

## MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee  
Large Conference Room—Springfield Justice Center—230 Fourth Street  
Springfield, Oregon

August 11, 2011  
11:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Hillary Wylie (City of Springfield), Chair; John Fox (City of Coburg), Kitty Piercy, Alan Zelenka (arrived at 11:43 a.m.) (City of Eugene), Jay Bozievich, Sid Leiken (Lane County), Sonny Chickering, Savannah Crawford (Oregon Department of Transportation), Greg Evans, Mike Eyster, (Lane Transit District), members; Gino Grimaldi (City of Springfield), Tom Schwetz for Ron Kilcoyne (Lane Transit District), Brenda Wilson for Jon Ruiz (City of Eugene), Celia Barry for Liane Richardson, *ex officio* members.

Byron Vanderpool, Andrea Riner, Kathi Wiederhold, Paul Thompson (Lane Council of Governments); Rob Inerfeld (City of Eugene), Tom Boyatt (City of Springfield), Theresa Brand, Natalie Stiffler (Lane Transit District), Dave Jacobson, Edward Winter (Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizen Advisory Committee); Tyler Fisher, Carleen Reilly, guests.

### 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Ms. Wylie welcomed everyone to the meeting and to Springfield. Those present introduced themselves.

### 2. CALL TO ORDER/APPROVE JULY 14, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Piercy, seconded by Mr. Evans, moved that the minutes for July 14, 2011 be approved as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

### 3. ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MPC MEMBERS

There were no adjustments to the agenda.

Mr. Eyster stated those who read the Register-Guard this morning may be under the impression that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was pressured to force Lane Transit District (LTD) to hire a consultant to study the Sixth/Seventh EmX route. He asserted that impression was wrong. LTD knew from the time the route was identified as the locally preferred alternative that it would need to be studied and had hired a traffic engineer to perform that work. The preliminary results indicated that the EmX would not increase congestion, and would likely relieve traffic pressure in the area.

Mr. Vanderpool distributed a postcard reminder for the Oregon Planning Institute (OPI) conference, *Planning with a Purpose*, scheduled for September 14-16, 2011 at the University of Oregon (UO).

He asked MPC members to encourage planners, elected officials and other interested parties to attend. Ms. Wiederhold could respond to questions.

#### **4. COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

There was no one who wished to offer public comment.

#### **5. METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES**

##### **a. Report from the MPO Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)**

Edward Winter, representing the MPO CAC, joined the MPC. Mr. Winter said the June 16, 2011 CAC agenda included the draft Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), MPO coordination with the LaneACT, and a status report and speakers bureau training for the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) update. He invited MPC members to a CAC field trip scheduled for August 18, 2011. Phillip Carroll had recently resigned from the committee citing one reason for his resignation being a lack of time to have thorough discussions on some issues that came to the CAC. The CAC was considering how to provide more time for discussions on major issues. Mr. Winter added several CAC members' terms would end this year.

Mr. Zelenka arrived at 11:43 a.m.

##### **b. Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Update**

Mr. Thompson directed MPC members to the Preliminary Draft 2035 Regional Transportation Plan, portions of which were included in the agenda packet for today's meeting. He distributed an outreach postcard entitled *It's How We Get There That Matters*. He noted the MPC began a review of the Goals and Objectives and the RTP project lists in 2010. The MPC had been kept apprised of progress in updating and preparing other elements of the RTP, including the financial constraint analysis, and the transportation and air quality models. The 45-day public comment period was scheduled for September 2 to November 7, 2011. Mr. Thompson reviewed the RTP update schedule.

Mr. Zelenka thanked staff for including the Roosevelt Boulevard project.

In response to a question from Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Schwetz explained the LTD Emx project on the Bob Straub Parkway arose in discussions regarding a potential EmX connection to a City of Springfield economic development priority.

Mr. Boyatt added the City of Springfield had three mixed use centers (MUC) planned along the Bob Straub Parkway. The majority of the city's large employment lots were within the city's urban growth boundary (UGB) and it made sense to develop high capacity transportation for that future growth area.

Mr. Schwetz stated placing the project on the illustrative list allowed LTD to explore the nature of the transit connection.

Mr. Zelenka thought it fine to include the LTD project in the illustrative list, but if EmX died in Eugene, the project would not move forward. He questioned if the project did not make sense in Eugene how it would make sense in other parts of the community.

Ms. Piercy emphasized the importance of continuing to build the system.

Ms. Lundberg agreed it was important to look at the entire system and how it worked in each leg. Decisions should be made on a case by case basis.

In response to a comment of Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Eyster said because the EmX projects and the federal processes were so lengthy, it took about ten years to complete a line. There were various points along the way where decisions would be made on whether LTD should stop a project or continue to study the feasibility and go on to the next decision point. The LTD Board had discussed this in relation to West Eleventh Avenue proposal, where the Board agreed that once it decided to do a study, the Board would not speculate about whether or not a project would happen. The Board would assume that it would move forward to the next point and do the necessary studies, after which it would make a decision. LTD was currently undergoing the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) study and the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) study, which were expected to be completed this fall. The Board was assuming it was going forward until the next decision point, at which time it would look at the information gathered since the last decision point, and determine if it made sense to continue to advance the project or stop it.

