

MINUTES

Citizen Advisory Committee
of the
Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization
Eugene Public Library—Singer Room—100 West 10th Avenue
Eugene, Oregon

January 3, 2007
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Dan Egan, Sylvia Shaw, co-chairs; Webb Sussman, vice chair; David Jacobson, Moriah Demers, John Anderson, Phillip Farrington, Rich Hazel, Jeanne-Marie Moore, members; Kathi Wiederhold, Petra Schuetz (Lane Council of Governments), Connie Bloom Williams (Lane Transit District), Judy Shioishi (Oregon Department of Transportation), Jan Spencer, Zachary Vishanoff, guests.

ABSENT: Ross Notebaart, Kitty Piercy, members.

Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Mr. Sussman called the meeting to order and those presented introduced themselves. He announced that the e-MPO report would be taken up first to accommodate Ms. Schuetz's need to attend another meeting. There were no objections.

e-MPO Progress Report

Ms. Schuetz gave a brief overview of the development of the e-MPO interactive website to provide the public with information on regional transportation planning and transportation projects. She demonstrated the website, interactive mapping functions and data being collected. She said improvements were being made to how data was accessed and the next step was to populate the website with data. She distributed an example of a project page and asked for feedback on the way information was displayed and navigation features. She also distributed an example of the type of data that would be collected on all projects. She said the work plan for developing the website was on schedule and she expected it to be available online by June 2007.

Mr. Anderson arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Egan asked that another field be added that would indicate the dates when public involvement opportunities had occurred or would occur during the life of the project.

Mr. Jacobson and Mr. Sussman agreed with Mr. Egan's suggestion.

Mr. Sussman asked how the e-MPO would be linked to other Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) websites like Keep Us Moving. Ms. Schuetz said that websites would be esthetically linked through use of color and forms and electronically linked to refer users to the site most relevant to their interests and needs.

She noted that the e-MPO was focused on project planning and policies and future activities while Keep Us Moving provided information on current construction activities.

Ms. Moore commented that everything sounded extremely inaccessible. She asked if things were well labeled so users would be clear about the type of information on various websites. Ms. Schuetz said there would be a simple front page to direct users to relevant sites and since the sites were hosted by the same entity that would reduce inconsistencies between the sites. She said that both sites would give direction about public involvement and input opportunities and both sites would provide information in an acceptable ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Bobby-approved format.

Mr. Farrington remarked that he had recently visited websites for other ACTs (Area Commission on Transportation) and the Portland Metro site was particularly good. He said those websites were good resources for public involvement purposes in terms of providing information on the policy and decision-making background, source data, groups involved in transportation planning and their relationships and opportunities for public participation.

Ms. Schuetz said the e-MPO would have direct links to public involvement opportunities on the front page as well as a link to Keep Us Moving. She said that Ms. Wiederhold was involved in developing a Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) webpage.

Mr. Egan said a helpful feature of the website would be questions about the user's purpose and interests to help direct them either within the e-MPO site or to a more relevant site. He felt that feature should be on the front page or easily accessible from the front page.

Ms. Demers noted that there was a place to input user name and password on the page. She understood that was likely intended for staff but it gave other users the impression that they should not be on the site.

Mr. Sussman suggested that the staff log-in be clearly designated as such and part of a pull-down menu instead of on the front page of the site.

Ms. Schuetz agreed with Ms. Demers and Mr. Sussman. She said the site would also have a feature that allowed members of the public to sign up for email notifications and self-regulate when and if they wished to receive information. She said this function would be fully explained.

Mr. Jacobson felt it was important for people to have the ability to ask a question online or via phone and get a quick response. Ms. Schuetz said that each project on the website would have project manager contact information at the top of the fact sheet.

Mr. Farrington said that "MPO" should be spelled out and defined on the first page of the site. Ms. Schuetz said that a definitions page was being developed. She would have Ms. Wiederhold notify the CAC when changes were made to the site and request that they review and comment on revisions.

Announcements

Mr. Sussman announced that Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy had agreed to be the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) liaison to and from the CAC, replacing Bobby Green. He said that a special meeting to discuss Peak Oil, energy usage, transportation planning and related issues was being organized by staff.

He said it had been decided the CAC was not the most appropriate venue for those concerns as it was not a policy-setting body and those discussions would be moved to that venue.

