

Meeting Minutes

Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation  
COACT  
July 12, 2007

**Members:**

Bill Bellamy (Jefferson County), Lynn Lundquist (Crook County), Dennis Luke (Deschutes County), Gary Farnsworth (ODOT), Joe Mansfield (City of Redmond), Dan Harnden (City of Culver), Dan Lovelady (City of Prineville), Randy Pape' (OTC), Mike Morgan (City of Madras), Jeff Monson (Commute Options), Gene Moe (Jefferson County), Darlene Jordt (City of La Pine), Alan Unger (City of Redmond), Urbana Ross (WS Tribes), and Bill Friedman (City of Bend).

**Guests:**

Representative George Gilman, Art Schlack (Association of Oregon Counties), Mike Lovely (MPO-CAC & SBNA), Tom Blust (Deschutes County).

**Staff:**

Andrew Spreadborough and Kelly Elzner (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council).

**Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair Dennis Luke called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

**Meeting Minutes**

The May 10, 2007 meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

**Legislative Wrap-Up**

Mr. Art Schlack of the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) provided an update on transportation-related legislative bills considered during the 2007 session. He started with AOC initiatives, explaining that a "first time title" bill for new cars was introduced by the AOC, but had no traction. House Bill 2691 would have allowed counties to implement a local vehicle registration fee without a vote. The bill passed through the house, but stalled in the senate and did not pass. However, a bill to require new residents of the state to register their vehicle within 30 days did pass, meaning that new residents will have a 30-day time frame for licensing and registering their vehicles. House Bill 3047, which applies to counties with special road levies, also passed,

Mr. Schlack noted that although not much happened this legislative session, there may be opportunities moving forward. He said that according to the freight and trucking industry, education on transportation needs is necessary leading into the 2009 session. He noted that Senate Bill 556 created a Joint Interim Committee on Transportation, which will consist of five House members and five Senate members, with the purpose of reviewing transportation needs – specifically the viability of a transportation utility fee. He noted that there will be an opportunity to work with the committee on pre-session filings.

Mr. Schlack provided a handout on county funding allocations approved through Senate Bill 994, and explained that this legislation created a one-time funding allocation to counties to fund road projects.

## Attachment A

The intent of the funding was to offset the proportional loss of revenue from timber payments. This occurred prior to the news that the timber payment bill was extended by the federal government to November 1, 2008. The Association of Oregon Counties will report to the legislature in 2008 on projects will be funded, costs, and when projects will begin. The match rate on these funds is 10.89% - which is the same as the federal match rate. The dollars can fund maintenance, preservation, safety, congestion relief, and/or new construction on county roads. The legislation included language about coordinating with cities, ACTs, and other groups.

Mr. Schlack wrapped up his presentation by stating that he does not anticipate much will happen in the 2008 session related to transportation funding. He believes there is an opportunity in 2009. He speculated that new transportation revenue could result from new fees, gas tax, or some other source. The Joint Interim Committee will be looking at the proposed utility fee and other new ways of generating funding for transportation

Representative George Gilman commented on the failed gas tax and registration fee increase, noting that if passed it could have raised up to \$500 million dollars for transportation projects. He said that he brought the proposals to the Republican caucus, but received no support. He noted the importance of and need for additional transportation funding. He explained that part of the challenge is that some legislators are not aware of the transportation needs within the state or even within their own district. He said that everyone should be working with legislators to educate them on the need. He further explained that he has the support of the business community to go out and sell this proposal to the general public.

Chair Luke encouraged Representative Gilman and the legislature to work with the Area Commissions on Transportation, and to articulate what would be accomplished should there be an increase in the gas tax. He suggested that a list of project needs that could be funded by increased gas tax revenue may be a useful tool. Representative Gilman agreed that lists for all districts would be needed in order to get the necessary support.

Commissioner Randy Pape' thanked Representative Gilman, Art Schlack and all of the involved individuals for their efforts and support of transportation. He then provided additional background regarding Senate Bill 994, noting that when the bill was approved it appeared that the "Secure Rural Schools" timber payments to counties would be cut. We learned later that at least one more year of appropriations for timber payments had been approved. The county allocation amounts were based primarily on the amount that counties would lose if Secure Rural Schools funding was eliminated. Whether or not the \$56 million to be allocated through SB 994 gets funded is questionable. He advised not spending the funds yet. He said ODOT will need to look at the STIP to see where the funds will come from. Mike Morgan advocated not taking the funding from the STIP, but rather to get the funds from the state general fund. Commissioner Pape' stressed that he wants folks to understand the dynamic - he appreciated the help and support for the attempt to pass the transportation revenue bill, and he is disappointed that it was not successful. He said the House Bill 3018 had new funds identified to support transportation at the city and county level. If passed, it would have raised \$107 million for counties, \$90 million for cities annually. He advocated strongly for outreach to legislators, specifically Republican legislators because they provided no support. He expressed frustration over the lack of action by legislators.

