

## Meeting Minutes

### Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation COACT November 12, 2009

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#### Members:

Lynn Lundquist (Crook County), Dennis Luke (Deschutes County), John Hatfield (Jefferson County), Lonny Macy (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs), Eileen Stein (City of Sisters), Gary Farnsworth (ODOT), Gus Burrell (City of Madras), Lon Kellstrom (City of Sisters), Douglas Ward (City of La Pine), Dana Cork (BLM), Steve Forrester (City of Prineville), Jeff Monson (Commute Options), Bob Bryant (ODOT) and E.V. Smith (City of Culver).

#### Guests:

Gene Whisnant (Oregon Legislature), Mike Johnson (ONHIP/Smith Rock neighborhood), Janet Brown (Governor's Office), Scott Edelman (City of Prineville), Darrell Newton (ODOT), Scott Smith (City of Prineville), Eric King (City of Bend), Nick Arnis (City of Bend), Chris Doty (City of Redmond), Tom Blust (Deschutes County), Joe Bessman (Kittelson and Associates), Brian Ray (Kittelson and Associates), Scott Beard (Kittelson and Associates), Wayne Pearson (Madras-Jefferson County Economic Development), Jerry Brummer (City of Prineville), Karen Friend (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council/Cascades East Transit), and Michael Bufalino (ODOT) by phone.

#### Staff:

Andrew Spreadborough (Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council).

#### Call to Order and Introductions

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

#### General Public Comment

Mike Johnson, Terrebonne/Smith Rock neighborhood home owner, made comments regarding the need for re-routing of truck traffic off of Smith Rock Way. He said that they developed an alternate shortened route that worked for the Oregon Truckers Association. He requested COACT consider adding this project to the STIP at some point. He said that all that remains to be completed would be straightening the curves at the O'Neil pit. He asked for an update on the status of the project, and who is taking ownership. Tom Blust said that County has participated in a number of meetings with ODOT and the aggregate producers. He said that the curves are the jurisdiction of ODOT. He said that the County has improvements to 19<sup>th</sup> Street on their list; in the short term the County plans to overlay their portion of the road. Longer term, the curves will be straightened as a component of the rail freight yard project. Gary Farnsworth said that cost estimates for the curves coming up the grade on the Crook County side that will help us clarify how to get the project funded. The process is under way, though construction funding has not been programmed yet.

Lynn Lundquist noted that the west end of the area is an issue, not just the curves. Dennis Luke said that this project is not on the back burner; the two counties are concerned and freight haulers want a solution. Mike Johnson said there are a lot of neighbors interested in what happens in this area.

**Public Hearing – 2010-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program**

Chair Lynn Lundquist opened the public hearing.

Gary Farnsworth provided an update on the STIP process. He referred to attachment B, and noted that the full STIP is posted on the ODOT web site. He said copies are available upon request. He said that the ACTs are reviewing and taking comments. The public review process will take 2-3 months, with adoption taking place in the spring. Referring to the attachment he noted that new projects are listed in bold font, while the non-bolded projects are carry-overs from the previous STIP. He reviewed the document, noting that the STIP remains a draft. He said ODOT is open to suggestions, comments and proposed changes. He said that the COACT Technical Advisory Committee received and discussed this draft.

Dennis Luke asked what was included within the US 97 First Street (La Pine) project. Gary Farnsworth said that the project has a \$397,000 total cost, which includes \$200,000 for preliminary engineering and \$187,000 for right-of-way. He said that this is an estimate only at this point; a scoping analysis is needed. Cost share will also be needed on this project. He noted that the La Pine Industrial Group is interested in participating in a partnership for this project.

Scott Edelman asked why the Highway 126/Tom McCall Road project was not on the STIP list. Gary Farnsworth replied that it is not yet a defined project – a refinement plan is needed prior to STIP inclusion. Lynn Lundquist noted the importance of project planning processes in getting projects on the STIP.

Eric King discussed the TSM planning work on the Bend Parkway corridor and suggested adding these projects to the planning STIP. Gary Farnsworth suggested accessing SPR funding from ODOT as an alternative.

Representative Gene Whisnant asked if the \$1 million project cost for the US 97 First Street (La Pine) project is the total project cost. Bob Bryant replied that this project cost is for the planning phase and project development only. Representative Whisnant said that the project is a safety issue, with students using that intersection to get to the McDonalds. He said that he does not want to wait two more years for this problem to be addressed; moving forward on this project would be important for community safety. Dennis Luke said that the project is important; having the project on the STIP allows possible requirements to be placed on the Subway that is considering moving in, which would strengthen the project partnership.

