

## MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee  
Eugene Public Library – Bascom-Tykeson Room, 100 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue – Eugene, Oregon

December 9, 2004  
11:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Bonny Bettman, Chair; Jim Torrey (City of Eugene), Bobby Green, Bill Dwyer (Lane County), Sid Leiken, John Woodrow for Anne Ballew (City of Springfield), Judy Volta (City of Coburg), Gerry Gaydos, Susan Ban (Lane Transit District), Robert Pirrie (Oregon Department of Transportation), members; Mike Kelly (City of Springfield), Dennis Taylor (City of Eugene), Ken Hamm (Lane Transit District), Jamon Kent (City of Coburg), Bill Van Vactor (Lane County), *ex officio* members.

Randy Papé, (Oregon Transportation Commission), George Kloeppe, Tom Schwetz, Paul Thompson, Ann Mortenson, Susan Payne, Kathi Wiederhold, (Lane Council of Governments), Lisa Gardner (Lane Transit District).

**ABSENT:** Gary Ross, Blake Hastings (Willamalane) members; Bob Keefer (Willamalane) *ex officio* member.

### 1. CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Bettman called the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) to order. Those present introduced themselves.

Mr. Torrey raised a point of order regarding the number of people wishing to speak and the amount of time available. Ms. Bettman suggested that the question be addressed at the start of the public hearing when the number of speakers was known.

### 2. APPROVE NOVEMBER 18, 2004, MINUTES

Ms. Bettman noted that Mr. Leiken should be shown as absent in the minutes.

Mr. Torrey, seconded by Mr. Leiken, moved to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2004, meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

### 3. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Ms. Bettman announced that speakers would be limited to three minutes due to time constraints and could submit written comments if they wished.

**Bob Cassidy**, 1401 East 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, thanked the MPC for holding public hearings and offering people the opportunity to speak. He said that Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) did not offer the

public such opportunities to express their opinion on matters before the board. He asked if the MPC was the decision-making body and what impact testimony would have.

**Mona Lindstromberg**, 87140 Territorial Road, Veneta, said that Veneta residents had a brief opportunity to pose questions to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) regarding the freight route designation of Highway 126. She said another discussion was scheduled for December 13, 2004. She said that ODOT's response to questions regarding implications of the designation was that freight could already be hauled on Highway 126. She felt that ODOT's reply was non-responsive and if more freight was hauled, her concern was that the constricted portion of the road between Fern Ridge and the railroad track would become a greater safety hazard, particularly for pedestrians and bicyclists. She was also concerned about the potential for future designation as an expressway and complications for business access and unfunded mandates for municipalities such as Veneta.

**Mark Rabinowitz**, 28549 Sutherlin Lane, Eugene, spoke to the Region 2050 planning process. He said the process showed a lack of concern with the fact that in 50 years most petroleum would be converted into carbon dioxide. He said the process should factor in the concept of peak oil and study how to have a local economy in the year 2050. He proposed local energy production through use of agricultural land for seed oils. He also proposed retrofitting all buildings in Eugene and Springfield with solar hot water and electric to create sustainable jobs and converting recreational vehicle manufacturing to bus rapid transit vehicles.

**Rob Zako**, 1280-B East 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, said he had recently attended a business symposium in Portland that addressed regional planning done in a way that supported the economy. He described a regional planning effort in Utah that involved approximately 140 stakeholders and addressed both land use planning and prosperity. He emphasized the need for cooperation and collaboration within a community to promote business and economic development.

**Lauri Segel**, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, expressed the support of 1,000 Friends of Oregon for appointment of MPO Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members in accordance with the subcommittee's recommendations. She stated for the record that the CAC was two years in the making and hoped the MPC would approve the appointments.

#### **4. MPO (Metropolitan Planning Organization) ISSUES**

Ms. Bettman asked approval to consider CAC appointments before proceeding with the public hearing. There were no objections.

##### **a. Appointment of MPO Citizen Advisory Committee Members**

Mr. Green briefly described the subcommittee's selection process and the large pool of applicants. He asked the MPC's permission to serve for a year as the MPC liaison to the CAC because of his long-term involvement in the creation of the CAC and recommendations for appointments.

Mr. Dwyer, seconded by Mr. Torrey, moved to approve the subcommittee recommendations for appointment of 14 citizens to the MPC Citizen Advisory Committee and appoint Bobby Green to a one-year term as the MPC liaison to the Citizen Advisory Committee. The motion passed unanimously.

**b. Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**

Ms. Bettman announced that speakers would be limited to three minutes per speaker and could submit written comments if they wished. She asked members of the audience not to engage in displays of opposition or support of a speaker's comments.

Mr. Thompson briefly reviewed the additional materials distributed at the meeting, which consisted primarily of public testimony or comments received since the agenda packet was mailed to members and responses to those comments. He said there was also a letter from Marianne Dugan and responses from staff and from the U.S. Department of Transportation. He said the letter from the U.S. Department of Transportation to Governor Kulonski was required whenever an RTP could potentially lapse. He noted a letter from Rob Zako containing recommendations for the RTP and distributed a response from staff.

Ms. Volta said that MPC members had read the written testimony and asked if those who had submitted it would consider not giving oral testimony in the interests of time. She remarked that there would not be time for the MPC to take action before the meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m. if the more than 40 people who had wished to testify each spoke for three minutes. Ms. Bettman said that had never occurred in any public hearing.

Ms. Bettman opened the public hearing.

Mr. Torrey expressed his concern that the MPC would not be able to take action on critical items as required if each speaker took three minutes for testimony.

Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Mr. Green, to limit testimony to two minutes per speaker.

Ms. Bettman spoke in opposition to the motion because the hearing was the only opportunity for the public to speak to the changes in policy, funding levels, and scope of projects.

Mr. Torrey pointed out that the MPC had held two previous hearings on the plan.

The motion passed, 8:2; Ms. Bettman and Mr. Dwyer voting in opposition.

