

MINUTES

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

June 6, 2007
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Webb Sussman, Chair; Moriah Demers, Vice Chair; Phillip Farrington, Rich Hazel, Jeanne Marie Moore, members; Kitty Piercy, MPC liaison; Kathi Wiederhold, Paul Thompson, Jacob Callister (Lane Council of Governments),

ABSENT: John Anderson, David Jacobson, members.

1. Welcome, Introductions, and Agenda Review

Ms. Demers called the meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) of the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) to order and those present introduced themselves.

2. Comments from the Audience

Ms. Demers determined no one wished to speak.

3. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Farrington, seconded by Mr. Hazel, moved to approve the minutes of the April 4, 2007, meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 4:0.

Ms. Demers announced that at the request of staff an item to discuss the committee's July and August meetings would be added to the agenda.

4. Update on Recruitment of New Members

Ms. Wiederhold distributed materials for recruitment of new CAC members. She said that promotional materials, information and application forms were available in English and Spanish. She also provided a list of places where recruitment materials would be distributed and listed local newspapers in which ads would appear. She said that notices would also be sent by email to more than 900 people on Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) mailing list.

Ms. Wiederhold said applications would be screened by a committee consisting of Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) members Kitty Piercy, Anne Ballew and Bobby Green, plus CAC officers. She hoped that new members would be appointed by the August meeting.

Ms. Wiederhold encouraged CAC members to use their personal contacts in the community to develop a diverse pool of applicants.

5. Changes to July and August Meetings

Ms. Wiederhold hoped to include an orientation for new members at the August meeting. She said the July meeting has been rescheduled to July 11 and would be a field tour with a bike and pedestrian focus. She said that Lane Transit District was providing a bus and the bicycle/pedestrian coordinators with the cities of Eugene and Springfield were helping to select a tour route. She indicated that new members would not be appointed by the July meeting/tour and asked committee members to consider whether applicants should be invited to participate in the tour.

Ms. Demers said the August 1 meeting was tentatively planned as a barbecue to welcome new members and offer an opportunity for everyone to become acquainted and discuss the CAC's mission in a relaxed environment. She said the meeting would be held at the regular time of 5:30 p.m.

6. Citizen's Guide to Transportation Planning

Ms. Wiederhold distributed a review draft of the Citizen's Guide that had been updated with input from the last meeting. She noted that the review draft did not include graphics; those would be added once the text was finalized. She suggested that the committee take the draft a page at a time and offer their suggestions for any changes.

Inside Front Cover

Ms. Piercy suggested that the statement on the inside of the front cover regarding materials in alternative format be expanded to specify the alternative formats that were available.

Ms. Moore said if the target audience for the guide was the general public the alternative formats should include versions in different languages, on a CD or a tape or in Braille, depending on the agencies ability to produce those formats.

Table of Contents

Ms. Wiederhold asked if the titles for sections were sufficiently descriptive.

Ms. Demers pointed out that the section entitled "Nix the problem—Fix the future" did not actually offer suggestions for fixing the future; it only discussed the problem.

It's How We Get There That Matters

Ms. Demers comments that driving to get groceries seemed out of place on the list of ways to get around the community that were more environmentally friendly. Other members agreed that the item could be removed from the list.

Mr. Hazel suggesting replacing the language with something related to combining errands and trips when driving.

Nix the Problem—Fix the Future

Mr. Callister displayed graphics and data that other regions had used in their publications. He said he worked with LCOG staff to develop local material to include in the guide, such as the increases in residents, jobs and density and the increase in travel by car between 1990 and 2000.

Ms. Wiederhold said because the guide was not a technical document she used a more informal approach to defining and attributing data and asked for committee feedback.

Mr. Hazel suggested using the term “greater Eugene-Springfield area” instead of trying to identify specific areas that data reflected.

Ms. Demers asked that the increases be expressed in percentages as well as numbers.

Ms. Piercy objected to the title of the section.

Mr. Hazel suggested substituting “The Challenges” as a title.

Mr. Farrington suggested providing more data to illustrate growth to date and anticipated. He said that the increase in car registrations could be a revealing statistic. He said that a growth rate of 1.6 percent annually for the area did not sound like much, but the result in 40 years was dramatic.

Ms. Piercy noted that slower growth in the metropolitan area than anticipated and the impact of movement to the outlying communities on the road system.

Mr. Farrington said that data on the average length of commute trips in terms of time or travel could be an interesting statistic to include.

Mr. Sussman arrived at 6:15 p.m.

Let’s Talk About Crowded Roads—And What We Can Do About Them

Mr. Callister discussed the data included in the section and the graphics that would be included in the final version of the guide.

Regarding the bulleted points under ways to reduce congestion, Mr. Hazel pointed out that improving existing roads was the same as making traffic flow on existing streets more efficient. He also objected to use of the term “improve” as widening a road did not necessarily improve it. He preferred the bulleted item about making traffic flow on existing streets more efficient.

Mr. Farrington remarked that it was not always a bad idea to widen the roadway. He said that the recent widening on I-105 made significant capacity improvements that the community needed and helped existing streets become more efficient.

Just the Facts

Mr. Callister reviewed the data table and asked for feedback.

Mr. Sussman expressed concern about the use of 2002 data and felt the public would question why more current data was not being used. Mr. Thompson replied that some of the data could be more current but in some cases, such as employment, data beyond 2004 was not available. He said the table would be updated with the most current data available.

Ms. Demers was concerned that the title of the section would suggest that the future projections were facts. Ms. Wiederhold said she would work on different wording for the title.

