Metropolitan Policy Committee
Springfield Library Meeting Room – 225 5th Street, Springfield

September 11, 2003
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Bill Dwyer, Chair; Bonny Bettman, Vice Chair; Anne Ballew (for Sid Leiken), Tammy Fitch, Jim Torrey, Bobby Green, Mike Dean, Robert Pirrie, Pat Hocken (for Gerry Gaydos), members; Bill Van Vactor, Ken Hamm, Mike Hudson, Tom Boyatt, Mike Kelly, Jim Carlson (for Dennis Taylor), *ex officio* members; George Kloeppel, staff.

Staff and Guests: Tom Schwetz, Paul Thompson, Jamon Kent, Byron Vanderpool, Lane Council of Governments; Chris Henry, Mark Schoening, City of Eugene; Cynthia Pappas, Nick Arnis, Greg Mott, City of Springfield; Tom Stinchfield, Bill Morgan, Ollie Snowden, Lane County; Lisa Gardner, Lane Transit District; Dave Reinhard, Transportation Consultant; Christian L. Watchie, Trans-Watch; Connie Bloom Williams, Commuter Solutions Program; Lauri Segel, 1,000 Friends of Oregon; Rob Handy.

ABSENT: Sid Leiken, Gerry Gaydos, Christine Lundberg, Blake Hastings, Hillary Wylie, members; Dennis Taylor, Eric Havig, Bob Keefer, *ex officio* members.

1. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVAL OF AUGUST 14, 2003 MINUTES

Mr. Dwyer called the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) to order at 11:35 a.m.

Ms. Bettman, seconded by Ms. Ballew, moved to approve the minutes of the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee held on August 14, 2003. The motion passed unanimously.

2. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Those present introduced themselves.

3. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Lauri Segel, 1000 Friends of Oregon, 120 West Broadway, Eugene, said she had reviewed meeting materials. She regretted that there was not more time for citizen involvement in the prioritization of transportation projects, because of deadlines. She asserted that a list of priorities had already been formed by staff. She felt that this shortchanged the opportunity for the public to provide comment and the staff to incorporate the public comments into the list.

Regarding the Surface Transportation Program – Urban (STP-U) projects in the preservation category, Ms. Segel felt that this portion of the money was too small in relation to the need. She recommended that the committee return to the local governments and solicit feedback on the preservation needs of the different jurisdictions.

Mr. Dwyer asked how, in a perfect world, would citizens come forward with such input. Ms. Segel advocated for having citizens participate at the "front end" identifying projects and working on the matrices and criteria.

Rob Handy, 455 ½ River Road, commented that some Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs) had avoided problems by "front-loading" projects with citizen input. He felt that the committee should consider how it could address problems early on. He asserted that the recommendation was "planner-driven."

Regarding STP-U funding, Mr. Handy asked where the funding was for nodal development. He wondered how much of the money was being spent on planning as opposed to actually fixing potholes. He noted that there was a lot of money spent on planning in the Lane Transit District (LTD).

Ms. Bettman stated that the different jurisdictions had looked at all projects in the pipeline and that staff had pulled the projects from the pipeline and prioritized them. She asserted that the City Council of Eugene had not reviewed the staff recommendation for prioritization. She asked if the City of Springfield and LTD had.
Ms. Pappas responded that the City Council of Springfield had reviewed it. Ms. Hocken said that LTD would be reviewing it in the coming week.

Ms. Bettman questioned the ability of the MPC to take action in a month on the STP-U project list, while the jurisdictions had yet to weigh in on it. She said she would request a work session on the projects for the Eugene City Council. She asked how the MPC could accommodate input that had yet to be provided.

Mr. Thompson replied that the committee was not compelled to take action, but that the State wanted the list for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Mr. Schwetz added that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) had specified that the list should be submitted by October, 2003. Mr. Thompson noted that this was due to the ODOT printing timeline. Mr. Thompson remarked that it was possible to delay the action and the list could be submitted to the State for inclusion in the STIP in November, but that delay would possibly result in the local projects being omitted from the hard copy printed version and only appearing in the electronic version of the STIP,

4. MPO ISSUES

a. Draft FY04-06 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Federal STP-U Allocations

Paul Thompson gave an overview of the background information provided in the memorandum to the committee regarding **Item 4a**. He highlighted the public involvement that had been incorporated into the process thus far. He said that, in addition to the public comment period recommended through October 9, a public forum was scheduled for September 25 and would be noticed to the public. He said a public hearing was scheduled for October 9, as well.

Mr. Thompson highlighted the STP-U applications that had been received by the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). He noted the corrections listed in the attachment entitled **Item 4a: Corrections to MTIP Memo and Attachment Tables**. He said that the corrections did not alter the prioritization of projects.