Mr. Dwyer explained that he realized the time constraints but people should have an opportunity to speak to the plan, even if it took another meeting.

Mr. Green said the MPC should commit to having another meeting before the end of the year since it was limiting speakers to two minutes.

Mr. Thompson clarified that the RTP would lapse if it was not conformed before December 13, 2004.

Mr. Dwyer said the consequences would be determined by the length of the lapse.

Ms. Bettman said her understanding was that a lapse in the plan would jeopardize Lane Transit District's (LTD) funding. She asked if there was a way to adopt components of the plan that would facilitate LTD's funding while continuing the public hearing on the other components. Mr. Thompson said there was no

way to accomplish that as a conformed Regional Transportation Plan and conformed Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) were needed for the funds to flow and there was no mechanism for doing only a portion of that. He said staff had prepared a preliminary analysis of the impacts of a conformity lapse on the MPO projects and the impacts extended beyond LTD projects. He distributed the analysis and noted the list of projects that would be halted by a conformity lapse, including many major projects not related to LTD. He said the lapse would impact any project using federal funding, not just the LTD projects.

Ms. Ban clarified that the issue was more than just funding; it was LTD's ability to move forward with other activities, such as the review process for the Martin Luther King Parkway. She said that LTD was very concerned with the serious consequences if the plan was not adopted before December 13, 2004.

Ms. Bettman called for testimony.

**Ruth Duemler**, 1745 Fircrest Drive, Eugene, spoke against the West Eugene Parkway. She said that improvements to Beltline Road should be the top priority for road funds. She said Beltline was unsafe and the speed limit should be lowered until improvements were made and the \$17 million allocated to the parkway might be better spent to provide a safer Beltline for City and County residents. She also opposed the parkway because of the negative impact of an elevated roadway through the center and heart of the West Eugene Wetlands. She said that wetlands were necessary to prevent flooding, purify water, provide wildlife and plant species habitat, and provide educational opportunities. She urged other answers to transportation problems such as carpooling, improved transit, alternate transportation and Beltline improvements.

**Paul Nicholson**, 1855 East 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, commented that two years ago Mayor Torrey assured the public that State and federal funds would cover 100 percent of the construction and maintenance expenses related to the parkway project. He urged a negative vote.

**Mark Rabinowitz**, 28549 Sutherlin Lane, Eugene, said that three and a half years ago at a West Eugene charette ODOT had promised the public that it would pick "no build" for the parkway and if that decision had been implemented Beltline would have been finished and the poor design of West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue would have been repaired. He said he had predicted that the cost of the parkway projected was closer to \$150 million than \$88 million and that had proven to be correct. He said the parkway was an unnecessary project and urged the MPC to have a public information session as part of the environmental impact statement process before any further implementation.

**Rachel Foster**, 3431 View Lane, Eugene, expressed her opposition to the West Eugene Parkway as planned. She urged a serious look at alternatives that would not have such an impact on the wetlands. She said that \$18 million had been invested into acquiring land to conserve and extend the vital wetland corridor along Amazon Creek. She related expansion of bird and other species populations in the new wetlands area, including the Western Meadowlark and the rare Great Copper butterflies. She said the parkway slicing through the ecological corridor would interfere with communication and movement of wildlife in the area and did not make sense.

**Teresa Damron**, 605 Howard Avenue, Eugene, spoke as a River Road resident and business owner. She said she opposed the West Eugene Parkway because it was fiscally and environmentally irresponsible. She said that she spoke to people from throughout the country who wished to visit Oregon because of their belief that its environmental assets were extremely rare and beautiful. She said with hard financial times ahead, it was fiscally irresponsible to spend more money than the community could afford just because

some federal funds were available. She urged a decision based upon responsible stewardship of the public's money and the environment and invest in public transportation instead.

**John Heintz**, 632 Fairfield Avenue, Eugene, said he had resided in Eugene for the past 25 years and as a motorist had seen vehicle use generally increase with population growth, together with changing traffic patterns. He saw no current or foreseeable future need for the proposed West Eugene Parkway. He described the proposed route, which paralleled West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Roosevelt Boulevard on an east/west axis. He said West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue was a multiple-access, five-lane highway with a center turn lane and Roosevelt Boulevard was a limited-access highway with a posted speed of 45 miles per hour for most of its length. He did not think adding another route between those two highways was going to be useful. He said he found use of Roosevelt Boulevard adequate, easy, and convenient as an alternative to West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue because of its connections to River Road, Highway 99, and the Northwest Expressway, all of which were major north/south arterials. He noted that major flow improvements had been made to West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

**Dean Bishop**, 28335 West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, said he lived at the proposed terminus of the West Eugene Parkway and his concern was that in reviewing the TransPlan it appeared the parkway project had a low priority as of two years ago and had recently received support from the mayor and business community. He said the parkway did not address the area's transportation needs and a number of analyses determined it did not meet goals. He observed that the cost of the project had doubled since the first estimate. He encouraged the committee to visit the wetlands and see the area through which the parkway would be routed. He said that a large amount of fill would be required and that would create a large amount of income for a few individuals. He said the project was a bad example for children, bad for the environment, fiscally irresponsible, and a bad project. He urged denial of the project.

**Charles Biggs**, 540 Antelope Way, Eugene, requested that the record remain open for an additional two weeks to facilitate submission of neighborhood executive comments. He submitted written testimony. He stated that when the *Coburg Road Bus Rapid Transit Corridor Study* was completed, the two neighborhoods involved, Harlow and Cal Young, did not support the BRT route because of construction of the corridor and other problems. He said he understood that the BRT corridor between downtown Eugene and Springfield was undergoing some significant changes due to costs, such as a free system instead of fares. He did not think that expanding roads was the way to encourage people to make wiser transportation choices.