Doug Ward said that he is encouraged that the project is on the STIP, since it is a tremendous safety issue for the community. He said that a hundred kids cross per day at this intersection, which lacks lights or crosswalks. He said that this is a high priority for the community and the City, and that the City is willing to do whatever it takes to complete the project. Representative Whisnant asked if the project could be moved higher on the list. Farnsworth replied that the projects are not listed in priority order; the list reflects all of the project work that will occur within the 4-year STIP period, and equals the region's funding allocation.

Eileen Stein asked if the project list will be prioritized further, either within COACT or along with the other Region 4 ACTs. Bob Bryant said that the STIP has been prioritized in the past, so that may be something to consider further.

Gary Farnsworth asked if there are any proposed changes to the Central Oregon STIP modernization project list. Nick Arnis said that there are minor changes needed on the City of Bend projects, and he will follow up with Gary after the meeting. Representative Whisnant asked about funding allocated to “various” locations. Gary Farnsworth replied that these line items reflect budgeted region-wide funding for specific purposes. These funds would be used across the 9 counties within Region 4.

Lynn Lundquist asked if there was any additional input. No additional input was offered. Lynn Lundquist closed the public hearing.

***Dennis Luke moved to endorse the 2010-2013 draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program as presented. John Hatfield seconded. The motion was approved by consensus.***

### **ConnectOregon III Process Update**

Michael Bufalino from the Oregon Department of Transportation Freight Mobility section joined the meeting by phone to discuss the ConnectOregon III application process. He said that the process is very similar to the first two rounds of ConnectOregon. He said staff review will occur first, followed by modal committee reviews. The region will advance priority projects to the final review committee. All review committees (modal and regional) will participate in the final review process. He reviewed the application due date and submission process.

Andrew Spreadborough asked for a summary of how airport projects will be handled in light of the 5% aviation set-aside with a later application due date. Michael Bufalino said that rural airport projects will be handled by the Department of Aviation within a separate process. The intent is that these funds would provide matching funds for FAA airport improvement funding. He said that the 5% is for rural airports only; the Portland airport would not qualify. He said that airport projects can apply under the set-aside along with the regular ConnectOregon funding, but ODOT will not fund an airport project out of both funds. He said that the 5% rural airport set-aside applications will not be reviewed by the regions.

Gary Farnsworth asked COACT members to identify any potential ConnectOregon III applications. Eric King said that the City of Bend plans to submit applications for the Airport East Side Taxiway and Master Plan Update under the 5% set-aside category, and Airport Heli-Pad project under the regular ConnectOregon funding. Gus Burril said that the City of Madras will be submitting an application for Madras Airport automated weather equipment. Chris Doty said that the City of Redmond and the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council will be applying for funding for a regional transit maintenance facility. Steve Forrester said that the City of Prineville will be applying for funding for the regional rail facility.

### **Old Business**

#### **September 10, 2009 Minutes**

***Dennis Luke moved to approve the minutes of September 10, 2009. Lonny Macy seconded. Minutes were approved by consensus.***

### **Central Oregon Rail Plan Report Acceptance**

Gary Farnsworth said that COACT reviewed the draft report in September, and comments have been received. He said that the narrative portion of the report along with the table of rail crossings is included as attachment C, while the remaining portions of the plan are available on the ODOT web site. He said that the rail team is looking for acceptance of the final document from COACT. Dennis Luke asked where we are in the process of developing an at-grade crossing “bank”. Gary referred to the report recommendations, which includes the need for more work on this issue. Bob Bryant noted that by adopting this plan, the region is better positioned to negotiate and develop rail crossing agreements with the railroad.

Representative Whisnant suggested that the Oregon Transportation Commission should be briefed on this plan. Bob Bryant said that the OTC is already discussing this plan as a model for the state rail plan update.

Gary Farnsworth returned to the issue regarding O’Neil Junction; he said funding has been set aside in the STIP for the railroad junction project. He also said that the City of Prineville ConnectOregon III project application will be for the development of a regional rail yard. This is a component of the TIGER grant application, which was discussed at the September COACT meeting. He said the TIGER grant is a long shot, and he said that even if funded, he doesn’t see how the funding timeline could be met. He said he wanted the group to be aware of these challenges. He said that due to the land use and environmental requirements, he does not see the project as doable within the TIGER funding requirements.

Dennis Luke said that there would be no need for a City of Redmond land use process for the yard improvements, though ODOT would need to go through a land use process for improvements to the roads. Gary said that an environmental process would be necessary as well. Steve Forrester said that the City of Prineville favors continuing with the application process, stating he is not sure what the downside risk would be. Bob Bryant said that the TIGER grant funding decisions will be made in February. Dennis Luke said that this is a one-time opportunity to get a grant of this size, and he said we want to do what we can to secure the grant. Lynn Lundquist asked for more information on the timeline concerns. Gary said that the land use process will take time. Residents will be affected, which will lead to a detailed NEPA process. Property acquisition will take time, with possible relocations. With the grant fund expenditure deadline of 2012, this would be a difficult project timeline to meet.

