

MINUTES

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

September 15, 2005
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Anne Ballew (City of Springfield), Chair; Bill Dwyer (Lane County), Sid Leiken, Christine Lundberg (City of Springfield), David Kelly, Kitty Piercy (City of Eugene), Judy Volta (City of Coburg), Susan Ban (Lane Transit District), Erik Havig (Oregon Department of Transportation), members; Dennis Taylor (City of Eugene), Bill Van Vactor (Lane County), Ken Hamm (Lane Transit District), Cynthia Pappas (City of Springfield), *ex officio* members.

George Kloeppel, Byron Vanderpool, Tom Schwetz, Paul Thompson, Ann Mortenson (Lane Council of Governments); Tom Boyatt (Oregon Department of Transportation), Greg Mott, Nick Arnis (City of Springfield), Connie Williams (Transportation Solutions), Chris Henry, Kurt Yeiter, Jim Carlson (City of Eugene), Tom Stinchfield (Lane County), Terry Connolly (Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce), Brian Ray, Rob Handy, David Sonnichsen, guests.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Ballew opened the September 2005 meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) and welcomed those present.

Members of the MPC introduced themselves.

APPROVE AUGUST 11, 2005, MINUTES

Mr. Kelly requested that his statement on page four under the section relating to Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) funds be revised as follows:

He looked at the modernization piece as *potentially strategic and providing the most good “bang for the buck” if used strategically* but emphasized that Eugene’s interest was in maximizing the opportunities for road preservation.

Ms. Volta, seconded by Mr. Kelly, moved to approve the August 11, 2005, minutes as corrected. The motion passed unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Terry Connolly, Eugene Area Chamber of Commerce, commented on the Region 2 large project priority list. He said the chamber supported those projects and the rankings presented by staff were consistent with

the status of projects. He acknowledged the efforts of Congressman DeFazio and the Oregon congressional delegation to get federal funding legislation approved. He said the chamber was a strong supporter of the Interstate 5/Franklin interchange and the opportunity, with the construction of a new bridge, to develop off-ramps that would benefit the entire metropolitan area through better access to communities. He encouraged each of the MPC member jurisdictions and agencies to partner on the project and work with state and federal agencies to take advantage of the opportunity.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES

Status Report on Interstate 5/Franklin Proposed Interchange, Phase 2 – Community Dialogue

Mr. Boyatt introduced Brian Ray of Kittleson and Associates to present an overview of design concepts, federal guidelines and best practices in interchange development. He said that sketch-level draft concepts had been posted on the MPO's website. He reminded members to focus on the basics of interchanges and said that the sketch-level designs were intended to create a framework for a feasibility analysis rather than design an interchange project.

Mr. Dwyer asked if the design sketches would outline major impediments and solutions. Mr. Ray replied that he would address key issues from ODOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHA) policy perspectives.

Mr. Ray stated that while it might appear easy to attach ramps to the new Interstate 5 (I-5) bridge while it was being constructed, the issue was very complex. He highlighted some of the technical issues and challenges associated with an interchange and used the design concepts to illustrate how they would apply. He said that the FHA had criteria that had to be addressed when changes to the interstate system were considered and ODOT was the steward for all of the interstate highways in the State. He explained that interchanges were categorized as either system or service:

- System – interchange between an interstate and a highway or two high type of highways with high volume, free-flow conditions, higher speed
- Service – interchange between an interstate or highway and a local street

Mr. Ray noted that some interchanges combined both types of interchanges. He said that diamonds and loops were the two main types of interchange forms, with variations and combinations of those forms. He said the potential ramps for I-5/Franklin would be a service interchange. He explained the functions of ramps to allow traffic to enter and exit high-speed, free-flow traffic with considerations for operational conditions, grade change, length, spacing, sharpness of angle and ability to stop or merge safely.

