

## MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee  
Springfield City Hall—Library Meeting Room—225 5th Street  
Springfield, Oregon

January 10, 2008  
11:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Kitty Piercy, Chair; Alan Zelenka (City of Eugene); Bobby Green (Lane County), Anne Ballew, Sid Leiken (City of Springfield), Greg Evans, Gerry Gaydos (Lane Transit District), John Thiel (City of Coburg), Sonny Chickering (Oregon Department of Transportation), members; Angel Jones (City of Eugene), Jeff Spartz (Lane County), Gino Grimaldi (City of Springfield), Mark Pangborn (Lane Transit District), Don Schuessler (City of Coburg), *ex officio* members.

George Kloeppe, Kathi Wiederhold, Paul Thompson, Byron Vanderpool, Ann Mortenson, Jamon Kent (Lane Council of Governments); Jeff Scheick, Eric Havig (Oregon Department of Transportation); Greg Mott, Len Goodwin, Tom Boyatt (City of Springfield), Rob Inerfeld, Kurt Yeiter (City of Eugene), Tom Schwetz, Mary Archer (Lane Transit District); Celia Barry (Lane County); Dave Jacobson (MPO Citizen Advisory Committee); Rob Zako, guests.

### WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Piercy called the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) to order and welcomed committee members, staff and guests. Those present introduced themselves.

Mr. Pangborn announced that Lane Transit District (LTD) had received an honorable mention award from an international organization focusing on issues of sustainability and livability. He said that LTD was the only American property to receive recognition.

Ms. Piercy welcomed new Lane County Administrator Jeff Spartz and bid farewell to Jeff Scheick, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) northwest regional manager.

### APPROVE SEPTEMBER 13, 2007, MINUTES

Mr. Zelenka, seconded by Ms. Ballew, moved to approve the September 13, 2007, minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

### ELECTION OF MPC OFFICERS

Ms. Piercy expressed her appreciation for the opportunity to chair the MPC and said she would continue to advocate for better citizen involvement and encouraged the endeavors of the Citizen Advisory Committee. She urged the MPC to explore televising its meetings and suggested a review of the voting structure and

procedures. She said that separating the Eugene and Springfield urban growth boundaries would require a different approach to regional planning and partnerships.

Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Zelenka, moved to elect Sid Leiken as MPC chair. The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

Ms. Ballew, seconded by Mr. Evans, moved to elect Bobby Green as MPC vice chair. The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

Mr. Leiken thanked Ms. Piercy for her leadership during the past year. He asked for volunteers to fill the positions of CAC liaison and OMPOC representative. He noted that Ms. Ballew was willing to continue as the Oregon MPO Consortium (OMPOC) representative if no one else was interested.

Ms. Piercy indicated she was willing to serve as the OMPOC representative. Ms. Ballew agreed to serve as the alternate.

Mr. Leiken said that the CAC liaison would be appointed at the next meeting.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Mr. Leiken determined there was no one wishing to speak.

## **METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES**

### **Report from the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)**

Dave Jacobson, CAC vice chair, distributed copies of *It's How We Get There That Matters—A Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning*. He said the CAC had developed the booklet to encourage citizen involvement in transportation planning and reviewed its contents. He said the e-MPO website was another tool to enhance public participation. He noted that the CAC had changed its meeting date to the third Wednesday of each month in the Singer Room of the Eugene Downtown Library at 5:30 p.m.

Ms. Piercy suggested the MPC charge the CAC with evaluating the effectiveness of the Regional Transportation Plan public participation process.

### **FY08-11 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Modernization Reductions**

Mr. Thompson referred to the November 30, 2007, memorandum from Jeff Scheick, which would be the subject of the next three agenda items. He said modernization reductions responded to Task 1 in the memorandum, which asked Area Commissions on Transportation (ACT) to review and respond to a "straw proposal" document for cutting \$20.5 million from the FY08-11 STIP. He said the Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) had reviewed the straw proposal for Lane County and unanimously recommended approval by the MPC.

Mr. Thompson noted that there were only four ODOT modernization projects in the FY08-11 STIP from which funding could be reduced; the recommendation was to reduce FY09 construction modernization

funding for the I-5 at Coburg interchange project by \$3.4 million and eliminate FY08 preliminary engineering modernization funding for the Beltline Highway development project by \$2.5 million to achieve the ODOT target of \$6 million in reductions for Area 5.