**Nancy Ellen Locke**, 1130 West 25<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, spoke against the parkway and for the wetlands and public transportation. She said her concern was that when the parkway projected was voted on by the public it was a very different project than the one currently in the RTP. She said it felt as if the MPC was alienating the public and the project appeared to be a "bait and switch" and she urged its denial.

**Jonathan Evans**, 1737 Orchard Street, Eugene, thanked the MPC for the opportunity to speak to the RTP but resented the reduction of speakers' time to two minutes as the issues were complicated. He said at the time of the initial citizen advisory vote on the project the cost was approximately half of what it currently was. He suggested that the project again be put to a vote by the public. He said the parkway did not seem to meet all of the transportation needs for West Eugene according to various studies and that proposing a significant portion of funding for the parkway as opposed to other transportation needs had placed many projects on the "back burner." He suggested that the existing infrastructure should be supported and maintained to meet the transportation needs of a livable community. He said over 13 projects were postponed because of the prioritization of the West Eugene Parkway.

**Andrew Orahoske**, 1737 Orchard Street, Eugene, said he was a law student at the University of Oregon and a member of the Lane County Audubon Society. He said the MPC's limitation on public input was disingenuous at best and showed contempt for the State's open meeting laws. He said that factors involved in the opposition to the West Eugene Parkway included cost overruns, questionable use or value, and impacts on wildlife and wetlands. He said the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was enacted more than 30 years ago and it was landmark legislation that controlled all land in the country and had extra-territorial application. He said the parkway would go through federal land and the ESA was implicated; the project would require Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permits and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service would have to sign off on the permits. He asked the body to consider "If we can't save a butterfly, how can we save ourselves."

Mr. Torrey raised a point of order that it was not fair to other speakers when someone spoke beyond the allotted time.

**Mona Lindstromberg**, 87140 Territorial Road, Veneta, commented that approval of the parkway project appeared to be a fait accompli because of the LTD issue and it appeared to affirm the bad planning trend of the RTP. She asked the MPC to consider severing that aspect of the plan in the time allotted and to deny the parkway. She said there was little invitation to engage Veneta residents in the public process or encourage their comments, even though the parkway would have a large impact on the community with four lanes of traffic narrowing into two lanes and funneling more traffic into the area. She said she understood through her involvement in Veneta wetlands the extreme importance of the significant wetlands that the West Eugene Parkway would be degrading and encouraged denial of the plan because when the parkway was voted on by Eugene it was a very different project.

**Carlos Barrera**, 2470 Olive Street, Eugene, urged the MPC to not approve amendments to the RTP related to the West Eugene Parkway. He compared the MPC to the board of directors of a corporation that wanted to increase the efficiency of a factory and went to stockholders with a request to change the business plan and purchase equipment that was a certain price and maintenance-free; once approval was granted the board discovered that the equipment was twice as expensive, required maintenance, and would not increase efficiency. He asked if the MPC would proceed anyway and how it would explain to stockholders when the bill was due.

**Lilah Glick**, 1678 Wilson Street, Eugene, spoke as a concerned citizen to the West Eugene Parkway's impact on quality of life. She said that Eugene was known as one of the most livable cities in the country and the parkway would increase rapid growth that would bring profits to the few and the cost would be subsidized by Eugene citizens. She indicated that studies had shown building roads might alleviate traffic in the short term, but eventually brought new traffic because it forced new growth in new areas.

**Carleen Reilly**, 395 Marion Lane, spoke as a County resident in the River Road area of Eugene. She said she had been left out of the loop as a County resident and decisions were made to move forward with the parkway without her hearing of it. She said she heard about the project three years ago and over the ensuing years repeated assurances that funding was available for the project were repeatedly shown to be a program of misinformation. She realized she had never had an opportunity to voice her opposition to the project. She asked why as a River Road resident she was not able to vote on the project as she would be impacted if other more critical needs were not addressed. She was appalled that only \$17 million was available and the parkway was estimated to cost \$169 million. She asked why that project was being undertaken when there were roadways, such as Beltline from River Road to the Delta Highway, were crying for help. She asked why current identified road work is being delayed to tackle new projects.

Ms. Bettman reminded the audience that comments could be submitted for the record; although if a decision was made at the end of the public hearing, the MPC would not be able to read those comments before it voted.

**Eileen Nittler**, 121 West Hilliard Lane, said she also lived in the River Road area, was a county resident, and had not had an opportunity earlier to provide input. She agreed with previous speakers who commented on the waste of money and said the community should maintain what it already had.

**Kate Perle**, 4740 Wendover Street, Eugene, spoke to the lack of balance in the Regional Transportation Plan. She said in an age where the most reputable scientific associations spoke about the finite quality of the planet's oil supply and where thirst for a resource that could not be produced compelled human and environmental atrocities on an unfathomable scale it was puzzling that so much human energy and resources were expended to bring the inadequacies of the plan to light. She asked where in the plan was the prioritization of other forms of transportation and when would it be accepted that the status quo of an average of ten person trips per day per individual by car could not continue to be supported. She said she was a Santa Clara area resident and chose to appropriately use alternative transport to the greatest extent possible by walking, biking, busing, and training through life. She said she daily witnessed traffic congestion and noted that while Mayor Torrey had told the City Council on September 22, 2004, that Beltline Road, not the West Eugene Parkway, was the City's number one need for road improvements, but it was listed as a significantly lower priority in the RTP. She said that the Santa Clara area was experiencing unbridled growth and the addition of hundreds of cars each week to its roadways and in addition a special interest development proposal known as the Santa Clara Community Park Land Swap would guarantee 1,000 additional residences at the furthest reaches of the urban growth boundary. She said there was a lack of comprehensive planning around issues of development, transportation, and best use of finite funding to serve the most citizens at the highest level. She said any additional funding would be better spent developing, promoting, and implementing increased opportunities for appropriate transportation.