Mr. Leiken emphasized that there was a great opportunity to create an entrance into the cities of Eugene and Springfield. He expressed frustration that Oregon was sometimes appeared to be viewed as a place to move goods between Seattle and San Francisco. He said that the solution to an interchange would require a partnership among the two cities, agencies and ODOT. He was less concerned with the design of the ramps than with assuring that they were constructed. He urged everyone involved to develop a solution that could be given to the Oregon congressional delegation for funding.

Mr. Leiken left the meeting at 12:10 p.m. Ms. Lundberg served as his alternate.

Mr. Ray used a series of design sketches to illustrate ramp concepts in both diamond and loops forms. He said that the design team had discovered during the process that because the Glenwood interchange was so close and had so many problems already that it could not be excluded in consideration of an I-5/Franklin interchange.

Mr. Dwyer asked if obstacles related to rules were listed for each of the ramp concepts. Mr. Ray replied that ODOT was providing leadership and FHA representatives were participating in the meetings. He revised each design concept and discussed applicable issues, obstacles, opportunities and benefits.

In response to a comment from Mr. Kelly, Mr. Ray said that the impact on the Laurel Hill Valley neighborhood with respect to auto, bicycle and pedestrian ingress and egress was a critical issue to be raised, discussed and resolved through a multi-modal solution during the design process.

Ms. Volta asked if a possible solution to the problem of the Glenwood interchange might be to include a connection to Glenwood through a new interchange instead of the current Glenwood interchange. Mr. Ray agreed that might be a solution and the design team would be looking at many considerations and trade-offs as well as fiscal constraints.

Ms. Ballew asked that discussion of this item be suspended in order to take up the item related to program amendments, which required action, as some members had to leave the meeting early. There were no objections.

Amendments to Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) FY05-07 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

Mr. Thompson explained that the resolution would adopt a set of four amendments to the FY05-07 MTIP. He referred to the summary of amendments contained in the agenda packet and noted that three of the amendments were requested by Lane Transit District (LTD) to program new funds that were recently received through federal grants and ODOT requested the fourth amendment to add a safety project on Highway 99 West using funds decided upon in another venue. He said that none of the amendments represented funding decisions; rather, they would include in the MTIP projects that were already funded.

Mr. Dwyer, seconded by Ms. Piercy, moved to approve Resolution 2005-11 adopting amendments to the FY05-07 MTIP. The motion passed unanimously.

Status Report on Interstate 5/Franklin Proposed Interchange, Phase 2 – Community Dialogue (continued)

Continuing, Mr. Ray stated that while some concepts would impact Glenwood more than others, all would require that Glenwood be included in all concept evaluations. He reviewed the remaining design sketches and emphasized many of the values in the design team's exercise, including recognition by ODOT and FHA of some of their policy needs, identification of impacts from a community and neighborhood perspective and environmental issues, as well as cost and financing questions and physical engineering constraints.

Mr. Dwyer expressed concern about the constraints of rules and cost on the interchange design. He left the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

Ms. Ballew asked if the river would present a major obstacle in terms of adding bridges. Mr. Boyatt said that was more of a policy question for the built environment of the urban form. He said that the costs of overcoming various challenges were not yet known, but there could be a sense that there should not be a lot of concrete in the river.

Ms. Lundberg asked if jurisdictional boundaries were indicated on the design sketch maps. Mr. Boyatt that Interstate 5 was the boundary.

Applications for FY07-09 Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) Funds

Mr. Thompson said that staff recommendations were consistent with the MPC's direction at its July 2005 meeting that 20 percent of the FY07 STP-U be programmed for modernization. He said the four applications for those funds greatly exceeded the targeted funding level but staff developed a recommendation that the two LTD applications would be withheld pending potential additional FY07 funding or resubmitting the application for funding in FY08 or later, fully funding the Eugene application for the Game Farm Road project in the amount of \$319,000 and partially funding the Springfield application for Gateway/Beltline right-of-way acquisition project in the amount of \$410,000. He said the MPC was not being asked to take action, but to provide any feedback on those recommendations and release them for public comments; action would be taken at the November 2005 meeting. He said an additional recommendation from staff was to delay programming of the planning funds because applications were for substantially more funds than the target level and additional review of establishing regional priorities was necessary. He said the final recommendation was to program Transportation Demand Management (TDM) funds for all three years at a level of \$350,000 per year.

