

March 4, 2004

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Paul Thompson

Subject: Item 4.c.iii: Options for Citizen Representation

**Action Recommended:** Review options for Citizen Representation. Select option (with any MPC modifications) for implementation.

### **Issue Summary:**

In July 2003, MPC received a recommendation from the MPC Public Involvement Subcommittee to "Add citizen and stakeholder representation to the MPO's Transportation Planning Committee (TPC)." This recommendation was one of ten forwarded by the Subcommittee for improvements to public involvement in the MPO. MPC directed staff to provide proposals for implementing the recommendation, focusing first on the one stated above.

After several reviews of options for increased citizen representation, MPC has asked staff for a review of two options: adding citizen representatives to the existing TPC, or forming a separate standing Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for the MPO. This memo addresses that request, adding a third blended option of citizen representation on TPC combined with the use of ad hoc CACs.

The most significant difference between the options is one of cost and staff resources. Adding citizen representatives to the existing TPC structure will be significantly less costly than the formation of a new CAC. However, a standing CAC could allow for broader and more diverse ongoing public representation in the MPO process.

### **Background**

At its November 2003 meeting, the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) considered a staff recommendation for the addition of citizen representatives to the Transportation Planning Committee (TPC). During the meeting, a proposed motion to implement citizen membership on TPC failed for lack of a supporting vote from a Springfield representative. The proposal had called for four citizen representatives to serve on TPC, two appointed by the City of Eugene, one by the City of Springfield and one by Lane County. Springfield representatives on MPC indicated a desire to consider other options for modifying citizen participation in the Metropolitan Planning Organization

(MPO) transportation planning process and suggested carrying the topic over to the next meeting.

As communicated by Springfield staff in a memo to MPO staff dated December 2, 2003, the City of Springfield proposed creating a citizen advisory committee (CAC) that makes recommendations to MPC regarding metro transportation issues. The Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) will continue to exist to provide technical staff assistance to MPC.

At the January 8, 2004 MPC meeting, staff was asked to develop an analysis outlining the advantages and disadvantages of using a CAC or citizen participation on TPC.

### **Local Trends in use of CACs**

The trend locally over the last several years in using citizen committees varies with jurisdiction. Springfield and Lane County generally have held steady the number of citizen committees they have. Eugene uses fewer citizen committees, primarily due to the cost of staffing them, and has shifted towards fewer standing committees and more ad hoc committees. Lane Transit District has increased the use of citizen committees in the last five years. Eugene, Springfield, Lane Transit District and Lane County sometimes jointly use citizen committees for metropolitan planning studies, depending on the nature of the study.

Lane County has about twenty-five citizen advisory committees, including a couple which have been added in the last few years and another couple that currently are inactive. Generally, the number of CACs has remained about the same over the last several years. The county consolidated its two planning commissions into one, primarily due to staffing costs. The Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) is a standing citizen committee staffed by Lane County Public Works that reviews and forwards recommendations for specific plans, the 5-year Capital Improvement Program, and capital improvement projects.

Eugene eliminated many of its forty-five citizen committees after a comprehensive review about ten years ago, retaining four standing committees to the council and creating short term ad hoc Department Advisory Committees that have a specific charge, e.g. rates. Eugene recently eliminated its Citizen Involvement Committee and transferred the duties to its planning commission, after deciding not to fund the needed staffing. Eugene used a series of public workshops for citizen involvement on its West Eugene Wetlands Study, in lieu of a CAC.

Springfield relies on a variety of boards, commissions, and committees for citizen involvement. The city uses both standing citizen advisory committees on an ongoing basis and ad hoc blue ribbon panels or task forces to advise on issues with defined beginning and ending dates, such as a levy. Springfield Planning uses ad hoc CACs on an as-needed basis, tailoring them to fit the project. A common approach is to combine the CAC with the technical committee, which has the advantages of reducing the number of meetings and fostering interaction between the technical staff and citizens.

Lane Transit District uses citizen committees for both the annual budget process and for major capital projects, such as bus rapid transit and the Springfield Station Project. The capital project committees are Steering Committees, and are comprised of elected officials, business owners and interested citizens. These committees are staffed by Lane Transit District staff, and are supported by technical advisory committees comprised of staff from the City of Springfield, City of Eugene, Lane County, ODOT, and the Federal Transit Administration.

Using a CAC for citizen involvement is one of the public involvement approaches that has been commonly used for metropolitan planning projects. Examples of projects that had a CAC are the Residential Lands Study, the Natural Resources Special Study, and the Industrial Lands Study. These citizen committees typically met monthly for the several-year duration of the study.

### **What are other MPOs doing?**

The use of citizen representation on standing committees as a public involvement strategy varies across the Oregon MPOs. One MPO, Rogue Valley, has a standing CAC. Two MPOs, Portland Metro and Salem/Keiser, include citizen representatives on the technical committee that advises the MPO policy body.

