



May 18, 2010

Dear Commissioner Wilhoite:

Thank you for the opportunity to express my appreciation for the North/Northeast Economic Development Initiative Community Advisory Committee and their work on behalf of the N/NE community. The Committee was tasked with prioritizing future investment in N/NE Portland. Jorge Guerra from the Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs' team was a part of that effort. Over the past year, they have heard from neighborhood residents and businesses about numerous opportunities inside and outside the urban renewal area. They have had to weigh the benefits of adding new areas to the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area boundary with funding for projects in the existing district.

The Committee has successfully identified the following priorities: community benefit, support for small businesses, and funding the Interstate Gem List. As a small business owner and a longtime advocate for minority entrepreneurs in North Portland, I agree with these priorities. Funding projects that will benefit local residents and allow small businesses, women-owned businesses, and minority-owned businesses to grow is especially important given the current economic recession. Bringing money into the community will help get us through these difficult times.

Realizing that there is enough financial capacity to complete the Gem List in partnership with the private-sector, I lend my full support to the funding recommendations and boundary adjustments for the Interstate Corridor Urban Renewal Area.

Sincerely,

Samuel Brooks
President, Brooks Staffing
Founder and Chair of the Board, Oregon Association of Minority Entrepreneurs