*Dennis Luke moved to accept the Report on Central Oregon Rail Planning. John Hatfield seconded. The motion was approved by consensus.*

### **New Business**

#### **Cascades East Transit Update**

Karen Friend provided an overview of the Cascades East Transit program, which is operated by the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council. Her presentation included the following:

- COIC established the regional Medical Ride Brokerage in 2004.
- COIC assumed operation of the Crook County Dial-a-Ride and opened it to the general public and expanded the service area in 2006.

- 2007: Central Oregon Council on Aging (COCOA) approached COIC about assuming operations of their DAR services in La Pine, Redmond, Sisters, and Madras.
- CET opened as a regional system in January 2008.
- Demand-response services are provided by appointment. All services open to the public, buses fully accessible.
- Provide local service in within a 5-8 mile radius from downtown in Madras, Metolius, Culver, Redmond, Terrebonne, Prineville, Sisters, and La Pine.
- Community Connector Shuttles: 4-6 round-trips per day connecting Bend, Redmond, Prineville, Powell Butte, Sisters, La Pine, Madras, Culver, and Metolius.
- Ridership has grown dramatically – from around 3,500 in January 2008 to over 11,000 in September, 2009. October's ridership numbers were above 13,000.
- Employment rides now make up 53% of all rides on the system.
- Partnerships and diverse funding sources support the system

Eric King said that the City of Bend is looking at how they can work with Cascades East Transit to develop a regional system. Dennis Luke asked if COIC anticipates changes in ridership as the economy changes. He said that there are a lot of transit-dependent riders as a result of the down economy. Jeff Monson pointed out that the employment ridership numbers may increase as the economy improves, since more people will be traveling to work.

Karen Friend discussed the status of the intermodal transit center project located in Bend. She said that a purchase sale agreement with Cascade Natural Gas will be finalized soon. She said COIC and the City of Redmond will be also partnering on a ConnectOregon III project application to develop a regional transit maintenance and operations center at the City's new 84 Lumber public works facility in Redmond.

Wayne Pearson asked if Cascades East Transit connects to Warm Springs. Karen said that a contract with Warm Springs is in place, and that they will begin service once COIC completes a cultural orientation.

### **Oregon Transportation Commission October Workshop Summary**

Bob Bryant said that the OTC held a workshop in October on the topic of the link between transportation and land use. Participants included the Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development, Travel Oregon, Oregon Business Development Department, and the Governor's office. The discussion highlighted key issues such as how to balance and prioritize between industrial and commercial development, how can investment in transportation facilities be protected while allowing key development to proceed, and next steps for implementing HB3379.

Bob Bryant summarized HB3379, which was passed by the Oregon legislature in their 2009 session. HB3379 was an attempt to provide flexibility in applying the Transportation Planning Rule. ODOT was tasked with developing the administrative rules. He said that the process is in the early stages; a key consideration will be providing additional guidance in making consistent "reasonably likely" determinations, which is where we usually get hung up. Bob Bryant suggested that COACT consider scheduling a presentation on the status of access management rules, which are the administrative rules applied to ensure state law is met when permitting access and/or development.

Lynn Lundquist asked about the timeline for this process in terms of outcomes. Eric King said that he participated on a conference call where it was stated that rulemaking is anticipated after the special session. Chris Doty agreed, saying the estimate is in 6-9 months. Dennis Luke asked if the administrative rules would be approved by ODOT. Bob said that it depends on if they affect the TPR (which would be DLCD's rules) or mobility standards (which would be the OTC).

**Oregon Freight Plan and Transportation Safety Plan Update**

Gary Farnsworth referred to attachment D which provides a summary of the process for updating the Oregon Freight Plan. He noted that Carrie Novick and Dan Lovelady are freight plan advisory committee members.

Gary distributed a handout on the Transportation Safety Plan update process. He suggested that ODOT provide an overview of the Safety Plan update at a future meeting. Jeff Monson noted that the Safe Routes to Schools program falls under this plan. Eileen Stein said that there have been internal discussions at ODOT regarding how roundabouts and signals compare in terms of safety. She asked if there is an ODOT staff person to connect with to get additional detail on the comparative safety of each intersection type. Gary said that Ed Fisher, ODOT state highway engineer, would be the appropriate contact.

Meeting adjourned at 4:40.

DRAFT