Ms. Moore asked why a meeting would be held if the committee was not going to do anything with regard to those issues. Mr. Sussman replied that the MPC would be facilitating the meeting as that was the appropriate body.

Comments from the Audience

Zachary Vishanoff, Patterson Street, said that Oregon State University (OSU) had a significant nuclear program and urged that OSU be included in the special energy meeting. He spoke about the problems with managed or coached public input and a more labor intensive consensus building approach. He was concerned that a significant amount of planning occurred before any public input was solicited and urged early neighborhood and community involvement in projects such as the multi-way plan for Franklin Boulevard, use of the Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB) property in downtown and the Butterfly Lot. He asked the committee to request that the City of Eugene hold an up or down vote on disposition of the EWEB property and conduct a hearing on acquisition of the Butterfly Lot.

Jan Spencer distributed a revised version of his letter to the MPC discussing the Hirsch Report and providing information about many other energy issues. He appreciated the CAC's interest in holding a special meeting to discuss energy concerns and hoped he would be permitted to attend and participate in that discussion. He urged committee members to conduct their own independent research into petroleum reliance and reminded the committee that the MPC had invited the CAC to take the initiative with issues that should be brought to the MPC's attention.

Approve December 6, 2006, Minutes

Mr. Farrington, seconded by Ms. Shaw, moved to approve the December 6, 2006, meeting minutes.

Mr. Hazel noted that the committee had unanimously passed his motion at the December 2006 meeting to bring a discussion of the energy issues raised by Mr. Spencer forward to the January 2007 meeting; however, he did not see that discussion item on the meeting agenda. He understood that the special meeting was intended to accomplish that, but hoped to hear more details about that meeting. Ms. Wiederhold replied that based on her discussion with Ms. Shaw at the December meeting it did not appear possible to accommodate an energy discussion on the January meeting agenda and officers and staff would work on scheduling that discussion as soon as possible. She said there had been some discussion among officers about having MPC host the meeting but she was still following up on that suggestion and no definite arrangements had been made at this point. She said the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) was having a presentation on the topic in late January and she was in contact with the presenter to determine if the material was consistent with the CAC's interests.

Mr. Hazel expressed concern that his motion seemed to have changed direction somewhat as his intent was for a discussion by the CAC regarding the Hirsch Report and Peak Oil, possibly leading to taking a position, and it now seemed to be an educational event for the MPC.

Mr. Jacobson said the book “The End of Oil” by Paul Roberts and materials from the Rocky Mountain Institute were good resources for those who wanted a better understanding of energy issues.

The motion passed, 5:0:0; Mr. Jacobson and Ms. Demers abstaining.

Regional Transportation Plan Update

Ms. Wiederhold said the goal was to develop a public outreach strategy for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. She reminded the committee that the Public Participation Plan contained core outreach tools and a specific strategy would be crafted for each MPO product. She said this was an opportunity to try some of those tools in a public involvement strategy for the RTP update. She reviewed agenda materials that contained ideas brainstormed by the CAC during earlier meetings. She said a tentative calendar would begin implementation of the outreach strategy such as public workshops in April 2007 to discuss aspects of the draft RTP update, a review and comment on the draft update by the CAC in May 2007, continuation of public outreach and a referral of the update to the MPC in June 2007. She noted that the committee, as a starting point, had discussed the following general messages to the public:

- Transportation planning has a big effect on your life. (why you should care)
- The RTP is being updated and does not involve policy.

Mr. Sussman observed that those two messages canceled each other out. He said if the intent was to stimulate discussion about planning in general the reference to being a minor update should be dropped and the role of the MPC in making policy emphasized. He said while the update did not involve major policy decisions it was an opportunity for someone to “get their feet wet” and see the process in action.

Mr. Farrington said it appeared the overall goal was to inform the public and even though the RTP update had minimal policy impact it could be used to get people’s attention, inform them about the content and purpose of the RTP itself and prepare them for involvement in future more substantive policy issues.

Ms. Moore asked why open houses were being held in April. Ms. Wiederhold said Mr. Farrington had accurately described them as an opportunity to better understand transportation planning.

Ms. Moore said she was not certain most people realized that planning for the entire metropolitan areas had only been done through 2015.

