

MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee
Springfield Library Meeting Room—Springfield City Hall
525 5th Street—Springfield, Oregon

June 10, 2010
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Alan Zelenka, Chair; Kitty Piercy (Eugene), Pete Sorenson, Rob Handy (Lane County), Christine Lundberg (City of Eugene), Greg Evans, Mike Eyster (Lane Transit District), Don Schuessler, Brian Pech (City of Coburg), Sonny Chickering (Oregon Department of Transportation), members; Gino Grimaldi (City of Springfield), Mark Pangborn (Lane Transit District), Jeff Spartz (Lane County), Sarah Medary (City of Eugene), *ex officio* members.

George Kloeppe, Kathi Wiederhold, Byron Vanderpool, Petra Schuetz, Andrea Riner, Paul Thompson, Stacy Clauson, Lane Council of Governments; Dave Jacobson, Metropolitan Policy Organization Citizen Advisory Committee; Celia Barry, Lane County; David Reesor, Tom Boyatt, City of Springfield; Rob Inerfeld, City of Eugene; Tom Schwetz, Connie Bloom Williams, Lane Transit District; Savannah Crawford, Sven _____, Oregon Department of Transportation; Rob Zako, Kevin Matthews, Melvin Barnes, guests; Robert Lewis, Neil Moyer, Metro Television.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Zelenka convened the meeting. Those present introduced themselves.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Zelenka called the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) to order.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA

There were none.

ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MPC MEMBERS

Mayor Piercy reported on her recent attendance at the rail conference sponsored by the American Public Transportation Association meeting in Vancouver, British Columbia. She termed the conference an immersion in rail issues. She also attended a Cascadia Corridor meeting to discuss rail issues, and said it was a good opportunity to connect with people from throughout the corridor. She had been asked to co-chair a Cascadia subcommittee that had been tasked to work on rail from Portland to Eugene. Mayor Piercy acknowledged that Eugene was relatively small as compared to Portland, Vancouver, BC, and Seattle and that, consequently, this region needed to work to maintain itself as an important part of the Cascadia Corridor.

Mayor Piercy believed that the issue of rail should be on every MPC agenda because of the expectations of the State in regard to rail and said the Oregon Transportation Commission was also discussing rail. She asked MPC members to contact her, if they were interested in doing more work on rail issues. She emphasized the importance of a multi-modal approach to transportation involving rail.

Commissioner Sorenson noted an upcoming workshop in Eugene on July 19-20 at the Goodson Room at Lane County Public Works entitled “Finding Capital: Developing Tools and Products for the Next Generation Superstructure.” The target audience was government finance staff, and the workshop was sponsored by the Applied Solutions Coalition.

Mr. Pangborn reported that the Lane Transit District (LTD) Board of Directors had held a public hearing regarding options for the West Eugene EmX Corridor Extension. He noted there were currently 58 options on the table; that number would soon be winnowed to eight to ten options.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Melvin Barnes advocated for more financing for LTD because of the demand for more bus routes in more areas, such as around Jasper Road. He reported that he trained people about how to ride the bus, but after they were trained, they came to him to tell him they were unable to find a bus. He also advocated for a shuttle system to serve riders, particularly senior citizens, to allow them to reach important destinations.

Mr. Zelenka indicated his belief that the entire committee shared Mr. Barnes’ concerns. Mayor Piercy concurred, and said local representatives had been to Washington, DC, to discuss the issue of federal funding to underwrite the costs of transit operations.

Kevin Matthews, President of Friends of Eugene, discussed public involvement for transportation issues and urged that there be more integrated public involvement. He maintained the “public needed to be involved in public planning and the public needed to be involved in public involvement.” He said Eugene in particular needed to determine how to overcome roadblocks facing projects such as the EmX West Eugene extension project.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION ISSUES

Report from the Citizen Advisory Committee

Mr. Jacobson, Chair of the Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizen Advisory Committee (MPO CAC) reviewed the report on CAC activities contained in the meeting packet. He noted some CAC recommendations related to strengthened and broadened public outreach, and reported on the CAC’s discussion regarding the MPO’s Title VI report. He also noted the CAC’s approval of the public outreach plan for the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP).

