

## THE EMPIRE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PROJECT

The City of Coos Bay is seeking funding for major improvements along Empire Boulevard (formerly Cape Arago Highway) from Newmark Avenue to the City Limits. The existing roadway has no sidewalk or bike lanes. The shoulder of the roadway is uneven in most spots and has a steep drop off in others. It is currently not used by pedestrians due to safety concerns and repeated accidents.

The project will widen the roadway section to provide bike lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the street. The project will also provide a covered structure at the Coos County Area Transit (CCAT) bus stop on Empire Boulevard. Street lighting, benches, pavers and other improvements would be provided to make the boulevard more attractive and user friendly for bicycle and pedestrian usage.

**Empire Boulevard is the major published route to a cluster of four State parks and ocean beaches that welcome over 500,000 visitors each year.** Additionally, the roadway is also the major connector for the Empire Neighborhood connecting a low-income residential neighborhood and two tribal housing developments to the Empire business district, two large public schools and CCAT public transportation bus stops.

### NATIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

This section of highway is a major national connector.

- This section of roadway is a designated part of the **Oregon Coast Bike Route**
- This section of roadway has a preliminary designation as a part of the **US Bike Route 95**
- This section of roadway is a designated part of the **Oregon Coast Trail**
- Empire Boulevard is on the designated route off **US HWY 101** to a cluster of State Parks and ocean beaches.
- Empire Boulevard was formerly part of **HWY 245**. HWY 245 starts on Empire Boulevard outside the City limits.
- Empire Boulevard is the major route into Charleston and the local fisheries.
- Empire Boulevard is in close proximity to the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area and the Siuslaw National Forest.



***The project has been recommended to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) to receive an ODOT Flex Funds Grant of \$2.1m for the first phase of this project. The OTC will vote on the Flex Funds grant program at their March 2012 meeting. The TIGER IV grant and cash match from the City of Coos Bay would pay for the rest of the project.***

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/TP/FlexFunds.shtml>

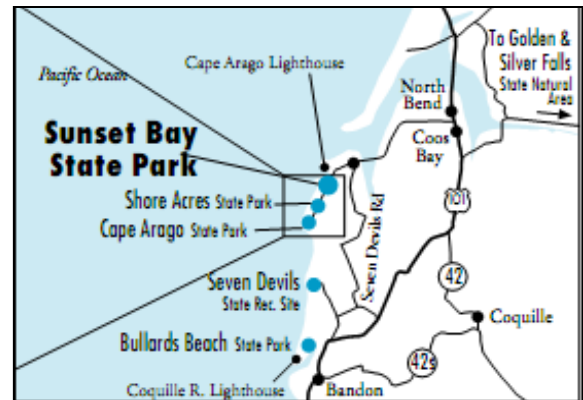
### QUICK BUDGET OVERVIEW

TOTAL PROJECT COST	\$4,000,000
TIGER IV Grant Request	\$1,100,000
Coos Bay URA	\$800,000
ODOT Flex II	\$2,100,000 (unsecured)

## ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS

The Empire neighborhood sits at the edge of several national jewels. To the north, across the Bay, the Siuslaw National Forest hosts the Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area. The Dunes sprawl north over 40 miles of ocean beaches. Hundreds of thousands of visitors camp, ride ATVs, bird watch and enjoy this scenic wonder.

Empire Boulevard also leads tourists out to a series of several State Parks, the fishing village of Charleston, the Oregon Institute of Marine Biology and the South Slough National Sanctuary. The botanical gardens of Shore Acres State Park, the immense tide pools of Cape Arago State Park and the noisy walrus just off of Sunset Bay State Park beckon travellers. A significant portion of 10,000 daily vehicles on Empire Boulevard are tourists driving out to enjoy these pristine natural treasures.



The Empire Neighborhood has an interesting juxtaposition of being the gateway community to some of Oregon's most pristine and cherished Ocean beaches and State Parks while also having some of the most profound poverty by any standard.

Oregon State Parks	Annual Attendance
Cape Arago State Park	339,132
Shore Acres State Park	228,500
Sunset Bay State Park	582,954
Sunset Bay Campground	62,746 <sup>1</sup>

This project will provide the visual cues needed and develop a waterfront based infrastructure that will give passing tourists a reason to stop, explore the Empire Neighborhood and invest in the community with their money. The resource, tourists and travellers, already exists with over 500,000 people travelling on Empire Boulevard to visit the State Parks each year. Long-term

job creation will be evident in the growth of small business in the Empire downtown.

## LIVABILITY

The "The Empire Bicycle and Pedestrian Project" will create a neighborhood where residents can walk or bike safely to the Empire downtown area, local schools, public transit stops and area parks. This project will strengthen the local and regional economy, support the community by expanding transportation choices and help foster the Empire Neighborhood into a place where people work, play and live.

In light of the area's high poverty rates and high unemployment, providing better transportation connections for residents is critical to livability. This project will provide residents with a less expensive and safer connection to local medical centers, social services, employment centers and transportation options. Providing safe and accessible walkways and bicycle lanes along Empire Boulevard will link residents with the existing CCAT bus station and the Empire downtown.