In response to a question from Ms. Ballew, Mr. Scheick explained that ODOT's budget was impacted by gas tax revenue and other revenue streams that were lower than projected levels, department overhead costs higher than anticipated and a legislative mandate to transfer \$56 million from the department's budget to counties in November 2008 to mitigate the shortage of federal funds. Mr. Scheick said while it was difficult to postpone the Beltline project, there was no net loss; the I-5 at Coburg project still had a buildable phase that ODOT was discussing with the City and the County and a construction tangible phase would occur even after the funding reduction. He hoped that the project would be poised for completion when new State or federal funds became available.

Ms. Piercy commented that there needed to be a method for analyzing the top projects and then continuing to support them. She said that Beltline was in terrible shape and hoped that priority was not being abandoned.

Mr. Chickering explained that the reduction would not actually delay the project because it was unlikely the planning activities would be completed due to staffing shortages until additional funds were available.

Mr. Thiel expressed concern about the status of the I-5 at Coburg interchange project and whether a delay might jeopardize federal earmark funds. Mr. Chickering replied that the project would remain viable and recent discussions with members of Oregon's congressional delegation indicated a continuing commitment to spending the earmark at that location for the benefit of the community and the State's highway system. He noted the project was in the STIP and the reduction in the total amount authorized for construction would not postpone the project as it was not funded sufficiently to build the entire interchange. He said ODOT was proposing a phased approach focusing primarily on local improvements to address congestion problems that could be built even with a \$3.4 million reduction to project funding.

Mr. Thiel asked if any of the funds being transferred from ODOT to the County could be used for the project. Mr. Thompson said the legislative action was to address a shortfall in federal funds to counties and the money was available for use by the County on county facilities, including any that were related to the I-5 at Coburg interchange project.

Mr. Green said the Board of County Commissioners would be discussing the MPC's recommendations at its January 16 meeting.

Mr. Leiken said he hoped the MPC was not sending mixed signals as the project was a priority for the region and costs would only increase in the future.

Mr. Green noted that there were few projects in the region to which reductions could be made.

Ms. Ballew said that scheduling of the project meant that a reduction now did not eliminate the project in the future as new funding would become available.

Mr. Thiel expressed appreciation for ODOT and the MPC's continued support for the project.

Ms. Piercy emphasized that the MPC was dealing with funding realities while trying to keep projects on track and agreeing to reductions did not reflect a change in priorities.

Mr. Green said the challenge was to establish priorities for the region that would be competitive at the region and State levels.

Mr. Scheick provided assurance that ODOT remained committed to the I-5 at Coburg interchange project and would complete planning activities so the project would be attractively positioned in future funding cycles.

Ms. Ballew, seconded by Mr. Green, moved to concur with the Region 2 Straw Proposal for Reductions in the FY08-11 STIP Modernization funding and provide feedback to the Oregon Department of Transportation regarding the region's continuing strong support for the projects that were being impacted. The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

### **FY10-13 STIP Modernization Priorities**

Mr. Thompson said the item addressed Task 2 in the ODOT memorandum requesting modernization priorities for approximately \$6 million that matched as closely as possible the \$5.9 million in FY08-11 STIP reductions. He said the TPC was recommending the following project priorities:

1. Backfill the Beltline Road preliminary engineering development work for \$2.5 million
- 2a. Backfill the I-5 at Coburg interchange project for the acquisition of right-of-way or other project needs as scoped in an adopted phased strategy for \$3.4 million
- 2b. Provide funding for discrete improvements for the I-5 at Beltline project during Phase II for \$3.4 million

Mr. Thompson said the total requested was \$9 million because ODOT encouraged submission of priorities at 150 percent of anticipated funding.

Mr. Chickering commented that Item 2b was added by staff at his request based on information there were discrete improvements that could be built for approximately \$3.4 million. He said those included westbound through southbound ramp improvements and/or construction of additional sound wall along the west side of I-5. He said further research indicated that ramp improvements were dependent on a widened bridge and that option was not available, nor was the sound wall project as the FY10-13 funding would arrive too late. He said items 1 and 2a were accurate and there was still an opportunity to designate funds for Phase II without identifying discrete improvements.

Mr. Green asked when the next leaf would be built at the Delta Highway/Beltline interchange to address the serious congestion problems. He asked if that project would qualify for funding. Mr. Chickering said any project at that location was tied to the Beltline to River Road to Coburg study, which would identify projects within the corridor. He said that study was just beginning.

Ms. Ballew supported including I-5 at Beltline in the recommendation as it was still a high priority project.

Ms. Ballew, seconded by Mr. Green, moved to approve draft recommendations for MPO Modernization priorities for the FY10-13 STIP, with elimination of the reference to discrete improvements in Item 2b.

Mr. Zelenka remarked that the two top priorities for the region were finishing the I-5/Beltline interchange and dealing with the Delta Highway/Beltline interchange congestion problems and understood that funds were required for Beltline planning activities, to be followed by construction in the next phase of the project.