**Rob Handy**, 455 ½ River Road, Eugene, registered his disappointment in the public involvement process that was seriously flawed as the CAC should have looked at and vetted the issues and that it had taken two years to establish the CAC and two months to develop the plan and take action on it. He asked the MPC what its fiduciary responsibility was. He said the old parkway project was estimated at \$88 million, the funding was available and the State would build and maintain it; now there was only \$17 million for a new project with new maintenance requirements and a new design. He asked why Coburg, with its fiscal problems, would approve a plan with almost six times as many dollars for LCOG planning as for on-the-ground projects. He pointed out the tension in the community about the love for transit, yet wondered if LTD at times looked at its navel around moving projects forward. He suggested that LTD consider a delay of a couple months for funding of the Martin Luther King Parkway as the funding would be returned to the community and it would be preferable for the community to have a parkway with dedicated bus lanes and transit from Eugene to Veneta to Springfield.

**Rich Hazel**, 2603 Moon Mountain Drive, Eugene, said he was opposed to the West Eugene Parkway because it did not pass the "sniff" test. He said the MPC should ask if the parkway accomplished anything, citing the different cost figures, lack of funding, and need for funds from a gas tax or other sources to try to pay for the backlog of road maintenance. He said the parkway would only barely improve traffic flow under the best case scenario, was too expensive, and not as advertised. He urged the MPC to abandon the project. He said that if the MPC wondered if the parkway was not big enough to actually address traffic load, it should look to the examples of Los Angeles and Seattle trying to pave their way out of traffic jams. He urged the MPC to deny the project.

**Keith Walton**, 1640 East Beacon Drive, Eugene, said he lived and farmed very close to major transportation routes that served residents of Eugene and outlying areas and it was important to him that the West Eugene Parkway proposal was handled in a way that gave the public a voice. He said since the project was proposed and estimates of costs were originally calculated they had nearly doubled; in the meantime the need to allocate limited funds to move pressing and existing road improvement projects should outweigh any momentum the proposal had developed. He said that the objections from the public, Army Corps of Engineers, and BLM should not be ignored, and the funds reserved for the project allocated to improving the Beltline bridge at the Willamette River and improving bicycle passage through the area. He expressed appreciation for all that had been done to improve bicycle transport in and around Eugene as it remained the most efficient means to move people for the money invested. He expressed regret that the CAC had not been available to help serve the RTP process and asked the MPC to postpone action on the plan until the CAC was able to meet, review the plan, and hold public hearings. He was concerned that wetlands were impacted by the proposal as each increment of wetland that was destroyed increased the load to the floodways that included farm fields.

**Lauri Segel**, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, representing 1,000 Friends of Oregon, said many people understood that adopting the RTP was one of the key responsibilities of the federally-mandated MPO and the MPO's planning activities should include the involvement of a citizen advisory committee, but the RTP planning process was far from citizen-friendly. She said there had been only staff level input into the recommendations, although there were limited opportunities for citizens to respond. She remarked that opportunities to comment did not necessarily equate with opportunities to participate. She asked why such an awkward methodology was used to include Coburg. It would have made more sense to update the RTP, known as TransPlan, by giving it a more appropriate title and by adding a Coburg section. Instead, the proposal represented an extremely small Coburg element, especially considering the magnitude of the minor amendments. She said the document was still basically TransPlan with an inflated financially constrained projects list, none of which truly reflected the addition of Coburg. She asked that if the plan had to be adopted immediately, all new non-Coburg projects proposed for addition to financially constrained lists be withheld from consideration for the time being; this would allow LTD projects to proceed and projects could always be added at a later date after a more comprehensive review by the CAC.

**Mara Wile**, 3470 High Street, Eugene, said she was a former resident of River Road and would be a future resident of River Road. She was concerned that Beltline had been moved to a lower priority than the parkway and what that meant in terms of emergency access should PeaceHealth move to Springfield and McKenzie-Willamette Hospital not move to Eugene.

**Ann Montgomery**, 140 Stults Avenue, Eugene, said she had lived in the area for 39 years and if Lane County held a contest for the worst way to waste transportation tax dollars the West Eugene Parkway would be the finalist because of wetlands destruction, unsustainability, and waste of tax dollars. She said that most importantly the parkway would destroy wetlands and remaining wetlands were so valuable because most had already been destroyed by agriculture, highways, and urban sprawl; as a species, people were rapidly destroying the very components that supported life on the planet for the sake of short-term greed. She asked how the Eugene City Council could support the parkway when in 1999 it passed a sustainability resolution and the only beneficiaries of the project would be a few contractors and land speculators. She stressed the waste of tax dollars in the face of limited resources for transportation.

**Lora Byxbe**, 677 West 23<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, Eugene, opposed construction of the West Eugene Parkway for the reasons that were addressed by previous speakers and in addition was concerned with covering the world with concrete. She said that concrete was an impervious surface that increased stormwater runoff and

poisoned rivers and streams. She displayed an article researching the issue and noting it was becoming a nationwide concern. She said that 42,000 square miles were now covered with concrete and urged that more square miles not be added and alternatives to the parkway be considered.

**Leslie Maguire**, 420 Goodyear Street, Eugene, said that limiting testimony from three to two minutes was not fair to the public. She reminded the MPC that the citizens of Eugene approved a parkway proposal for \$88 million, not \$169 million, to be funded by the State and not by taxpayers. She said the project did not make sense and would cause a heavy tax burden while real transportation needs and the fragile balance of the wetlands were not addressed. She asked the MPC to turn its attention from the parkway to addressing how to maximize limited resources by prioritizing needs to the current infrastructure and funding the necessary and more modest transportation projects such as improvements along West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Beltline Road to ease the growing traffic congestion and improvements to the Interstate 5/Franklin Boulevard interchange in tandem with the soon-to-be constructed new Willamette River bridge. She agreed with Mayor Torrey's remarks to the Eugene City Council that Beltline was the City's number one need for road improvements and submitted that it was the smaller, greatly needed, and more cost effective projects that should be approved and not the updated, unrecognizable, cost-inflated West Eugene Parkway project.