Chair Luke suggested that local ACTs compile lists of city and county projects that would be completed with these funds to illustrate specific local projects that would benefit from increased funding. Commissioner Pape' declared his continued dedication to this effort

Chair Luke asked Mr. Schlack to provide a brief update on Measure 37 activities. Mr. Schlack mentioned that an amendment to Measure 37 was passed by the legislature, and that it will be referred to the voters. He announced that he will forward a summary to Mr. Spreadborough to pass on to the COACT members.

Representative Gilman commented that one of the legislative successes was the creation of a Rainy Day Fund.

### **Connect Oregon II Updates**

Mr. Gary Farnsworth distributed a handout summarizing the latest news on Connect Oregon II. A total of \$100 million statewide was approved by the legislature, with a minimum of \$10 million to be directed to each region. ODOT is working on defining the process for application, project review, and project selection. Initial strategy concepts include seeking input on projects and priorities from the modal committees first, and then from the regions. There will also be a round of presentations made soon, possibly at an upcoming COACT meeting. Mr. Farnsworth mentioned that Julie Rodwell is the point person for Connect Oregon II.

Mayor Alan Unger asked if more information will be provided before January 2008. Mr. Farnsworth replied affirmatively, stating that more information will be provided once David Evans and Associates is under contract, and when more progress has been made in relation to project concepts.

### **Regional Transit Forum**

Mr. Andrew Spreadborough referred to Attachments B & C in the meeting packet, which were handouts from the June 18, 2007 COACT Regional Transportation Forum. He said the forum was funded by Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson Counties and ODOT, and that there were 75 persons in attendance. Thirteen were business representatives, and six were chamber of commerce or economic development representatives. There were also representatives from Central Oregon Community College, Bend La Pine School District, local and state government, and transportation providers, as well as members of the general public. The event agenda included four presentations:

- An overview of the mobility consortium by Mayor Unger – discussed the opportunity to leverage resources regionally to create a mobility system. A consortium committee is forming, and seeks to establish a three county public-private consortium where a framework is created for the private sector to contribute capital and be at risk to provide services and manage a network of providers.
- An overview of transportation coordination projects by Mr. Spreadborough – discussed outcomes of public transportation planning in each of the counties. This planning was a community stakeholder-driven process that resulted in plans approved by each county. Common priorities include the need to establish inter-community links; identify or develop a regional coordinating entity; continue to engage providers and stakeholders in developing systems; and better market the availability of existing services and to expand services through the use of a central call center.
- Regional transit analysis overview and outcomes by Mr. Gene Bregman of Bregman and Associates – provided a detailed summary of the “Mobility Market Survey” results.

## Attachment A

- Keynote presentation by Mr. Dale Marsico, Director of the Community Transit Association of America – discussed the opportunity for regional transit planning, the need to design a system based on needs rather than geography or funding, and the need to plan now for the future rather than trying to catch up.

The event wrapped up with small group breakout discussions. Mr. Spreadborough announced that once the forum report is completed it will be distributed to the COACT and to forum attendees.

Chair Luke asked Mayor Unger to provide more detail on the mobility consortium concept. Mayor Unger explained that the consortium is a committee of the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council, since COIC is the local Council of Governments. The consortium is seeking membership from the counties, cities, school districts and business entities. There will be a technical committee formed to assist in identifying regional transportation issues and how best to coordinate solutions. Mayor Unger used an example of working with Commute Options and industry representatives to identify and then address the demand for public transportation.

Councilor Bill Friedman expressed the City of Bend's concern that the city general fund revenue supports the Bend Area Transit (BAT), and that the general fund may not be able to continue to support its public transportation system. Councilor Friedman stated that something must be done as a community. He agreed that it is encouraging to hear discussion take place on a regional level regarding public transportation, but noted the need for an agency to be established to run public transportation in the City of Bend with opportunities for other communities to participate as they wish. He offered BAT as an opportunity for COACT to observe what the City is doing over the next couple of years as a possible way of moving toward a regional transportation system.

Representative Gilman mentioned that in Southern Oregon they were forced to cut one of its public transportation routes due to lack of funding. The funding is not keeping up with the demand. He cautioned the group to plan so that the need matches its fiscal revenue capability, and to find a balance.

Mr. Morgan commented that what he found interesting regarding the mobility survey results is that 86% of individuals who responded said that the local streets need repair and 75% said that the local highways are in need of repair, yet when you look at the options of how this work could be funded only 24% of the responders said they are in support of a utility tax. So the population is not willing to pay for the service that they receive.

Mr. Farnsworth mentioned that his impression regarding the consortium is that they should be focusing on ways to maximize existing resources, existing systems, and existing services.

