

# MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee  
Springfield Library Meeting Room, 225 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Springfield

August 14, 2003  
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Bill Dwyer, Chair; Bonny Bettman, Vice Chair; Hillary Wylie, Anne Ballew (for Tammy Fitch), Gerry Gaydos, George Poling (for James Torrey), Bobby Green, Mike Dean, members; Kurt Corey (for Dennis Taylor), Anita Yap (for Mike Hudson), Tom Boyatt, Mike Kelly, Bill VanVactor, *ex officio* members

Staff and Guests: Tom Schwetz, Paul Thompson, Jamon Kent, Bob Swank, Steve Gordon, Lane Council of Governments; Kurt Yeiter, City of Eugene; Cynthia Pappas, Len Goodwin, City of Springfield, Ollie Snowden, Tom Stinchfield, Lane County; Randy Papé, Oregon Transportation Commission; Rob Zako, 1,000 Friends of Oregon.

ABSENT: Sid Leiken, Bob Pirrie, Christine Lundberg, Blake Hastings, members; Ken Hamm, Eric Havig, Bob Keefer, *ex officio* members.

## 1. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF JULY 10, 2003 MINUTES

Mr. Dwyer called the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) to order.

Ms. Bettman noted that her first name was misspelled in the July 10 minutes. She asked that the last sentence in paragraph 4 of item B on page 4 be struck as the meaning was unclear.

*Ms. Bettman, seconded by Ms. Ballew, moved to approve the amended minutes of July 10, 2003. The motion passed unanimously.*

Mr. Dwyer stated the minutes were accepted as corrected.

## 2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Those present introduced themselves.

## 3. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

**Rob Zako**, 1000 Friends of Oregon, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, referred to a memo he had sent to the MPC in April regarding integrated transportation planning and asked if funding was available to support plan development. He commented favorably on the public forum staff held on the STP-U. He said the forum was not well-attended, but those present had an opportunity to discuss the issues in depth. He expressed concern that more members of the public had not attended and urged the MPC to consider ways to better inform the public of issues and opportunities to participate.

## 4. MPO ISSUES

### a. Proposed Project Evaluation Criteria and Process for STP-U Funds

Paul Thompson gave an overview of the development of evaluation criteria and the STP-U funding process, the public comment period on these topics, and the public workshop conducted by staff. He reported that the proposal before the committee for consideration reflected changes based on staff evaluation of, and public comments on, the original proposal.

Mr. Thompson said the three-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) update would take into account several funding sources, including the Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP-U) funds, which come to the Transportation Management Area (TMA) for distribution. He said the amount of available funds was uncertain, as the Federal reallocation process is still in progress and the funding level has only been determined for the first of the three-year period, but he estimated that approximately \$6.75 million was available to program.

Mr. Thompson described the three steps necessary to process funding applications. He said the first was to establish a framework of project categories, the second step was to establish a set of screening criteria, and the third step was to establish prioritization criteria for ranking projects that passed the screening process.

According to Mr. Thompson, public comments offered suggestions on how to improve public involvement in the process and funding priorities. He highlighted the funding categories and percentage distributions recommended by staff and the modifications to categories and distribution percentages recommended by 1000 Friends of Oregon, details of which were contained in his memorandum of August 7, 2003, to the MPC. He said staff recommended four categories: system preservation, system modernization, planning and project development, and transportation demand management (TDM). He noted that the 1000 Friends proposal included a new funding category: public education, planning and transportation system improvements to promote transportation-efficient land use patterns.

Mr. Thompson identified other staff-recommended changes to the original July 10 proposal as modifications to the prioritization factors and adaptation of the criteria scoring system for the City of Coburg applications.

Ms. Bettman asked if there was a standard definition for “system modernization” and what was intended by the definition. Mr. Thompson said a proposed definition was in the July 10, 2003, meeting materials and included a majority of STP-funded projects, such as reconstruction of streets to bring them up to urban standards, off-street bike paths, traffic operational improvements, and transit enhancements.