Ms. Ballew remarked that I-5/Beltline was the biggest project in the area and would continue to be until it was completed. She questioned a rating system that rated other projects as of equal or higher value even though those projects had merit.

Mr. Kelly agreed with the basic recommendations of staff. He pointed out that the MPC's motion was to program 20 percent of FY07 STP-U funds for modernization projects, not *at a minimum 20 percent* as memorandum dated September 7, 2005, stated. He asked that the phrase "at a minimum" be deleted. Mr. Thompson said that staff interpreted the minutes to mean that should be the minimum action, not the minimum amount.

Regarding Gateway/Beltline right-of-way acquisition, Mr. Kelly related that one of the issues raised about intersection improvements was an elaborate intergovernmental agreement between Springfield and ODOT, with community input, about a monitoring plan and no design or construction until specific trigger points were reached. He hoped that acquiring right-of-way on the preferred design did not change that plan.

Ms. Ballew determined that there were no objections to opening the public comment period on the recommendations.

FY08-11 MPO-Specific Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Prioritization Factors and Evaluation Process

Mr. Thompson said that the staff recommended maintaining the same process and local MPO-specific factors that were used the last time for the FY06-09 STIP and several prior STIP processes because they

were still applicable to the set of projects that would be under consideration and also because the separate STP-U process to look at MPO priorities as a whole and consider a new framework for evaluating those priorities would address the larger question of establishing the MPO priorities. He asked for comments for direction.

Mr. Boyatt commented that Lane County, as the regional advisory body and not an area commission on transportation (ACT), would also have the opportunity to add the County's prioritization into the process. He noted that the County had tended to honor metropolitan priorities.

Ms. Ballew suggested that staff consider not just dividing the available funds into an equal amount for each of the three years, but striving for greater flexibility. She said that trying to spread funds too thinly could prolong larger projects.

Ms. Volta asked if a future objective would be related to the regional employment impact of projects. She said employment or economic development should be a factor and was the main reason that Coburg was participating on the MPC. Mr. Thompson replied that regional employment had not been an MPO-specific criterion but staff would consider it as they conducted their evaluation. He noted that it was minimally reflected in the Oregon Transportation Commission criteria and the Oregon Highway Plan economic development goals.

Mr. Boyatt said there was also now a freight mobility factor that could be related.

Review of Draft FY08-11 STIP Region 2 Large Project Priority List

Mr. Thompson said that ODOT had requested a review of the region's large project priority list for completeness and prioritization based on STIP modernization program criteria. He said there were five Central Lane MPO large projects on the list and reviewed the summary of criteria and rankings provided in the agenda packet. He said that MPO staff recommended continuing the priorities and if the MPC concurred, that recommendation along with any MPC comments would be forwarded to the County.

Ms. Piercy stated that if the MPC were able to vote on the priority list, which included the West Eugene Parkway (WEP), she would not be in favor because the environmental process for the WEP was not completed. She recognized there were significant traffic problems in West Eugene that had long needed resolution and there were nationally-recognized wetlands established through unique private-public partnerships and the wetlands were highly valued as an educational, recreational and environmental community asset. She said the community needed a solution to the traffic problems that did not reduce the integrity and value of the wetlands and the WEP was a solution that had the support of only half of Eugene, had been a long-term source of community division and would not solve the traffic problems. She said the WEP would continue to face many challenges and obstacles and suggested that programs such as Oregon Consensus or Oregon Solutions could assist in developing a creative solution that could be acted upon quickly and less expensively. She advocated for removing the WEP from the project list.

Mr. Kelly said he also would vote against the WEP. He agreed with Ms. Piercy's comments regarding the traffic problems and community dissension surrounding the WEP as a solution. He asked how the MPC would be able to establish the MPO's priorities and forward that information to the Council if it was unable to take a vote. Mr. Thompson responded that the County had noted on the attachments to the previous agenda item that the STIP project list was based on the MPO's 2004 ranking process. He said that staff recommendations were to maintain those rankings. He believed the County would continue to

place some weight on the 2004 MPO priorities as the last that were formally approved since the MPC lacked a quorum to take action to change them; however, the County would be holding a hearing and comments could be provided at that time.