Ms. Piercy wanted to be supportive of building the entire system, but she felt she needed to recognize that various jurisdictions valued different parts of the system. It was important to help each other succeed in the parts they were interested in, but to always consider the value of the whole system.

Mr. Zelenka asked if LTD decided not to move forward with West Eleventh Avenue EmX route, did it mean that LTD would start over and it would be another ten years before the next project began.

Mr. Eyster confirmed LTD did not have a fourth line in the queue. He opined LTD had learned much from the last experience and it was incumbent on the Board to establish a process and criteria for selecting the fourth route, as well as establishing criteria that demonstrated support and partnership for the fourth route. He confirmed the FTA approval process was competitive. He noted that it was an iterative process so that feasibility could be evaluated at each step and decisions could be made on whether to proceed at each step.

Mr. Zelenka recently spoke with Portland Metro Councilor Carlotta Collete and staff who oversaw the City of Portland's Metro business assistance program. He suggested it would be good for the MPC to invite Metro staff to provide information about programs Metro has developed to reach out to businesses. He agreed to contact the City of Portland staff.

Mr. Leiken said it was important to go through the process and keep it moving. The decision would ultimately be made by the FTA, and they may decide not to fund this project. It was important to let the process finish before the final decision was made. He recalled that LTD competed with only five or six other jurisdictions for FTA funding on the first EmX project, and now there hundreds of jurisdictions competing for the funding. He acknowledged the various projects differed from each other and provided learning experiences for everyone.

Mr. Evans said funding mechanisms were undergoing change around the country, and public-private partnerships were becoming more common. He noted the timeline for a public-private partnership rail line in Denver was being accelerated and was creating another platform for economic development. This model provided the MPC members an opportunity to explore public-private partnerships as a way to continue to develop the EmX. It was important to build the EmX system out to the planned 61 mile footprint, regardless of the order in which routes were developed, that would

provide a viable system for the grandchildren and great grandchildren of today's residents, for the next 100 years.

In response to a question from Mr. Bozievich, Mr. Thompson explained TransPlan was still in existence as the Eugene/Springfield local Transportation System Plan (TSP), and as the Regional TSP, noting the Cities of Coburg, Eugene and Springfield were currently updating their individual TSPs. Additionally, the Regional TSP would be totally updated within the next two years and the horizons would catch up to the 2035 RTP horizon. The planning horizons for the various plans were never in sync due to differing planning horizons and update cycles for local, state and federal plans. There was language in the current RTP that talked about the context of the local and federal plans, and the interaction between the plans, which clarified that the RTP was not a land use document. The RTP is the long term plan as required by the federal government, and it is developed based in part on the other existing adopted local, regional, and state plans such as comprehensive plans and TSPs.

Mr. Zelenka said the time frame and how the system was built out mattered to him. What happened on the West Eleventh Avenue leg would impact the system in the future. With more constrained dollars and a highly competitive process, the chances for federal funding for the LTD project would plummet with a "pull the plug" possibility when compared to other projects. If the West Eleventh Avenue route did not move forward, it would be a setback for the entire system.

Mr. Schwetz stated there were two decision making points for the EmX process, the federal requirements and the local process. The local decision making process required LTD to demonstrate that the system increased transit efficiency along BRT corridors; local government demonstrated support for the project; and financing was feasible. He agreed LTD needed to incorporate the lessons learned and move forward. It was not good to have a failure, but noted TriMet had two failures, and the MAX was voted down two times before it was approved by the voters. Now people were clamoring to be the next line. The federal process had clear criteria on what were competitive projects. The Gateway project was one of the most cost effective projects for which the FTA had received an application. The initial analysis for the West Eugene project shows that project to be equally competitive. The FTA was seeing implementation of BRT as done in the Eugene/Springfield community continuing to be a competitive effort for funding.

In response to a question from Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Thompson clarified that some of the performance measures were being removed in the RTP Update to ensure flexibility for the development of local performance measures in the individual jurisdiction's TSPs. In the meantime, all of the performance measures continue to be applicable under TransPlan. The requirements for performance measures are a state requirement, not federal.

### **c. Regional Transportation Plan Goals and Objectives**

Ms. Riner directed MPC members to the staff memorandum in the agenda packet, noting the Draft RTP was scheduled for release for public review and comment on September 2, 2011. She noted the MPC discussed the document at the May and July 2011 meetings and the document reflected some public involvement at the regional level and the local TSPs. She opened the floor for comments and suggestions on the Draft RTP Goals and Objectives from MPC members.

Mr. Leiken said the Board of County Commissioners (BCC) had ongoing discussions about freight rail, particularly with the potential of the rail line providing service from Coos Bay into Lane County. He recently met with a group of local business owners from Eugene and Springfield who moved a

significant amount of goods throughout the country, who said it was cost prohibitive to use rail at the present time. It was currently less expensive for business owners to truck goods from the Eugene/Springfield area to North Carolina than to use rail, and the rail service was poor. The business owners advised Mr. Leiken they preferred to use rail if they could. While he agreed that rapid passenger rail was a good concept, freight rail also needed to be studied as an element of economic development.

