

# MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

May 6, 2021  
11:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Joe Berney, Chair (Lane County); Lucy Vinis, Randy Groves (City of Eugene); Sean VanGordon, Steve Moe (City of Springfield); Ray Smith (City of Coburg); Frannie Brindle (Oregon Department of Transportation); Caitlin Vargas (Lane Transit District), members; Matt Rodrigues (City of Eugene); Anne Heath (City of Coburg); Dan Hurley for Steve Mokrohisky (Lane County); Aurora Jackson (Lane Transit District), *ex officio* members.

Brenda Wilson, Paul Thompson, Kelly Clarke, Ellen Currier, Drew Pfefferle Rachel Dorfman (Lane Council of Governments); Emma Newman (City of Springfield); Rob Inerfeld (City of Eugene); Megan Winner (City of Coburg); Tom Schwetz, Kelly Hoell, Andrew Martin (Lane Transit District); Sasha Vartanian (Lane County); Bill Johnston, Marsha Hoskins, Erik Havig (Oregon Department of Transportation); Neil Moyer (Metro TV).

## **WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Mr. Berney convened the meeting of the Metropolitan Policy Committee (MPC) and the roll was called and a quorum established.

## **APPROVE February 4, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Moe, seconded by Ms. Vinis, moved to approve the April 1, 2021, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

## **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MPC MEMBERS**

There were no adjustments.

Mr. Groves announced that May was Bike Month and the City of Eugene and its regional partners were sponsoring an interesting slate of COVID-19 safe events. He said the city had selected Cascadia Mobility to operate PeaceHealth Rides, the community bike share system. The service area would be expanded over the coming year, increasing the number of bikes and connectivity to transit.

Ms. Vinis announced that the City of Eugene was continuing its Rev Up program to provide information to those considering the purchase of an electric vehicle. The Shift program encouraged people to move to e-bikes by providing education materials and workshops. She said Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB), a statewide organization called Forth Mobility, and St. Vincent de Paul were collaborating on a pilot project providing car share electric vehicles to affordable housing developments.

Mr. Berney announced that the Lane County Climate Advisory Committee had received a presentation on Lane Transit District's (LTD) plans to achieve net zero emissions. He looked forward to the presentation later in the meeting and noted that many entities in the region were pursuing similar goals.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

There was no one wishing to speak.

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

### **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Thompson provided a brief summary of the UPWP and said there had been no additional input during the public comment period. He said the UPWP had been reviewed by the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), Federal Highways Administration (FHWA)) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and determined to meet all federal requirements. He asked that the MPC approve the resolution adopting the program and funding. He noted that the funding table included in the document might undergo minor modifications during negotiations with ODOT and those would be addressed administratively.

Mr. Groves, seconded by Mr. Smith, moved to approve Resolution No. 2021-05 adopting the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization FY22/FY23 Unified Planning Work Program and Programming FY2022 Surface Transportation Block Grant Funding. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

### **FY2024-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)**

Mr. Thompson said now that the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) had made a determination on funding categories. ODOT was working on developing priorities within each category.

Ms. Hoskins provided an overview of the Public and Active Transportation category in the 2024-27 STIP. She described implementing actions in the Strategic Action Plan to improve access to public and active transportation, including directing more funding to those activities while prioritizing needs and effectively targeting funds. Funding to the category would be increased to \$255 million. She listed the eligible activities and described the process involved in ODOT's development of its sub-allocation proposal, including input from an advisory committee, stakeholder agencies and the public. Sub-allocation categories were:

- ODOT Ped/Bike Strategic Projects
- ODOT Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Infrastructure
- Increased funding: Community Paths, Transportation Options, SRTS Education, transit for older adults and people with disabilities
- Transit vehicle replacement
- Passenger rail facility planning

Ms. Hoskins reviewed the sub-allocation proposal and said the proposal had been accepted and ODOT was in the process of scoping projects using a data-driven approach to identify high need locations. She invited suggestions from the MPC for local high need locations that were not on the list. Alignment with proposed Fix It and ADA projects in order to leverage funds was highly desirable. ODOT would use an Active Transportation Needs Inventory (ATNI) as the management system to inform investments. She described the factors used to evaluate the system, identify needs and determine prioritization of those needs.

