

## Meeting Minutes

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

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### **Members:**

Chair Bill Bellamy (Jefferson County), Dennis Luke (Deschutes County), Mike Morgan (City of Madras), Jeff Monson (Commute Options), Bill Adams (City of Sisters), Anzie Adams (City of Culver), Carrie Novick (Redmond Airport), Randy Pape' (OTC), Joe Mansfield (City of Redmond), Bill Friedman (City of Bend) and Gary Farnsworth (ODOT - Region 4).

### **Guests:**

Bob Grimes (BNSF Railway Company), Tyler Deke (Bend MPO), Tom Blust (Deschutes County), Neil McKie ( Visitor), Jim Bryant, Ed Moore, Joel McCarroll and Julianne Repman (ODOT), Chris Doty (City of Redmond), Michael Magee (City of Bend), Mike McHaney (Jefferson County) and Chuck Burley (State Representative District 54).

### **Staff:**

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

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

Chair Bellamy called the meeting to order and announced that item "B" on the agenda will not be addressed at today's meeting. Introductions were made and Mr. Farnsworth introduced Bob Grimes, Manager of Public Projects for the Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company. *Staff was asked to see if "Rail" was a COACT membership category within the Bylaws, and to add BNSF to meeting notice outreach.*

### **Public Comment**

Chair Bellamy called for public comment. Seeing none, Chair Bellamy closed the public comment portion of the meeting.

### **Minutes**

Minutes from the July 14, 2005, meeting were approved by consensus.

### **Roundtable**

Chair Bellamy asked for the Roundtable agenda item to be moved up as the group waits for Representative George Gilman to join the meeting by phone.

**Deschutes County:** Tom Blust said that clearcutting is underway for the Sunriver interchange, and that the first traffic signal in La Pine will be placed at 1<sup>st</sup> and Huntington in the spring of 2006. Commissioner Luke mentioned that they would like to see 19<sup>th</sup> Street in Redmond extended to Deschutes Junction and at some point have a new interchange.

**Commute Options:** Jeff Monson said the City of Bend and Commute Options for Central Oregon have received a Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant to research the cost of vanpooling as well as

assist employers in setting up vanpools. Mr. Monson distributed a handout which summarized the details of the grant and requested COACT members to help spread the word that there are vanpools running between Bend and Sunriver Resort and from Redmond to Black Butte Ranch. Commute Options has a goal of starting at least four more employee vanpools.

City of Madras: Mike Morgan said that the City continues to refine the “J” Street intersection at Hwy 97. Construction of a new general aviation building is underway at the airport.

Jefferson County: Mike McHaney said that activity at the new state prison is under way, with trucks transporting lots of rock to the site. The north 97 Y construction is very active with curbs having been poured, asphalt and grade/lane changes. Bridge work at “J” Street Phase II is complete and sub grade work including sewer and waterlines is under way. The County is currently working on its TSP with Ed Moore of ODOT and the Cities of Madras, Culver and Metolius.

City of Redmond: Chris Doty said that the new dry canyon bridge at Maple is starting to take shape with a projected completion and access date of November 2006. Negus Crossing has had its groundbreaking with a completion date of spring of 2007. The signals at both 15<sup>th</sup> Street and at Rimrock are scheduled to be turned on and the City is ready to embark on its TSP update focusing on the addition of 2,000 acres to the urban growth boundary.

City of Bend: Michael Magee said that three new roundabouts were opened on the same day in the City of Bend. One is located at Bear Creek and 15<sup>th</sup>, which was the final condition that had to be met in order to have the signal on Hwy 20. The Newport bridge OTIA III project is moving forward and is on target for construction next year. A study is under way on the Reed Market Corridor to address the traffic issues for short and long term. There are still activities under way at Juniper Ridge, and the Mtn. Washington Bridge is under construction.

Redmond Airport: Carry Novick said that the airport parking lot project will increase parking from the 250-space capacity originally included in the airport plans back in 1993 to the current anticipated capacity of 1,000 spaces. The parking facility will include both short- and long-term parking and will include a dedicated credit card lane. The project will also include a new entrance to the airport. Future airport terminal construction will begin next spring, expanding the terminal from 23,000 sq ft to 92,000 sq ft, and will include a basement to house the Transportation Security Administration (TSA). Some of the more unique aspects of the airport terminal project include energy efficient construction, only off-the-shelf items (for cost savings), larger bathroom stalls, and a wider width between the stalls and the counters to accommodate power wheel chairs. Other projects on the horizon include an upgrade to the general aviation ramp and extension of water and sewer infrastructure, which will open up some 80 acres of airport site development. Ms. Novick anticipates adding new destinations as well as a third departure to Salt Lake City.