Mr. Jacobson emphasized the broad diversity of the CAC’s membership.

Mayor Piercy noted the “Envision Eugene” planning process currently underway and suggested that the CAC could talk with Eugene staff on how to increase public involvement in that process. She believed that the CAC’s input was very important and encouraged Mr. Jacobson to take advantage of Envision Eugene public input opportunities.

Ms. Lundberg suggested that the CAC could go the public as opposed to asking the public to come to it,

and urged Mr. Jacobson to take advantage of already scheduled community events, particularly those related to transportation, to reach out to the community. Mr. Jacobson said that the CAC had discussed that issue and he agreed with Ms. Lundberg.

Speaking to the issue of reaching out to Title VI communities, Mr. Evans reminded Mr. Jacobson that not all Title VI populations were connected to the Internet because they could not afford it. He recommended the CAC consider a strategy related to making connections via word of mouth and small committees that did direct public outreach.

Amendment to FY2008-2011 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

Mr. Thompson reviewed the proposed amendment, reminding the MPC that it had discussed the subject the previous month and held a public hearing, at which no one testified. He had noted the two public comments received during the public comment period in his staff report. Mr. Thompson recommended MPC approval of Resolution 2010-05, amending the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization FY2008-2011 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Sorenson, seconded by Mr. Eyster, moved to approve Resolution 2010-05, amending the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization FY2008-2011 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program. The motion passed unanimously.

Draft FY2010-2013 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Thompson called the MPC's attention to a pie chart distributed at members' places entitled FY2010-2013 MTIP by Activity Type, as well as to a document entitled Central Lane MPO Composite Project List, which contained the full list of projects, and distributed a multi-page spreadsheet entitled *Central Lane MPO—FFY08-11 MTIP Project List—Summary of Funding by Jurisdiction, Federal Fiscal Year, and Activity Type*. He briefly overviewed the structure of the MTIP.

Mr. Thompson observed that adoption of a new TIP frequently involved funding decisions; the TIP currently before the MPC did not. The MPC had previously made STP-U funding decisions and the Oregon Department of Transportation had made its draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funding decisions, and they were reflected in the MTIP already.

Mr. Zelenka opened the public hearing.

Kevin Matthews, Friends of Eugene, commended the use of evaluation criteria, which he asserted represented an evolution in the direction of local transportation planning. Mr. Matthews objected to some of the projects on the list as not meeting the criteria, specifically Bertelsen Road from 18th Street to Bailey Hill Road because it was at the edge of the urban growth boundary (UGB) and adjacent to a wetland preserve owned by The Nature Conservancy. He did not think the project required a center turn lane because no one could turn into the preserve. He questioned whether the project was an upgrade or road preservation. Mr. Matthews believed that many of the City of Eugene's road upgrade projects were inappropriate because of their location and scale and suggested a "middle way" approach was possible on Bertelsen Road involving less pavement and a separate bicycle lane.

Mr. Matthews also noted his objection to several ODOT modernization projects. He did not think "modernization" fit into the evaluation criteria and suggested the term was a euphemism for building bigger and better road projects. He approved of better but not bigger. He asked that the Bertelsen Road project be removed from the document until it was "framed in a sensitive way." He believed the ODOT projects called for a larger conversation and a "continued shifting of the paradigms."

Rob Zako, 1280-B East 32nd Avenue, suggested that the reason that only he and Mr. Matthews were present to offer public comment was because the decisions reflected in the TIP had already been made in another venue. He believed that the public had earlier opportunities to be involved. However, if today was not the right time to raise concerns, he wanted to know when it was appropriate to raise concerns and how he could find out about how to get involved. He asked the MPC to consider how better to involve the public, and at what point.

Mr. Zelenka closed the public hearing.

Mr. Zelenka referred the MPC to page 31 of the packet, which included a table showing activity types and funding percentages, and noted that transit had the largest amount of funding and bicycle/pedestrian/rail had the least amount of funding, which seemed “historically” out of proportion to where he believed the community wanted to go. He stated a desire to reprioritize that approach.

