

MINUTES

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

December 15, 2011
5:30 p.m.

PRESENT: Edward Winter, Sarah Strand, co-chairs; Paul Adkins, Diana Alldredge, Dick Beers, Wendy Butler-Boyesen, Philip Farrington, Gary Gillespie, Dave Jacobson, Alexandre Lockfeld, Bill Morganti, Eleanor Mulder, Jennifer Smith, members; Ron Kilcoyne, MPC liaison; Kathi Wiederhold, Paul Thompson, Byron Vanderpool, Andrea Riner, Lane Council of Governments; Kurt Yeiter, City of Eugene; David Reesor, City of Springfield; Savannah Crawford, Oregon Department of Transportation; Celia Barry, Lane County.

ABSENT: Rosalia Marquez, member.

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Mr. Winter called the meeting of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to order. Those present introduced themselves. There were no changes to the agenda.

Comments from the Audience

There were no comments.

Approve November 17, 2011, Minutes

Mr. Morganti, seconded by Mr. Gillespie, moved to approve the minutes of October 20, 2011, as submitted. The motion passed unanimously, 10:0.

CAC Recruitment Update

Mr. Winter reported that the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) had considered CAC recruitment strategies at its December 8 meeting and selected Option C (a more extensive process), but eliminated the use of display ads. The recruitment period would be from December 9, 2011 through January 23, 2012. He said the MPC also extended the terms of the five CAC members with terms expiring in December 2011 to March 2012 when the recruitment and selection process would be completed. CAC applications were now available online.

Ms. Strand arrived at 5:40 p.m.

Mr. Winter said he thought the current recruitment process would be similar to the last one and a CAC subcommittee would be formed to screen applications and make appointment recommendations to the MPC, although the MPC wanted to see all of the applications before making a decision. He urged all of the CAC members with expiring terms to reapply.

Mr. Vanderpool described the processes used in the previous four CAC recruitment efforts and suggested that the application screening committee could include more representatives from the MPC to encourage better understanding of and engagement with the CAC.

Mr. Jacobson commented that the screening committee should have balanced representation from the CAC and MPC.

Mr. Kilcoyne, Mr. Jacobson, Mr. Morganti, Ms. Alldredge and Ms. Smith volunteered to serve on the screening committee. Mr. Winter designated Ms. Smith as the screening committee chair.

Mr. Lockfeld arrived at 5:45 p.m.

Ms. Wiederhold said she would work with the chair and committee members to schedule meeting dates.

Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

Mr. Thompson stated that the MTIP was a document that programmed four years of funds for transportation activities. It was updated at least every two years and the current document was virtually the same as the previous one because of the uncertainty of future funding. He noted that most of the projects had been carried forward without changes and there were only six new projects: four were Lane Transit District (LTD) projects that reflected the use of anticipated funds in the last two years covered by the MTIP and two were Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) projects. He said jurisdictions could program additional projects in the MTIP as amendments if funding was assured in the future.

Mr. Beers asked if LTD funding was being increased. Mr. Thompson replied that the increase in LTD funding was not based on decisions by the MPO or LTD; they were funds distributed at the federal level on a formula basis to transit districts across the country. The formula had not changed from the previous MTIP, so in that sense there was not an increase in funding, but rather a continuation of the same funding levels into the new out years in the draft MTIP.

Mr. Jacobson asked about the status of federal timber funds received by Lane County. Ms. Barry replied that the County was not depending on receipt of those federal funds because of decreases in previous years. The funds are decreasing year by year in a graduated step-down.

Mr. Jacobson suggested that the MTIP language regarding those funds should be changed to past tense.

Mr. Winter asked for a definition of roadway modernization and preservation projects. Mr. Thompson said preservation projects referred to preserving and maintaining an existing roadway; modernization referred to modifications to a roadway that increased capacity, such as adding a lane, or building a new facility. He said some projects could have overlapping purposes that reflected both preservation and modernization.

Mr. Jacobson asked if there had been any consideration of using double tiered roadways to improve Highway 126 between West Eugene and Veneta because of the physical constraints along that section that would prevent efforts to widen the current roadway.

Mr. Thompson said he had seen double-decker highways in other areas of the country, but had not heard that option discussed locally.

Ms. Butler-Boyesen arrived at 5:55 p.m.

Mr. Beers suggested an alternate route that would avoid impacts to wetlands.

Mr. Farrington asked if a couplet was being considered.

Ms. Crawford said there had been some discussion of a separated facility, such as a double-decker roadway, as well as alternate routes. She said ODOT was just beginning the process of looking at a range of options for improving Highway 126 and no alternatives had been discarded at this point.

Mr. Thompson stated that the MTIP public comment period would be open until January 5, 2012, and the MPC would be asked to approve the document at its January 8 meeting. He said only one set of public comments had been received to date and asked the CAC for a recommendation to the MPC regarding MTIP approval.

Mr. Farrington observed that not all transportation projects were reflected in the MTIP. Mr. Thompson said the MTIP contained a four-year list of projects for which funding was available and committed; the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) contained a 25-year project list, both funded and unfunded, that reflected future needs. When funding was identified for a project in the RTP, it was then included in the MTIP.