Ms. Bettman, referring to the modernization projects portion of the *Summary Scoring Sheet* prepared by staff to illustrate the proposed scoring method using a sample of past projects, noted that almost 90 percent of the funds could be spent on two large projects that scored no points under the “alternative performance measures” factor. She questioned whether the staff recommendation to increase the points given to TransPlan policies and decrease the points for alternative performance measures weighted prioritization more heavily toward projects that supported TransPlan policies. She said providing more

points and establishing a lower threshold for the other factors would give other projects a fair opportunity at funding.

Mr. Thompson acknowledged that the staff recommendation gave more weight to TransPlan policies and said to address Ms. Bettman's concern it was necessary to give more points for each policy. He drew her attention to the modernization project scoring summary and noted that the points awarded for alternative performance measures made a significant difference in final scoring. He also commented that most projects included funding other than STP-U funds.

Mr. Thompson and Mr. Schwetz commented on the difficulty of scoring preservation projects against some measures. Ms. Bettman stated that the Eugene City Council was on record as supporting preservation projects. She said the City's need for modernization projects was in the area of transportation infrastructure in designated nodes, which included reconstruction and transit enhancements. She expressed continued concern with the weight given to TransPlan policies over alternative performance measures.

Ms. Ballew remarked that the criteria did not appear to address the question of need. She reported that there was a potential change in federal allocation of transportation dollars that would eliminate funding for bike paths. Mr. Schwetz said that an omnibus bill had been passed that would eliminate the enhancement program, but STP funds could still be used for bike paths; however the enhancement set-aside was reduced. Mr. Thompson responded that need was established when a project was placed on the TransPlan fiscally constrained list, which represented the regional set of priorities.

Ms. Bettman asked if any of the \$1.35 million in planning and project development funds were available for MPO jurisdictions to use for projects such as site-specific planning. Mr. Thompson said that the funds could be used for planning programs and activities that met federal guidelines for STP funds, which generally would include site-specific transportation planning. Mr. Schwetz commented that TDM grant funds were also available for planning. Ms. Bettman asked why no scoring summary was provided for planning and project development or TDM projects. Mr. Thompson replied that no completed projects were available to test the model.

Ms. Ballew remarked that 20 per cent for planning seemed high and many federal funding streams established a ceiling of fifteen percent. She said planning dollars did not put asphalt on the street. Mr. Thompson said other federal funds were not used for planning activities and STP-U funds were the one flexible source to support MPO and other regional planning activities. He said the twenty percent of STP-U funds represented a much smaller percentage of total TIP funding.

Mr. Dwyer opened the public hearing and asked for testimony on the proposed project evaluation criteria and process for STP-U funds.

**Rob Handy**, 455-1/2 River Road, Eugene, said the proposal represented only two sides of a triangle and the transportation land management and nodal development aspects were missing. He said that decision-makers cited lack of funds or flexibility as reasons for not funding those types of projects and the STP-U funds represented an opportunity to do so. He acknowledged that preservation was a major issue, but commented that the available STP-U funds were a "drop in the pond" for preservation needs. He urged the MPC not to use STP-U funds for preservation, but rather for alternative performance measures. He suggested that the funding distribution should be 60 percent for land use measures, 20 percent for planning, and 20 percent for TDM.

**Rob Zako**, 1000 Friends of Oregon, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, commented that the entire TIP would be adopted in two months and the STP-U funds were a small pot of flexible federal funds that represented about 5 per cent of TIP funds. He said there was a large amount of funding available for transportation system improvement, a small amount allocation for TDM, but no dedicated funds for land use measures. He said STP-U funds were an opportunity to balance the triangle, referred to by Rob Handy, by putting funds into land use measures.

Mr. Dwyer closed the public hearing.

Ms. Ballew asked if the proposed distribution of funds among the four project categories recommended by staff was flexible in the event more funding was needed in a particular category. Mr. Thompson replied that the TIP was updated every two years and could be amended. He said that the MPC could also provide different direction to staff at a future meeting, although cautioned that suballocations could not be based on population, but were otherwise flexible.

