

MPC Meeting – March 10, 2011

Good morning.

My name is Paul Conte. I'm currently Chair of the Jefferson Westside Neighbors in Eugene, And I'm speaking on the organization's behalf.

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There are four compelling reasons to support the W. 6th/7th Alignment for the West Eugene EmX Extension or "WEEE":

First, 6th/7th produces significantly better benefits for the community.

Second, this alignment does not create a four-lane thoroughfare through the middle of a residential neighborhood, and would enhance the neighborhoods to the north and south of the W. 6th/7th couplet.

Third, a strong MPC vote for this alignment would ensure the FTA sees more community support and less opposition for WEEE, thus improving its chances for funding.

Fourth, building the W. 6th/7th Ave. EmX segment as part of this project would reduce the cost of a future Hwy. 99 EmX route by over \$32 million.

Let me address each in turn.

The 6th/7th alignment generates greater total ridership, generates more ridership per million dollars of capital investment, reaches more residents and employees, and would serve an area that is identified in the draft "Envision Eugene Plan" for intensive commercial and residential development and already has tax breaks through the Multiple-Family Property Tax Exemption program.

The W. 6th/7th couplet separates the Jefferson Westside Neighbors to the south and the Whiteaker neighborhood to the north. Both neighborhoods have voted to support EmX on W. 6th and 7th Aves. We believe the combination of a modern transit system and City support for Transit-Oriented Development in this area is exactly the right combination, in the right location, to promote compact growth that contributes to the vitality and livability of close-in urban neighborhoods.

Cleaving the JWN with a thoroughfare that is as wide as W. 6th Ave. and has the same number of lanes would have a terrible impact on the livability and stability of our neighborhood. The JWN membership has voted overwhelmingly to pursue all legal and appropriate actions to prevent WEEE from being built on W. 11th Ave.

Dividing a residential neighborhood and prompting the forceful opposition of the JWN would seriously jeopardize the WEEE project altogether, especially since the W. 13th alignment would probably result in a 4-4 split in the Eugene City Council and would needlessly squander the value of the unanimous vote for the superior alignment on 6th/7th.

Using W. 6th and 7th Aves. for WEEE and sharing this segment for a future Hwy 99 EmX route would show far better fiscal responsibility to those in the community who don't believe that Federal and State tax dollars are "free money." The greatly reduced cost to complete the Hwy 99 route would make it an extremely attractive proposal to compete for future FTA funding.

In addition, having dealt with the issues of impacts on businesses close to the WEEE alignment, the Hwy 99 route would not have to revisit these issues.

Thank you for your consideration and support for the community's best interests.