

# Meeting Minutes

## Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation COACT May 8, 2008

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### Members:

Bill Bellamy (Jefferson County), Dennis Luke (Deschutes County), Lonny Macy (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs), Lynn Lundquist (Crook County), Gus Burrell (City of Madras), Mike Morgan (City of Madras), Peggy Fisher (USFS), Eileen Stein (City of Sisters), Alan Unger (City of Redmond), and Bob Bryant and Gary Farnsworth (ODOT).

### Guests:

Tom Blust (Deschutes County), Peter Russell (Deschutes County), Bill Zelenka (Crook County), Jerry Brummer and Scott Smith (City of Prineville), Jim Bryant and Devin Hearing (ODOT), Nunzie Gould (Citizen, Deschutes County), Bud Prince (Redmond Economic Development), Ron Wortman (BLM), Lt. James Rejzek (Oregon Military Department, Biak Training Center), Tyler Deke (Bend MPO), Thelma Krueger (City of Culver) and Donna McCormack (City of Culver), Eric Porter (City of Sisters), Penny Keller (Crook County Road Department), Mike Lovely (BMPO-CAC-SW Bend Neighbors Association), and Patricia Gainsforth (Deschutes Soil and Water and Private Citizen).

### Staff:

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

### **Call to Order and Introductions**

Chair Bellamy called the meeting to order and introductions were made.

### **General Public Comments**

Ms. Gould expressed concern regarding the planned Tumalo Interchange. She noted discrepancies found in published documents regarding the budgeted cost of the Tumalo Interchange. In answer to a question, Mr. Blust stated that the Tumalo Interchange project is included on the list and is part of Deschutes County's SDC calculation. Mr. Luke added that Deschutes County's SDCs are not restricted for interchange connections only, but also used for improvement to county roads. Mr. Farnsworth noted that the cost element is a moving target and actual cost of the interchange will not be known until construction is underway. The environmental process still needs to be completed. Mr. Farnsworth added that this is a high priority project with a 2016 timeframe.

Ms. Stein questioned why the large discrepancy in the cost of the project. Mr. Farnsworth answered that the environmental work greatly impacts the cost range in building the interchange. Ms. Gould stressed the need for a long range visioning process. Mr. Unger addressed the need for support in developing this project and stakeholder involved is important to the process.

## Old Business

### Meeting Minutes

Mr. Luke moved to approve the minutes of March 13, 2008. Mr. Morgan seconded. Minutes were approved.

### Connect Oregon II – Regional and Statewide Review Committee Outcomes

Mr. Spreadborough said that he would be providing an overview of the ConnectOregon II Regional Review Committee outcomes, Final Review Committee outcomes, and next steps. He said that the Regional Review Committee meeting (3-ACT meeting) was held on April 1<sup>st</sup>. The committee was composed of Scott Cooper and Bill Bellamy from COACT, Gary Thompson (Sherman County Judge) and Mike Weimer (Gilliam County) representing the Lower John Day ACT, and Brad Winters (Lake County Commissioner) and Jeff Ball (City of Klamath Falls) representing the South Central Oregon ACT. Scott Cooper was appointed chair by the committee. The purpose of the Regional Review Committee meeting was to develop priority rankings for the Region 4 ConnectOregon II projects. The prioritization was based on presentations by applicants, staff reviews, and modal committee reviews.

Mr. Spreadborough referred to Attachment B2, which summarized the priority order assigned by the Review Committee. He explained the tiering criteria (tiers 1 through 4), ranking (high/medium/low), and the priority order (indicates the committee's preference relative to the other projects). He said the projects that had yellow highlighting were projects viewed by the committee as of statewide significance.

Mr. Spreadborough said that the Final Review Committee met on April 29 and 30 in Portland to develop the final statewide priority list for submission to the Oregon Transportation Commission. Scott Cooper represented COACT at the Final Review meeting. There were 25 total participants, composed of representatives of the ACTs and of the modes. Mr. Spreadborough distributed a handout that listed the Final Review Committee prioritization of all 70 ConnectOregon II projects. He said that all the projects through #30 have been recommended for funding, including four Central Oregon projects. He said that one change from the ConnectOregon I process is that there was not a separate list for projects of statewide significance; rather, a single priority list was developed, which was then reviewed to ensure each region had at least \$10 million in projects. He said the list was approved by unanimous consensus of the Final Review Committee.

Mr. Spreadborough wrapped up by passing along some comments from Scott Cooper regarding the process:

- Project readiness was important – projects that had permits, financing in place, and a defined scope fared well. The committee was looking for any way to remove projects from consideration, and any lack of readiness on the part of an application was used to move it down the priority list. As an example, the Port of Umatilla project (#43 on the list) was initially highly ranked, but it came out that they did not have a rail crossing permit in place.
- As a region – know your priorities and stick with them.