Ms. Novick mentioned that the airport is planning on applying for a grant through the Connect Oregon program for the terminal project, and requested a letter of support from COACT. Mayor Friedman requested that staff determine if there are other Connect Oregon grant applications expected from jurisdictions. He also requested that Ms. Novick supply an electronic copy of the sample letter of support to the COACT members for review. Commissioner Luke asked COACT to authorize the Executive Committee to review the applications and draft letters of support. Mr. Farnsworth mentioned that based on the bill packaging for funding, the OTC will be directing staff as how to provide guidance to the Area Commissions on commenting on projects. Staff will come back to COACT with a package of how to provide assistance to project applicants.

Commissioner Randy Pape' explained that the Connect Oregon bill has passed and moved to the implementation phase. The Oregon Transportation Commission is charged with the responsibility of selecting projects for the \$100 million in either the form of loans or grants. There is \$15 million for each of the five ODOT regions, leaving \$25 million that will be distributed across the regions. The rules and criteria are still under development. Once the evaluation process has been finalized a packet will be provided to staff for distribution. Mr. Farnsworth will remain abreast of these activities and will facilitate a technical workshop for technical assistance and to evaluate potential applications.

City of Culver: Anzie Adams said that homes are being constructed rapidly in Culver, but there is not a lot of transportation activity at this time. Mr. Farnsworth mentioned that the bridge in Terrebonne will be completed within the next couple of months.

City of Sisters: Bill Adams said that the Hwy 20 is overlay project is under way.

### **Regional Long-Range Transportation Discussion**

State Representative George Gilman was connected to the COACT meeting via conference line. Mr. Farnsworth provided background information to Representatives Gilman and Burley regarding the regional long-range transportation planning activities. Mr. Farnsworth explained that the COACT TAC group met to discuss how best to move forward with long-range transportation planning for Central Oregon. The attendance and discussion at that TAC meeting was very positive and productive. Mr. Farnsworth went on to summarize the maps that Ed Moore compiled using information from the COACT Needs Lists, as well as information pulled from explained local TSPs. The maps serve as a tool to demonstrate some of the needs in Central Oregon.

Mr. Farnsworth stated that through this process COACT has discussed the planning direction, focus and the priorities, and now it is time to focus on prioritizing tasks. A handout was distributed which provided bulleted suggestions to use as a tool while working through the next steps in prioritizing tasks. Mr. Moore distributed the updated maps based on recent input from the TAC group. He explained that these same maps have been distributed to the jurisdictions with a request that they review and submit corrections - as well as verify if projects are of regional importance. Mr. Moore asked the jurisdictions to respond by the 16<sup>th</sup> of September.

Commissioner Luke asked if with the state highway modernization funds being reduced by ½ to pay for bridge bonds, whether there are plans in the next session or two to replace any of these funds with other sources. Representative Burley answered that there does not appear to be any new funding in the 2007 session. Representative Gilman announced that if there is going to be any increase in funding, then an alternative mechanism will need to be created.

Chair Bellamy complimented Mr. Moore on the maps, commenting that the info is detailed and valuable. He appreciated the time invested in this process. Commissioner Pape' mentioned that there are some study dollars at ODOT that may be available for completing processes such as this. Mr. Farnsworth agreed and mentioned that the more clarity that is developed on purpose, goals and objectives the more effective COACT can be in applying for funds to support this process. He also mentioned that the group may want to consider whether to develop a financing strategy, and whether to look toward developing public-private partnerships on some projects. Commissioner Pape' explained that this is exactly what the Connect Oregon is all about, looking for alternative ways of doing things. Looking at ways to utilize and connect all modes of transportation.

Representative Burley mentioned that the Speaker will be appointing a house interim transportation committee, and both he and Representative Gilman have requested seats on the committee. Connect Oregon is a project of focus for that committee; however a full briefing has not been completed yet. It is his understanding that the state aviation board will be meeting in Madras later in the month to discuss Connect Oregon. He also explained that the Highway Traffic Safety Commission will conduct a briefing later in the month regarding the Safe Routes to Schools Bill. He explained that he is following these activities and the outcomes that affect Central Oregon.