Mr. Evans noted that the region would need to eventually provide more specific language regarding the type of activities to be funded in Item 2b.

Mr. Zelenka asked for an explanation of Phase III of the I-5/Beltline project. Mr. Chickering replied that the third phase would be replacement of the bridge over I-5 and once that was completed ramps could be reconfigured.

Mr. Green asked for clarification of discrete improvements included in Phase II of the project. Mr. Chickering listed the following improvements:

- I-5 northbound off ramp to Beltline
- I-5 northbound on ramp from Beltline to I-5
- Sound wall on the west side of I-5 north of Harlow Road
- Right-of-way for \$5.5 million
- Construction for \$13 million

Mr. Green requested a copy of the list for the record.

The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

### **STIP Process and Program Funding Update Memo Tasks 3 & 4**

Mr. Thompson asked for discussion and direction from the MPC on Task 3 to develop priorities for a potential funding increase in STIP modernization over the 2010-2015 time period. He said the increase could result in \$10 million for Lane County over the six years. He said that would result in \$90-100 million in priorities at 150 percent of estimated costs. He reviewed a list of all ODOT modernization projects in the RTP. He said the CAC and TPC would also be providing input on priorities.

Ms. Piercy remarked that it would be helpful to have a matrix of how the projects responded to regional priorities to assist the MPC in identifying priority projects. Mr. Thompson said that staff was in the process of comparing projects to STIP eligibility and prioritization criteria.

Mr. Zelenka agreed there should be an objective evaluation process for identifying priorities for the region. He asked if local criteria developed by the MPO could be added to the process. Mr. Thompson said that could be done and asked ODOT to address how it would take those criteria into consideration.

Mr. Scheick stated that the OTC required each of the areas to use the criteria and prioritization factors that were identified for STIP nominations. He said areas could add local prioritization factors, but those would be only for the benefit of the area and would not move forward to the regional level. He said there should be a discussion of how the County, as the area's decision-making body, might react to local criteria added by the MPC.

Mr. Havig explained that the Lane County Board of Commissioners functioned as an ACT in ODOT's process and ODOT would need to understand how the local criteria were identified and decided upon. He said other areas had added local criteria to further refine the priority-setting process, but ODOT and the OTC did not factor those in.

Mr. Zelenka suggested that staff provide the MPC with a list of STIP criteria and prioritization factors, along with options for local criteria that could be added to the prioritization process. Mr. Thompson said in the process agreed to in previous STIP cycles the MPC established priorities within the MPO boundary and forward those priorities to the Lane County Board, which melded them with priorities outside of the MPO boundary, but did not change the order of priorities. He said local criteria added by the MPC could change the order of those priorities. He noted that the MPC had a lengthy discussion during the last prioritization process and directed staff to rank projects based on STIP criteria and RTP policies.

Mr. Zelenka asked that the MPC have an opportunity to review the criteria before staff completed the prioritization matrix. Mr. Thompson said there could be timing problems as ODOT was requesting input by February 22 and there was only one MPC meeting scheduled before that date.

Mr. Zelenka stated he was reluctant to simply approve staff recommendations without discussion and consideration of criteria. He suggested staff could bring criteria back to the MPC for consideration and modification via email or at a special meeting and then complete a matrix for consideration at the regular February meeting.

Mr. Green remarked that it would benefit the MPC to have a discussion of all the projects and how they could benefit the entire system.

Ms. Piercy regretted that the MPC was often caught in timelines that did not allow it to fully consider issues and if another meeting was necessary to satisfy that obligation one should be scheduled. She said that would also apply to the CAC. She agreed with Mr. Zelenka and Mr. Green's comments.

Ms. Ballew reminded the MPC that the MPO would be competing for funding at the State level against STIP criteria and prioritization factors, not local criteria.

Mr. Zelenka said there should be something to supplement that process at the local level to help identify priorities for the MPO as it appeared that there could be many ties among projects on the list if only the STIP criteria were used.

Mr. Boyatt remarked that the funding had not yet been discussed by the legislature and ODOT's intent with the straw proposal was to prepare for that discussion. He said there could be subsequent steps in the process that would allow MPOs to revisit and refine priorities after the legislation was passed.

Mr. Thompson pointed out that the legislature could also add criteria and factors for funding. He said the list was long because staff wanted the MPC to see all ODOT modernization projects in the RTP, both constrained and future. He said the MPC could focus its prioritization on the constrained list to make the process more manageable.

Ms. Piercy said it was important that the list submitted to the legislature truly reflected local priorities and was not just a list of all projects.