Ms. Wylie said a Coos Bay line was discussed at the August 10, 2011 LaneACT meeting. The shippers were anxious to move their goods on the tracks as quickly as possible.

Mr. Zelenka suggested adding rail freight to Goal 10. He also offered language for Goal 1 to include the statement “reduce reliance on any single mode”, which was recorded by staff.

Ms. Piercy agreed with Mr. Leiken’s comments relating to freight. She noted when discussing a line between Portland and Eugene, passenger and freight service were intertwined.

Ms. Riner agreed to refine the Goals and Objectives for inclusion in the Draft RTP per MPC members’ suggestions.

Ms. Wilson agreed to coordinate a meeting of interested local people, and elected and appointed officials with Union Pacific officials.

Ms. Lundberg asked staff to provide more information on how freight was moved and what local officials could do to support cost effective measures.

Ms. Piercy asserted that achieving both successful freight rail and successful passenger rail would create more capacity problems. As use increased, competition for rail would increase. She added that increased rail service created quiet zone issues. It was important to look at the plans and goals for 20 years in the future, and consider how they would impact the livability of the community. The community may reach different recommendations and decisions if it looked at the total picture.

Mr. Fox said passenger rapid transit and freight sharing one line was an oxymoronic concept, because eventually someone would be displaced, freight would be delayed and passenger service would not be rapid transit. It was essential to bring the freight people into the discussion, particularly since they owned the line.

Mr. Bozievich supported working freight into Objective 5, noting he had requested this be included in the goals and objectives several times. Freight rail was efficient. However, if a user was not using a significant amount of traffic on rail as a priority customer, the user had little say in how quickly a train load was built and how quickly a car was moved through the system. Trucks on the rail trailers were huge movers of freight and the businesses had the ability to tell the rail company to move the trucks quickly or lose business. Freight rail was efficient and energy efficient as steel on steel and had the ability to carry long loads and heavy weights. Mr. Bozievich also stated that he felt that rapid passenger rail was not a regional issue but rather a statewide issue. Passenger rail was not any more efficient than intercity buses. The plan contained a goal that was promoting a system that was not more efficient and was at cross purposes to an important economic vitality goal of moving freight.

Ms. Piercy opined that both passenger and freight rail were important.

Ms. Riner said she would make revisions to Goal 1 as proposed by MPC members and work in a discussion of the freight system to Goal 5 for inclusion in the draft RTP.

**d. point2point Solutions Followup Report**

Ms. Brand directed MPC members to the report in the agenda packet and reviewed responses to questions raised at the July 2011 MPC meeting.

In response to a question from Mr. Fox, Ms. Brand said there had been a change with a major employer, PeaceHealth. PeaceHealth chose to buy individual passes rather than participate in the group pass program due to changes at the downtown facility. LTD anticipated PeaceHealth would eventually return to program participation.

Mr. Schwetz directed MPC members to page 4 of the report. He corrected the income tables, noting the *Federal Guidelines for qualification for the **Free Lunch Program*** and the *Federal Guidelines for qualification for the **Reduced Lunch Program*** data had inadvertently been switched.

**e. MPO Planning Calendars**

Ms. Riner briefly reviewed the calendars, noting a request had been forwarded to the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) for assistance providing the MPC with a greenhouse gas scenario planning update in September. She noted again that the final draft of the RTP would be released next month with a public hearing near the start of the public comment period.

Mr. Chickering said the MPC and LaneACT had expressed interest in having an Oregon Transportation Commissioner attend one of their meetings. Mr. Chickering had invited Mark Frohnmayer to attend a future meeting.

**f. Follow-up and Next Steps**

- **ODOT Update**—Mr. Chickering announced I-105 eastbound over I-5 would be closed from 8:00 p.m., on August 12, 2011 through 6:00 a.m., August 15, 2011, during which time ODOT would raise the bridge by one foot. He stated a ribbon cutting ceremony was scheduled for August 18, 2011 for the southbound Willamette River bridge opening. Tours were scheduled following the ceremony.

Ms. Piercy commented that this was a very successful project, which resulted in a beautiful bridge that provided a great entry into Eugene and Springfield. She appreciated the efforts ODOT made to work with Eugene and Springfield on the project.

Ms. Wylie noted there had been a great deal of citizen participation over a long period of time. The bridge was a successful product of the community working together.

- **Rail Update**—Ms. Piercy reported invitations would soon be sent asking people to participate on the committee.

- **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Update**—no update.
- **MTIP Administrative Amendments**—In response to a question from Mr. Zelenka, Mr. Chickering confirmed that Amendment 2011-32—I-5 @ Beltline Interchange, Unit 3, was the result of the right-of-way work being completed under budget.
- **Next Steps/Agenda Build**

The next meeting was scheduled for September 8, 2011 at a location to be announced.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 p.m.

*(Recorded by Linda Henry)*