

Meeting Minutes
-----------------

**Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation  
COACT  
January 13, 2011**

**Members:**

John Hatfield (Jefferson County), Stephanie Serpico, (ODOT), Mike McCabe (Crook County), Lonny Macy (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs), Alan Unger and Tony DeBone (Deschutes County), Lon Kellstrom and Eileen Stein (City of Sisters), George Endicott (City of Redmond), EV Smith (City of Culver), Gus Burril (City of Madras), Peggy Fisher (Deschutes/Ochoco National Forest), Eli Ashley (Bicycle and Pedestrian), Don Greiner (City of La Pine), Steve Forrester and Jack Seley (City of Prineville), Jeff Monson (Commute Options) and Dana Cork (Prineville BLM).

**Guests:**

Scott Edelman and Scott Smith (City of Prineville), Penny Keller (Crook County Road), Peter Russell (Deschutes County), Tom Blust (Deschutes County Road Department), Wayne Pearson (EDCO – Jefferson County), Peter Russell, (Deschutes County Planning), Chris Doty (City of Redmond), Susan Law (FHWA – Federal Lands Highway), Pat Creedian, Joel McCarroll and John Condon (ODOT), Paul Bertagna (City of Sisters), Tyler Deke (Bend MPO), Nick Arnis (City of Bend) and Art Schlack, Association of Oregon Counties (by phone).

**Staff:**

Andrew Spreadborough and Sharon Nance (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council).

**General Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

**COACT Membership Appoint Process Update**

Andrew Spreadborough stated that he has sent the cities and counties COACT membership appointment forms for the 2011-2013 period. He noted changes to the membership composition:

- Judge Mike McCabe has been appointed Crook County's member with Ken Fahlgren appointed as the Alternate
- Tony DeBone has been appointed as Deschutes County's Alternate
- Lynn Lundquist has been appointed as Crook County's Appointed Stakeholder Representative
- Mayor Ken Mullenex has been appointed as the City of La Pine's member with Don Greiner appointed as alternate
- Metolius Mayor Sandy Toms named alternate

**Legislative Update**

Art Schlack, Association of Oregon Counties, joined the meeting by phone to provide an update on current legislative issues. He reported that the Senate Business and Transportation Economic Committee will be chaired by Lee Beyer, with Jason Atkinson serving as vice chair. Due to the even split in the House, their transportation committee will have 2 co-chairs: Cliff Bentz and Tobias Reed and 2 vice-chairs.

Art reviewed the status of several legislative concepts:

- LC 1412 – Allows counties to charge permit and inspection fees for utilities lines in county right of way. This is a legislative proposal by the Association Counties – HB 2327.
- LC 1440 – Relating to operation of electric motor vehicles and plug-in hybrid electric motor vehicles payment of road usage charge – HB 2328
- LC 1601 – Prohibits studded tires. This bill has not been supported by the Association of Oregon Counties in the past. HB 2333 would consider a fee that would help pay for repair.

Legislative Concepts introduced by the Senate Transportation and Economic Development Committee

- LC 1201 – Reinstates county access management authority – SB 1201. This bill will reinstate the counties access management authority to the level prior to the February action by the legislature. This bill has the support of the counties.
- LC 363 – Relating to the operation and collection of tolls – SB 266.

Other Legislative Concepts of Interest – both resubmitted through the Revenue Committee and are constitutional amendments that would go before the voters.

- LC 381 – Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution to allow revenue from taxes on motor vehicle fuel and ownership, operation or use of motor vehicles to be used for transportation projects that will prevent or reduce pollution and congestion created by use of motor vehicles.
- LC 2488 – Proposes amendment to Oregon Constitution to allow revenue from taxes on motor vehicle fuel and ownership, operation or use of motor vehicles to be used for public transportation services – SB 13

Art Schlack reaffirmed the Association of Oregon Counties' position that the State Highway Trust Fund should be maintained as is. George Endicott said that 6 proposals/bills are in the works dealing with the Transportation Planning Rule, including a bill that would suspend the TPR. Art Schlack stated that he is unfamiliar with these proposals/bills at this time. Answering a question from Alan Unger regarding available transportation dollars, Art informed members that there is very little modernization dollars available due to decisions to bond future revenues, for OTIA III and bridge investments. These decisions depleted resources for modernization projects. In addition, with HB 2001 the legislature made a decision that the gas tax increase will fund projects that were identified within the bill.

### **Old Business**

Pat Creedian, ODOT District 10 Manager, updated members on ODOT's plan to decrease the use of herbicide throughout the state by 25% before 2016. This represents a major shift to the weed abatement program. He said that ODOT is looking for opportunities to work together with counties and federal agencies to be more efficient in treatment of invasive weed species.

In Central Oregon, ODOT currently spends an average of \$417,000 per year to control vegetation. Of that, \$143,000 is spent on spray on 800 acres of right-of-way, using 5,600 pounds of active ingredient. As carriers of 60% of the traffic in the state, state highways play a major role as a conduit for the spread of noxious weeds between regions of the state and from neighboring states. Typically along a major highway, roadsides are treated 8 feet from the shoulder. On lesser highways, roadsides are sprayed 6 feet from the shoulder.

