

# Skyliners Road Improvement Project

## FACT SHEET

September 2011



U.S. Department  
of Transportation  
Federal Highway  
Administration



Western Federal Lands Highway Division  
Federal Highway Administration



### **What is the Skyliners Road Improvement Project?**

Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with Deschutes County and the Deschutes National Forest, is proposing to reconstruct Skyliners Road to address the deteriorating roadway surface and the existing mix of bicycle and motorist use. The Skyliners Road Improvement Project (Project) starts at the western city limits of Bend and extends westerly for approximately 8.4 miles to the junction with Forest Service Road 4603. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2013.

### **Why are improvements needed?**

The Project is needed to increase safety for roadway users and to reduce maintenance costs. The road pavement is deteriorating and requires frequent maintenance. In some areas, the pavement edge is breaking up, resulting in increased maintenance costs and leaving no paved shoulder for bicycles and pedestrians. These conditions have led to increasing concerns about the potential for bicyclist, pedestrian, and motorist accidents.

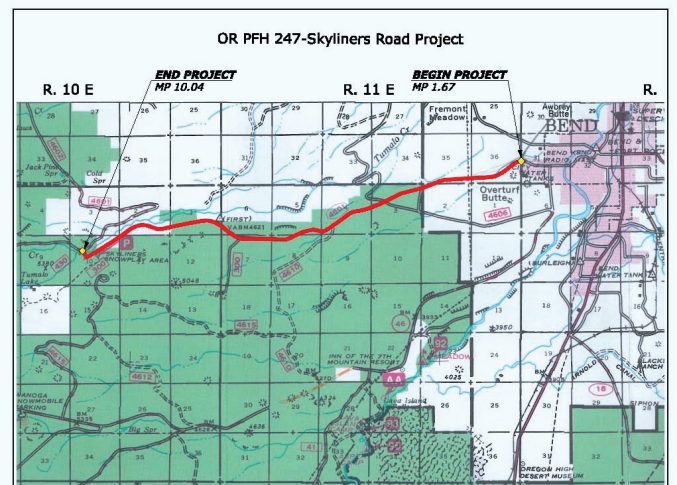
### **What bicycle and pedestrian improvements are proposed?**

The Forest Highway Program is providing funding for improvements to Skyliners Road. The purpose of that program is to provide safe and adequate transportation access to and through National Forest System lands. Accommodating bicycle/pedestrian uses is an ancillary benefit, particularly when the primary purpose of these uses is not intended to access National Forest System lands. In recognition of the roads' popularity for cycling, FHWA is intending to provide six-foot wide shoulders to accommodate projected cycling use and to provide for both vehicle and cyclist safety.

### **Why are wider bike lanes not being provided?**

FHWA believes that a six-foot shoulder width is the appropriate standard to accommodate projected cycling use and to provide for both vehicle and cyclist safety. Deschutes County, not FHWA, will be responsible for designation and maintenance of any bike lanes established on Skyliners Road. The proposed expansion of shoulders to six feet is in accordance with state and county bicycle and pedestrian design standards and is supported by Deschutes County Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Bike lanes are not designed to foster cyclists riding abreast or to accommodate passing, rather they are intended to separate cyclists from vehicles. Cyclists have a responsibility to ride safely.

The greater the shoulder width, the greater the costs associated both with construction and maintenance. With wider shoulders, additional right-of-way would have to be purchased. The costs of expansion of shoulder widths beyond the six-foot design standard would need to be borne by Deschutes County, as they would not be in accordance with the purpose with the Forest Highway Program.



## FACT SHEET (continued)

### ***Will improvements be designed to accommodate organized cycling events?***

Improvements are being designed to improve roadway safety, with accommodation of cycling as an ancillary benefit. Regulation of cycling and other events on Skyliners Road is under County authority. The issues of shoulder width and number of events are unrelated.

### ***How will organized requests, such as petitions, for wider bike lanes be responded to?***

All input is considered equally, irrespective of source and type. FHWA and the County have received input from a variety of sources, including support from the cycling community for six-foot bike lanes.

### ***How are these improvements being coordinated with other projects in the area?***

The Skyliners Road Improvement Project is being coordinated with the City of Bend's Surface Water Improvement Project and with improvements proposed by the Deschutes National Forest to Phil's Trailhead.

The City of Bend owns and operates an existing surface water supply system that includes a treatment facility at the City's Outback site and two raw water pipelines that run from the Bridge Creek intake facility to the Outback Reservoir site. These pipelines are generally parallel to Forest Road 4603 and Skyliners Road and are located mostly on Forest Service land. The City plans to build a new treatment plant, replace the existing pipelines with a new single pipeline, and possibly construct a new hydroelectric generation facility at the Outback site with associated improvements at the intake facility. The City's preferred new route for the new pipeline involves using the Skyliners Road prism. Work on the pipeline will be coordinated with the Project to ensure construction avoids damage to the newly reconstructed road.



FHWA is also coordinating with the Deschutes National Forest on proposed improvements to Phil's Trailhead which is accessed by Skyliners Road. Deschutes National Forest is proposing to re-design the Phil's Trailhead to provide a high-quality recreation site to primarily serve existing trail users in the area.

### ***When will construction occur?***

Skyliners Road reconstruction and widening is currently scheduled to begin in Spring 2013, with completion potentially extending to Winter 2014. Due to weather constraints, it is unlikely that all improvements can be completed within one construction season.

### ***What public outreach opportunities are being provided?***

Project updates will be provided through a Project website. Additional public outreach and input opportunities will be provided before the completion of the design in the Fall of 2012. Public outreach will continue in the form of public notices, newsletters, and website information during project construction.

### ***How do I obtain additional information?***

For more information about this Project, please refer to the Project website at [www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/or/skyliners/](http://www.wfl.fhwa.dot.gov/projects/or/skyliners/), or contact Mike Odom, Project Manager, at [Mike.odom@dot.gov](mailto:Mike.odom@dot.gov).

If you have written comments, please submit them to: Jennifer Corwin, Environmental Protection Specialist, Western Federal Lands Highway Division, 610 East 5th Street, Vancouver, WA 98661.