In response to a question from Ms. Bettman regarding the scoring of projects, Mr. Thompson deferred to Mr. Schoening. Mr. Schoening stated that the process was not random. He said that the scoring was specific and that some jurisdictions applied the scoring in different ways. He asserted that some TransPlan policies were applied differently, according to jurisdiction.

Mr. Dwyer remarked that the 69th Street project in Springfield would be difficult to develop. He asked how the drainage would be facilitated. Mr. Arnis responded that the drainage would have to be significantly altered.

Mr. Dwyer called for a moment of silence at noon to commemorate the tragedy of September 11, 2001. All present paused for a moment of silence.

Mr. Thompson explained *Table 1; Modernization STP-U Allocations*, noting that the last two projects on the list had exceeded the amount of money targeted for modernization.

Regarding *Table 2; Preservation STP-U Allocations*, Mr. Thompson stated that the Coburg applications were subject to a process at the Federal level by which the roads had to be classified on the Federal Aid Urban system. He said that, should the roads not be added to the Federal Aid Urban system, the cut-off line in the projects would move, but not so much that the project below the line, Springfield's EWEB bike path overlay with safety improvements, could be afforded.

In response to a question from Mr. Torrey, Mr. Thompson explained that the City of Coburg's roads had to attain the classification of collector or above. Mr. Schwetz clarified that some of the roads in question were already classified as such in the Coburg TSP. Local staff would be working with ODOT to attain such classification on the Federal Aid system.

Ms. Bettman questioned the definition of modernization projects. She said she had understood the eligibility criteria to include some preservation projects. She asked if the criteria and the point system were blocking some jurisdictions from pursuing their highest priority projects. She pointed out that the Eugene City Council had stated that its highest priority was operations, maintenance and preservation of the current transportation infrastructure. She noted that the Eugene projects that had been scored above the funding cutoff line were only bicycle paths.

Mr. Thompson clarified that it was possible to have modernization projects with preservation components.

Ms. Bettman moved to expand the modernization category to include the maintenance and preservation of existing streets. Mr. Dwyer provided the second.

Mr. Torrey questioned the legality of this. Mr. Schwetz responded that maintenance projects would not be eligible for the STP-U funds.

Ms. Bettman restated her motion, moving to expand the modernization category to include the preservation of existing streets. Mr. Dwyer reiterated his second.

Mr. Schoening commented that, when looking at the Trans Plan criteria, modernization projects would always be moved above the preservation projects. Mr. Schwetz said that zeroing out the modernization money could increase the amount of projects that could be addressed on the preservation list.

Mr. Dwyer explained that he had provided the second because he thought that preservation was important. He stated that it was better to fix an old road than to build a new bike path.

Ms. Bettman asked how the "playing field" could be leveled. Mr. Schoening suggested that the modernization category could be eliminated altogether.

Ms. Bettman felt that the City of Springfield should retain its choice in the matter.

Mr. Torrey reiterated that the City Council of Eugene had gone on record in support of operations, maintenance and preservation projects. He called the Chad Drive extension a good project, however, commenting that there were times that modernization had a positive impact on transportation. He suggested that he and Ms. Bettman return to the Council and explain this, as he did not believe that the Council fully understood the implications of their statement. He felt that ODOT staff should come before the Eugene City Council and provide input.

Mr. Dean recommended letting the jurisdictions decide for themselves and letting them assign higher scores to the projects that were of the highest priority to them. Ms. Ballew asserted that the projects scored themselves to a certain extent.

Ms. Fitch remarked that she was not in favor of changing categories. She noted that the Springfield projects were comprised of only streets and the Eugene projects only addressed bike paths. She wondered why bicycle paths would score higher, given that the criteria was the same.

Mr. Thompson explained that the Eugene street projects were scored low because it was hoped that other funding could be leveraged for them.

Ms. Bettman agreed with Mr. Torrey that greater discussion was necessary at the Eugene City Council level. She felt that it should not be an all or nothing situation, adding that the STP-U funding was only a small portion of available funding. She said, however, that the STP-U funds were the only funds flexible enough to use for maintenance and preservation, while new projects could tap other sources, such as system development charges (SDCs). She recommended that the scoring be weighted in favor of preservation.

> ***Ms. Bettman moved to direct staff to bring back several options for a proposal to alter how STP-U projects were scored so as to prioritize the maintenance and preservation of the transportation infrastructure. Mr. Dwyer seconded the motion.***

Ms. Hocken felt it prudent to be careful not to tweak the scoring process so as to make it completely subjective.