### **Regional Roundtable**

Ms. Urbanna Ross, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, mentioned that there is a fixed route public transportation system operating in Warm Springs, with routes within the Warm Springs community and to Kah Nee Ta. Additionally, a landslide in the Kah Nee Ta vicinity closed a section of the road, and the Tribe is looking for assistance to solve this problem. The Tribe is also still looking for support for the Highway 26 re-alignment near Beaver Creek. She noted ongoing discussions with Senator Wyden and Congressman DeFazio.

## Attachment A

Mayor Unger, City of Redmond, announced that the Redmond reroute construction is three months ahead of schedule. A groundbreaking ceremony for the Redmond Airport terminal expansion project will be held on August 12<sup>th</sup>. Once completed, the expansion will increase the terminal size from 25,000 to 130,000 square feet. The first of two RV rallies will be at the Fairgrounds in August. There will also be a Harley Davidson rally coming up as well.

Ms. Luana Damerval, City of La Pine, said that the City is working on a Small Cities grant to complete grading and gravel work on seven miles of city roads.

Mr. Tom Blust, Deschutes County, said that the first rural roundabout in Deschutes County was recently finished. It is located at the front entrance of Sunriver. The road from Sunriver to Mt. Bachelor will be closed through the summer for re-construction. The construction is federally funded, although the County will maintain the road after completion. A consultant has been hired to develop a System Development Charge for rural Deschutes County.

Dan Lovelady, City of Prineville, said that the City's Connect Oregon I project is under way. The project is out to bid, with construction anticipated to begin in the fall. He noted his appreciation for regional allocations through Connect Oregon. He also reported that the Prineville Railroad, plans to run its first steam excursion trip to Redmond on July 29<sup>th</sup>.

Councilor Bill Friedman, City of Bend, reported that the Juniper Ridge main entrance is under construction at Cooley Road and 18<sup>th</sup> Street, where a roundabout will be located. County roads within the Urban Growth Boundary reserve will become City roads. The City plans to orient the Juniper Ridge traffic to the east to keep traffic off Highway 97. There will be access to Deschutes Junction, which may provide an alternative connection to Redmond.

Mayor Dan Harnden, City of Culver, said that the City's highway project is under way. The City received an \$880,000 grant for sidewalks and other related improvements. Planning is the first stage of the project, with construction anticipated to begin in 2008. The city will also host 50 + RVs during the rally. Housing development continues to grow, specifically within the new subdivision. The City approved the formation of an urban renewal agency to spruce up downtown. The Urban Growth Boundary recently expanded by 60 acres.

Mr. Mike Lovely, Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization (BMPO), said that the BMPO is made up of representatives of city, county and ODOT, and concentrates on transportation planning needs within the BMPO boundary, which is roughly the urban growth boundary of Bend. He anticipates the BMPO boundary increasing along with the expansion of the Bend urban growth boundary.

Mr. Gene Moe, Jefferson County appointed stakeholder, said that Jefferson County is considering developing a north entrance to Crooked River Ranch. The recent fire reinforced the need to have more than one access to the community. He said that he learned of potential funding sources for this project, which he plans to pursue, at a homeland security conference.

Mr. Jeff Monson, Commute Options, said that ODOT Public Transit Division recently released discretionary funding for vanpools. The intent is to develop a total of 12 vanpools during the next two years within the tri-county area. The discretionary funds will allow Commute Options to buy-down the cost of those van pools for the businesses by 50%.

## Attachment A

Mr. Mike Morgan, City of Madras, noted that the City completed its first meeting with ODOT on the “J” Street Highway intersection project, and stated his appreciation that the Oregon Transportation Commission included the project on the STIP and for ODOT’s willingness to work with community stakeholders on the project. He also reported that the City increased its System Development Charges by 56%. Additionally, the city adopted its new Transportation System Plan (TSP). He noted that there will be construction on, around and under Highway 126 at Safeway and the new hotel. Mr. Morgan said that the North Y project is complete (other than final landscaping), and noted his appreciation for grant funding allocated to the project by the Central Oregon Community Investment Board.

Commissioner Lundquist, Crook County, said reconstruction is under way on the 90 degree curve on the Powell Butte Highway. He said that the County is facing the need to connect to the Juniper Canyon area through the development of a second ingress/egress route. He said that the County is working with Powell Butte residents to determine the preferred route through the community.

Commissioner Bill Bellamy, Jefferson County, announced that the County is close to adopting their Transportation System Plan – they recently sent a draft to the Department of Land Conservation and Development for comment. Camp Sherman will be repaving the road to Highway 126. He said that he has been meeting regularly with ODOT to discuss the shoulder work through O’Neill Junction, and expressed his appreciation for the process – noting that it has been extremely beneficial.

Meeting adjourned.