

M I N U T E S

Metropolitan Policy Committee
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

February 3, 2022
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Steve Moe, Vice Chair; Sean VanGordon (City of Springfield); Joe Berney, Heather Buch (Lane County); Lucy Vinis (City of Eugene); Ray Smith (City of Coburg); Frannie Brindle (Oregon Department of Transportation); Don Nordin (Lane Transit District), members; Dan Hurley (Lane County), *ex officio* member.

Brenda Wilson, Paul Thompson, Kelly Clarke, Ellen Currier, Drew Pfefferle, Rachel Dorfman, Dan Callister (Lane Council of Governments); Emma Newman (City of Springfield); Rob Inerfeld (City of Eugene); Sasha Vartanian (Lane County); John Marshall, Megan Winner (City of Coburg); Tom Schwetz, Andrew Martin, Mark Johnson (Lane Transit District); Travis Brouwer, Bill Johnston (Oregon Department of Transportation); Rob Zako, Claire Roth (Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation), Metro Television; John Faville, NE Neighbors, Carleen Reilly, guest.

WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

APPROVE JANUARY 6, 2022, MPC MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Vinis, moved to approve the January 6, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MPC MEMBERS

In response to a question from Ms. Vinis, Mr. Thompson said discussions of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) would begin at the MPC's March meeting. Staff would present a road map for moving forward over the next several years with respect to all of the transportation planning activities at the local, state and federal levels.

Mr. Berney announced that he provided direct testimony to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in which he elaborated on the region's priorities. He felt it was a productive and positive meeting.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Rob Zako, Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST), thanked the committee for transitioning to ZOOM technology to facilitate public participation. He appreciated the strategy for a continuing process to revise plans and investments. He said BEST was developing a resolution to partner with the MPC and assist whenever possible. He asked for feedback on the draft resolution and a final version would be presented at the MPC's March meeting.

John Faville, NE Neighbors, said at the MPC's January 6 meeting it had approved the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) local prioritization of projects for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)

funding. He was pleased with the support and said two projects of top importance to the area were completing improvements on the Delta/Beltline interchange and construction of an arterial bridge across the river. He encouraged them to continue on that path and asked that those projects remain front and center as the OTC made decisions about allocation of funds. He said the NE Neighbors area was defined and isolated by the Beltline and was one of the fastest growing areas of Eugene. An arterial bridge was critical in terms of safety and access.

ELECTION OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR FOR 2022, APPOINT OMPOC MEMBERS

Mr. Berney said it had been an honor to serve as chair during the past year and he appreciated the opportunity to get to know MPC members and learn about the MPO and MPC. He thanked committee members and staff for their interest in moving forward with an in depth examination of the RTP and transportation planning activities. He noted that based on the agreed upon rotation of chair and vice chair functions among the cities of Eugene and Springfield and Lane County, the next chair would be from Eugene and vice chair from Springfield.

Ms. Vinis, seconded by Ms. Buch, nominated Randy Groves as chair of the MPC. There being no other nominations Mr. Groves was elected unanimously, 8:0.

Mr. VanGordon, seconded by Mr. Smith, nominated Steve Moe as vice chair of the MPC. There being no other nominations Mr. Moe was elected unanimously, 8:0.

Mr. Thompson explained the duties of an MPC representative to the Oregon MPO Consortium (OMPOC). Currently serving as OMPOC representatives were Steve Moe and Caitlin Vargas. He said OMPOC met quarterly and he briefly reviewed the agenda for the February 11 meeting. He said meetings were being held virtually at this time and typically lasted about three hours.

Mr. Moe indicated he was willing to continue to serve as an OMPOC representative.

Mr. Nordin said Ms. Vargas was unable to attend this meeting and he was willing to serve as an OMPOC representative if she was not interested in continuing in that role.

Mr. Thompson said that OMPOC staff would confer with Ms. Vargas and determine if she wished to continue to serve or turn that role over to Mr. Nordin.

Mr. Berney determined there was consensus with Mr. Thompson's proposal to appoint Mr. Moe and allow Ms. Vargas to continue as an OMPOC representative if she wished to and if not, designate Mr. Nordin as OMPOC representative.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES

Amendment to FFY 2021-24 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

Mr. Callister stated that Springfield had requested MPO discretionary funds to augment the existing Lane County project on Laura Street. He said that project was approved by the MPC for \$3.1 million to improve a section of Laura Street under the County's jurisdiction. The City of Springfield was requesting \$250,000 for improvements on the City's section of Laura Street in order to collaborate with the County to address the entire corridor. He said the Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) recommended an expedited

approval process, with a two week comment period instead of 30 days, and a public hearing and approval of Resolution 2022-03 at this meeting.

Ms. Buch asked if there were plans to transfer the County's section of Laura Street to Springfield's jurisdiction. Ms. Vartanian replied that an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) to affect that transfer was currently in the approval process.

Mr. Moe opened the public hearing. There was no one wishing to speak and the hearing was closed.