**Alice Pueschner**, 1512 Barber Drive, Eugene, said that previous speakers had addressed her issues related to the environment, economic feasibility, and traffic congestion. She stated that the West Eugene Parkway should be abandoned and the \$17 million dollars allocated for it spent now on many of the transportation projects that would be postponed indefinitely if the two major projects went forward. She hoped the CAC would have time to gather public input on the matter before the final vote.

**Charles Missar**, P.O. Box 567, Cottage Grove, said that before his retirement he was the facilities manager for a company for 15 years and in that role was involved in the discovery and mitigation of wetlands the company had unknowingly filled in the 1980s. He said he was awarded the Eugene Wetlands Award in 2002 for his work to define a workable industrial properties strategy that also cohesively preserved wetlands. He said the proposed West Eugene Parkway was now too costly to build, with cost estimates more than doubled, and additional costs would be incurred through the possible extension of Terry Street that crossed Amazon Street. He said the City had been discussing the project for almost a decade and now several more years would be added to the planning cycle, with the inevitable lawsuits and legal maneuvering; by then the increasing cost of gasoline would lead to the need for more transportation, which the West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor could be converted to more readily. He noted the tremendous taxpayer investment in acquiring large, undisturbed, contiguous wetland sites in West Eugene and one large wetland was more valuable environmentally than two wetlands severed by the parkway. He said the wetlands represented a unique urban preserve that would grow the tourism and recreation industry in the Eugene area and needed to be managed for its habitats and not its highways. He said the West Eugene Parkway was always of marginal benefit to the community as a whole and when the cost escalations and complexities of chopping up the valuable wetland were considered, the project should be dropped; 21<sup>st</sup> century problems should not be solved with 20<sup>th</sup> century solutions.

**Ethen Perkins**, 2410 Monroe Street, Eugene, a wetland, rare species, and restoration consultant, said he had been working in West Eugene for the past 14 years. He stated his concern for the unrealistic and impractical environmental responsibility policy goals and objectives of the RTP. He said a significant environmental degradation from building the parkway simply could not be remedied and the most significant impact was habitat fragmentation. He said West Eugene was one of only a handful of places where the endangered Fenders Blue butterfly existed in small, fragile populations and the elevated highway and wide footprint would block movement of the butterflies as they migrated between patches, as

well as creating a permanent barrier isolating fragile plants. He said that the RTP assumed that environmental responsibility could be met through compliance with all state and federal regulations and each project would provide practical mitigation measures. He stated that there were no practical mitigation measures for endangered species habitat fragmentation. He urged removal of the parkway from the RTP and submitted written testimony.

**Paul Conte**, 1461 West 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, offered a humorous version of the top ten reasons for building the West Eugene Parkway.

**Elizabeth Sereda**, 1073 Jackson Street, Eugene, said she had moved to Eugene from California six years ago and during her time in California had witnessed five cities change as land and resources were exploited in the name of progress. She said that Fresno was hit the hardest and dependence on cars, freeways, and huge city blocks had contributed to its being named the most polluted city in the United States. She said that sprawl developers were capable of erecting cities overnight and taking full advantage of the prices of productive land and wilderness with no regard for the food that could be grown to feed people nor the unique species that were part of the local ecosystem. She said that sterile, rapid development already infected Eugene as evidenced by the empty parking lots at the “big box” stores on West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue. She urged the MPC to halt the irresponsible growth process and allow Eugene’s creative minds to develop alternatives to sprawl and let Eugene become one of the visionary cities that refused to follow the trend and instead followed its conscience.

**Bob O’Brien**, 3525 Gilham Road, Eugene, spoke to process and the difficulty of organizing citizens and getting them involved in an issue. He questioned the process leading up to adoption of the RTP and contrasted it with TransPlan where people formed study groups and had sufficient time to study documents; there had not been enough time available to fully consider the RTP. He expressed his love for the West Eugene wetlands and did not want to see them bifurcated. He said the RTP update was described as a minor update but the escalating costs seemed to be a new TransPlan.

**Mary O’Brien**, 3525 Gilham Road, Eugene, botanist, said she had been working for the past six months to map areas of West Eugene that by federal status and procedures qualified as critical habitat for recovery of Fenders Blue butterfly and the host plant upon which it depended. She said that despite many requests, ODOT had not provided a GIS map of the proposed Beltline/West Eugene Parkway interchange to allow preparation of a map of the impact of the parkway on upland prairie habitat on which the Fenders Blue butterfly and its host plant depended. She said that research had identified an arc of potential recovery sites running southeast from the Willow Creek Preserve northwest through Meadowlark Prairie on BLM land and the proposed parkway would rip the recovery arc in half and pave over or severely impact an additional 19.5 acres of habitat that was now 99 percent gone from the Willamette Valley. She noted BLM expressed legal concerns about a parkway through its land.

**Sharon Blick**, 2579 Kincaid Street, Eugene, said she spoke for those who could not attend a meeting held in the middle of a business day and for wild plants and animals. She said she had discovered the Great Copper butterfly in the West Eugene Wetlands for the first time in 50 years. She said a highway through the wetlands would result in the deaths of many animals through road kill, including butterflies and baby pond turtles. She also spoke for the children with whom she had worked for 15 years as an environmental educator; the earth was not owned, it was borrowed from the children.

**Karl Sorg**, 1555 West 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, said he had lived in Eugene for 13 years and before moving to Eugene had given his automobile away as he found public transportation to be adequate. He said the demise of downtown Eugene was largely due to the construction of malls and “big box” stores on the

outskirts of the city and adding an exurbia highway along the 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor would only hasten that process. He urged the MPC to invest tax dollars wisely in the maintenance of existing corridors and the preservation of downtown Eugene. He also expressed concern about endangerment of the wetlands.

