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August 18, 2010

Gail Achterman, Chair
Michael Nelson, Vice Chair
Alan Brown
David Lohman
Mary Olson
Oregon Transportation Commission
Oregon Department of Transportation
Transportation Bldg., Room 135
355 Capitol Street N.E.
Salem, OR 97301-3871

**RE: 8/11/2010 ODOT Staff Report on “ConnectOregon III Project Selection”
Pertaining to Oregon Department of Aviation’s Connect Oregon III
Program Application for the Aurora Airport Control Tower**

Dear Chair Achterman and members of the Commission:

The City of Wilsonville is very disappointed by the 8/11/2010 ODOT staff report on “ConnectOregon III Project Selection” and the recommendation pertaining to the Oregon Department of Aviation’s Connect Oregon III program application for the Aurora Airport Control Tower.

The staff report appears to avoid the substance and content of testimony provided by the City, as well as that provided by Clackamas County and the land-use organizations 1000 Friends of Oregon and Friends of French Prairie pertaining to problems with the Oregon Department of Aviation’s Connect Oregon III program application for the Aurora Airport Control Tower.

The staff report fails to directly address the land-use issues of concern to the jurisdictions and land-use watch-dog groups, and suggests that the issues be worked out through later land-use processes. However, this kind of approach is contrary to Oregon law, which seeks to have government agencies conduct land-use planning *prior to* constructing infrastructure and transportation improvements.

The staff report does not address the issues raised regarding surface-transportation impacts to ODOT-managed highways and other connecting roads of increased economic activity at the Aurora Airport that the Aviation Department predicts will occur with installation of an air traffic control tower. This lack of addressing surface-transportation concerns is antithetical to ODOT’s proactive approach to interchange management for federal highways and maintaining capacity on ODOT-administered roadways. ODOT transportation rules emphasize good, early planning to maintain interchange approaches and highway capacity; yet here, the staff report avoids recommending this type of advance planning study.

Also by the staff report in effect providing advice to the Commission "not to worry" that the land-use processes of the impacted jurisdictions will address these matters, the staff report neglects the obvious disconnect presented by the Aviation Department's Aurora Airport Impact Area Map that artificially excludes the lands of Wilsonville and Clackamas County that are obviously within the impact zone of the Aurora Airport. The staff report advances this omission of key planning functions by this disconnect, and by doing so, it also fails to provide critical analysis to assist the Commission in its deliberations.

The City would have appreciated a follow-up by ODOT staff to the City's July 21, 2010, testimony before the Commission and what the City understood by the Chair's instruction for staff to follow-up with the affected jurisdictions, and a response to my letter to you dated August 6, 2010. ODOT silence in the face of express direction simply underscores that the City's position is correct as to the impacts.

You may recall that despite several years of seeking an intergovernmental agreement with Oregon Department of Aviation and Marion County to discuss and plan for potential off-site impacts and mitigation strategies to nearby land-uses and surface transportation facilities from increased activity at the Aurora Airport, both the city and Clackamas County have been repeatedly rebuffed. An ostrich-like "head-in-the-sand" approach with and after-the-fact hand-off to the land-use process does not serve anyone well.

Therefore, the City of Wilsonville respectfully continues to request that if the Commission approves the Aviation Department's Connect Oregon III program application for the Aurora Airport Control Tower, the Commission do so subject to two conditions:

1. The funds cannot be released until and after a thorough study is jointly conducted and completed with the participation of ALL of the neighboring jurisdictions within the true impact area that includes a thorough analysis of potential land-use and surface transportation impacts and mitigation strategies to deal with the impacts that increased activity at the Aurora Airport that could come about when a control tower is installed; and
2. The study comes back to the Commission for your final approval and adoption for release of the funds.

Please advise if I may be of further assistance. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Tim Knapp, Mayor

cc: Honorable Theodore Kulongoski, Governor, State of Oregon
Honorable Lynn Peterson, Chair, Clackamas County Commission