- Projects need modal committee support – regional support alone is not sufficient. Through the initial sorting process, projects scored more favorably if there was agreement between the region and the modal committee. Differences in scoring were used as a means to drop a project lower in the rankings.
- He stressed that the Final Review Committee outcomes are not the end of the process – the Oregon Transportation Commission will need to approve the list. He recommends that representatives of all projects that are recommended for funding attend the OTC meeting on May 13 in Salem and June 19 and 20 in Enterprise.
- The modal committees made a deliberate effort to have more influence, and modal representatives made up a majority of committee members.
- ODOT is planning to take 2% for administrations off the project awards, so project recipients should budget accordingly.

Mr. Luke thanked Mr. Bellamy for serving on the Regional Review Committee. Mr. Spreadborough was asked to draft a letter of thanks to Scott Cooper for his work on this process.

#### Rail Planning Update

Mr. Bellamy requested that Lt. James Rejzek, Oregon National Guard, be added to the COACT membership and to the membership of the rail planning committee.

Mr. Farnsworth distributed a handout entitled “Proposed Work Plan 4-1-08”. The handout included the proposed work plan, Evaluation Criteria for Realignment Option, and a map outlining the general route to relocate the Burlington Northern Santa Fe rail line to the east of Bend and Redmond. The map showed an alternate route intended to guide an initial analysis of whether such an alignment is feasible from a topographic, financial and land use standpoint. Mr. Farnsworth stressed that this is not a proposal for rerouting the BNSF line; rather, it is an analysis of costs and issues associated with such a move.

The City of Redmond, working with the COACT Rail Group, has applied for funding from the Department of Land Conservation and Development for an economic opportunity analysis to examine the availability of industrial land for current and potential rail freight use and for the siting of a rail freight terminal to serve Central Oregon Communities. Currently, the group is gathering input and comments. Mr. Farnsworth indicated that within a couple months they will be ready to draw conclusions.

Mr. Wortman asked when the proposed reroute would be implemented. Mr. Farnsworth said that the group is not looking to answer that question. They are trying to focus on major impacts and cost comparisons. In answer to a question regarding an alternate route to the west of Redmond, Mr. Farnsworth replied that the terrain to the east is more conducive to a possible alternate route. In addition, he stated that the grant and the report are one component of the overall project. The grant will help defray the cost of the analysis and the report which will focus on the larger scope of work. Mr. Bellamy stated that discussions regarding an alternate route to the east must include the Oregon Military Department due to their land holdings east of Redmond.

Mr. Farnsworth said that representatives from the BNSF will be visiting on June 3, and that Dan Lovelady will be facilitating the group. Jurisdictions will be invited to participate in a dinner.

Mr. Prince said that BNSF no longer has an interest in stopping in Central Oregon to pick up freight, since long haul is more profitable. He said that rail service is critical to the region and the timing on this project is key to assure that opportunities and potential growth in the local economy are realized. He said that there is a good argument to be made for a rail depot to be constructed. Mr. Farnsworth added that opportunities might include utilizing the existing line (upon completion of a reroute) as a spur line.

#### 2010-13 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Proposal

ODOT is in the process of updating the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), including developing a recommendation for high priority modernization projects that could be added to the program if additional revenue is received. Additional revenue scenarios are being developed due to the Senate Bill 566 which was adopted by the Oregon Legislature in 2007. SB 566 directed ODOT to identify highway projects that could be built with a significant revenue increase and that would reduce traffic congestion, improve freight mobility and enhance safety. SB 566 also directed ODOT to develop a list of larger “mega” projects. The draft attachment (C-2) provided in the meeting materials summarized a draft list of candidate projects to prepare for the update of the 2010-13 STIP and to meet SB 566’s direction. Mr. Farnsworth said that two Technical Assistance Committee meetings were held over recent months, and that his is a work in progress. He said that the process needs to be completed by May 31, 2008 in order to meet the required July 2008 legislative presentation mandate.

The draft list divides projects into three categories:

- 1) Revised Staff Recommendation: Highest Priority Projects
- 2) Additional High Priority Projects (not in priority order)
- 3) Other Projects Considered

In addition, the list places projects in Scenario #1 – 2010-13 STIP; Scenario #2 – SB566 funding; and Scenario #3 – Mega projects. Mr. Bryant said that the scenario #1 list reflects current revenue forecasts and debt financing. The list should be considered a sampling of priorities that we would look at if funding becomes available.

The COACT members reviewed the list and made recommended changes /modifications, including the addition of \$5 million into the 08-11 STIP column to reflect local contribution. Mr. Unger said that the new earmark policy projects need to be reflected in the STIP. Mr. Brummer said that the 9<sup>th</sup> Street project in Prineville has an existing 50-foot right-of-way that can be used as a road bed.