**Pat Reilly**, 395 Marion Lane, Eugene, stated that approval of the wetlands project would negate other more critical projects that dealt with the existing infrastructure and would have the potential to burden the City of Eugene with a huge, unfunded mandate. He urged the MPC to consider other projects to meet existing needs first such as the River Road/Beltline/Delta Highway section of highway because it would facilitate improvement to an already existing roadway and funding was apparently available.

**Candace Nelson**, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, staff for Friends of Eugene, said the RTP was an important multi-jurisdictional document with significant implications in both the short- and long-term and should be factually accurate, internally consistent, fiscally sound, “regulatorily” compliant, and comprehensible to communities concerned. She said the draft RTP had not achieved specific and qualitative thresholds in each of those areas it was not ripe for final approval. She said that public involvement had not met the minimum standard, local jurisdictions had not approved the plan, policies previously inserted by Eugene City Council was deleted without the council’s action, implementation of nodal development was inaccurately described, required plan elements were shown as deleted based on completion of implementation when the implementation had hardly started, scheduling of nodal development implementation had not met the State’s requirements, nodal maps were contradictory to the definition of nodal development, significant transportation impacts of nodal development location was not accounted for, transit goals were reduced to show service reductions due to bus rapid transit but impacts on overall plan performance were not accounted for, and a West Eugene Parkway was prioritized which had unacceptably high costs in environmental impacts. She asked the MPC to provide for a continued and expanded process so the region could achieve an acceptable threshold of integrated land use.

**Kevin Matthews**, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, submitted written testimony from Friends of Eugene. He thanked the citizens who attended the meeting. He expressed concern that the citizen turnout would be perceived as the result of the MPO’s successful public participation efforts. He asked for a show of hands if people heard about the hearing through a citizens’ group or official public channel; most people indicated they had heard through a citizens’ group. He said citizens were doing the work of analyzing the plan, generating public participation and preventing a lawsuit. He said land use policy #5 was proposed for deletion from the plan on the basis that nodal development designations were in place and the three-year time frame reference had elapsed. He urged the MPC to examine how much nodal development land had been zoned, particularly in Eugene.

**Dick Lamster**, P. O. Box 51532, Eugene, representing the Lane County Audubon Society, said that testimony had been provided in the past to other groups. He stated the Audubon Society’s strong opposition to placement of a four-lane highway through pristine wildlife habitat and asked the MPC to please stop the project.

**Nadia Sindi**, 3950 Goodpasture Loop, Eugene, a 26-year resident of Eugene, urged the MPC not to build the West Eugene Parkway because the money was not available and Arabs were being slaughtered for their oil.

**David Sonnichsen**, 2435 Skyline Boulevard, Eugene, suggested that even proponents of the parkway had moments when they questioned whether the project was possible. He said that many at the meeting acknowledge that the parkway had gone from a Rube Goldberg project to a Frankenstein monster, increasing in cost from \$88 million to \$169 million. He said the City of Eugene would have to assume

financial responsibility and the project would continue to demand more resources. He said the project did not have to happen and compared the dumping of gravel from one part of town to another with an ecosystem not designed to receive it to having an addict break into one's home and destroy the security and normal functioning. He said the parkway was a 1950s styled project with 1950s thinking, a bad solution that would create an instant relic. He asked proponents to admit to themselves the project was a bad idea and publicly say so. He urged the committee to deny the project.

**Barbara Shields**, 1489 West Hilliard Lane, Eugene, a resident of the River Road area, said she was opposed to the parkway because of her concern with Beltline. She said she was the mother of a 17 year old daughter and allowing her to drive on the Beltline was a constant source of concern. She pointed out that three of the area's major high schools were adjacent to Beltline and on any given day thousands of new drivers were trying to negotiate the Delta interchange and River Road intersection. She was appalled that building a parkway into a wetland would be considered when the community's most precious resource, its children, is endangered every day and the funds were not allocated to make them safer.

**Deborah Brady**, 1382 Dalton Drive, Eugene, said she was perplexed that the parkway was still a funding priority. She said she had lived in the River Road area for 12 years and during that time had witnessed the building boom and ensuing traffic increase. She gave a number of examples of extreme congestion and the dangers associated with driving on Beltline. She said that as more farmland was lost to housing development and the urban growth boundary was expanded, reliance on cars would increase, at least in the short-term. She noted that bus service had decreased, making it less convenient for many people. She stated that the West Eugene Parkway of today was not the one that voters approved and the harsh reality was that tight state and city coffers demanded fiscal pragmatism and careful prioritization of how funds were spent. She pointed out that no one had spoken in support of the parkway and asked who it would benefit.

Mr. Dwyer left the meeting at 1:20 p.m.

Mr. Torrey asked how many speakers were left and whether the MPC would have a quorum to conduct business at the end of public testimony.

Ms. Bettman indicated that there were eight speakers left.

Mr. Green agreed to stay until the end of the meeting so a quorum would be maintained.

**Eben Fodor**, 394 East 32<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Eugene, expressed dismay at the motion to reduce the amount of time for speakers to three minutes. He stated that public testimony was the lowest grade or quality of public involvement and offered little opportunity for the MPC to digest or discuss the testimony or written comments that were submitted. He said that Eugene's public process had been disappointing over many years and suggested that if there was an actual deadline and approval was needed in order for LTD to receive funds, the new projects on the financially constrained list could be put aside and further discussion on them allowed. He said that Eugene would have a new mayor and council members in three weeks and they should have an opportunity to deliberate and debate the parkway issue. He urged postponement of critical issues in the plan for a few more weeks.

**Cary Thompson**, 966 Jackson Street, Eugene, said most of his planned remarks had been covered by previous speakers. He commented that the current West Eugene Parkway project in the RTP was a very different proposal than that which was voted on in 2001, with new criteria and prioritizations and doubled costs, and had pushed aside many other important projects. He said the RTP had inadequate opportunities

for public input and urged the MPC to put the parkway project on the shelf and proceed to solve West Eugene's traffic problems in a more holistic, less expensive manner with more public input.

