

Meeting Minutes

Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation
COACT
March 10, 2005
COIC Redmond

Members:

Chair Bill Bellamy (Jefferson County), Dennis Luke (Deschutes County), Scott Cooper (Crook County), Bill Friedman (City of Bend), Alan Unger (City of Redmond), Eileen Stein (City of Sisters), Ron Wortman (Prineville BLM), Tom Blust (Deschutes County), Mike McHaney (Jefferson County), and Gary Farnsworth, Jim Bryant & Mark Usselman (ODOT - Region 4).

Guests:

Joel McCarroll (ODOT), E.V. Smith (City of Culver), Kathie Eckman (Senator Wyden's Office), Gus Burrell (City of Madras), Neil McKee (visitor), Tyler Deke (Bend MPO), Chris Doty (City of Redmond), and Clare Mangis (and fellow neighbors) from NW 10th Street north of Terrebonne.

Staff:

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

Call to Order and Introductions

Chair Bellamy called the meeting to order and introductions were made. Mr. Farnsworth introduced Mr. Mark Usselman as the interim Region 4 Manager while Mr. Bob Bryant is serving his one-year commitment in D.C.

Public Comment

Chair Bellamy called for public comment and three residents of the NW 10th Street neighborhood near Terrebonne gave public comment regarding their concerns related to access and egress safety issues at NW 10th street and US 97 north of Terrebonne. COACT listened to the concerns and suggestions of the residents regarding their desire to have ODOT include new turning lanes into the railroad bridge work that is currently under way. Mr. Farnsworth explained that the funds available for the bridge project are exclusively for replacement of the existing bridge, and are not directed at bridge improvements. However, the bridge is being designed to accommodate expansion in the future when and if funds become available.

Commissioner Luke stated that representatives from ODOT have attended community meetings and have met one on one at various times regarding this request and concern. It was recognized that the Commissioners agree that US 97 from the High Bridge to the south end of Terrebonne is a safety corridor problem, and ODOT has programmed funding to address the safety corridor including the 10th Street needs. Chair Bellamy pointed out that COACT requested safety measures be taken into consideration while the bridge work was being done. The neighborhood residents may not be satisfied with the outcome at this time, but COACT does recognize the safety area from the High Bridge to Terrebonne needs to be resolved, and for that reason COACT promoted the funding which will now be applied to the safety and preservation work [noted by Mr. Farnsworth]. Chair Bellamy thanked the committee for coming in and participating in the public comment section portion of the meeting.

Minutes

Minutes from the January 13, 2005, meeting minutes were approved by consensus.

COACT Needs List Update

Mr. Farnsworth gave a detailed overview on attachment "B", the COACT Needs List documents and asked for comments. Mayor Unger asked about the timing of the long range planning projects that are listed as priority 1. Mr. Farnsworth answered that the first 4 projects listed should be underway within the year.

Mayor Friedman suggested that an even longer range planning focus for future transportation needs in Central Oregon be looked at. His thought was that a group be formed to look 25 -30 years into the future. The group agreed that COACT along with the various city and county long range planners meet and have an initial brainstorming session taking a look to the year 2020 of the transportation needs in Central Oregon and then pass it on to a technical study committee for further review and more specific concentration.

Mr. Farnsworth mentioned that the last page of the Needs List is centered on rail crossing project, and even though this is just the beginning of identifying rail needs, he is excited that as this list grows it is something that can be shared with the Rail Division.

The updated Needs List was approved by consensus.

Oregon Transportation Plan Update

Judge Cooper mentioned that the above topic of conversation actually blends into the current agenda item, Oregon Transportation Plan Update, and mentioned that a very important issue needs to be called out. The issue is that the State of Oregon Transportation Policy is very much focused on how to transfer responsibility onto local governments, i.e. jurisdiction swaps where ever they can be done, but the Plan does not focus on how to build additional connections between communities. He further expressed that in a growing state such as Oregon and in a fast-growing region like Central Oregon this concept ought to be put on the table. He emphasized that as the Plan is being updated it is time to stop being driving on the dollars that are available right now, but more on where we would like to be and how we can get there.

Chair Bellamy recommended that a round-table centered on this topic be added to the next meeting agenda. He also requested that ODOT fish for some pockets of money to assist in this planning activities. Mr. Farnsworth agreed that he will bring to the next meeting some maps to assist in the discussion and requested that the COACT member bring with them their planning staff. The group asked if there can be information provided in advance to the individual planning staffs with any pertinent information regarding where communities are expecting to grow. Chair Bellamy asked that the planning staffs come to the next meeting with at least a general idea of where they feel growth is expected in each area.

No comments on the Oregon Transportation Plan Update were submitted by COACT members. Mr. McHaney inquired about the difference between the Oregon Transportation Plan and the Oregon Highway Plan. Mr. Farnsworth responded by explaining that the Highway Plan looks specifically on the state highway system, while the Transportation Plan is a higher level document that looks at all modes of transportation in the state.

Regional Projects Update

Mr. Farnsworth provided a brief overview of the Redmond Transportation projects map that was provided in the meeting packet. He explained that the Redmond Re-route has been a top priority for the City of Redmond in their efforts to redirect truck traffic out of the downtown Redmond area, but it is also a huge step forward in the development of the US 97 corridor as far as long term mobility for the region. He mentioned that most of the canal piping is complete, which is part of the re-route project. A contractor has been hired to build the 9th street extension, the 2nd street work, and the extension of 7th Street. June is the target date for hiring a contractor for the Maple Negus Bridge crossing, which should be complete by middle of 2006. Late this year a contractor should be hired to start construction on the main line of the re-route. Mr. Farnsworth explained that the total budget for the Re-route and Maple-Negus project is coming in at approximately \$72 million.

Mr. Farnsworth mentioned that OTIA-1 funds have been prioritized for funding the Redmond Couplet project, which is now under construction. This project will be underway over the next year and possibly into 2006. Mr. Farnsworth also gave a brief update on the Terrebonne railroad bridge project, explaining that the walls and embankment work is underway and construction on the bridge should start within the next month.

The group discussed other projects that are under way as well as additional plans for Central Oregon transportation needs, and staff announced that those interested in receiving a copy of the Redmond map contact COIC staff.

Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Study

Mr. Joel McCarroll gave a detailed presentation regarding the ITS Study. He explained that in 1991 the Federal Highway Administration recognized ITS as a program category. He explained that the ITS Study conducted was developed in cooperation with the ITS office in Salem and local partners. ITS provides a way to apply technology to solve capacity and safety problems. Some of the ITS solutions include traffic signal control, freeway management, incident management, traveler information, transit management, work zone safety, emergency response, as well as a sub-set of in-vehicle systems like GPS systems.

The area studied included communities within Deschutes County and will be incorporated into the requirements of the Bend MPO. The group discussed the Study and inquired as to why some areas of the region with emergency response concerns were left out of the study, and is there a process for comment on the Study planning process for the purpose of including the needs of each community. Mr. Farnsworth agreed that communicating with local officials is a very important piece of the process, and that since this is a fairly new program with an evolving process, staff will continue to improve its efforts in communicating with jurisdictions. It was also mentioned that there is a push right now to make this ITS program a formula based allocation process rather than the competitive process that Oregon has not fared as well in. Should the formula allocation be implemented, there will be more funds to put toward the program and COACT will be consulted/involved in the planning.

Other meeting handouts included a summary of House Bill 2164 and a Legislative Update summary, dated March 10, 2005. Commissioner Luke announced that the Transportation Bill passed out of House today and it is felt that the Senate will pass it by May and will accept the House numbers.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.