Mr. Thompson discussed the public involvement activities associated with the MTIP, which included an upcoming open house in downtown Eugene and broadly distributed notice. He said the public comment period would be open until July 5, 2010. He acknowledged that many funding decisions had already been made through prior public processes, where considerable public input was provided about the projects in the MTIP. Mr. Thompson said the MPO CAC had recommended the public involvement that was planned for this MTIP because of the outreach that had already occurred through other processes.

Mr. Thompson reminded the MPC that the MTIP also included an element related to the air quality conformity determination required by federal law. The MPC would consider that issue in August or September, and another public involvement process would occur at that time.

Mr. Zelenka asked how the public could submit comment before July 5. Mr. Thompson invited telephone calls and e-mails to either himself or the MPO, and noted that contact information was listed on the web site and would be available at the open house being held at LTD’s Eugene Station.

Mr. Schwetz pointed out that the percentages discussed by Mr. Zelenka did not capture the extensive investments in pedestrian and bicycle facilities associated with EmX and other transportation projects. He suggested that staff return with an accounting of that to illustrate for the MPC what was actually happening on the ground. Mr. Zelenka welcomed that information and thought it would be helpful. Mr. Thompson recalled that staff had previously broken out bicycle elements related to modernization projects during the STP-U funding process, but that was not shown in the tables presented to the MPC for the MTIP.

At the request of Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Chickering provided an update on the planning associated with the Beltline interchange project and noted that the State was still \$30 million short of what was needed to improve the interchange.

Mayor Piercy observed that public participation could be both local and regional and all levels of government were trying to get better at it. She agreed that people could not easily see what was being spent on bicycle and pedestrian projects if those projects were not specifically called out. She suggested a narrative was needed in the MTIP that identified what government was trying to accomplish in regard to transportation, and how the projects proposed for funding achieved those goals. She did not think that the public found charts and tables as informative as such a narrative might be.

Mayor Piercy returned to the subject of rail and suggested that rail should be funded so that people had choices in transportation. She said the State would be debating whether it should have a “Connect Oregon 4.” She thought that the MPC should support such an effort, and it should raise the issue of rail now.

Mr. Handy asked staff for comment on the points raised by Mr. Matthews and what options the MPC had to modify the project in question. He asked if it was possible to use context sensitive design for the project. Mr. Inerfeld said there was residential development on one side of the street, which was why sidewalks, bicycle facilities, and a turn lane were proposed. He suggested that some modifications to the project could be made with the involvement of representatives of the environmental community, The Nature Conservancy, and the residents. Mr. Handy encouraged staff to seek such modifications and requested a later report. Mr. Inerfeld indicated he would modify the project description.

Mr. Handy noted the Beltline corridor discussions currently underway and said “who knows how big that project is going to be” and suggested that no one was discussing land use in regard to that topic. He had raised Beltline during one of the Envision Eugene discussions and there was “either stunned silence or shock in the room” about the fact the project was under discussion. He wanted to know how the MPC and ODOT could work together to better integrate land use and transportation. Mr. Chickering said that ODOT had discussed concerns raised by LTD about the possible inclusion of EmX on the facility. He pointed out that ODOT was early in the process of designing the facility, but it was already working on the issues raised by LTD to ensure that LTD could support the project. In regard to the Envision Eugene process, Ms. Crawford said that ODOT was involved in that process and would continue to participate.

Mr. Chickering recalled similar questions had been asked at a recent Board of County Commissioners meeting and repeated sentiments he had expressed then, which was that ODOT believed it was integrating land use and transportation. He acknowledged that some in the community did not think that ODOT did enough in that regard. Currently, ODOT considered land uses and their demand on the system; if those uses changed, ODOT considered that impact. He said that some perceived that as reactive rather than proactive. He believed there was room for discussion, but he was following the practices of a large organization that operated on a statewide basis. He believed that ODOT was sufficiently flexible to make adjustments in its practices over time.