Ms. Ballew advocated for having the greatest flexibility possible because the jurisdictions had different needs. She felt that the model could not be blamed for the results that were coming from staff. She suggested that the uses specified for different parts of the money be reshuffled.

Mr. Schoening explained that there were no other funding sources for off-road bicycle paths and that staff had decided that they could not risk losing the bike path projects by moving the street preservation projects above the line at which the funding stopped. He noted that the City had $2 million from the gasoline tax for road issues and nothing allocated for the bicycle path system.

Ms. Bettman reiterated that she had been under the impression that the category of modernization had included some aspects of preservation, but that it had been clarified at this meeting that this was not so.

Mr. Thompson responded that staff had looked at the definition of modernization and that those projects could allow for some preservation to be funded as part of a modernization project.

Mr. Green pointed out that the motion did not provide clear direction to staff. As such, he said he was unclear as to how to vote.

Mr. Dwyer stated that the motion directed staff to formulate proposals to increase the flexibility of the STP-U funding criteria.

Mr. Torrey commented that only two Eugene City Councilors were present and that the whole council should have the opportunity to discuss the scoring criteria and where it fit in with the Council's priorities.

Ms. Bettman repeated the intent of the motion, that the MPC was directing staff to reexamine the modernization category and find the most flexibility available to them.

Mr. Green concurred with Mr. Torrey, stating it was clear that there needed to be further discussion of this at the Eugene City Council level. Ms. Ballew agreed.

Mr. Carlson said, regarding the Chad Drive extension, that the project was comprised of improvements that brought the road to urban standards, as per the direction of TransPlan. He explained that a project on Coburg Road had been considered, but that the Chad Drive project had been determined to be a safer project and that it would provide a better intersection for Game Farm Road north. He added that the project had been approved by the City Council of Eugene.

Mr. Torrey opposed the motion as he asserted it would encumber staff.

Ms. Bettman reiterated that the City Council had provided direction as to how road projects should be prioritized. She opined that the Mayor, Mr. Torrey, was acting in a manner that was inconsistent with City Council policy direction.

Ms. Fitch called the question.

Mr. Pirrie abstained from the vote as this was a local issue.

The motion failed, Ms. Bettman and Mr. Dwyer voting in favor.

Mr. Thompson discussed *Table 3; Planning and Project Development STP-U Allocations*. He related that staff had recognized the importance of regional transportation planning activities for all of the jurisdictions and had chosen to support those activities. He said that in order to provide some level of planning and project development funding for all of the applying jurisdictions while staying within the category's funding target, staff had taken the approach of zeroing out the third year (FY06) of the three-year requests, and then reducing the amount the jurisdictions had requested in the first two fiscal years until a total had been arrived at that approximated the FY04-06 funding target, $1.35 million.

Regarding *Table 4; Summary of Recommended STP-U Allocations*, Mr. Thompson said that under the *Transportation Demand Management* category staff had determined that the Regional Commuter Solutions program was the best use of this funding.

Continuing, Mr. Thompson highlighted the *Draft FY04-06 Transportation Improvement Program*. He stated that the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) was required to list all projects using federal funds and projects with regional significance.

Ms. Bettman moved, seconded by Ms. Ballew, to open the public review process until October 9, 2003. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Final Report on Central Lane TMA Certification Review

Mr. Schwetz reported that the final report had arrived from the federal government. He provided a brief overview of the memorandum regarding the **Final Report on Central lane TMA Certification Review**.

Mr. Torrey asked what the timeline would be for the development of a congestion management system, as per the first bulleted point of the memorandum. Mr. Schwetz replied that the federal authority had directed the area to produce such a system within 18 months of being designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA), and that they had suggested that initially the area jurisdictions should identify congested parts of the system and draw on the Trans Plan for the framework. He thought that staff would formulate a tentative system and bring it before the MPC in January of 2004.

Mr. Schwetz affirmed, in response to a question from Mr. Torrey, that staff would be able to identify the problem areas for traffic congestion.

Ms. Ballew asked what goal was served by the TMA certification. Mr. Schwetz replied that the report was very complimentary to the area's process. He said that staff had gone through a three-day process to work through the certification that had been triggered by the metropolitan area achieving TMA status.

Mr. Schwetz offered hard copies of the Trans Plan to committee members.

Mr. Kloeppel said that staff had worked diligently through the certification process and the positive outcome reflected the good staff work that had been done.

c. MPO Calendar and Information Item

Mr. Dwyer noted that Ms. Bettman would chair the next meeting of the MPC.

Mr. Torrey suggested holding a discussion on the possible remand of the West Eugene Parkway.

Mr. Dwyer adjourned the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

(Recorded by Ruth Atcherson)

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