Mr. Gillespie left the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Mr. Farrington asked if there were projects that might be in the concept stage that jurisdictions had not yet included in one of the transportation plans. He noted that in the past jurisdictions had identified projects when flexible funding became available and funding had been switched around among other activities in order to implement those projects. He was curious about how those projects were selected by the jurisdictions.

Mr. Thompson explained that occasionally the CAC was asked to support jurisdictions' applications for funds from various sources and those applications could include a number of projects that if funded would be included in the MTIP through amendments. Ms. Riner noted that those projects were generated at the local jurisdiction level, rather than in the regional arena.

Mr. Jacobson commented that the City of Springfield had solicited suggestions for capital improvement projects and asked what funding sources would be used for those projects. Mr. Reesor explained that the City's five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) was reviewed and updated periodically and projects were funded from a variety of federal, state and local sources, such as system development charges, gas tax and bonds.

Mr. Winter asked if the federal funding for EmX would be included in the MTIP. Mr. Thompson said EmX planning and construction funding would have to be included in the MTIP before it could be utilized. Any funding confirmed after the MTIP was approved would be incorporated through an amendment.

Mr. Lockfeld asked for an explanation of project scoping activities referred to in the MTIP. Mr. Thompson replied that once a decision was made that an improvement on a roadway would be built, the scoping phase consisted of preliminary engineering and design and cost estimation of the project; further refinements to the project would not occur until later in the planning process.

Mr. Lockfeld asked if the scoping phase could eliminate bike and pedestrian components of the project. Mr. Thompson said if those components were in the project description programmed into the MTIP it was unlikely they would change. He said any amendment that would remove a project component would have to be subjected to public comment and action by the MPC if the project used MPO funds.

In response to a question from Mr. Beers, Mr. Thompson said the process was interactive, with jurisdictions developing project information during scoping to provide some cost certainties for projects and when funding was identified, the details of the project were then determined.

Mr. Farrington asked how bike and pedestrian facility gaps in the improved street system were addressed. Mr. Yeiter said gaps were addressed through property assessments or system development charges. Mr. Thompson added that as development occurred on vacant land where there was a gap, typically the developer would be assessed for those improvements. He said it was unlikely that federal funds would be used and those projects would not be reflected in the MTIP.

Mr. Winter asked if the list of bike/pedestrian projects included those that were part of other roadway projects. Mr. Thompson said the list only reflected stand-alone bike/pedestrian projects; it did not include the value of bike/pedestrian components of predominantly roadway projects or reflect the total investment in bike/pedestrian improvements.

Mr. Morganti, seconded by Mr. Lockfeld, moved to recommend approval of the Draft FY2012-15 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program to the Metropolitan Policy Committee.

In response to a question from Mr. Beers regarding the amount of funding for LTD, Mr. Kilcoyne explained that LTD received formula federal funding each year and historically that had been used for capital costs; however, it was permissible to use some capital funds for operations and in order to minimize service cutbacks when payroll taxes decreased LTD had used some of that money for preventive maintenance.

Mr. Beers expressed concern that 35 percent of funding in the MTIP was directed to LTD. He wanted fewer funds to go toward transit and more funds distributed for projects throughout the community.

Mr. Lockfeld pointed out that the funds going to LTD were federal transit funds and could not be used for other purposes. If they did not come to LTD they would be distributed to transit districts elsewhere in the country and not be available to the local community for other projects. Mr. Thompson said federal transit funds were entirely separate from highway funds and could not be used for roads. He said the MTIP was a transportation program that covered all modes, not just roads.

Ms. Riner reminded the committee that the MTIP did not reflect all transportation investments in the region; it only included regionally significant projects that used federal funds. There was a significant amount of

other funds from local and state sources that were not included in the MTIP and therefore the funds going to LTD were not 35 percent of the regional transportation funding.

Mr. Jacobson observed that \$400 million for transit through 2035 was only about \$20 million per year. Mr. Lockfeld said the investment in transit was modest compared to the cost of the Interstate 5 bridge and Beltline flyover projects, which totaled several hundred million dollars.

Ms. Strand referred to a newspaper article that indicated 50 percent of the U.S. population lived in poverty and reminded the committee that transit was a major component of equity.

The motion passed, 10:1; Mr. Beers voting no.

The committee took a short break.

South Willamette Street Transformation Project Update

Mr. Yeiter said the City of Eugene had received State Transportation Growth Management (TGM) funding to assist in realizing its land use and transportation vision. He said Willamette Street was one of Eugene's main north/south streets and it had the most commercial activity along it. He described its current configuration and said it had been the subject of concern for many years.

Ms. Mulder arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Mr. Yeiter said that workshops and outreach had engaged neighborhood and business associations in discussions of the location and nature of future development and transportation improvements that would be needed to make the area more accessible, pedestrian/bike-friendly and support commercial activities. The purpose of the TGM grant was to develop and adopt a plan for Willamette Street and adjacent neighborhoods that would be supported by stakeholders and eventually result in projects that would be included in the MTIP. He anticipated that public outreach associated with the planning project would commence in March 2012.