In the Portland Metro Area, the Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT) is the delegated MPO Policy Board for transportation. JPACT representation includes elected officials and representatives from relevant state and local agencies. While JPACT provides a forum for recommendations on transportation issues at the policy level, the Transportation Policy Alternatives Committee (TPAC) provides input from the technical level. TPAC's membership includes technical staff from the same governments and agencies as JPACT, plus representatives of the Federal Highway Administration and the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council. There are also six citizen representatives appointed by the Metro Council.

The Salem/Keiser MPO has a policy body made up of elected officials and representatives from relevant transportation agencies. They also have a technical advisory committee made up of jurisdictional staff, agency representatives and interested parties. The Public Involvement Framework Plan indicates the policy body can elect to create a CAC as a method to encourage public participation on such processes as regional transportation plans, Air Quality Conformity Determination; and Major Regional Transportation Studies, Refinement Plans, "Deferred" or "Outstanding" Issue Studies and Related Air Quality Conformity Determinations.

The Rogue Valley MPO has a Policy Council comprised of elected officials, a Technical Advisory Committee made up of professional staff members and a Public Advisory Council. The Public Advisory Council consists of appointed citizens from 6 citizen involvement areas who make recommendations to the MPO Policy Council from the public's perspective on proposed long-range transportation plans, project plans, priorities for state and federal funding and other transportation issues.

## **Federal Regulations for MPO Public Involvement**

As detailed in an accompanying memo (Item 4.c.i: *Overview of MPO Public Involvement Objectives and Issues*), the federal regulations on the public involvement process for metropolitan transportation planning do not specifically require or speak to the need for direct citizen representation on any MPO body. Furthermore, the federal regulations apply when:

- initiating a major transportation investment study, 23 CFR 450.318(b),
- developing the metropolitan transportation plan (RTP), 23 CFR 450.322(c),
- developing the Transportation Improvement program (MTIP), 23 CFR 450.324(c), or
- amending the Transportation Improvement program (MTIP), 23 CFR 450.326.

The requirement for addressing the federal public involvement regulations only during consideration of the three major products above could be met at a minimum by the use of ad hoc CACs to advise the MPO during the development of those products.

## **Local Options**

Presented below are three options for consideration, a standing CAC, adding citizens to TPC, and adding citizens to TPC while creating ad hoc CACs as needed on specific transportation issues.

### **Option #1: Standing Citizen Advisory Committee**

This option proposes a standing CAC that would make recommendations to MPC on policy, project prioritization, public involvement and other issues. Specific tasks that could be addressed by the CAC include review and recommendations regarding the MPO's Public Involvement Plan (PIP), recommendations for public outreach for specific transportation activities (e.g., an RTP update), or providing citizen input on project priorities. It is recommended that the committee consist of 8 to 12 members representing a diverse range of interests in the community. MPC would approve appointments. As discussed by MPC, a citizen member of the standing Lane County Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) could also be appointed to serve on the MPO's CAC.

The initial City of Springfield proposal for a CAC (presented in January) recommended that the CAC report directly to MPC. Staff suggests that while recommendations and reports from the CAC should go directly to MPC, some form of communication and interaction between the CAC and TPC could result in a more efficient process. This could be accomplished by regular reports from the CAC and TPC to the other body, by periodic joint meetings (perhaps twice a year) or by CAC holding one or two non-voting membership seats at TPC.

The CAC would meet monthly and staff anticipates that meetings could commence in June-July 2004. It is estimated staffing the CAC would require .2 to .25 FTE for MPO staff. In addition, it would increase time commitments from staff from the cities, county, state and LTD. The total cost related to a standing CAC is estimated to be between \$25,000 to \$50,000 a year, depending primarily on the scope of the CAC's work program, and on the size of the CAC, meeting frequency and other factors.

### Advantages

- CACs are designed to provide a forum to discuss community-wide public involvement issues.
- Would facilitate interaction between citizens and MPC.
- The ongoing involvement of CAC members would allow them to become familiar with the issues and to provide informed comment early and often.
- CAC members may assist in outreach to the broader public—helping to design outreach, hosting events, participating in the speaker's bureau, and proactively soliciting involvement from a wide spectrum of the community.
- The CAC could serve as a forum itself for citizens (other than those on the CAC) to provide input.
- Allows having enough citizen representatives to give fair access to a wide spectrum of the community.

### Disadvantages

- To provide staff support, would increase costs to MPO, cities, county, state and LTD.
- Processing topics through both the CAC and TPC could delay MPC's consideration of issues. The extra step of the CAC process would lengthen the turn-around time for issues being returned to MPC. Certain issues must be dealt with by MPC in as little as two months – this could be problematic with a CAC or may preclude CAC review of certain items.
- MPC workload may increase with materials and presentations from both TPC and CAC.
- If MPC requests that the MPC membership receive copies of all CAC packets, then support costs could increase further.
- CACs can tend to inherently expand the scope of their own work and thus increase the demand on staff time and the process.