Mr. Handy noted the many ODOT projects on the list and hoped in the future the public would be able to see how those projects did or did not address such issues as public health and obesity, transportation demand management, and greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Handy recalled that Governor Ted Kulongoski had suggested there could be \$250 million available for the Beltline project. He asked if ODOT could give him hope that it could build a “least cost” option for Beltline that incorporated community values and left money for improvements in West Eugene. Mr. Chickering said that ODOT did not allocate money in such a fashion, and that he was not sure where Commissioner Handy’s figure came from. ODOT is going through a process to determine what it needs to build, and ODOT is considering Beltline options that range from a no-build option to an option that probably exceeded \$250 million. It was unlikely the higher cost option would be carried through the process. Mr. Chickering said ODOT was trying to do least-cost planning now, and the community would decide what it wanted to build and ODOT would seek the needed money. He said there was no funding allocated to the project at this time.

Mr. Handy requested an ongoing MPC agenda item on rail.

Mr. Sorenson asked questions clarifying the allocation percentages for the different expenditure categories. He confirmed with Mr. Thompson that rail was included with bicycle and pedestrian projects but there was currently no rail project in the MTIP. Mr. Sorenson asked if the MPC had authority to change the percentages. Mr. Thompson said the MPC could change the percentages for the funding it controlled in the future; he recalled that the MPC had changed the percentages in the Surface Transportation Program-Urban (STP-U) funding.

Mr. Sorenson asked if there were any policy choices that the MPC could make in regard to the MTIP. Mr. Thompson said that the MPC could revisit its own funding decisions or it could try to influence expenditures through the STIP process.

Mr. Zelenka said he understood that Oregon got left out of the federal allocation for rail because it lacked a plan. He thought it important to continue to push on that issue.

Mr. Zelenka was glad to hear that LTD and ODOT were talking about how to incorporate EmX on Beltline.

Mayor Piercy emphasized the importance of moving forward projects that realized community goals and provided residents with choices.

Responding to a question from Mr. Evans, Mr. Thompson anticipated that the MPC could discuss additional funding for rail projects to facilitate connectivity, for example, when the federal transportation bill was reauthorized and more funding was available in the STP-U program. Mr. Evans said the MPC should establish a funding category for such rail-related projects to ensure the community was ready when funding was available.

Regional Policy Discussion: Public Involvement

Ms. Riner called attention to a diagram in the packet and also displayed on the meeting room wall showing a timeline for public involvement for various local and regional transportation planning processes. She reviewed the timeline.

Mr. Zelenka commended the materials and determined there were no questions.

Title VI Review

Ms. Clauson provided the staff report. She provided a brief overview of the Title VI Plan and noted the requirement for an annual report on progress, to be submitted to ODOT. She called attention to the report, which was included in the packet, and provided an overview of the report and the input provided by the MPO CAC. She solicited comments or changes to the report from MPC members. There were none.

Responding to a question from Mr. Handy about any “on-the-ground” improvements that resulted from the plan, Ms. Clauson said that staff considered the plan in its other planning processes to ensure the infrastructure needs of the Title VI community were met. She also discussed the MPO’s plans to broaden outreach to the Title VI community to better understand its challenges.

Mr. Zelenka emphasized the need to encourage minority representation on advisory committees such as the MPO CAC. Mr. Evans suggested the MPC consider how the community could “grow its own” representatives of different populations, including communities of color.

Mayor Piercy suggested that evaluating the general issue of access to various populations, including Title VI populations, would help determine gaps in the choices that existed in the transportation system. She also urged staff not to lose sight of the fact religious communities were at the heart of many people’s lives, and that religious communities were often looking for a way to contribute to the larger community.

MPO Planning Calendar

The calendars were included in the packet.

Follow-up and Next Steps

- **ODOT Update**

Mr. Chickering said there was some discussion occurring at the State level about the allocations for modernization funding in the 2012-15 STIP, and he was hearing rumors that the amount of money that would be available would be very small.

Mr. Chickering announced the upcoming Lane County Area Commission on Transportation meeting with the Board of County Commissioners and members of the OTC on June 23.

- **MTIP Administrative Amendments**

Mr. Zelenka called attention to the amendments included in the packet.

- **Next Steps – Agenda Building**

Mr. Zelenka suggested that the MPC cancel the August meeting. There was no objection.

The next meeting was scheduled for July 8, 2010.

Mr. Zelenka adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

(Recorded by Kimberly Young)