**Evelyn McConnaghy**, 1653 Fairmount Boulevard, Eugene, a 55-year resident of Eugene, said she had attended most of the public hearings on the proposed West Eugene Parkway and pointed out that the route and construction had changed considerably since the first proposal was explained and the first vote occurred. She said the public was misled on the cost for the second parkway vote. She was opposed to the project because of the proposed route, enormous size, bisection of the wetlands and impact to wildlife. She said that alternate routes as proposed by various citizens would be much more cost effective and would spare the wetlands; a good proposal would include prioritizing Beltline, River Road to Delta Highway, and West 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Greenhill Road to Terry Street. She said the need for the parkway was debatable and it seemed probable that the driving force was opening of land for more business development; prioritization of the parkway had postponed more important projects indefinitely.

**Rob Zako**, 1280-B East 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, transportation advocate for 1,000 Friends of Oregon, noted he had submitted three documents to the MPC and appreciated receiving responses. To demonstrate poor marketing techniques, he displayed copies of TransPlan and the RTP and pointed out the easily identifiable features on the cover of TransPlan; the RTP had a different name and was considered by the MPC instead of local jurisdictions. He said that the hearing was scheduled in the middle of the day when most people were working and while there had been some outreach by staff, the RTP was characterized as an unimportant, minor technical update and people were uninterested in being involved. He said that citizens' groups had highlighted issues such as the parkway that generated significant public interest. He expressed regret that the MPC was going to take action after all of the information that was provided.

Ms. Bettman raised a point of process and noted that the meeting was scheduled to end.

Mr. Torrey, seconded by Ms. Volta, moved to extend the meeting by 20 minutes. The motion passed unanimously.

**Jan Spencer**, 212 Benjamin Street, Eugene, a resident of the River Road area, commented that BLM and the Corps of Engineers had major concerns with the proposed parkway project. He said the project was not what people had voted on two years ago, even though the vote was only advisory. He reminded the MPC that the Eugene Planning Commission was opposed to the parkway project. He said if more roads were built more people would come and communities surrounding Eugene needed to develop more jobs so that their residents were not coming to Eugene for employment. He pointed out that what the parkway represented contradicted many of the goals and policies in *Oregon Statewide Planning Goals and Guidelines*, including citizen involvement, smart land use planning, safeguarding open spaces, and water quality.

**Tom Bowerman**, 33707 McKenzie View, Eugene, spoke to the macro issue of atmospheric warming and the relationship of transportation policies to atmospheric warming. He said that use of the automobile as it was functionally used today to be addictive behavior that was extended and enabled by the RTP policies being considered. He asked the MPC to freeze all transportation improvements in the community as a responsible approach to bringing to bear a realization that serious thinking was necessary on very basic behaviors about how to behave in a responsible society. He said Europeans demonstrated daily that it was possible to be very competitive, have a functional society, and be very environmentally responsible while addressing atmospheric warming issues from a transportation policy perspective. He said the MPC as decision-makers in the community must deal with the flawed policy in the RTP.

**Marcy Cauthorn**, 2739 University Street, Eugene, asked the MPC to eliminate the West Eugene Parkway from its priorities. She said that Eugene alone had a \$100 million backlog of unfunded road repair and there were far more pressing and smart uses of tax dollars, such as planning and creating a full Interstate 5/Highway 99/Franklin Boulevard interchange and repairing the Interstate 105/Beltline interchange. She asked the MPC to demonstrate it could repair the current infrastructure before beginning new projects. As former chair of the extinct Eugene Citizen Involvement Committee, she said that citizens had the right not to be involved but governing bodies had a moral and fiduciary duty to seek out public comments and involve citizens to the fullest extent from the beginning of the process. She said the MPC's job was to represent the public, not themselves, and there had been no comments in favor of the parkway project. She urged a vote against the parkway.

**Steve Gub**, 1818 Villard Street, Eugene, emphasized the importance to the MPC of taking to heart the public testimony that was entirely opposed to the West Eugene Parkway. He asked why no supporters of the parkway spoke in its favor during the hearing. He said there were three issues: credibility, fiscal responsibility, and process integrity. He said the issue of credibility was based on whether the assurances of public representation that the funding was available was simply not true or based on bad information and it was clear that the proposal before the MPC at the 11<sup>th</sup> hour and under pressure would force a decision that was inappropriate. He used the example of Congress supporting the war in Iraq under similar circumstances and suggested that the MPC give itself the opportunity to take the plan apart, pass those issues that were critically necessary to proceed, such as LTD projects, and allow sufficient time to consider whether other projects were necessary.

Ms. Bettman thanked those who testified and apologized that the time to speak had been reduced to two minutes when they had anticipated at least three minutes. She closed the public hearing.

Mr. Thompson briefly reviewed the history of the distribution of the draft plan, the two public hearings, two public open houses, and a notice mailed to over 400 individuals on LCOG's interested parties list. He encouraged those who had heard about the hearing through citizens' groups to add their name to the interested parties list by submitting their names to staff or signing up on the LCOG website. He offered several points in response to comments during the hearing:

- There were no policy changes in the document. The MPC acted in November 2004 to retain the three policies that were marked for possible deletion so they remained in the document.
- According to the U.S. Department of Transportation in a letter to the chair of the MPC two days earlier the public involvement in the updates of the RTP and the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) was "more than adequate and exceeded the federal transportation planning requirements."
- Local jurisdictions do not adopt or approve the Regional Transportation Plan, which was the federal document being considered by the MPC.
- The West Eugene Parkway had not doubled in cost; after adjusting for inflation from the 1997 dollars in the adopted TransPlan there was approximately a 53 percent increase that included full costs not included in the initial planning costs estimates.
- The West Eugene Parkway was proposed in the RTP as fully financially constrained and by the criteria established by the federal government for financially constrained was fully planned to have a reasonable expectation of funding over the 20-year horizon. The fact that only \$17 million were programmed in the MTIP only reflected that within the first three years of that horizon \$17 million had been dedicated, but the full \$169 million was expected during the 20-year horizon.
- Approximately six months ago the MPC adopted an amendment to the MTIP that added \$2.75 million for planning for the Franklin Boulevard/Interstate 5 interchange and bridge replacement.