Get Involved! Be Informed!

Ms. Wiederhold quickly reviewed the remaining sections and asked if the guide was consistent with CAC direction regarding the tone and flow of information. She noted that there had been no changes in some section from earlier drafts and asked for feedback on any items the committee wanted to revise.

Ms. Moore said she wanted to take a copy of the guide and show it to someone outside of the committee to obtain feedback from potential users.

Mr. Farrington felt the “Get Involved” section was thorough and not too long, but if information was on two pages they should be facing pages.

Ms. Wiederhold said she would add information to the section on what happened to people’s comments.

Who Plans?

Ms. Piercy said that if the purpose of the guide was to encourage people to understand and participate in transportation planning, the public should be identified as planners in the process. She said the page discussing what transportation planner do was complicated and that should be acknowledged.

Mr. Sussman said the guide could emphasize that because there were many entities involved in the process, members of the public had a lot of opportunities to participate as a resident of a city, the county, the transit district, a user of Oregon Department of Transportation facilities and many others. He said a message should be added that urged people to become involved.

Ms. Moore suggested saying “There are many point for you to get involved, so please do!”

Following a general discussion, Ms. Demers determined that it was not necessary to produce another hard copy draft of the guide. She asked committee members to email any additional concerns or suggestions to the staff.

Ms. Moore asked for a final version of the guide to be provided in Braille.

7. May 21 Open House

Ms. Demers reported that she had attended the open house and learned a lot about the West 11th Avenue EmX extension.

Mr. Thompson said that over 60 people attended the open house.

Mr. Farrington commented that he heard different issues raised regarding transportation needs, including expansion of bike path connections that spanned west Eugene from north to south.

Ms. Demers remarked that the CAC officers had discussed the good attendance and agreed to collaborate with other agencies on similar events in the future.

Mr. Thompson invited members to attend the LCOG open house on June 7.

The committee took a short break.

8. Status Report on Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update and Proposed Modifications to Project Lists for Regional Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Thompson distributed an updated project list that showed the new and changed projects from the current RTP to the new draft. He said the list was close to being final and he would respond to any questions.

Mr. Sussman asked what would happen to Lane County projects if there were funding difficulties as a result of the County's financial situation. Mr. Thompson said the County had asked that two programmed (funded) projects be removed from the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), which was the four-year program, but had not asked for projects to be removed from the long-range plan.

Mr. Thompson said that changes consisted of new projects, projects moving from the unfunded illustrative list to the constrained list and from the constrained to the illustrative list. He said that many ODOT projects were moving from unfunded to funded status because of the removal of the West Eugene Parkway. In response to several questions regarding the EmX Gateway corridor, which moved from the constrained to the illustrative list, he explained that LTD did not yet have enough specificity for the project to be on the constrained list and it was moved to placeholder status until the next phase of the project provided the necessary details.

Mr. Farrington asked about the source of new projects on the list, such as the Game Farm Road projects. Mr. Thompson said that the projects may have been previously adopted into various jurisdictions' plans, but they were new to MPO planning documents.

Committee members commented on the need for information about projects that would help people gain a better understanding of how projects evolved, who was responsible for them, contact information, interrelationship of projects and project status. Mr. Thompson reminded the committee that the eMPO was under development and once available, would be an interactive website that provided that information about projects within the region and provided contacts for each project. He expected a prototype to be available later in the summer.

Ms. Moore urged that the prototype be tested by people who were blind well in advance of rolling the site out for public access. Mr. Thompson said that once the prototype was fully functional the CAC would be involved in testing it, including the text only version.

Mr. Thompson said that a new federal requirement for the RTP was coordination with all of the resource, environmental and land use planning agencies to provide information around the environmental, natural resource, land use and cultural resource issues that transportation projects might encounter as they move

forward. He said the requirement would assure that those issues were considered early in the transportation planning process and displayed a number of maps that reflected the relevant data. He said that the maps were available on the LCOG website.

Ms. Moore asked about the nature of the project at the intersections of West 6th and 7th avenues and Washington and Jefferson streets. She said there were aspects of the project, such as narrower sidewalks, that some people would object to. Mr. Thompson replied that it was an ODOT project to improve sightlines and resolve turn conflicts; it had been planned for some time and now that it was under contract it was too late for public input.

Mr. Hazel remarked that it was difficult for members of the public to know that a project was being planned and provide input at some meaningful point when change was still possible. He said that once a project was in the MTIP it was too late.

Ms. Piercy noted that projects had to be approved by a governing body, such as the City Council, and that included a public hearing.

Ms. Moore said she had been interested in the Jefferson/Washington project because of difficulties she had encountered at those intersections, but now it was too late for public input. She was entirely unclear about how a person could participate at the planning stage and that was a huge gap that the committee wanted to close.

Mr. Farrington asked if the eMPO would identify a project's current status in the process from concept to implementation so people could identify the points at which they could become involved and provide input. Mr. Thompson said that was a difficult question to answer because there was no requirement for jurisdictions to specify any timing for projects that were outside of the 4-year MTIP period but within the 20+-year long-range plan.

Due to lack of time, Mr. Sussman asked Mr. Hazel and Ms. Moore to put their questions and concerns regarding the gaps in the process in writing and email them to Ms. Wiederhold with copies to Ms. Demers and him.

9. Wrap Up

Ms. Demers called for suggestions for the July 11 tour.

Ms. Moore asked that the tour include the Springfield roundabouts. She said they were totally inaccessible to the blind.

Mr. Thompson announced that LCOG's four-year certification review by the U.S. Department of Transportation had been very successful.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)