Ms. Vinis, seconded by Mr. Berney, moved to approve Resolution 2022-03. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Flexible Funding Priorities

Mr. Thompson stated this was a continuance of the ongoing discussion with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) regarding priorities for use of the IIJA flexible funding. He said the OTC at its January 2022 meeting had approved a series of funding scenarios for public review and comment and an explanation of those scenarios would be provided by ODOT Assistant Director Travis Brouwer.

Mr. Brouwer said approximately \$1.2 billion in additional IIJA funding was available for roads, transit and active transportation. About \$412 million of that funding was available for use in a variety of areas across the transportation system and those were the funds for which the OTC was developing funding scenarios based on input from the public and stakeholders such as the MPOs and ACTs (Area Commission on Transportation). He said major themes heard across the state included strong support for investing in public and active transportation, investing in bridges and preservation of road conditions and addressing bottlenecks on state highways. Other themes were addressing the needs of urban arterials in a much more comprehensive way, safety improvements across all modes and programs, and investing in fish, wildlife and environmental projects. Interest had also been expressed in expanding electric vehicle charging access across the state and insuring a fair regional distribution of funds.

Mr. Brouwer said based on the themes that had emerged, ODOT prepared a proposed investment for the OTC that recommended investing in nine different program areas. He used a slide presentation to explain each of the OTC approved scenarios and options for distribution of investments across those program areas. He said public comments on the investment strategies would be provided to the OTC at its March 10 meeting and the OTC would provide feedback to staff. The OTC would approve final funding allocation on March 30 and project selection would begin in April 2022. He listed a number of ways in which public comments could be provided and said stakeholders would be asked to respond to the following questions:

Are these the correct areas in which to invest the flexible funds?

Which funding scenario best helps Oregon achieve its transportation and community goals?

Should any modifications be made in the scenarios when the OTC makes its decision about how to spend the IIJA funds?

Mr. Moe asked if some projects would be cut back in order to have matching funds for the federal dollars. Mr. Brouwer said some of the funds would be set aside and used to federalize programs that were currently funded out of state dollars, then use those state dollars to leverage federal dollars.

Mr. Berney questioned the cost of \$500 million for a state project. He noted that during the description of scenarios activities such as business and workforce development and bringing black, indigenous and people of color (BIPOC) into trades. He said there were already apprenticeship programs in union and

non-union trades that targeted typically excluded populations and provided guaranteed jobs. He said rather than financing a new system the state should consider how to exponentially leverage the existing system. He said Lane County was developing a community benefits agreement to guide all of the proposed construction. He recommended bringing the investment down to \$2-3 million to achieve those community benefits. He said the \$4 million identified for electric vehicle charging was likely not going to address ways to offset by a few thousand dollars each residential and commercial buildings installing charging stations in their garages. It was probably looking at stops along the state highway system. He suggested a more community-based, cost effective and exponentially more impactful approach that would also create a number of jobs.

Mr. Brouwer said ODOT currently invested about \$1 million annually in the apprenticeship system and that would be the program it intended to expand. He said ODOT was also discussing community benefits agreements for projects.

Mr. Thompson referred to a slide in the presentation that summarized the analysis and tradeoffs of the proposed scenarios and pointed out that during the MPC discussions over the past year it had prioritized public and active transportation, which was reflected in the Scenario 2 funding proposal. Scenario 2 directs about 50 percent of the flexible funding towards priorities the MPC had established. He asked that the MPC direct staff to prepare written testimony for the February 17 OTC meeting supporting Scenario 2.

Ms. Vinis agreed with Mr. Thompson's request regarding Scenario 2. She asked if that scenario included Great Street strategies. Mr. Brouwer replied that Scenario would put the largest share of funds in Great Streets and Safe Routes to School.

Ms. Vinis said the City of Eugene had acquired jurisdiction over Highway 99 prior to the Great Streets concept. She asked if the Great Streets designation and funding could be applied to roads that had formerly been state highways and had been transferred to local jurisdictions. Mr. Brouwer said that issue had also been raised by other communities and that issue should be brought to the OTC with the suggestion of broadening the program's focus to include former state highways.

Mr. VanGordon agreed with Mr. Thompson's request to prepare testimony supporting Scenario 2. He cautioned that the jurisdictions and ODOT should not try to do too many things with the funds, but rather focus on community priorities and making a visible difference that would allow people to see the benefits of investments.

Mr. Smith also supported expanding the designation of state highway to include sections now under local jurisdictions' control. He concurred with Mr. VanGordon that the MPC should prioritize what it wanted to get done and achieve some success instead of spreading funds over a vast number of projects.

Mr. Moe determined there was consensus to direct staff to develop written testimony to the OTC in support of Scenario 2.

Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriation Act (CRRSAA) Funding

Mr. Thompson provided a brief overview of CRRSAA funding and said a portion of those funds were directed to MPOs. The Central Lane MPO was slated to receive \$2,018,930 of relief funding and the first step toward receiving the funds is to notify USDOT what type of funding it wants to receive. The options were either as federal infrastructure funding similar to the MPO's normal STBG funding, or as non-federal relief funding. If the relief funding option was selected, the MPO would work with USDOT and ODOT to receive the funds as nonfederal dollars with no match or other federal requirements attached. The MPC

could then determine how to use the funds. The TPC recommendation was to receive as relief funding and he asked for approval of Resolution 2022-04.

