

MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee
Eugene Public Library—Bascom-Tykeson Room—100 West 10th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon

February 14, 2008
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Sid Leiken, Chair; Anne Ballew (City of Springfield), Bobby Green, Peter Sorenson (Lane County), Kitty Piercy, Alan Zelenka (City of Eugene); John Thiel (City of Coburg); Greg Evans, Mike Dubick (Lane Transit District), Sonny Chickering (Oregon Department of Transportation), members; Dan Brown (City of Springfield), Stefano Viggiano (Lane Transit District), Don Schuessler (City of Coburg), Scott Luell (City of Eugene), *ex officio* members.

George Kloeppe, Kathi Wiederhold, Petra Schuetz, Paul Thompson, Byron Vanderpool, Ann Mortenson, Susan Payne, Jamon Kent (Lane Council of Governments); Eric Havig, Robert Maestre (Oregon Department of Transportation); Tom Boyatt (City of Springfield), Tom Schwetz (Lane Transit District), Eleanor Mulder (MPO Citizen Advisory Committee), Mark Robinowitz, Dan Armstrong, Rob Zako guests.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

APPROVE JANUARY 10, 2008, AND JANUARY 29, 2008, MINUTES

Mr. Green, seconded by Mr. Chickering, moved to approve the January 10 and January 29, 2008, minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously, 10:0.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Dan Armstrong, Eugene, said he had recently attended a presentation on Peak Oil and climate change and was convinced that transportation planning had to consider those issues. He encouraged the MPC to focus on alternative modes during its discussion of State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) modernization priorities and eliminate adding new facilities as an option.

Mark Robinowitz, Eugene, asked that the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) include an analysis of how Peak Oil and climate change would impact transportation availability to design year 2031. He said that proposals for carbon trading and carbon neutrality were scientifically fraudulent. He listed a number of measures that could be implemented to demonstrate a commitment to reduce energy consumption. He did not think the MPC's public participation process was acceptable and the comments that were received were not considered when decisions were made. He objected to the expansion of bus rapid transit, which he characterized as "greenwashing" development.

Rob Zako, Eugene, discussed the Portland transit system and how it was an integral part of the city's vision of what type of community it wanted to be. He urged jurisdictions in the Eugene/Springfield metropolitan area to work together to develop a common vision and discuss how resources could be used to advance that vision.

Mr. Sorenson remarked on a study that compared the number of miles per capita that were driven in the Portland metropolitan area to other metropolitan areas and quantified the increase in disposable income that resulted when people drove less.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES

Report from the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

Ms. Wiederhold drew the committee's attention to the report on CAC activities included in the agenda packet. She said CAC recommendations related to STIP funding priorities and televising MPC meetings would be discussed under other agenda items. She distributed public education and involvement materials developed by the committee. She announced that one CAC member had resigned, leaving 11 voting members. She said that the CAC likely would make recommendations to MPC at a later meeting for additional appointments.

Mr. Zelenka commended the *Citizen's Guide for Transportation Planning* developed by the CAC and said he found the meeting minutes very informative.

Mr. Sorenson suggested that an area-wide applicant pool could be created from individuals who had applied to a local jurisdiction for appointment to a board or commission, but were not selected. Applicants in that pool could be solicited for interest in being appointed to a body such as the CAC.

Title VI Training

Ms. Wiederhold explained that Title VI was a section of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that required consideration of under-represented groups. She said that training would cover outreach to those groups and project assessment to determine there were no undue impacts on under-represented groups. She said two training sessions would be held on March 5 and invitations would be sent to MPC members.

Ms. Ballew requested an executive summary of the issue.

Mr. Sorenson asked for a summary of the stages at which environmental justice could or should be incorporated in the planning process. Mr. Kloeppe replied that projects were required to take those civil rights issues into consideration or be subject to challenge. Mr. Vanderpool added that Title VI requirements had been applicable to MPO actions for many years and the SAFETEA-LU transportation bill specifically required adoption of a Title VI plan. He said that educational materials had been requested from the federal training providers.

Designation of Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) Liaison to the CAC

Mr. Kloepfel said that a member of the MPC was needed to serve as liaison to the CAC and asked for a volunteer. He said the CAC met monthly and provided an important linkage between citizens and the MPC.

Ms. Piercy volunteered to serve as liaison until another MPC member was appointed.

ODOT STIP Process and Program Funding Update Memo Task 3

Mr. Thompson provided a brief overview of the issue, which was continued from the January 10 and January 29 MPC meetings. He said the agenda packet included Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) recommendations for FY10-15 STIP modernization funding in accordance with direction from the MPC. He reviewed the TPC's unanimous recommendation of four construction project priorities totaling \$90 million and three development projects for an additional \$5 million.

Ms. Ballew said she was supportive of the projects, but not happy with the inclusion of the additional local prioritization factors, which were not voted upon at the January 29, 2008, meeting. Mr. Thompson replied that the minutes of that meeting indicated that the chair had determined members agreed that projects would be prioritized based on current criteria, RTP policies and consideration of the four factors recommended by the CAC. He said staff interpreted that to mean the projects should be scored and ranked based on all of the criteria.