In response to a question from Mr. Dwyer, Mr. Thompson said that staff had asked for MPC action to approve the funding categories and funding targets for those categories, and the evaluation criteria and scoring system. He said if these were approved, staff could take applications from local jurisdictions through the process and return to the September meeting with proposed funding.

Ms. Bettman said she had some interest in modifying the point system, but thought the category definitions were broad enough to allow jurisdictions to advocate for the projects they wanted.

*Ms. Bettman, seconded by Mr. Gaydos, moved to approve the STP-U criteria and process.*

Mr. Dean asked if activities in the additional category proposed by Mr. Zako were included in other categories. Mr. Thompson said that category was not included in the staff recommendation, but there was some overlap with other categories. Mr. Dean said that the City of Coburg was beginning to consider a transportation system plan and was interested in activities such as public education and outreach. Ms. Bettman said that Coburg could apply for planning and project development funds within the scope of the staff recommendation.

*The motion passed unanimously*

#### **b. Proposed TMA Boundary**

Mr. Thompson illustrated on a map the proposed Transportation Management Area (TMA) boundary. He said that staff from the MPO jurisdictions participated in identifying the proposed boundary, which included the Metro Plan boundary, and additionally the Census 2000 urbanized area. He said that the TMA boundary also included the City of Coburg and the map also illustrated the TMA study area for purposes of collecting and analyzing data. He said the TMA boundary was the MPO political boundary within which the adopted RTP policies, performance measures, and benchmarks were applied, and within which the STP-U funds would be programmed.

Ms. Bettman noted that the TMA boundary included the community of Goshen and asked if there would be a representative on the MPO. Mr. Thompson replied that Goshen was not incorporated and would therefore be represented by the Lane County commissioners on the MPO.

*Mr. Green, seconded by Ms. Ballew, moved to approve the proposed TMA boundary. The motion passed unanimously.*

**c. MPO Comment Letter on Draft FY06-09 STIP Criteria**

Mr. Schwetz referred committee members to the draft comment letter and explanatory memorandum from staff that were included in the agenda packet. He said the letter responded to the Oregon Department of Transportation's (ODOT) request for comments on draft project eligibility criteria and prioritization factors for the FY06-09 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He said that staff recommended supporting the August 12, 2003, letter from the Lane County board of county commissioners that included many of the issues MPO had identified in the criteria. He noted that three additional issues had been identified:

- Draft criteria don't appear to provide guidance on transit, TDM, bike, or pedestrian projects
- Advocacy for a more explicit process for identifying and prioritizing citizen-initiated safety projects
- Support for addition of development portion of STIP

*Ms. Bettman, seconded by Ms. Wylie, moved to approve the letter of comment on draft FY06-09 STIP criteria. The motion passed unanimously*

**d. MPO Support Letter for Walkable Communities Grant**

Mr. Schwetz said the *Walkable Community Workshop* grant was offered by the National Center for Bicycling & Walking (NCBW). He said that Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) was applying for \$20,000 worth of technical assistance to conduct a series of workshops on bicycle and pedestrian safety solutions. He said the workshops would be conducted in eight locations in Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg. He requested a letter of support from the MPC for the grant application.

*Ms. Bettman, seconded by Mr. Gaydos, moved to approve the letter of support for the Walkable Community Workshop grant application. The motion passed unanimously.*

**e. MPO Calendar and Information Items**

Mr. Schwetz stated that the agenda packet contained copies of a resolution and explanatory materials related to the Portland Metro's efforts to have their transportation policy committee designated as an Area Commission on Transportation (ACT). He said the materials were provided for information purposes only and no action was required by the MPC.

Ms. Ballew asked the staff to restrain their use of acronyms in presentations.

Mr. Thompson noted that the proposed projects for STP-U funding would be considered at the September meeting and staff would ask the MPC to open a public comment period and hold a workshop on the projects. He said the RTP work program update would also be considered at the September meeting.

## **5. STATUS REPORTS - None**

Mr. Dwyer announced the next meeting would held September 11, 2003, at the Springfield Library Meeting Room.

Mr. Dwyer adjourned the meeting at 12:40 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)