Mr. Groves commented that Beltline divides two neighborhoods and impacts SRTS for children in those neighborhoods trying to get to North Eugene High School. He felt the project also fit within several of the

sub-allocation categories by providing a safe walking and biking route to the school and between neighborhoods.

Mr. Thompson pointed out that Representative Peter DeFazio had submitted the Beltline bike/pedestrian bridge over Beltline as one of his earmark projects for funding consideration.

Ms. Vinis commented that the funding requested by Rep. DeFazio was insufficient to complete the entire project and state support would also be needed. She said the project was perpendicular, not parallel, to a state highway and asked ODOT to give consideration to the fact that a state facility was dividing the two neighborhoods.

Mr. Johnston noted that a Beltline pedestrian overpass was actually included on the ATNI list of needs.

In response to a question from Mr. Berney, Ms. Hoskins explained that SRTS had an education and outreach component that included curriculum, tools and materials and some assistance with project refinement. She said that component was in great demand by communities.

Ms. Brindle added that under the FY2024-27 STIP ODOT regions and areas would be receiving Fix It and Safety data-driven project lists and those would be shared with MPOs and Area Commissions on Transportation (ACT) in June and July. Project scoping would be done with input from local agencies where the projects would occur. More details would be forthcoming on the Enhanced Highway discretionary program; \$65 million would be available statewide to address congestion and freight on the state system. She listed a variety of projects could be considered.

Ms. Vinis asked if a climate filter would be applied to projects. Ms. Brindle said information from ODOT's Climate Office could be provided at a future meeting.

Mr. Havig said that congestion relief and freight mobility were primary drivers in project selection for the Enhanced Highway program based on OTC guidance. He said OTC also issued a caveat that the funds not be used only within metropolitan areas and at least 30 percent of the funding would be targeted outside of those areas; guidelines would be issued soon.

### **Future Discussion with Chair of Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC)**

Mr. Thompson said a joint meeting with the MPC, LaneACT and OTC Chair Robert Van Brocklin had been scheduled for June 3, 2021. At the MPC's direction, a list of potential discussion topics was included in the agenda packet. The list included the topic of two-way communications between the OTC and MPC.

Mr. Smith emphasized that communications were a priority and lack of two-way communication with the OTC had frequently been a frustration as a member of the MPC and LaneACT. He hoped the MPC would be specific about its expectations for the communications process.

Ms. Vinis said the MPC had raised safety concerns about crashes and traffic fatalities in the community. She hoped to see more information from ODOT's Safety Division about the focus on and metrics about safety and to raise the visibility of local safety issues.

Mr. Thompson said another potential topic was development of funding categories for the FY2024-27 STIP last fall and the analysis matrix and criteria ODOT used. He said the outcome was one that did no harm, but there had been some comments at the OTC meeting that the outcome also did not result in any

new initiatives or significantly beneficial outcomes. He said MPC members and staff had discussed the need for bolder action.

Mr. Berney urged MPC members to raise issues of local concern and encourage the OTC to work directly with decision-makers. He looked forward to a substantive discussion.

Ms. Brindle announced she would be unable to attend the June 3 meeting and Region 2 Manager Sonny Chickering would attend to represent the area and region during the discussion.

### **LTD Sustainability Program**

Ms. Hoell provided an update on LTD's Climate Action Policy adopted by the Board of Directors in June 2020. She said significant progress had been made in some areas and noted that a major focus for LTD was making the connection between its environmental program and social equity. She was pleased to report that LTD was on track to exceed the Climate Action Policy and fleet procurement goals adopted by the Board. She said there were two components to the Climate Action Policy: a narrative component that recognized the urgency of addressing climate change and specific quantitative and qualitative goals:

“LTD recognizes the urgency in addressing climate change and is committed to reducing community greenhouse gas emissions by taking steps to maximize public transit ridership and support low carbon active transportation modes.”