Mr. Leiken moved, seconded by Mr. Torrey, to adopt Resolution 2004-06, Adopting an Update to the Central Lane Regional Transportation Plan.

Mr. Leiken expressed his appreciation to those who testified. He said the Regional Transportation Plan was much more than just the West Eugene Parkway and there were many projects that affected Springfield, as well as regional projects. He also appreciated those who spoke to the formation of the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Mr. Torrey said he stood by his comments to the Eugene City Council that Beltline between River Road and Interstate 5 was the worst traffic situation in Lane County. He said the point was that the project did not have a plan, was not represented in the RTP, and ODOT and Lane County needed to work on that effort. He acknowledged Mr. Green's activities in that regard. He recognized the differences of opinion in the community regarding the parkway, but he represented all of the citizens of Eugene and there many who supported the parkway. He said that he and Mr. Green had approached ODOT and that the parkway be built without going through the wetlands, but no one from the community was there to support that request. He said almost everyone agreed on the need to improve transportation in West Eugene and he had been advised by some that if the parkway was not built, the improvements that would be needed were four additional lanes on Highway 126 between Fisher Road and West 11<sup>th</sup> on the way into Eugene, which would have as much impact on the wetlands as the parkway. He said he was prepared to look at alternatives but no one had stepped forward with one; it was simply not enough to say "no" to the parkway. He intended to vote for the motion and all of the worthwhile projects in the RTP.

Mr. Pirrie offered a point of information relative to comments on Beltline. He said ODOT had recently sponsored a joint meeting on the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and the RTP in Springfield and there had been very little public participation. He said it was proposed at that meeting that the draft FY06-09 STIP include \$1 million to proceed with the planning process to improve that section of Beltline.

Ms. Volta welcomed citizen comments but the MPC had to act on the RTP or jeopardize federal funding. She said there were many projects at stake that were of interest to all citizens in the region and asked that the body vote on the matter.

Ms. Bettman apologized for remarks about the lack of citizen participation. She said that citizen input was not respected and the MPC intended to act upon the matter immediately based on allegations that funding was at stake. She said she did not support the West Eugene Parkway, but there was an election and supporters prevailed; she agreed with Mr. Torrey's comments regarding the ability to move forward with the project.

Ms. Bettman moved to amend the motion on the floor to redefine and describe the West Eugene Parkway and all affiliated West Eugene Parkway projects in the Regional Transportation Plan identical with the way they were funded and defined in the ballot measure as a limited access parkway with the same interchanges for \$88 million and the State would maintain it. The motion to amend died for lack of a second.

Mr. Thompson clarified that federal conformity would lapse on December 13, 2004, and there were two actions necessary by the MPC to avoid that: adoption of the RTP and adoption of Resolution 2004-07 related to the Air Quality Conformity Determination for the 2004-2025 Regional Transportation Plan and FY05-07 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Mr. Green, to extend the meeting time by 15 minutes. The motion passed, 8:1; Ms. Bettman voting in opposition.

Ms. Bettman said she would vote against the RTP not only because the magnitude and definition of the West Eugene Parkway had changed, but because she did not believe that it was a minor amendment and the document had not been reviewed by the Eugene City Council. She said the increased cost should trigger a new evaluation of the alternatives and allow for greater citizen input.

Mr. Green called for the question.

The main motion passed, 8:1; Ms. Bettman voting in opposition.

Mr. Torrey moved to approve Resolution 2004-07 Adopting the Air Quality Conformity Determination for 2004-2025 Regional Transportation Plan and the FY05-07 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

Ms. Bettman ruled the motion out of order as the public hearing had not been conducted and there was someone wishing to speak.

**c. Draft FY05-07 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)**

This item was postponed to a later meeting.

**d. Draft Air Quality Conformance Determination**

Ms. Bettman referred to a December 7, 2004, letter from the Federal Highway Administration that notified Governor Kulongoski of an air quality conformity lapse of the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan and asked for an explanation from staff.

Mr. Schwetz pointed out that the letter only notified the governor of a potential lapse if the RTP update was not adopted.

**Rob Zako**, 1280-B East 28<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Eugene, stated for the record that he did not know what was being considered, had not had time to review it, and had no substantive comments. He said it had taken him a month to review the changes to the RTP and wished there was more time to comment on the Air Quality Conformance Determination.

Ms. Bettman closed the hearing.

Mr. Torrey moved, seconded by Ms. Ban, to approve Resolution 2004-07 Adopting the Air Quality Conformity Determination for 2004-2025 Regional Transportation Plan and the FY04-06 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

Ms. Volta asked staff for a brief overview. Mr. Thompson responded that as discussed at the November 2004 meeting of the MPC when staff presented the draft determination finding, there was a 6,000 pound

budget and the analysis on the plan showed approximately 880 pounds of emission; the region was well within conformity and there was no issue with air quality.

The motion passed, 8:1; Ms. Bettman voting in opposition.

**e. MTIP Administrative Amendment**

This item was postponed to a later meeting.

**f. Follow-up and MPO Calendar**

- i. Meeting Notes from MPO Summit II
- ii. Status Report on ODOT Freight Route Designations
- iii. Memo from Bob Pirrie regarding FHWA's approval of West Eugene Parkway Re-evaluation report
- iv. Article on nationwide results of transportation funding measures
- v. MPO Calendar
- vi. MPC 2005 Meeting Calendar

These items were postponed to a later meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)

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