Mr. Egan commented that the strategy should consider how to attract the people who were not currently involved in transportation planning issues. He asked why the MPO was soliciting public participation: because it wanted input on policies and projects or because it wanted to better inform the public about the transportation planning process and how and when decisions were made. He said it should be made clear if the intent was to invite the public to learn more about planning rather than provide input that could impact policies and decision-making. He felt it was critical to identify key communicators—those whose opinions mattered in the community—and get them interested in MPO issues.

Mr. Jacobson felt the first step or phase of the strategy was to educate the public, prepare them to provide input and identify opportunities where they could do so. He suggested that presentations could be made in schools to attract the interest of parents of students.

Ms. Shaw emphasized that marketing address the following questions: Why? What? So what? What is in

it for me? She said it should describe the purpose of the update, who was doing it and the relevance for members of the public. She suggested eliminating references to “limited” update and instead build anticipation for the future and expanded opportunities for public involvement because it was “how we get there that matters.”

Ms. Wiederhold summarized the revised message based on the committee’s discussion:

- The MPO does transportation planning and it has a big effect on your life.
- The MPO is updating the RTP; here is what it does.
- We are inviting you to learn more about this process.
- It is how we get there that matters.
- We are building anticipation for the future.

Ms. Williams said the question for her was what the CAC expected from the process. She thought it would be a challenge to explain that this RTP update process did not involve policy change but the next one would. She said that clearly explaining what would be involved in the next update would build in anticipation and answer the questions of what was in the process for the average citizen and why that person should care. She said those questions had to be answered to generate interest and participation.

Ms. Demers remarked that it was important to let people know their input was appreciated and could actually make a difference.

Mr. Farrington said the point of the exercise was to educate and inform, not necessarily obtain input. Ms. Wiederhold said that staff had discussed whether input received during the update could be retained and incorporated as a starting point in the comment process for the major RTP update that would occur in four years.

Mr. Sussman thought that with the transient nature of the population many people might not be in the area in four years and capturing comments now might be good.

Mr. Egan said he had brought up the subject of key communicators because they were likely to be here in four years. He said if the emphasis was on exposing 50 or so key communicators to the information that could create a knowledgeable group that could be engaged in future processes to help disseminate information to the general public. He preferred that approach to waiting for people to come to open houses based on a general invitation to the public.

Ms. Demers said that many younger people did not care about transportation planning and suggested focusing on students at the university level who were interested instead of taking a “blanket” approach.

Ms. Wiederhold asked the committee to review the list of tools, bearing in mind that the budget was limited to \$3,000, and identify those they would like to try with the update. She said she had investigated the cost of television spots similar to the EWEB spots; they were not affordable and perhaps not appropriate for a minor update.

Mr. Jacobson noted that one of the tools listed was an automatic phone calling system. He said many people objected to those types of calls and urged that such a tool not be used.

Ms. Demers suggested advertisements on buses.

Ms. Shaw said she liked the idea of “TransMan.”

Mr. Farrington suggested using SurveyMonkey to solicit feedback. He said it was an inexpensive online survey instrument.

Mr. Sussman recommended appearances on morning radio talk shows to provide an overview of the process. Ms. Shaw added that some television stations had similar public interest opportunities.

Mr. Egan reiterated his suggestion to involve community leaders. He said a press release announcing the opportunity for public comment would be included in newsletters by organizations such as chambers of commerce, neighborhood organizations, senior centers, and others.

Mr. Sussman said there were several databases for newsletters, papers, periodicals, radio stations and other media that staff could access to provide coverage for a news release or announcement.

Mr. Farrington suggested distributing information and surveys to passengers on buses going to Duck football games.

Ms. Demers said that student government organizations at the University of Oregon, Lane Community College and Northwest Christian College and relevant programs within those schools would probably be willing to distribute information.

Ms. Shaw remarked that reader boards attracted attention.

Mr. Egan questioned the ability of a reader board to convey enough information. He liked Ms. Demers' suggestion to involve student government organizations in getting out information.

Ms. Williams urged the committee to clearly define its goal and what it wanted from the process and analyze each potential tool based on its ability to help achieve that goal and affordability.

Mr. Egan left the meeting at 7 p.m.