Chair Bellamy asked Mr. Bob Grimes of Burlington Northern-Santa Fe what he sees in the future for the railroad as it relates to the increase in gas and diesel prices. Mr. Grimes answered that it is important to know that while COACT is working through its planning process, COACT can always contact BSNF so they can participate in the planning efforts. BSNF has its own economic development department and can best serve COACT if they are aware of the regional needs and are part of the planning efforts.

Commissioner Pape' mentioned that during his recent meeting with Judge Cooper they once again discussed how Central Oregon transportation is affected by Gresham area traffic congestion. Representative Burley followed up by commenting that Les Schwab is the single largest container shipper out of the Port of Portland and that there is a freight issue around the state that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Farnsworth said that when talking about purpose, goals and objectives for long-rang plans, there are examples of other regional/area plans that can serve as templates. However, he asked the group if it is truly the desire of COACT to create a regional long-range plan. Mr. Farnsworth asked for some clear direction. Commissioner Luke said that each of the jurisdictions work on local needs, and it is really the connectivity piece that needs to be addressed through COACT. How do we keep our communities connected?

Mr. Morgan mentioned that when discussing connectivity and building roads one should keep in mind growth and land use. Commissioner Luke agreed that this may be easier in the cities, but Measure 37 in creates challenges for the counties.

Mr. Farnsworth referred the group back to the themes listed on the handout. He mentioned that a couple of the themes on the list have been touched upon today, but questioned how thoroughly the group wants to address each theme. For instance, bullet number 5 refers land use issues. He asked to what degree COACT wants to focus on land use during this process. It was suggested that the group may want to decide on their goals for the process. For instance, is the goal to see that people are able to make it from point A to point B in a certain amount of time?

Commissioner Pape' said that he felt that land use and transportation are tied to each other. He also explained that DLCD and OTC have a subcommittee who meet regularly to discuss and work through issues that come up in the area of land use and transportation. He said that COACT is welcome to invite members of the subcommittee to participate in one of its meetings should there be questions or concerns that they would like addressed. Mr. Farnsworth said that Mark Randabaugh from the local DLCD did attend the last TAC workshop and plans on attending future COACT meetings. Mr. Farnsworth offered to complete some research for the group on how to protect corridors and investments, and bring the results back to the group.

Mr. Farnsworth referred to the last bullet on the handout - the need for some ground rules for what kinds of projects and issues are addressed through this process. Staff needs to understand what is considered a local need versus a regional need. He suggested that the group differentiate and provide direction to staff so they can better understand and then begin filtering in an effort to make this process easier to manage.

Mayor Friedman voiced his unease in regard to a copy of draft minutes that he received from the Transportation Commission meeting that was held in La Grande. He explained that one of the main items at the OTC meeting was the approval of the STIP, including projects that came through the OTIA III process in the freight mobility piece. He explained that the Freight Advisory Committee went through months of prioritizing projects to assure that they met the selected criteria in terms of improving freight mobility and improving economic opportunity. There were two projects in Central Oregon that were to be considered; both were supported by COACT, the Bend MPO and the City of Bend as well as ODOT staff. Mayor Friedman voiced his dismay at how the Transportation Commission, without any consultation with the city, identified the Cooley Road – Hwy 97 interchange as a project that will not be approved until a master plan is completed for the area, which includes Hwy 97 and Cooley Road along the Mtn. View Mall to where Hwy 97 and Hwy 20 connect. His reason for expressing his distress over this matter was the “we will not approve” portion of their opinion and that the statement implied that the Commission is going to choose where and what is done in Central Oregon as far as land use. He felt that that statement singles out that stretch of highway for demands that are different than demands that are being made around the state.

Commissioner Pape’ responded that it is his belief that the Commission’s thinking is that when looking at the Hwy 97 corridor, end to end, north to south, the importance of that corridor is increasing every day. The Commission recognizes the importance of this stretch of highway. He explained that when the Commission looks at moving traffic through this region safely and efficiently, as well as the investment of tax payer dollars in existing infrastructure, their concern is to protect existing investments. He explained that the Commission may have wrongfully singled out Central Oregon when there are other similar situations around the state. The Commission did not want to take the money away from this project, even though they had authority to do so. Instead, they chose to put the brakes on to allow time to understand the problem while working together collaboratively to come to a reasonable conclusion to extend the Parkway maybe beyond the UGB of Bend so that traffic will continue to move efficiently through the stretch of Highway 97. He explained that this was a broad way of thinking and was not intended to be harmful to Central Oregon.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.