It was suggested that the US 26 Corridor in Prineville be moved to Category 1, and the Redmond –Prineville Refinement Plan be moved to Category 1 recognizing that without funding this project can not move forward. Members asked if there was another method to address project placement such as how to handle development plans, initial funding vs. total funding, etc. It was stated that this is a SB566 exercise, reflecting a list of projects that can be removed because of a reduction in funding or added if additional funding becomes available. Mr. Luke moved to approve the “Potential Region 4 Modernization Projects for 2010-2013 STIP update and SB 566 list as amended. Mr. Unger seconded. Motion passed.

## **New Business**

### **Oregon Transportation Commission – Central Oregon Roundtable Planning Update**

The Oregon Transportation Commission will conduct a roundtable meeting in Redmond on August 20<sup>th</sup> with the formal Commission meeting being held on August 21<sup>st</sup>. Mr. Farnsworth requested ideas from the members regarding the format for the roundtable. He said that Gail Achterman, Oregon Transportation Commissioner, requested that the format not include tours, preferring a workshop format. Ideas for the meeting included:

- 1) Similar to format of the previous meeting held in Central Oregon – open dialogue, no special theme
- 2) Smaller focus groups to include discussion on the issues of destination resorts and rail transportation
- 3) Have a facilitator from the governor's office conduct the roundtable meeting on the 20th.
- 4) Provide for a combination of theme and dialogue.

Chair Bellamy said this would be discussed further at the Executive Committee meeting. Mr. Luke requested members send their ideas on the meeting structure or topics to either Mr. Spreadborough or Mr. Farnsworth

## **Project Updates**

### **Deschutes Junction to Powell Butte Highway Project Update**

Mr. Lundquist stated that this project offers a regional approach to the issue of moving individuals within the Bend, Prineville and Redmond car-shed. A map was distributed showing an aerial view of the area south and east of Redmond. To move this concept forward, Mr. Zelenka suggested that a task force comprised of COACT, BLM, National Guard, cities and counties be formed to examine this concept. Mr. Unger spoke in support and added that a task force currently exists to study issues in the area south of Redmond, and with the additional of a couple members could address this concept. Chair Bellamy asked Mr. Lundquist and Mr. Zelenka to prepare a presentation for the next COACT meeting.

### **Terrebonne Project Overview**

Mr. Farnsworth distributed a map showing the area and a project summary. Project components include:

- 1) Repave 5 miles of US 97 from the Crooked River Bridge to the Redmond Reroute.
- 2) Widen substandard shoulders.
- 3) Improve intersection safety along US 97 at 10<sup>th</sup> Street, a private drive just south of NW 10<sup>th</sup> Street, NW Wimp Way and NW Lower Bridge Way
- 4) Extend NW 12<sup>th</sup> Street to the north and close several private drives on the west side of US 97 between NW Wimp Way and NW Lower Bridge Way
- 5) Improve pedestrian safety in Terrebonne by installing roadside curbs and sidewalks; reducing shoulder widths on both sides of US 97; and improve the existing pedestrian crossing at "B" Avenue by relocating or using a more prominent type of cross walk marking.

Construction is slated to begin the summer of 2009.

### Culver Streetscape Project

Ms. McCormack provided a proposed schematic design of the Culver Downtown Streetscape Plan. In the winter 2007/spring 2008, the City of Culver engaged in a streetscape planning process for downtown Culver, primarily along First Avenue. The process included a survey mailed to each household in Culver, three public meetings, interviews with property and business owners along First Avenue and an all-day bus tour of other streetscapes in Central Oregon. The project will be accomplished in three phases. The cross-section for the Downtown Culver Streetscape Concept includes two 12-foot travel lanes, an eight-foot parallel parking lane (on the east side), an 18-foot angled parking lane (on the west side), a ten-foot concrete sidewalk on the west side and a minimum 12-foot concrete sidewalk on the east side. It was noted that the west side of First Avenue will have priority for streetscape improvements in the near term. The final plan will be adopted this month.

Mr. Farnsworth noted significant developer interest in the vacant land in Culver. Mr. Unger thanked COACT for their focus on small communities in the region.

### Adjourn

Lt. James Rejzek thanked COACT for inviting him to today's meeting. He acknowledged that the rail planning work is not a proposal; rather, the study is looking at the feasibility of rail relocation. He said that he supports rail generally, and that his purpose was to listen to the discussion about the rail topic and to be informed of potential issues, both positive and negative, that would impact the National Guard. He said that safety is his top concern, followed by costs. He noted the National Guard's lease of BLM land, and said that the National Guard is open to collaboration and discussion.

Meeting adjourned at 5:00 p.m.