### **Option #2: TPC Citizen Participation**

TPC is the standing technical advisory committee to the MPO Policy Board. TPC conducts the technical activities of the MPO and makes recommendations to the MPO Policy Board on policy issues. TPC also takes administrative action on amendments to the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP). Under this option, it is proposed that 5 citizens be added to TPC (one from each agency – Eugene, Springfield, Coburg, Lane County, Lane Transit District) with the goal of representing a diverse transportation perspective. The membership would be approved by MPC. MPC has also discussed potentially adding a citizen member of the standing Lane County Roads Advisory Committee (RAC) to serve on TPC. The five citizens would vote on all recommendations to MPC. To add citizen representation to TPC would involve some relatively low initial cost, primarily to orient the new citizen members. Ongoing costs associated with citizen representatives on TPC would be minimal – again primarily associated with appointing and orienting new citizen members as needed. TPC's monthly mail outs and other communications are handled electronically, and thus there

is little, if any, additional cost in this area associated with adding additional members. These cost estimates are dependant on the citizen members' willingness to meet during regular working hours. Staff and direct costs may increase if after-hours meetings are required.

### Advantages

- Cost effective as this method fits within the existing committee structure.
- Possible streamlined communication process within the MPO structure.
- Overall, potentially would not add additional meetings or time delays to existing process. Initial meetings when citizens are first appointed to serve on TPC may require additional time for bringing citizens up to speed. May want to explore option of a preliminary series of two to three "initiation" meetings for new citizen members.
- Would facilitate staff-citizen interaction.
- Depending on the technical expertise of the citizen representatives, may require additional informational materials and briefings for citizens. However, this could provide another means to bring citizens up to speed on the technical aspects of MPO activities.
- Would give citizens familiarity and input on a broad range of transportation topics.
- Would provide more consistent and continuous citizen input to staff.
- MPC would receive one recommendation on an issue, although minority TPC reports would be possible.

### Disadvantages

- Would be a forum more suited for technical input from citizens rather than broad citizen involvement discussions; citizens may not have the background or expertise to be involved at this level of discussion and may decide to not participate.
- The more limited number of citizen representatives (compared to a full CAC) may not represent as diverse a spectrum of the community.
- Would facilitate citizen to staff interaction rather than citizen to decision maker interaction.
- Would reduce flexibility in TPC meeting times. TPC currently meets once a month during normal business hours. If required by time constraints, work loads, or response deadlines, TPC schedules additional meetings several times a year. These are generally easily scheduled among staff. The addition of citizen representatives may necessitate meeting during the pre-work day, during the lunch hour or in the evening.
- Citizen ideas could be consistently overridden by technical staff. May need to allow for minority report from TPC if this is the only method by which citizens are "sitting at the table" during the MPO process.
- Increased staff time and cost may occur because it may take much longer to explain diverse and technical transportation issues. Also, there is a potential for increased time and cost if resolution of differences between staff and citizen positions are hard to resolve.

### **Option #3: TPC Citizen Participation and Ad hoc Citizen Advisory Committees**

This third option includes full citizen participation on TPC as noted above with the addition of creating ad hoc CACs for specific topics or processes, for example a Regional Transportation Plan Update. Attachment 1 (*Summary Table of Public Involvement for Key MPO Products*) to Item 4.c.ii: *Overview of MPO Public Involvement Plan* provides an outline of when ad hoc CACs might be considered. MPC would approve the creation, membership and scope of ad hoc CACs. An ad hoc CAC would make recommendations on specific topics to MPC. TPC and the ad hoc CAC would communicate and coordinate as needed.

The staff time for the TPC component would be the same as above. Additional staff time would be required for an ad hoc CAC. The membership of an ad hoc CAC would vary based on the focus of the committee. Staff again recommends that MPC appoint members to represent a diverse cross-section of the community. It is estimated that an ad hoc CAC would meet monthly with an estimated total monthly cost for all staff and direct expenses of approximately \$1,500 to \$3,000. While many ad hoc CACs may be able to complete their work in as little as 2-4 meetings, an ad hoc CAC formed to advise on a major RTP update could function for as long as two to three years, although it might not meet monthly during that entire time.

#### Advantages

- This option has all of the advantages of direct citizen participation on TPC with the additional advantage of increased citizen involvement on specific issues as they arise. By obtaining broader citizen involvement on a focused basis as needed, the MPO will extend to the community both the opportunity for on-going involvement via TPC and focused input on major topics via ad hoc CACs.
- Membership representation on an ad hoc CAC could be tailored specifically to the topic or issue under consideration.
- Membership on an ad hoc CAC could in part draw from citizen representatives serving on TPC, thus providing the CAC with a knowledge and process base.
- Would be less costly than a standing CAC. An ad hoc CAC would have a starting and ending timeframe which could be adjusted based on resources available as well as other considerations.

#### Disadvantages

- More costly than solely adding citizen representatives to TPC due to staff time needed to staff ad hoc CAC(s).
- Would be more complex if more than one CAC is required at once.