursue opportunities for addressing the area’s most pressing intergovernmental challenges.

Last summer, the Board identified five topics that were particularly deserving of special consideration. Each was by its nature multi-jurisdictional, involving the vital interests of LCOG’s diverse local government membership. So, during this past year, along with attending to the other obligations incumbent upon the Board, LCOG’s policy body carved out significant time blocks at its meetings for the exploration of the identified regional topics. They were: public safety, local control, public infrastructure, education and life-long learning, and regional economic development. At its Goal-Setting Session in Cottage Grove in July, the Board will look back over its shoulder and assess the value of that commitment of time and energy. There is no doubt that improvements can be made in our efforts to address challenging intergovernmental issues within this region; but my sense is that the decision to shift the functions of the unique assembly of policy makers that is the Board of Directors away from the mundane and toward an exploration of important public policy topics has proven its worth.

As LCOG, along with our member jurisdictions, complete their annual budget processes and move toward fiscal year 2005-06, I am confident that this organization is on a constructive and promising path. Bringing elected officials together to address the most pressing regional issues strikes me a healthy step toward a better future for this community. Have a good spring.

LCOG’s Regional Focus newsletter is distributed across Lane County to members and other interested parties, and is now available on our website at http://www.lcog.org/rfnews.html. We are conducting an ongoing review of our mailing list to cut costs associated with the distribution of the Regional Focus.

If you would like to stop receiving the Regional Focus by mail, please contact Ann Mortenson at (541) 682-4373, or by e-mail at amortenson@lane.cog.or.us.

Thank you for reading, and feel free to contact us with suggestions regarding topics about which you would like to learn more.
New Lane Library District Joins LCOG

The new Lane Library District (LLD), created by the passage of last November’s Measure 20-87, joined the LCOG list of member agencies on March 3, 2005. The LLD will be represented on the LCOG Board on a revolving basis from the five-member governing board.

The LLD provides library services to the area that includes everyone living in the Creswell School District. A property tax rate of 59 cents per $1,000 of the assessed value of property in the District funds the expansion of services in the library, including expanded hours, a significant increase in the number of book titles, and relocation to a larger and more accessible downtown Creswell location.

The District is working toward an October grand opening for its new library, and has hired an architect, Rich Turi, and approved his preliminary plan for the new library. The plan includes restroom and entrance accommodations for those with disabilities, designated children’s and teen’s areas, an expanded collection of books and reference materials, and space for many more computers.

The Creswell Public Library Foundation (CPLF) has been working with the LLD to get the funding in place for the project, already raising $18,560 from community donors. Additionally, the Creswell City Council recently pledged $3000 to CPLF over the next four years, and over $20,000 of in-kind donations from local builders and others have been pledged to the project. The CPLF has also secured $67,000 in grants, including $52,000 from the Ford Family Foundation.

The LCOG organization welcomes the Lane Library District as its 27th member.

Sanny Wood (center), Senior Vice President at West Coast Bank, presents a check to Bob Swank (right) and Steve Dignam (left) for LCOG’s new U.S. Economic Development Administration business loan program. West Coast Bank joins eight other local banks that contribute to the program in order to assist small businesses throughout Lane County.

From I-105 page 1 regarding potential impacts of the improvement project throughout its duration, and providing information on and incentives to use alternatives to I-105 during the construction period.

Through creative application of the process, the future intent is to create a permanent, proactive and interactive tool for public information. Ultimately, this tool would allow the public to view project information at several levels – from planning to construction, thus continuing to improve coordination and public outreach techniques in transportation planning.
The Senior Meals Program received a bequest in 2004 from a former participant and volunteer who designated that the proceeds from the sale of his home be donated to the Senior Meals Program to benefit his meal site at Olive Plaza. This gift amounted to more than $121,000, which, with the help of Southern Willamette Services Corporation, was put toward an Endowment Fund at the Oregon Community Foundation.

The Endowment Fund allows the gift to be used to build toward the long-term financial stability of the Senior Meals program. The initial gift is kept intact and only the interest is available for the program’s use. The Olive Plaza Meal Site expects to earn at least $4,400 in interest on this one gift this year and each year in the future.

The program has received smaller bequests to benefit other meal sites which have also been invested in the Senior Meals Endowment. Endowment donors may designate their gifts to benefit the program as a whole or a specific community; and gifts and earnings are tracked by individual community. The larger the Endowment Fund becomes, the larger the annual interest payment will be, eventually providing a significant annual revenue stream to supplement ongoing fund raising efforts.

The Senior Meals Program operates twelve dining rooms and delivers Meals on Wheels in eight Lane County communities. For many years, Senior Meals Program staff and volunteers have supplemented Older Americans Act funds and participant contributions for meals with fund raising activities and direct mail appeals. Next year, annual fund raising activities must raise over $225,000.

In the next few months, brochures explaining the opportunity to contribute now or to make a planned gift to the Senior Meals Endowment Fund will be distributed to Senior Meals Program donors, volunteers, clients, attorneys and financial advisors; as well as LCOG employees, Board and Advisory Committee members. For more information about the Senior Meals Endowment Fund, contact Sandy Karsten at (541) 682-4378.