Pat reported that ODOT representatives met with county and forest service representatives on December 22, 2010 to discuss this issue. The group had many questions relating to why the change is being implemented, how the ODOT goals could be implemented, how accomplishment would be

measured, what the effects would be to state highways and on county and USFS roads, and how we could work together to improve efficiencies.

He said that Integrated Vegetation Management (IVM) practices manage roadside vegetation using a combination of mechanical, biological and chemical methods. The net effect of the reduction in the use of herbicides will probably be vegetation control that is more expensive and less effective, though not to an extreme. The reduction in residual spray will result in increased noxious weeds. In answer to a question regarding the reason behind the reduction, Pat Creedian explained that it comes from continued pressure from environmental groups in the Willamette Valley and it is a directive from ODOT in Salem. It was suggested to create a baseline to measure the effects the reduction of spraying will have on roadside vegetation.

### **Oregon Forest Highway Program Update**

Susan Law, Planning Team Leader from the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Highway Administration, gave an update on the Oregon Forest Highway Program – Long Range Transportation Coordination Plan.

The Forest Highway Program provides funding and technical assistance to resurface, restore, rehabilitate or reconstruct designated public roads that provide access to or are within National Forest System lands. Nationally, 41 states have Forest Highway Programs. Oregon has the largest Forest Highway Program in the country, with approximately 3,800 miles of designated Forest Highways that provide access to more than 15 million acres of National Forest System Lands. Because Forest Highways provide a multitude of economic, cultural and environmental services to state residents and visitors, it is important to understand the existing and long-term demands on the roadway system so that current and future needs can be addressed. The Oregon Forest Highway Program addresses those needs by providing funding for improvements to Forest Highways. The goals of the Oregon Forest Highway Program are: safety, preservation, economic development, mobility and environmental quality and health.

The Oregon Forest Highway Long-Range Transportation Coordination Plan is intended to help make investment decision for planning, multi-modal alternatives, transportation enhancements, safety management, preservation, and construction on Forest Highways in Oregon. This 20-year transportation coordination plan describes the Oregon Forest Highway Program and identifies the long-range goals for the program. This plan describes the process for coordinated planning and decision-making among the agencies responsible for the Oregon Forest Highway Program. This Coordination Plan provides a 20-year vision and mission for the Oregon Forest Highway Program, as well as goals, a funding and investment strategy, criteria, and guidance – all of which are to be used to select projects that will receive Oregon Forest Highway Program funding. Susan Law stated that the Federal Highway Administration is requesting feedback, comments, and questions about the Long Range Transportation Coordination Plan by February 28, 2011.

Western Federal Lands Highway Division, a part of the Federal Highway Administration operates in 5 states, Oregon Washington, Alaska, Idaho and Montana. The Forest Highway program allocates funds by formula; Oregon has the largest forest network in the western region. The funding programs support access to and through forest lands, via highways and roads.

Susan Law informed members of a current call for road projects due January 31, 2011. Typically, applications are submitted by the Forest Service and owner agency of the road. No match funding is necessary, beyond right-of-way. Tom Blust said that this is a very important program for Central Oregon, having funded recent projects such as the Sunriver interchange and the reconstruction of Skyliners Road. Eli Ashley noted a recent tour of Skyliners Road, which suggests that there may be an issue with available space for bike lanes.

**Significant Changes to the 2009 Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD)**

Joel McCarroll, ODOT Region Traffic Manager presented a PowerPoint presentation on “Compliance Issues Associated with 2009 MUTCD.” He said that the MUTCD plan was adopted in December 2009 by the Federal Highway Administration. States have two years to adopt their own version and be in substantial conformance. Oregon is currently finalizing its supplements to the plan and will be doing rulemaking in February. Implementation timelines state that some items are required to be changed at the end of their service life and other items have specific dates associated. Changes and timelines noted in the presentation are stated below.

Joel reviewed information on changes to:

- Minimum Retroreflectivity Levels for Signs
- Lateral Offset of Signs
- Size of Regulatory Signs
- Yield Sign Applications
- One Way Signs
- Size of Warning Signs
- Street Name Signs
- Signing on Conventional Roads on Approaches to Interchanges
- White Longitudinal Pavement Markings
- Yellow Change and Red Clearance Intervals
- Countdown Pedestrian Heads
- Worker Safety Considerations
- School Advance Crossing Assembly
- Grade Crossing Signs
- Grade Crossings Within or In Close Proximity to Circular Intersections
- Some changes w/out Compliance Date

The presentation gave examples of changed or eliminated symbols to be used on signage including new signs for warning signs (non-vehicular and vehicular) and evacuation route signs.