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<sup>1</sup> Oregon State Parks, 2010 Daily Park Attendance, Tom Hughes, Budget/Visitor's Statistic

One of the greatest challenges for many low-income residents is having consistent reliable transportation to their places of work. The CCAT local loop connects to the community college, Social

	Poverty Level	Veterans	Disability (18-65)	American Indians	Persons 65 +
<b>United States</b>	12.4%	12.7%	19.3%	0.9%	12.4%
<b>Oregon</b>	11.6%	15.1%	18.8%	1.3%	12.8%
<b>City of Coos Bay</b>	16.5%	18.3%	27%	2.3%	19.2%
<b><i>Empire District</i></b>	<b>21.4%</b>	<b>18.6%</b>	<b>29.5%</b>	<b>4.1%</b>	<b>19.3%</b>

Security office, Oregon Unemployment office, Bay Area Hospital, government office and major employers.

**The poverty rate of 21% for the Empire Neighborhood is one of the highest in the State of Oregon.** This population also has a statistically high percentage of people who are traditionally underserved: US veterans, persons 18-65 with a disability, American Indians and persons 65 and over.

## ENVIRONMENTALLY SUSTAINABLE

The “The Empire Bicycle and Pedestrian Project” has been designed not only be aesthetically pleasing but to also be environmentally sustainable.

The existing drainage facilities for Empire Boulevard consist of a drainage ditch that runs along the east side of the roadway, numerous culverts, two cross culverts and an existing drywell. The proposed drainage improvements will include the installation of green street swales between the curbs and sidewalks, water quality inlets where space constraints preclude swales and a storm water system to collect and convey runoff to the bay. The project proposes to install approximately 2,400 linear feet of an 8-foot landscape strip. Landscaping will include native plants and will be designed to require minimal maintenance. All storm water facilities are designed to meet ODOT, Oregon DEQ, NMFS and City of Coos Bay requirements. Trash cans on either side of the road will help to reinforce the “Keep Oregon Green” culture that promotes proper disposal of refuse.

## SAFETY

Empire Boulevard is currently unsafe for pedestrian traffic and limits residential access to public transportation. Coos Bay Police Department responds to multiple bicycle and pedestrian accidents along Empire Boulevard every year due to vehicles and pedestrians sharing the roadway.

The “The Empire Bicycle and Pedestrian Project” will enhance public safety.

- Students will have a safe route to walk and bicycle to school along Empire Boulevard. The sidewalk will be protected from traffic by a green street swale.
- Residents will be able to safely walk or bicycle to the CCAT transit station along Empire Boulevard.
- Tourists will be able to park their vehicles and safely explore the Empire downtown district, Hollering Place Development, Boat Building School and the Empire Wayside Overlook.

## INNOVATIVE

The City of Coos Bay is dedicated to utilizing the area's natural resources in innovative and creative ways that highlight the area's natural assets and conserve natural resources. The City has a strong history of promoting and protecting the local natural resources. This innovative approach allows the City to differentiate from other small communities, improve livability and to be a local leader in environmental sustainability.

The City is actively working to promote and capitalize upon the area's natural resources;

- **Oregon Dunes National Recreation Area.** The National treasure boasts over 40 miles of ocean sand dunes that start just north of Coos Bay.
- **Siuslaw National Forest.** The Siuslaw National Forest is a very diverse
- and productive region extending from Tillamook to Coos Bay along the Oregon coast.

COOS BAY'S INNOVATIVE PROJECTS	
<b>NATURAL RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New building for the Coos Bay Visitor Center</li> <li>• New Building of for Coos County Historical Society on City owned property on waterfront</li> <li>• New boardwalk area</li> </ul>
<b>ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New bicycle lanes along Newmark Boulevard and Ocean Boulevard.</li> <li>• Electric vehicle plug in at Coos Bay Fire Station</li> </ul>
<b>RESOURCE CONSERVATION EFFORTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solar panels on Coos Bay Visitor Center</li> <li>• LEED Silver, Coos Bay Fire Station</li> <li>• Re-lamping of downtown streetlights</li> </ul>
<b>UNIQUE NATIONAL RESOURCES/ TREASURES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion of the Dunes National Park</li> <li>• Promotion of the local State Parks and ocean beaches</li> </ul>

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The project has strong local support and has been a high priority for implementation by the Coos Bay Urban Renewal Agency.

The project has been reviewed at numerous meetings of the Coos Bay Urban Renewal Agency.

A community forum and public participation event for the development of the Hollering Place identified the inclusion of a walkway along Empire Boulevard as a key element to the redevelopment of the Empire Neighborhood.

**The project has no known or anticipated community opposition.**

### Political Support

- OR State Senator Verger
- OR Representative Roblan
- US Representative DeFazio
- US Senator Merkley
- US Senator Wyden

### Public Meeting and Forums

- Coos Bay Urban Renewal Agency Meetings 2009 – present
- Hollering Place Development Community Forum
- City of Coos Bay Council Meetings

### Local Support

- Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians
- Coquille Tribal Housing
- Coos Bay Police Department
- Coos County Transit Authority
- Sawmill and Tribal Trail Committee
- Coos Bay School District #9
- International Port of Coos Bay

### Planning Documents

- City of Coos Bay, Transportation System Plan
- Empire Urban Renewal District, Master Plan
- Hollering Place Development