Senior & Disabled Services’ Senior Connections program has been selected as a placement site for a Clara Barton AmericaCorps*VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) member. The VISTA member will begin a one-year service commitment with Senior Connections on August 29, 2005, and serve as the Senior Connections’ Resource Development Coordinator.

The primary responsibility for the position will be to assist the Senior Connections’ staff and volunteers to design and implement an innovative resource development plan, working to increase public awareness of senior needs and to expand the Program’s economic base. The additional resources will enable Senior Connection’s staff to serve more Lane County seniors in new and better ways.

AmeriCorps*VISTA is a full-time, national service program for individuals interested in developing lasting solutions to the problems of poverty in America. AmeriCorps*VISTA members serve in community and faith-based nonprofit organizations and with other agencies and local governments to develop and expand services and programs that help bring low-income people out of poverty.

Recruitment of the VISTA member will begin in May. LCOG will recruit nationally through the AmericaCorps Recruitment and Placement system, and locally through the LCOG web site, newspaper, and word of mouth. Those interested in applying for the position should contact Joan Taylor at 682-4374, or by e-mail at jtaylor@lane.cog.or.us. VISTA members receive a small living allowance to cover basic living necessities during service. As affordable housing is always difficult to find, anyone with ideas for available housing options is encouraged to contact Joan Taylor.
Southern Willamette Valley Communities
To Talk About Growth

Beginning in June, a series of public meetings will be held in 14 cities and rural areas throughout the Southern Willamette Valley to discuss and gather opinions about the development of a Regional Growth Management Strategy.

These meetings are part of the multi-year Region 2050 planning effort by Lane County and the area’s 10 cities and other government entities. The participants are using this process to work cooperatively on mutual issues such as population growth, water resources, job growth and other resource issues facing the Southern Willamette Valley. Times and locations for each of the 14 meetings scheduled between June and September are listed at right.

To prepare for these meetings, 150,000 copies of a newsletter, “Design Your Future,” will be printed and distributed in all of the region’s newspapers in May. A survey will be enclosed in the newsletter.

By the year 2050, the Southern Willamette Valley’s population is expected to grow by 160,000. This equals Eugene’s current population plus 20,000. These community meetings and the survey in the Design Your Future newspaper insert will give residents of rural Lane County and the cities of Coburg, Creswell, Cottage Grove, Eugene, Junction City, Lowell, Oakridge, Springfield, Veneta and Westfir a voice in how and where we will grow over the next 50 years.”

Community Meeting Calendar – Please register to participate.

To register and receive advance materials, enter your name, address, and date of the meeting online at www.Region2050.org, or call Ann Mortenson at (541) 682-4373.

June

- JUNE 9 • VENETA COMMUNITY CENTER
  25192 E. Broadway, Veneta

- JUNE 27 • CRESWELL COMMUNITY CENTER
  99 South 1st Street, Creswell

July

- JULY 7 • FRANKLIN GRANGE HALL
  92081 Territorial Road
  Junction City

- JULY 14 • WALTERVILLE GRANGE
  39259 Camp Creek Road
  Walterville

- JULY 21 • GOSHEN GRANGE
  Dillard Access Road
  Goshen

August

- AUGUST 3 • COTTAGE GROVE
  COMMUNITY CENTER
  700 E. Gibb’s, Cottage Grove

- AUGUST 10 • CROW GRANGE
  Territorial Road
  Crow

- AUGUST 11 • JASPER GRANGE
  Jasper Lowell Road and
  Hills Creek Road
  Jasper

- AUGUST 24 • JUNCTION CITY CITY HALL
  680 Greenwood St.
  Junction City

- AUGUST 31 • OAKRIDGE FIRE HALL
  42592 Hwy. 58
  Oakridge

September

- SEPTEMBER 14 • COBURG MUNICIPAL COURT
  32694 Pearl Street, Coburg

- SEPTEMBER 15 • LOWELL HIGH SCHOOL
  65 S. Pioneer, Lowell

- SEPTEMBER 21 • SPRINGFIELD CITY HALL
  Library Meeting Room
  225 5th Street, Springfield

- SEPTEMBER 22 • LANE COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS
  Room #4
  796 W 13th Ave, Eugene

All are welcome! All meetings will be 5:30-8:30 p.m.

For more information, contact Dwight Coon at (541) 998-2153, Faye Stewart at faye.stewart@co.lane.or.us, Carol Heinkel at cheinkel@lane.cog.or.us, or visit the Region 2050 website at www.Region2050.org.
LCOG Staff Secures Funds to Meet Area Needs

Rural development, water protection, transportation, regional planning, child abuse prevention, library facility, playground development, homeland security, youth mentoring—these are just some of the areas for which LCOG’s Resource Development and Evaluation staff have secured grants to help meet area needs in recent months. Nearly $4 million has been awarded to LCOG members and clients over the last 22 months through these efforts, with even more currently pending for equally worthy projects.