Ms. Ballew said she understood there would be additional discussion of adding local criteria.

Mr. Zelenka said his interest was in stimulating a discussion of local criteria, such as those used in TransPlan, as a way to more accurately address community issues in the prioritization process. He asked if local criteria would be considered by ODOT and the OTC. Mr. Thompson replied that local criteria could be used by jurisdictions and the MPC to prioritize local projects, but the criteria would not carry forward to the regional and statewide processes.

Mr. Thompson distributed a list of criteria for TransPlan project evaluation and explained how it had been used in the last TransPlan update in the 1990s.

Mr. Green affirmed the MPC's decision to continue a discussion of local criteria at future meetings.

Ms. Ballew commented that the appropriate place for local criteria and factors was at the local jurisdiction level.

Mr. Zelenka hoped to see the TransPlan prioritization process used as a model for prioritizing projects for the entire community instead of simply submitting separate lists from each jurisdiction.

Ms. Piercy observed that it was an opportune time to discuss the issue as staff was developing a work plan for the next TransPlan update.

Mr. Havig explained that ODOT would look at what local priorities were and the factors used for prioritization, but was obligated by the OTC to use the State's eligibility criteria and OTC prioritization factors.

Mr. Evans asked if environmental justice was part of the expanded criteria. Mr. Thompson said that environmental justice could be included in the MPC's discussion of local criteria.

Mr. Evans said he was also interested in geographic impacts, specifically adverse impacts on areas in which under-represented populations were concentrated.

Ms. Piercy and Mr. Zelenka agreed with Mr. Evans' suggestion.

Mr. Leiken opened the public hearing and noted the submission of a letter from Lloyd Gordon, Oregon State Transportation Alternative Resources.

There being no one wishing to testify, Mr. Leiken closed the public hearing.

Ms. Ballew, seconded by Mr. Zelenka, moved to approve and forward State Transportation Improvement Program Modernization funding priorities for FY2010-15 in response to Oregon Department of Transportation Task 3. The motion passed unanimously, 10:0.

ODOT STIP Process and Program Funding Update Memo Task 4

Mr. Thompson referred to the list of Large Unfunded Projects, which were developed in response to ODOT Task 4 and included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Green asked if the list was prioritized. Mr. Thompson said the projects were not prioritized.

Mr. Green, seconded by Ms. Ballew, moved to approve and forward the Large Unfunded Projects list for Oregon Department of Transportation Task 4. The motion passed unanimously, 10:0.

ODOT Draft Public Involvement Policy and Procedures Update

Mr. Thompson said that ODOT was seeking early comment on its *Draft Public Involvement Policy Update—Early Public Review Draft, January - February 2008*. He said the MPC could provide comment following the presentation or provide formal comment when the formal draft was issued.

Robert Maestre, manager of ODOT's long-range planning unit, provided a slide presentation describing ODOT's draft public involvement policy and procedures update. He said the goal was to provide statewide consistency for public involvement processes and improve coordination in the development and revisions of long-range statewide Multimodal transportation plans and the STIP. He said the emphasis was on early, open and continuous public involvement in the decision-making process that included a wide range of stakeholders, including individuals and organization that were interested in or affected by transportation decisions.

Mr. Sorenson remarked that parents were under-represented in transportation planning activities because they did not have the time necessary to participate. He asked if there had been any research on whether early and extensive public involvement had resulted in better decisions. Mr. Maestre said public

comments were valuable because themes arose that reflected stakeholder interests and needs and identified cross-connections among transportation system users. He said effective public involvement also established a list of values that would be used to determine which needs could be met by transportation and which should be addressed in other ways. He said elected officials were a reflection of a community and had emphasized the importance of public involvement.

Mr. Sorenson asked for a citation of an article where the premise was whether public involvement really benefited decision-making. He said that public involvement required significant resources and decision-makers wondered whether the comments received were reflective of the larger community and should be considered. Mr. Maestre said one benefit of good public involvement was a reduction in lawsuits because people felt they had been heard and another was that project timelines were sometimes shortened. He would look for additional research on the issue.

Ms. Piercy commented that Eugene had a high level of public involvement and it did affect outcomes. She said that car drivers could be a population that was difficult to reach.

Mr. Zelenka said that public involvement should be made simple, exciting and easily accessible, which would require an innovative approach. He asked if ODOT would hire consultants to help develop public involvement strategies. Mr. Maestre said there were a number of creative ideas being implemented and ODOT was investing considerable resources in the effort. He said in particular ODOT was interested in making transportation planning interesting to a younger audience.

Mr. Zelenka questioned how “meaningful” public involvement would be defined and the success of outreach strategies measured. Mr. Maestre said ODOT would evaluate the success of public involvement, but a methodology was not yet developed. He said measuring the success was difficult as it involved to a large extent people’s feelings and perceptions.