Citizen’s Guide to Transportation Planning

Ms. Wiederhold stated that whereas the Public Participation Plan was a technical document, the Citizen’s Guide was intended to be a user friendly document that guided people through the transportation planning process. She asked for feedback on the proposed table of contents and the “Did You Know” section. She said the goal was to complete a draft guide by May 2007, with a final document to the MPC in July 2007.

Mr. Jacobson suggested that information related to the MPO, MPC and CAC be incorporated in an appendix so that the guide’s primary focus could be on the planning process itself. He said the word “citizen” could be dropped and the document simply referred to as the Guide to Local Transportation Planning.

Ms. Moore agreed with the suggestion that the focus should be on why planning was necessary and its importance to people in the community.

Mr. Anderson felt the word “citizen” should remain in the title as an invitation to citizens who might

otherwise bypass the document. He said having the word “citizen” in the title would encourage members of the public to at least take an initial look.

Ms. Moore suggested using the word “public” as the word “citizen” was limiting. She said many people did not classify themselves as citizens but considered themselves part of the general public.

Mr. Anderson said it was essential to have a title that made it clear the document was intended for members of the community – John Q. Public.

Ms. Shaw suggested substituting “transportation planning” for “MPO.”

In response to a request from Mr. Jacobson, Ms. Wiederhold said she would bring resource materials, including similar documents from other jurisdictions to the next meeting.

Mr. Farrington suggested using a cartoon-like diagram or flow chart similar to that presented to school children about how a bill became a law to illustrate the transportation planning process and how a project happened.

Ms. Wiederhold said a prototype diagram had been reviewed at an earlier meeting but was rejected as too complicated. She invited any interested committee members to assist her in developing a simplified version. She agreed that MPO information should be moved to the end of the guide. She asked for comments on the section entitled “Key MPO Products.”

Ms. Moore suggested the term “results of planning” instead of “key products.”

Mr. Sussman suggested a diagram that illustrated the three layers of planning — local, state and federal — and the products of those processes and their relationship to each other.

Mr. Jacobson proposed showing the contrast between good and bad planning. Several committee members noted that it would be difficult to objectively show good and bad planning processes.

Ms. Shaw said the guide should answer readers’ questions about why they should be interested and involved.

Ms. Williams remarked that if the purpose was to engage people it was important to frame the guide in terms of “how we do things in our community” instead of making it a guide to government processes. She urged that no acronyms be used.

Ms. Wiederhold asked for feedback on the list of facts to be included in the Did You Know section of the guide.

Mr. Farrington suggested focusing on local facts rather than including national or global information. Several committee members agreed.

Mr. Jacobson suggested including information about future transportation modes and means and alternative fuels.

Ms. Moore suggested including the fact that 93 percent of all automobile accidents were due to driver error.

Mr. Farrington concurred with Ms. Moore's comments that an alternate term for "MPO products" should be found.

Mr. Jacobson urged that any reference to a location or fact should include personalized information such as an address or date.

Ms. Shaw and Ms. Demers supported Mr. Jacobson's recommendation for information on future issues as well as past facts.

Mr. Hazel proposed including information on freight handling and how the road system had changed to accommodate it.

Wrap up

Mr. Hazel asked for clarification on the special energy policy meeting that was being organized and for assurance that the meeting would be responsive to the committee's action at the December 2006 meeting to discuss taking a position to present to the MPC. Ms. Shaw said that options would be brought to the committee's February meeting. Ms. Wiederhold added that it was just not possible to schedule the discussion for the January 3 meeting and she was working with the officers to develop some options for the committee's consideration.

Mr. Hazel cited the December meeting minutes referring to the intent that the meeting would be a CAC meeting and not an MPC meeting. He said the purpose was to continue a discussion of former CAC member Jan Spencer's proposal regarding a recommendation to the MPC about peak oil and related issues and how they affected and should be incorporated in transportation planning. He hoped that any special meeting outside of the regular schedule for that purpose that provided additional information on the subject would be available and accessible to all CAC members and a majority of the time of the agenda would be reserved for discussion of recommendations to the MPC.

Ms. Shaw agreed that was the intent of the officers.

Ms. Moore expressed some reservation that being provided with additional information could dilute the purpose of the meeting and agreed with Mr. Hazel that the primary focus should be on a discussion by the CAC of recommendations to the MPC.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)