The Creswell Public Library Foundation (CPLF) recently sought organizational development support as well as grant research and writing from LCOG’s Resource Development and Evaluation staff assist the new Lane Library District (LLD). The outcome was a funding plan that assigned components of the grant preparation process to CPLF board members as well as to LCOG staff so that the Foundation’s financial resources were adequate for the task ahead.

Foundation volunteers gathered letters of support, sought out local funds and in-kind contributions from local businesses, and with a list provided by LCOG, pulled together supporting documents for grant applications. LCOG wrote and submitted grants to selected sources and assisted a volunteer writer as well. Currently, CPLF is at 41 percent of its grant goal, and is excited about the future as it waits to hear back from potential funders.

“This process has been so empowering, and LCOG has been a significant contributor to that,” states LLD Board President Carol Campbell.

Oregon Planning Institute Set for September

This year’s Oregon Planning Institute conference will be held on Thursday and Friday, September 15 and 16, 2005, with a special training for planning commissioner to be held on Saturday, September 17. The 2005 conference, titled “The Promise of Paradise,” will feature activist Ellen Lowe as keynote speaker. The University of Oregon’s Lillis Business Complex, which was a great success as OPI’s host last year, will be the location again for 2005. LCOG produces the conference, now in its fourth decade, to provide a forum for planners and related professionals from across the state.

Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy will kick off the conference and welcome the attendees to Eugene. Mayor Piercy is committed to the principles of grass-roots citizen participation as Eugene faces the challenges of sustainability in a variety of spheres.

Mayor Piercy’s talk will lead into this year’s keynote speaker, Ellen Lowe.

Ms. Lowe has spent a lifetime working on a broad range of community issues and is a fixture in Oregon politics. She has played many different political roles ranging from activist to gubernatorial appointee (10 times over) to lobbyist. An appointee to the Oregon Coastal Conservation and Development Commission, Ms. Lowe also served on Governor Tom McCall’s task force for Senate Bill 100, which created statewide land use planning.

Please join us to hear Mayor Piercy’s and Ms. Lowe’s insights on the issues facing Oregon today. Visit http://www.lcog.org/opi for more information.
Improving the quality of geographic information to better support virtually everything that local governments do—from saving lives to managing infrastructure to planning for future growth—is a never-ending quest. Better quality data supports better decision making, and will open doors for an even larger contingent of users whose applications for these data demand increasingly greater precision and reliability. LCOG and its regional GIS partners are working to meet these challenges now.

In 2000, after almost 30 years of building the regional Geographic Information System, the Regional Land Information Database (RLID) went online to facilitate inter-governmental data sharing and access. In 2002 Lane County, with support from LCOG and the cities of Eugene and Springfield, launched an ambitious effort to automate its tax mapping functions and build a new, more spatially accurate, GIS-based tax lot layer. The three-year effort is on schedule for fall completion and regional attention is shifting toward ongoing tax lot maintenance planning.

In 2004, the regional partners jointly funded, along with additional players such as the Army Corps of Engineers, an orthophotography acquisition project. The high resolution color orthophotography was flown during the spring of 2004 and covers most of Lane County. In addition to aiding the tax lot mapping effort (for example, delineating boundaries that coincide with natural features such as streams), the orthophotography offers a base against which other GIS layers that are not tied to tax lots can be compared and mapped.

For the regional partners and the broader RLID user community to enjoy the benefits of the newer survey control and more spatially accurate GIS “basemap”, considerable work remains. Last year, the regional GIS data were successfully converted to the currently accepted standard NAD83/91 datum. However, to be fully compatible with the new tax lots, the region’s extensive data holdings will also need to be spatially adjusted so that they “fit” or register to the new basemap. In addition, the partners must migrate their GIS to ESRI’s current ArcGIS technology.

LCOG Board Adopts Revised Budget; FY 2005-06 Budget Preparation Underway

At its April 21 meeting, the LCOG Board of Directors received a recommendation from its six-member Budget Committee to revise the current year’s budget to reflect changes that have occurred during the first nine months of the year. At the recommendation of agency management, the Budget Committee proposed adjustments to both the available revenues and the necessary expenditures. After consideration of the Committee’s recommendation, the Board approved a revision to the FY 2004-05 agency budget, increasing the fiscal year authorization by over $2.6 million to total $25,683,614. In the message that accompanied the revision, Executive Director George Kloeppel noted that the increase from the annual budget adopted in June 2004 was primarily driven by “higher reserves and augmented business loan funds.” He said that the budget adjustment made “virtually no change” in LCOG’s staffing authorization of 175.59 FTE for the year.

Also in April, the agency’s Budget Committee initiated its consideration of the budget that will support and guide LCOG’s work in FY 2005-06. The Committee will finalize its recommendation in May. The Board of Directors is scheduled to conduct a public hearing and consider that budgetary recommendation in June.
For more information on the programs and activities mentioned in this newsletter, visit the Lane Council of Government website at www.lcog.org

Current meeting schedules are now available on the LCOG website at www.lcog.org/calen.html