

Presentation by Mayor Smith to Lane Area Committee on Transportation (ACT) on February 9, 2022

Thanks for the opportunity to share some background on the future Coburg interchange improvement.

The City of Coburg lies on both sides of interstate 5 and the interchange is the only link to the eastside of the city and over 100 hundred homes in the county region further east.

With the need for a \$30 million Sewer treatment system to protect our municipal water sources, the city recognized that this would be a heavy financial burden for 1,000 residents and our existing businesses.

Coburg diligently planned for growth with emphasis on employment lands. Motivated by the need for a broader base for property tax revenue and utility user fees, we accepted the challenge of fulfilling a regional employment lands need of large light industrial lots.

Our small city put significant effort into land use planning and creating or updating master plans for expanding and upgrading our infrastructure for streets, water, sewer and storm water.

A key element in the planning discussions has been the upgrade of the Coburg/I-5 interchange. About 20 years ago, we completed some Interchange Area Management Plan (IAMP) improvements for the west side of the interchange and are in the design phase of the east side IAMP.

The interchange upgrade has been in planning discussions for over 25 years. The bridge itself was lifted about 20 years ago to increase I-5 height clearances. The bridge has literally no room for pedestrians or bike traffic. The steepness and outdated design of North bound on and

off ramps creates safety issues. The guard railing was damaged and replaced 4 times in 2021 from semi's tipping over while turning onto the northbound on ramp.

Coburg is processing an annexation application for approximately 107 acres of employment zoned lands on the east side of I-5. During this process, it has come to our attention that the current bridge will limit any development in Coburg that takes the peak hour trip beyond 632 trips. While we are below 200 trips at this time, we have an increased urgency over updating the interchange.

Many other factors contribute to our concern: commuter and commercial traffic to and from areas to the northwest of Coburg significantly affects our traffic counts. This factor is out of our control and influence. I understand that Harrisburg is one of the fastest growing cities in Oregon. As traffic continues to increase, Coburg stands to lose the ability to develop lands that we have put significant financial and staff resources into.

Coburg loves and hates the interstate. We love that it is a quick access to the metro area for our residents to shop and work. We hate the traffic, noise and pollution that it creates. However, we have tried to make lemonade out lemons and take advantage of our location by providing for regional employment lands that can take advantage of the quick interstate access near a significant metropolitan area. This can create many jobs and also help our city build a broader customer base to help pay for a safe and modern infrastructure.

The interchange upgrade has been needed for decades, Coburg started significant planning that relies on this interchange update. The current bridge and interchange effectively blocks any safe way to walk or bike across I-5. This requires many residents and visitors to drive from one side to the other.

This is not just a Coburg issue, it is a regional issue. Coburg businesses employ about 2,000 people. If the new lands are annexed and developed we could potentially double the number of jobs in Coburg. The Coburg interchange is a commuter and commercial route for businesses and residents to the Northwest of us in Lane, Linn and Benton counties that need access to the Eugene/Springfield Metro area.

While we are all aware that there is not enough money to go around, I hope we will all keep in mind the safety, and regional economic development concerns associated with this project.