

PORT OF SEATTLE
MEMORANDUM

COMMISSION AGENDA
ACTION ITEM

Item No. 4f
Date of Meeting June 9, 2015

DATE: May 18, 2015
TO: Ted Fick, Chief Executive Officer
FROM: Geri Poor, Regional Transportation Manager, Public Affairs
SUBJECT: Great Northern Corridor Coalition Phase II Memorandum of Understanding

Amount of This Request: \$10,000 **Source of Funds:** Operating Budget

ACTION REQUESTED

Request Commission authorization for Chief Executive Officer to (1) execute the Great Northern Corridor Coalition Phase II Memorandum of Understanding between the Montana Department of Transportation and the Port of Seattle and (2) provide \$10,000 for a portion of the local match of a \$419,200 federal grant awarded to the Port of Northern Montana to complete the Great Northern Corridor Multistate Planning and Development Study Phase II, for a total budget of \$546,000.

SYNOPSIS

In 2013, the Port of Seattle joined the Great Northern Corridor Coalition (GNCC). The coalition's primary purpose is to promote regional cooperation, planning, and shared implementation for programs and projects to improve multimodal transportation system management and operations along the rail corridor between the state of Washington and the Midwest. The Great Northern rail corridor is BNSF Railway Company's corridor through Washington, Idaho, Montana, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Illinois.

The GNCC is conducting a two-phased Multi-State Planning and Development Study to develop solutions that would enhance the Corridor and achieve the coalition's vision. Phase I was a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of the Corridor to identify projects to improve freight mobility in the Corridor. Phase II will be a planning level analysis leading to a prioritized corridor improvement program based on the results of Phase I.

These studies are funded by two Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Multimodal Corridor Operations and Management (MCOM) grants and contributions from coalition partners. The Port of Seattle participated in Phase I with funding of \$5,000 along with other partners, to match a \$299,910 federal grant. For Phase II, the coalition has secured a follow-on grant of \$419,200

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and the Port of Seattle has proposed a \$10,000 match, again with other partners. This Commission action would authorize staff to fulfill that partnership.

BACKGROUND

The Port entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Montana Department of Transportation for the Great Northern Corridor Multistate Planning and Development Study (Phase 1) on February 26, 2013. The study was awarded one of the Multistate Corridor Operations and Management (MCOM) Program grants by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The Montana Department of Transportation is the lead agency for the study.

In addition, the Corridor coalition applied for a follow-on Phase II grant from the same program and requested letters of support and additional funding from coalition stakeholders for the local match. Phase II of the Corridor Study is a planning-level analysis based on the results of the work completed in the Phase I SWOT analysis. A prioritized list of projects or initiatives will be developed that will enhance the corridor's strengths, further develop multimodal opportunities, and promote seamless transportation through multiple states along the corridor.

The coalition held its Phase I completion and Phase II kick-off meeting January 27-28, 2015, in Seattle. The Phase II Planning Analysis is expected to take 12 months and will commence as soon as matching funds are collected.

The Port of Seattle indicated support for potential additional funding in 2014. Funding for the Phase II contribution of \$10,000 to the study was included in the 2014 budget. However, since the Montana Department of Transportation (MDOT) will send us the Phase II invoice in 2015, this becomes an unbudgeted expense in 2015. Funding is available in the Regional Transportation expense budget.

Additional coalition members providing funding for the planning and development study include the ports of Everett, Grays Harbor, Pasco, Quincy, Tacoma, and Vancouver; Northern Montana; the Washington Public Ports Association; the BNSF; and the departments of transportation of Idaho, Minnesota, Montana, and Washington for a total of \$127,000 local match. There are additional non-funding members in the coalition.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION AND DETAILS

In order for the Pacific Northwest ports to stay competitive with U.S. ports in California and the East, South, and Gulf coasts, as well as Canadian ports, we must continue to work with our partners to implement improvement projects. The Great Northern Corridor Multistate Planning and Development Study Phase II provides an opportunity to collaborate with other stakeholders along the corridor who rely on an efficient transportation network to help preserve and grow our economies.

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Budget Status and Source of Funds

Staff is requesting Commission authorization for execution of the subject Phase II MOU and for the 2015 expenditure of \$10,000 for Phase II, as it was included in the 2014 budget but is being invoiced and spent in 2015.

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS REQUEST

- Great Northern Corridor Coalition Phase II Memorandum of Understanding between the Montana Department of Transportation and the Port of Seattle
- Port of Seattle letters supporting Phases I and II of the Great Northern Corridor Multistate Planning and Development Study Grant

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

- On September 24, 2013, the Commission ratified the Great Northern Corridor Coalition Memorandum of Understanding between the Montana Department of Transportation and the Port of Seattle and authorized the CEO to provide \$5,000 for a portion of the local match of a \$299,910 federal grant awarded to the Port of Northern Montana to complete the Great Northern Corridor Multistate Planning and Development Study.