Mr. Winter asked what type of outreach strategies would be employed. Mr. Yeiter said that door-to-door outreach to determine the interests of businesses was the most desirable. He said outreach was somewhat complicated because many businesses leased their space and mailings to property owners did not always reach those businesses. A variety of strategies would be used to assure that the different constituent groups, including local residents and people who worked in or visited the area were contacted and engaged in the process. He said a request for proposals for a firm to facilitate the planning phase had been issued and the firm selected would also bring creative ideas for public involvement to the process.

Ms. Smith commented that there were many elements that would impact the plan. She asked if an earlier study of driveway access would be a factor. Mr. Yeiter said that would be a factor, as would the bicycle and pedestrian master plan, which had identified a number of areas that required additional study. He said a new City ordinance allowed the closure of driveways in certain circumstances as a part of access management. He said an earlier study of constructing bike lanes on Willamette Street also contained recommendations regarding closure of driveways.

Mr. Yeiter said another component of the Willamette Street project would involve third-party engineers with expertise in transit and bike planning to determine the advantages and disadvantages of different

strategies under consideration, predict the impacts of strategies and describe those to the public. He said that experience gained in the West Eugene EmX project had prompted consideration shifting an EmX corridor from Willamette Street to Amazon Parkway because the congestion along Willamette made bus rapid transit a poor fit.

Mr. Winter observed that biking on Willamette Street currently was dangerous.

Mr. Lockfeld commented that one of the problems with that area was the lack of north/south through streets.

Mr. Beers asked how the City proposed to move a quarter of the population efficiently through that area from South Eugene to downtown. Mr. Yeiter replied that not all of the traffic would be moving through the Willamette Street corridor and future population growth was not envisioned to be concentrated in South Eugene; it also would occur in other locations in the community. He said Willamette Street actually had more capacity than it currently appeared and better traffic direction and controls would allow more cars to move efficiently through that area. He said appropriate improvements to bike and pedestrian facilities would not decrease current capacity according to engineers.

Mr. Jacobson was concerned that reducing traffic lanes to two would increase congestion along Willamette Street as the population grew and there were more cars on the road.

Ms. Smith said a center turn lane was the key to maintaining the flow of traffic. She said nodal development would also encourage people to access businesses in their neighborhood, rather than traveling across town.

Mr. Farrington said he did not favor a center turn lane as it did not improve safety for bicyclists. He asked if previous data or studies could be made available online for the CAC and the public to review. Mr. Yeiter indicated that information could be provided when a project website was established. He said one purpose of the grant was to determine how various scenarios would impact Willamette Street specifically and what other options were available.

Ms. Mulder commented that the problem of north/south traffic flow had existed for years and the plan could encourage motorists to use routes other than Willamette Street when they were passing through the area.

Ms. Butler-Boyesen asked how effective the reduction of traffic lanes on Bailey Hill Road had been. Mr. Yeiter said it appeared the reduction was working well, but the public wanted to see proof of that success. He said there was little factual information available from stakeholders at this point, but it might be possible to determine their opinions by interviewing them now that the project had been implemented for two years.

MPC/Other Updates

Mr. Winter reported that the MPC had adopted the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan and discussed air quality and greenhouse gas plans.

Reports from CAC Representatives on Outside Committees

Mr. Jacobson reported that the Lane Area Commission on Transportation (ACT) had an extensive discussion of Highway 126. It also discussed the process for responding to requests for letters of endorsement. He said ACT members preferred to have a draft endorsement letter included in the agenda

packet instead of presented to them at the meeting. He said Creswell mayor Bob Hooker was elected ACT chair for a second year and Eugene mayor Kitty Piercy was elected vice chair. He invited CAC members to attend the ACT meetings. Mr. Kilcoyne added that a letter from County Commission Jay Bozievich stating that the ACT should focus on road maintenance rather than social issues such as climate change and high-speed rail had elicited considerable debate.

Ms. Mulder stated that ODOT staff might be doing double duty because of the State's hiring freeze.

Mr. Jacobson announced that the Springfield Transportation System Plan (TSP) citizen advisory group would meet in January. Mr. Reesor said the technical advisory committee consisting of primarily agency staff would meet on January 18 and the stakeholder group would meet on January 24.

Mr. Yeiter said Eugene's TSP citizen advisory group would meet in late January or early February to review draft goals, objectives and policies based on the City's sustainability, pedestrian/bicycle and other efforts. He expected some analysis of the RTP traffic model runs to be available for review.

Ms. Smith suggested that the Eugene TSP group should be informed of the CAC recruitment process.

Mr. Reesor announced Springfield was working with the University of Oregon on sustainability efforts that could include stormwater, transportation and bike/pedestrian projects. He said students were generating many interesting and creative ideas.

Wrap-Up

Mr. Adkins said the City of Eugene Municipal Court established in May 2011 a diversion course for bicyclists that violated traffic laws. The diversion course was an alternative to paying the fine associated with a ticket. He said between eight and 15 people per month had opted to take the class and found it very helpful.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. The next meeting was scheduled for January 19, 2011.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)