Mr. Kelly asked what the County Board of Commissioners was doing with the large project list that was different than what would be done with the STIP list once the MPC provided its input in November. He observed that everything on the large project list was part of the STIP list. Mr. Thompson responded that the large project list was the first part and there would be other opportunities for the MPC and County to look at the overall priorities for the FY08-11 STIP funding. He referred to the letter from ODOT Region 2 Manager Jeff Scheick, attached to the agenda materials, which indicated Region 2 ACT chairs, vice chairs and Lane County chairs would meet with him and Erik Havig to discuss their respective priority lists. Mr. Havig added that large projects in Region 2 had been a constant source of contention and the goal was to work with regional representatives to develop priority settings that would place emphasis on regional agreement to select what the true priorities were for the focus of funding efforts as a way to move some projects forward. He said that would not replace the STIP process, but rather an effort to position as a larger regional group to demonstrate to the OTC unity on which projects had higher priority to take advantage of funding opportunities.

Mr. Kelly asked if Mr. Havig was implying that one of the points of the meeting might be that different ACTs and the County Commissioners would decide there was a better chance of getting some large project money if in the STIP only certain projects were listed instead of all of the projects. Mr. Havig said that was one approach; another was the list of large, statewide significant projects that were endorsed by the OTC and as projects moved off that list it might be possible to move a project onto it.

Mr. Kelly asked that Eugene's position in opposition to the WEP be conveyed at the meeting.

Ms. Piercy stated that her comments were intended to stimulate a conversation on the WEP and reiterated her interest in looking for a solution to the impasse that would preserve a commitment to the wetlands while addressing traffic problems in West Eugene in a responsible way.

Ms. Lundberg thanked Mr. Havig for his assistance with the priority list. She commented that it appeared ODOT preferred that the region agree upon highest priority for those projects that had the most significance in terms of improving the transportation system, with other projects either removed or bumped to the bottom of the list, and that would give the region better standing. Mr. Havig agreed that was the intent.

Ms. Volta commented that there were changes in philosophy as MPC membership changed but that kept the MPC an active organization. She said members should remember that they represented their entity, but acted regionally. She suggested that the report from the Citizen's Advisory Committee be moved to the start of the agenda so that it was given before members had to leave the meeting.

Ms. Ballew expressed concerns about removing the WEP from the list as it would leave a gap in the regional commitment of funds to address regional traffic problems. She acknowledged the points made by Ms. Piercy but was concerned that there was nothing to replace it.

Status Report on TravelSmart Survey

Mr. Schwetz drew members' attention to agenda materials that provided a status report on the TravelSmart

initiative. He said that policies in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) related to TDM emphasized voluntary measures and the TravelSmart technique was one of the most effective tools that could be used in a voluntary way to affect changes in driving habits. He said the effort was focused on providing information and incentives to those people looking for options.

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) Freight Advisory Committee Membership

Ms. Ballew reported that the Freight Advisory Committee had invited the MPC to send a member to participate on the committee. She proposed that the MPC Chair be the Freight Advisory Committee representative with Mr. Thompson and Mr. Schwetz serving as alternatives. There were no objections.

ConnectOregon

This item was postponed to the October 2005 meeting.

In response to a question from Mr. Kelly, Mr. Schwetz said the staff report on merging transportation plans would be presented at the October 2005 meeting.

Follow-up and MPO Calendar

Report from Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

This item was postponed to the October 2005 meeting.

Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) Administrative Amendments

Mr. Thompson pointed out that the materials in the agenda packet summarized three administrative amendments unanimously approved by the Transportation Planning Committee. There were no questions.

Ms. Ballew reminded members that the next meeting would be October 20, 2005, in the Eugene Public Library Bascom-Tykeson Room. She adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)