Ms. Vinis, seconded by Ms. Buch, moved to approve Resolution 2022-04. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

Central Lane MPO Governance Structure

Ms. Wilson noted that the agenda packet included a memorandum describing the formation and governance structure of the Central Lane MPO. In 1974 the Governor appointed the Lane Council of Governments (LCOG) as the MPO. In 1987 Lane County and the cities of Springfield and Eugene created the MPC, primarily to address land use issues within the metropolitan area, but it also assumed the responsibilities of three other committees. Those responsibilities included cable television, transportation policies and urban services. Some parks issues were also under the MPC's purview. In 2002 the LCOG Board delegated additional authority to the MPC, including transportation decision-making, because federally funded projects occurred within the metro area. She said LCOG covered all of Lane County and therefore the Board felt that planning and federal transportation dollars should be delegated to the MPC.

Ms. Wilson said the receipt of CRRSAA funds had raised questions about governance and delegation because of the different ways of accepting those dollars. She said that was a discussion the LCOG Board would be addressing and Lane County, Eugene, Springfield, and Coburg are all represented on the LCOG Board and would be involved in that discussion. The LCOG Board would clarify to USDOT how decisions would be made about the use of CRRSAA funds. She thanked the MPC for adopting Resolution 2022-04 as it was the first step in assuring that local policy makers could determine how the CRRSAA funds would be used.

Ms. Buch asked if the LCOG Board would need to delegate decisions regarding the use of CRRSAA funds. Ms. Wilson said the MPC had made a decision about how to accept the funding and would be the body discussing and deciding how those funds would be used.

Ms. Buch asked if that decision-making would need to be codified in the LCOG and MPC bylaws. Ms. Wilson said that clarification would be very helpful. She said this type of flexible funding was never contemplated when the MPC was established. She would strive to make that clarification as simple as possible because the funds needed to be allocated by September of 2024.

Ms. Buch said the LCOG Board had discussed using some of the IIJA funds for a position in the technology department to review regional plans and develop grant opportunities for rural internet or broadband. She asked if delegation of decision-making to the MPC would include that plan. Ms. Wilson said some of the IIJA funds could be used for the planning and build out of broadband, which was being tied more closely to transportation. She recommended that some funds be set aside to develop a regional broadband plan that would enable the MPO to apply for broadband funding in the future.

Mr. VanGordon stressed the importance of clarifying roles and responsibilities with respect to receipt and use of these federal funds to avoid the potential that MPC decisions could be vetoed by the LCOG Board.

Mr. VanGordon left the meeting at 12:55 p.m.

Mr. Smith asked if the MPC would have the final decision-making authority for use of the CRRSAA funds or would the LCOG Board need to approve those decisions because it was the MPO. He also agreed with the need for a regional broadband plan.

Ms. Wilson said LCOG could rescind its delegation to the MPC and that was why the issue needed to be discussed by the LCOG Board. She said transportation decisions should be local and not subject to LCOG's veto.

Ms. Vinis appreciated the efforts to clarify roles and responsibilities about transportation funding. She said extending the responsibilities of the MPC had been done in the past. She said the MPC was a metropolitan planning agency while LCOG spoke for 33 entities throughout the county. Something that was core to the MPC's mission should not be decided by entities outside of the metro area. She agreed that a regional broadband plan was essential.

Mr. Berney agreed with Ms. Vinis and Mr. Smith's remarks. He commended Ms. Wilson for her efforts to clarify and codify MPO and MPC governance issues and indicated that made it clear there was no issue moving forward.

Mr. Nordin emphasized the connection between broadband and transportation, particularly with the emergence of autonomous vehicles and new transportation technologies.

Follow-up and Next Steps

- **ODOT Update**—Ms. Brindle applauded the MPC's leadership in accepting and administering transportation funds in the community. She said the Oregon Community Paths program grants pre-application phase would begin in August. She said ODOT would hold webinars to explain project eligibility and the application process in March, April and May. The LaneACT would meet February 9 and agenda items would include the Coburg interchange project. The LaneACT would also begin hearing presentations on the priority list of projects on the state system.

Ms. Brindle announced that she would be retiring at the end of March and the MPC would be able to provide input on selection of her successor. She said it had been an honor to work with MPC members.

MPC member expressed their appreciation for Ms. Brindle and her leadership and assistance to local jurisdictions on transportation planning issues.

- **MTIP Administrative Amendments**—There were no questions.
- **Next Meeting/Agenda Build**—March 3 Virtual Meeting, April 7 Virtual Meeting, May 5 Virtual Meeting, June 2 Virtual Meeting

Future agenda items: transportation planning over the next several years and the MPC's involvement in those activities, future discussions of IIJA funding and OTC decisions

Mr. Moe adjourned the meeting at 1:16 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)