Ms. Hoell spoke to the benefits from transit and how to calculate them. The first and primary benefit was a ridership benefit focused on a reduction in vehicle miles traveled (VMT) associated with taking a bus instead of a private car. A second benefit was in the area of land use. Development tended to happen around transit stops and stations and resulted in a reduction of VMT for everyone no matter the mode of transportation they used and made active modes a more relevant option. She said LTD in 2018, even with its then diesel-fueled fleet provided two times of benefits in terms of greenhouse gas reductions compared to emissions from operations; benefits increased when the impact on land use was factored in.

Ms. Hoell said the most important thing LTD gleaned from the greenhouse gas inventory analysis that helped inform its Climate Action Policy was to focus on ridership as a means to reduce emissions in the community. Emphasis during the pandemic was on safety measures to protect employees and the public. As a result of those practices science had demonstrated there is little to no incidence of contracting the virus from using public transportation. She said the second most important lesson from the analysis was to focus on the fleet and consider life cycle emissions, not just tailpipe emissions.

Ms. Hoell reviewed progress on each of the Policy's goals:

Goal 1 – Short-term • 25 electric buses in 3 years

The District expected to have 30 electric buses by 2023 and was applying for additional grant funding. LTD was on track to exceed the goal with 11 electric buses on site and in the testing phase and 19 more expected to be added to the fleet over the next two year.

Goal 2 - Long-term • 100% fleet turnover and phase out of fossil fuels by 2035 • 75% GHG emissions reduction by 2030

As of September 2020 diesel buses had been switched from the five percent biodiesel fuel mix to an R99 renewable diesel. A graphic illustrated the reduction in greenhouse gas emissions based on switching fuels. Staff was researching options for paratransit and other vehicles that used gasoline and no problems achieving the goal were expected.

Goal 3 – Other considerations • Deliberate exploration of emerging technology and fuels • Joint community GHG emission reduction goals with partner jurisdictions • Iterative process to review progress & goals annually. LTD's fleet procurement plan project was now in progress.

In response to a question from Mr. Moe about renewable diesel, Ms. Hoell said it was a fuel made from waste plant and animal materials and similar to biodiesel and chemically identical to fossil diesel. The emissions from it were considered part of the natural biological carbon cycle; other benefits included fewer aromatics resulting in a more pleasant smell and reduced particulate matter. LTD was currently evaluating benefits on the vehicle maintenance side, although other agencies were reporting good results.

Mr. Groves asked about electric bus recharging time and whether LTD had experienced filter clogging with renewable diesel. Ms. Hoell said the buses had a 388 kWh capacity and LTD had invested in 150 kWh chargers. It took slightly more than 2.5 hours for a full recharge, but buses were generally not below a 20 percent state of charge when they returned to the station. She said there had been filter clogging with biodiesel, but not with renewable diesel.

Mr. Moe asked if the power load required to charge a large fleet of buses had been taken into consideration. Ms. Hoell replied that LTD's Board was technology agnostic for the majority of the Climate Action Policy. The fleet procurement plan being developed would include the flexibility to understand those tradeoffs when going beyond 25 percent of the fleet being electric. The Springfield Utility Board transformer through which LTD obtained power had been resized to accommodate between 30 and 40 buses. Other zero emissions solutions must be based on local conditions.

Ms. Vargas commended Ms. Hoell and LTD staff for their efforts on LTD's Climate Action Plan and thanked MPC jurisdictions and the MPO for their support.

Mr. Groves said he was encouraged by the presentation.

Ms. Vinis thanked LTD for its work and partnership with the City of Eugene.

In response to questions from Mr. Berney, Ms. Hoell said renewable diesel was purchased from the Midwest and Asia as there are no Oregon manufacturers. She explained the methodology used to determine emission reduction benefits from ridership and said she has a high degree of confidence despite it being an estimate. She said LTD is a participant in a land use benefit pilot study done across the country.

### **Follow-up and Next Steps**

- **ODOT Update**—Ms. Brindle said she had no additional information to report.
- **Next Meeting/Agenda Build**— June 3, 2021 (virtual meeting)  
Future agenda items:
  - MPO Draft Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
  - June meeting agenda: 11:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. regular meeting, 12:00 pm-1:00 p.m. joint discussion with LaneACT and OTC
  - Future meeting to be held on the ZOOM electronic platform

Mr. Berney adjourned the meeting at 1:28 p.m.

(Transcribed by Lynn Taylor)