Joel noted that there are no enforcement mechanisms in place by the Federal Highway Administration except through receipt of federal funding; however, failure to comply could result in legal issues in the instance of an accident occurring where signs were not updated. Federal Highway Administration is seeking comments of the compliance dates for: Maintaining Minimum Sign Retroreflectivity; Horizontal Alignment Warning Signs; One Way Signs, Yellow Change and Red Clearance Intervals; and Pedestrian Intervals. Comments are due January 14, 2011. In answer to a question, these requirements apply to every road open to public travel. Andrew Spreadborough informed members that this presentation will be posted on the COACT website next week.

### **Access Management**

Stephanie Serpico reviewed the Report from the Access Management Committee that was included within the meeting materials. The Access Management Review bill requires ODOT to work in cooperation with stakeholders to:

- Raise the thresholds when a land owner is required to re-apply for a driveway permit when the use of a property has changed.
- Establish less stringent access management rules, mitigation measures and spacing and mobility standards for highway segments where the annual average amount of daily traffic is 5,000 vehicles or fewer.
- Develop proposed legislation to codify, clarify and bring consistency to issuance of access permits based on objective standards.
- Report to the Legislative Assembly prior to January 2011, including a description of the proposed legislation that has been developed.

This work is to be completed by the end of January, 2011.

The Access Management Committee has reviewed the existing state access management standards. The committee is revising the process and standards that are appropriate in rural Oregon and within urban growth boundaries to create a more equitable balance between economic development and traffic safety. The Access Management Committee has focused its attention on five main areas:

- Clarification on how reasonable access is applied.
- Development of less stringent standards for highways carrying fewer than 5,000 vehicles per day and review of the existing access management standards.
- Measures to mitigate the impact on traffic associated with development.
- Standards for when and where raised, non-traversable medians are used.
- Revise the administrative rules implementing the “change of use” requirements.

The Access Management Committee adopted problem statements for the following sub-groups: Reasonable Access, Access Management Standards, Mitigation Measures, Medians, and Change of Use. It is anticipated that a revised Access Management Administrative Rule will be ready for adoption by the end of 2011. In answer to a question regarding a comment process, Stephanie Serpico stated that she will get back to COACT with information on a comment process.

### **Draft Oregon Freight Plan**

Stephanie Serpico reported that the Draft Oregon Freight Plan is now available for public review and comment. The draft plan can be viewed at [www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/Freight](http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TD/Freight). Comments will be accepted through February 28, 2011. There will be an open house event in Central Oregon on Thursday, February 10, 2011 from 11:30 – 1:30 at the Redmond COIC Office to get additional information and to ask questions. Wayne Pearson stated that if the emphasis is multi-modal, 1) companies in Jefferson County are primarily using truck transportation to get to the Port of Portland so that needs to be a major consideration; and 2) the Route 26 to Portland noticeably has very poor road snow removal until you get to the turn of to Mt. Hood Meadows. He cited Earth2O as a Jefferson County business heavily dependent on the Highway 26 corridor. He said that ODOT needs to address the safety of freight truck transportation on Highway 26. Stephanie Serpico stated that the stated concerns would be more of a maintenance issue, though comments regarding the importance of certain routes would be appropriate.

**Transportation Enhancement Program – Application Review and Comments**

Stephanie Serpico reported that the Oregon Department of Transportation is seeking input from the public on 85 projects from around the state under consideration for funding through the Transportation Enhancement program. Comments may be submitted through a survey available on line. Comments will be accepted through January 28, 2011. Stephanie Serpico stated that the ODOT Transportation Enhancement program has asked for a letter prioritizing the 4 Central Oregon projects. She added that all 4 Central Oregon projects technical scored well. Eileen Stein commented that in the past, COACT has deferred the recommendation to the Technical Advisory Committee. Stephanie Serpico stated that due to the short notice time, it would not allow for review by the Technical Advisory Committee. Andrew Spreadborough suggested that lacking a TAC meeting, it may be appropriate and beneficial for COACT to support all Central Oregon projects. Applicants gave a brief description on the proposed projects in Central Oregon.

Gus Burril, Madras – US 97/26 South Y Couplet Enhancement project. The project entails 4,350 feet of street improvements including lighting, landscape, curb, sidewalks and bike parking. It addresses safety, enhancement, beautification and business redevelopment.

Eileen Stein, Sisters – Hwy 20/ Cascade Avenue Project. Project would involve widening sidewalks, curb extension, and trees. It addresses economic development, safety, improving environment in the downtown area for pedestrians and cyclists.

Scott Edelman, Prineville – Ochoco Lumber Rail Spur. The project would entail the construction of a multi-use path and pedestrian crossing over Highway 26, to connect the city's trail network to the Iron Horse Development, which has the capacity of 2,800 homes. This would provide a safe, pedestrian pathway to schools over Highway 26.

Chris Doty, Redmond – US 97 Reroute Beautification project. The \$900,000 project entails gateway enhancement along the reroute including landscaping, walls, and signage.

**Alan Unger moved that COACT submit a letter with the Chair's signature supporting all 4 of the Central Oregon projects. Steve Forrester seconded. Motion carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m..