Mr. Zelenka said that identifying things that changed as a result of public involvement would be one measurement.

Mr. Sorenson said that the decision-making process for a large agency like ODOT was comparable to that of a large private firm. He suggested that public involvement strategies could include private sector activities such as focus groups and public opinion surveys and not be limited to holding hearings and receiving comments.

Ms. Ballew commented there were many approaches to public involvement and the greatest level of participation occurred when a project was controversial. She said transportation planning was very technical and could not compete with other activities. She agreed that there should be public participation, but pointed out that input that was poor advice could not influence decisions. She liked Mr. Sorenson’s suggestion to use private sector strategies for eliciting public opinion and comments. She hoped that any public involvement efforts would be cost effective.

Mr. Evans said that education used several tools for public involvement evaluation, including surveys, focus groups, interviews and quantitative and qualitative analysis. He said the issue as how to assure authentic engagement of under-represented communities in the process. He asked if ODOT had a strategic outreach plan for penetrating those communities. Mr. Maestre said it was clear that it would be necessary to physically go into those communities and reach out to people at churches, stores and schools as a first step and to conduct that outreach in conjunction with people who reflected those under-represented populations.

Mr. Green hoped that the goal was to make public involvement meaningful from citizens' perspectives, not just the agency's. He said that people wanted to see their opinions reflected in the actions or policies of the decision-making body. He remarked that 18 to 25 year olds were an overlooked group that represented an entire generation of future transportation system users. He said that was a very mobile population; technology was an important part of their lives and could be useful for communicating with that group. Mr. Maestre said that the relevancy of discussing the transportation system in 20 years was very difficult to communicate to people.

Mr. Dubick encouraged using multiple modes of communication. He agreed that a hearing should not be the point of public input; the process should provide many opportunities for people to express their opinions and concerns over a period of time. He said that public participation could be successful if the process was well designed at the beginning.

Mr. Zelenka felt that meaningful meant quality, not quantity; ten people would good ideas represented valuable input to him. He hoped that ODOT would reflect of the lack of success with current strategies and consider the MPO CAC's recommendations for public education and outreach activities.

Mr. Leiken observed that ODOT was empowering its field offices more than in the past and ODOT staff could work directly with jurisdictions and provide a local agency presence. He agreed with Mr. Green's comments about using technology to communicate with a much more mobile society. He said that government, unlike the private sector, had to be transparent and that meant a more extensive and accessible public involvement process.

Mr. Evans said that public education activities and materials had to be relevant to the present, use current technology and make the subject interesting and engaging.

Mr. Thompson determined that MPC members preferred to wait until the formal public review draft was released to provide comment.

Televising MPC Meetings

Mr. Green remarked that the MPC would need to make changes in its meeting venues if the decision was to televise meetings. He asked how televising meetings would be paid for. Mr. Kloeppe said as long as the MPC was engaged in MPO-related work it was considered a part of citizen involvement and there were funds available, but if the MPC's role included non-MPO activities in the future, federal transportation funds could not be used for that portion of business.

Mr. Green felt it would be difficult for jurisdictions to provide the funds.

Mr. Vanderpool indicated that staff would provide more detailed information at the next MPC meeting.

Draft Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) Earmark Policy

Mr. Thompson referred to agenda packet materials related to the OTC's draft earmark policy. He said staff would be reviewing the draft and providing recommendations at the March MPC meeting. He asked if the MPC wished to have a formal presentation on the policy.

Mr. Leiken said the issue was significant and he hoped that Matt Garrett or another high level ODOT official could make the presentation and discuss the policy with the MPC.

Mr. Chickering said he would convey that request to the Salem office.

Mr. Green concurred with Mr. Leiken's request.

ODOT Update

Mr. Chickering reported that the Oregon State Senate had taken action on nominations and reappointment of OTC members on February 8, 2008. He said ODOT was moving forward with disposing of West Eugene Parkway parcels. He referred to a description of the process and timeline in his memorandum of February 14. He said the first step was recommendations from the area district managers. He said Dee Jones, interim regional manager, would have to sign off on each parcel; she planned to tour the property and view parcels before taking any action.

Mr. Leiken requested that copies of the OTC's work plan be distributed to MPC members.

Ms. Piercy hoped that OTC members could meet with the MPC if they were in the area.

Mr. Zelenka asked for brief biographical information on OTC members. He asked if the OTC ever met in the Eugene/Springfield area. Mr. Havig replied that the commission did meet in communities around the state and he would pass along the MPC's interest in a local meeting.

Mr. Sorenson noted that there was no one from the area's congressional district on the OTC. He asked for information on what congressional districts were represented by current members. He said jurisdictions should monitor when a vacancy occurred on the OTC and lobby for representation from this district.

MPO Calendar

Mr. Zelenka asked for staff to present a status report on regional transportation planning at the next MPC meeting. Mr. Vanderpool replied that local jurisdictions were developing a work plan, but it was not yet completed and would have to be reconciled with the State's work plan. He was not certain how long that would take, but the MPC would have information as soon as it was available.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)