



June 5, 2008

To: Metropolitan Policy Committee

From: Kathi Wiederhold

Subject: MPC 4.a: Oregon Transportation Commission Policy on Public Involvement

Action Recommended: Approve letter conveying comments on the formal review draft of the Oregon Transportation Commission Policy on Public Involvement Policy.

The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) released the formal review draft of their Policy on Public Involvement (Policy, included as Attachment 1) on April 23, 2008. This memo reports recommendations from the Transportation Planning Committee and comments from the Citizen Advisory Committee on the draft Policy.

Recommendation from Transportation Planning Committee

At the regular meeting on May 22, 2008, the Transportation Planning Committee unanimously recommended that the Metropolitan Policy Committee endorse the proposed update on the OTC Policy on Public Involvement including the following comments:

- Divide the 19 points on pages 3-5 into categories, such as Who We Are Going to Talk To, How We Are Going to Talk to Them, etc.
- Talk about the 19 points as some of the “potential ways to implement public involvement” and explicitly refer to the development of the Public Involvement Guide that the Oregon Department of Transportation plans to produce and what that Guide will do.
- Change the 45-day review period to a minimum 60-day, or preferably 90-day, review period to accommodate local and stakeholder processes.
- Add “special transportation needs” to the reference of groups traditionally underserved in item #5 on page 3.
- Add an item to reference explicitly taking advantage of existing stakeholder networks and local processes to seek input from appointed and elected officials and citizens, e.g. the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee, the Metropolitan Policy Committee, the Lane County Roads Advisory Committee, and the Lane Transit District Accessible Transportation Committee.

- Change item #19 on page 5 as follows:
 - “Regularly evaluate, using a standardized method, ~~Periodically review~~ the effectiveness of this public involvement policy and processes to ensure that they provide full, meaningful, and open access to all interested parties and revise the process, as appropriate.”
- Differentiate in the text of the Policy between the terms “public involvement policy” and “public outreach.” Public involvement policy directs the planning process. Public outreach is conducted when a project happens. Clear usage of these terms in the Policy on Public Involvement would be one way to help the public understand the difference between the two.

Comments from Citizen Advisory Committee

Staff emailed Citizen Advisory Committee members information from the State about the draft Policy currently undergoing public review. The email suggested two 2 options for commenting, as there was not time for the Citizen Advisory Committee to consider making comments jointly at regular meeting. One option was for members individually to send comments to the MPO for staff to gather and send on to the Metropolitan Policy Committee to consider when making comments on the draft Policy. The second option was for citizen committee members individually to send comments directly to the State.

Citizen Advisory Committee member Rich Hazel sent the following comment to the MPO:

“I find the revised policy to generally reflect the processes I believe OTC should be using. I am especially supportive of steps 7 and 9, timely information and visualization techniques.”

Next Steps in Processing the Draft Policy

June 12, 2008 The Metropolitan Policy Committee will consider approving comments on the draft Policy for submission to the Oregon Transportation Commission.

June 25, 2008 Deadline for submitting comments to the Oregon Transportation Commission on the draft Policy.

July or August, 2008 (*tentative*) The Oregon Transportation Commission considers adoption of the Policy.

Chronology of MPO Processing of the OTC Draft Public Involvement Policy

January 2008 The Oregon Department of Transportation issued an Early Public Review Draft of the Policy on Public Involvement.

January 31, 2008 The Transportation Planning Committee reviewed the early public review draft but did not develop a recommendation to the Metropolitan Policy Committee for comments on the draft. The Transportation Planning Committee noted that the Oregon Department of Transportation draft could be improved by adding explicit reference to MPOs in item #3 on page 2. Staff also discussed that the Metropolitan Policy Committee could consider future changes

in the MPO's Public Involvement Plan to reference the state's updated Policy on Public Involvement after it is adopted.

February 14, 2008 The Oregon Department of Transportation presented a slide show on the early public review draft of the Policy at the regular meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee. The committee offered a lot of suggestions but preferred to wait until the formal public review draft was released to provide comment. Most of the points made during the approximately 45 minute discussion focused on broadening outreach techniques to involve more groups, such as parents, under-represented communities, and 18-25 year olds. There also was discussion of how to measure meaningful public involvement.

February 20, 2008 The Citizen Advisory Committee received a brief information item on their regular meeting agenda about the early public review draft, with a copy attached. Staff indicated they would bring the item to the committee at a later meeting to consider making comments on the formal draft.

March 25, 2008 Formal draft prepared for review by the Oregon Transportation Commission.

April 23, 2008 The Oregon Transportation Commission issued the formal draft Policy for review. Changes to the Policy that relate to MPO comments include: clarification of language about MPOs in item #8 on page 4; and an additional sentence in item #10 on page 4 referring to using electronically accessible formats to distribute information to the maximum extent practicable.

May 2, 2008 Posted information on the MPO website about the draft Policy and opportunity to comment.

May 15, 2008 The Transportation Advisory Subcommittee discussed the draft at their May 15, 2008 regular meeting and forwarded comments to the Transportation Planning Committee for consideration.

May 21, 2008 Emailed a message to the Citizen Advisory committee suggesting two options for submitting comments: send comments to the MPO for forwarding on to the Metropolitan Policy Committee; or submit comments directly to the Oregon Department of Transportation.

May 22, 2008 The Transportation Planning Committee made recommendations to the Metropolitan Policy Committee on the draft Policy.

Recommended Action:

Attachment 2 presents a draft letter of comment to the OTC on the draft Policy. The letter conveys the points recommended by the TPC. Staff requests approval of the letter.

Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Oregon Transportation Commission draft Policy on Public Involvement, dated March 25, 2008
- Attachment 2 – Draft letter of comment to OTC on Policy