Mr. Green agreed with Ms. Piercy. He said the supplemental legislative session would have a focus on transportation issues and it was important to be prepared to move forward.

Mr. Leiken did not favor an additional meeting. He felt that jurisdictions paid professional staff to make informed recommendations. He wanted Springfield staff to work in conjunction with Lane Council of Governments staff to develop recommendations that reflected local priorities.

Mr. Zelenka, seconded by Ms Piercy, moved to direct the Transportation Planning Committee to bring STIP criteria and suggestions for local criteria back to the MPC members and that an interim meeting be scheduled in early February to discuss and finalize those criteria, with final prioritization of projects to occur at the regular February meeting of the MPC.

Mr. Green emphasized the importance of being prepared with a list of priorities in the event the legislature allocated funds and was not opposed to an additional meeting to finalize MPO priorities.

Mr. Evans understood Mr. Zelenka's point, but hoped that it was not establishing precedence for additional meetings and the MPC could operate within established timeframes.

Mr. Green noted that ODOT had set the process timelines.

The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

### **2031 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Follow-up**

Mr. Vanderpool referred to his January 3, 2008, memorandum, which responded to a number of questions raised with respect to the RTP adoption process. He pointed out a correction to the reference on page 5 to an anticipated increase of \$25 million and said the updated amount was \$60 million.

Mr. Zelenka observed there was a convergence of many land use and transportation issues, including a TransPlan update, and jurisdictions had limited funds and staff. He asked how meeting schedules, staff and finances were linked so jurisdictions could accomplish all of those tasks. He asked if there was a work plan and schedule and if funding was available. He said the CAC's minutes reflected comments indicating there were many concerns about the RTP public participation process and questioned how the MPC could work with that group to address its concerns. He urged the MPC to televise its meetings and explore other ways to engage more citizens in the transportation planning process.

In response to a question from Mr. Evans, Mr. Vanderpool said the MPC meetings were not held in venues that were wired for television broadcast; staff could explore webcasts of meetings, which was a less expensive option, if the MPC so directed.

Ms. Piercy suggested the issue of televised or webcast meetings could be referred to the CAC for further discussion. Mr. Vanderpool said the CAC was continuing its evaluation of RTP public participation and would provide a formal report.

Ms. Ballew favored deferring action until the CAC report had been received.

In response to a question from Ms. Piercy, Mr. Vanderpool said staff was developing a joint work plan for state and federal processes and requirements. He would forward to the CAC the MPC's request for a recommendation regarding televising or webcasting MPC meetings. He noted that the e-MPO website would have an interaction function available to the public.

## **Follow-up and MPO Calendar**

### **ODOT Update**

Mr. Chickering reviewed his January 10, 2008, memorandum addressing four items raised since the last MPC meeting. He highlighted ODOT's request for comments on its updated Public Involvement Policy document, a copy of which was posted on the Area 5 website.

Mr. Thompson distributed copies of the updated document and asked if the MPC wished to provide preliminary comments during the early input period or wait until its March meeting to provide formal comments.

Ms. Ballew asked for a presentation by ODOT at the February MPC meeting, which could be followed by comments at the March meeting.

Mr. Chickering announced that ODOT staff was developing recommendations for the disposal of parcels of land that occupied the former West Eugene Parkway corridor. He recognized there were many planning efforts in progress in West Eugene and was concerned that they might move forward with the assumption the corridor would still be available. He said a map of parcels was available.

Ms. Piercy asked if ODOT had identified a timeline for disposing of the parcels and would it be willing to delay disposition until current planning efforts were completed. Mr. Chickering responded that some parcels were subject to right-of-first-refusal by prior owners to repurchase the properties. He said there was a State-mandated process for property disposition, including timelines, but how and when it was implemented would be the regional manager's decision. He invited input from MPC members for inclusion with staff recommendations.

Mr. Scheick said the disposition process would offer public entities the first opportunity to purchase property where there was no right-of-first-refusal agreement with a previous owner.

Mr. Zelenka asked for information regarding any mandated timelines for disposition of the parcels and whether those timelines could be extended if necessary.

Mr. Scheick cautioned that federal funds were used to purchase the parcels and staff should determine what requirements that could impose on the disposition.

Mr. Scheick announced that Dee Jones would be the interim northwest region manager while recruitment of a permanent replacement was being conducted. He thanked the MPC for its support during his tenure.

### **MTIP Administrative Amendments**

There were no questions on this item.

### **MPO Calendar**

Mr. Thompson asked if the MPC wished to schedule a public hearing on 2010-15 STIP modernization priorities at its February meeting.

Mr. Leiken determined there was consensus to schedule the hearing.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:20 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)