

MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

June 2, 2022
11:30 a.m.

PRESENT: Randy Groves, Chair (City of Eugene); Sean VanGordon, Steve Moe (City of Springfield); Heather Buch (Lane County); Ray Smith (City of Coburg); Caitlin Vargas, Don Nordin (Lane Transit District), members; Anne Heath (City of Coburg), *ex officio* member.

Brenda Wilson, Paul Thompson, Dan Callister, Ellen Currier, Syd Shoaf, Cassidy Mills (Lane Council of Governments); Emma Newman, Kristina Kraez (City of Springfield); Rob Inerfeld (City of Eugene); Sasha Vartanian (Lane County); Megan Winner (City of Coburg); Tom Schwetz, Andrew Martin (Lane Transit District); Bill Johnston, Molly Cary, Travis Brouwer (Oregon Department of Transportation); Rob Zako, Claire Roth, Colin Hill (Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation), Neil Moyer (Metro Television), Heather Carroll (Jacobs Engineering), Patty Hine (350 Eugene), Julie Daniel.

WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

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

APPROVE May 5, 2022, MPC MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Smith, seconded by Ms. Buch, moved to approve the May, 5, 2022, meeting minutes as presented. The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MPC MEMBERS

Mr. Thompson announced that Travis Brouwer, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) would be presenting the agenda item related to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Update.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

Mr. Thompson stated that written testimony had been submitted and had been distributed to committee members. He explained procedures for providing testimony during the virtual ZOOM meeting.

Patty Hine, 350 Eugene president, described her background and experience growing up in an environment where everyone drove everywhere. She discussed the outsized role that transportation played in the climate crisis and the need to rapidly reduce emissions from the transportation sector. That would require big changes and she recognized the challenges and cost involved. She said people were beginning to realize that the country's infrastructure was built for people who drove and it was necessary to rethink a car-centric way of life. Infrastructure should be redesigned to create safe and convenient options for people who chose not to or were unable to drive, such as walking, biking and more transit. She urged that transportation planning include plans for a less car-dependent future and listed several options for the committee to consider.

Claire Roth, Better Eugene-Springfield Transportation (BEST), expressed her support for policies that took more action to combat the effects of climate change in the community through the lens of transportation. Making walking and biking more comfortable for people would go far to promote active forms of transportation and help achieve goals related to the climate crisis. She cited data demonstrating that active transportation also provided economic benefits to small businesses that were hurt during the pandemic.

Julie Daniel, volunteer for the City of Eugene's Active Transportation Committee, spoke to the moral imperative to act. She said it took courage to make decisions about active transportation that would be unpopular with some segments of the population. She provided examples from her neighborhood of sidewalks in poor condition that created dangerous situations for residents of a long-term care facility who used mobility devices and students who drove or were driven to school because walking was unsafe. She urged the committee to make those difficult choices.

Colin Hill, BEST, said he was a University of Oregon student and he did not have a drivers license. He moved to Eugene because he knew it would be possible to live in the city without a car. He gave examples of progress that had already been made that allowed him to move about in certain areas of the metropolitan area safely, although in other areas that was not possible. He said for many people mobility was much more difficult than it could or should be. He urged the MPC to work together on a comprehensive long-term transportation vision that significantly reduced car dependence in the region.

Rob Zako, BEST, commented that BEST had submitted a memorandum to the MPC two years ago asking for urgent action and while some progress had been made there had since been two bad fire seasons and another was anticipated. He asked what the public, BEST and its partners could do to support the MPC in planning for a lower carbon, cleaner and cooler future.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES

Amendment to MPO Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP)

Mr. Callister explained that the proposal was to program \$65,000 in new federal discretionary funds outside of the formal process. The funds would be used to support a gap in PeaceHealth Rides operational funding for 2022-2023. He said it was an urgent need and the Transportation Planning Committee (TPC) recommended an expedited public review process of a two-week public comment period followed by a public hearing and approval of the request. He said if the formal process was followed the funds would not be available to obligate in a timely manner. He said the public comment period had concluded and no comments were received. He requested a public hearing and action on the resolution.

In response to questions from Ms. Buch, Mr. Callister clarified that the funds were technically available, but programming had been pushed back in order to align them with other funds that would be available for the 2024-2027 cycle. Mr. Thompson said the request was separate from the timing of federal funds and had not been anticipated. The funding request had arose very recently because the City of Eugene had been notified by the operator of the bike share program that there was a funding shortfall and the program could not be funded through the current period. The city had requested the funds in order to keep the bike share program operating.

Ms. Buch said she supported the bike share program and it would be an asset when the 2022 World Athletics Championships were held in Eugene during the summer of 2022.

Mr. Nordin said Lane Transit District (LTD) would support the request, but he felt more funds should be made available for the bike share program in the next funding cycle. He said it was his opinion that the program should be incorporated with the transit district and not connected to the cities of Eugene and Springfield as LTD provided transportation services to the entire region. He encouraged the MPC to approve the funding request in order to maintain the program, but said more funding should be allocated to an active transportation system.

Mr. Inerfeld said regional discussions were in progress about expanding the PeaceHealth Rides program beyond the borders of the City of Eugene.

Mr. VanGordon said he was comfortable supporting the request to maintain the program and noted that Springfield was also reviewing details about participating in the future. He thought it was important for the program to have an outside operator instead of a public agency. He stressed the importance of demonstrating to the public responsible use of the infrastructure and transportation funding that was now available, particularly funds that resulted from new taxes and fees the public was paying.

Mr. Groves said he had learned that bikes in the bike share program were used on average three times per day, which demonstrated there was a demand in the community for the program. He echoed Mr. VanGordon's comments about having an independent operator instead of a government agency.

Mr. Moe agreed with the need for an area-wide management system to operate the bike share program.

Mr. Groves opened the public hearing.

Rob Zako, BEST, commented that the PeaceHealth Rides bike share program was operated by a nonprofit, Cascade Mobility, with which BEST had a financial relationship. He said the organization was "lean and mean" and nonprofits tended to provide good services at a low cost. He appreciated holding a public hearing on the funding request, but pointed out that previously the MPC had approved a \$30 million project for Franklin Boulevard without a public hearing. He asked how it was determined that a public hearing was required prior to approval of funding.

Claire Roth, BEST, said the bike share program was used frequently and Cascade Mobility had reported that last week was the strongest bike share usage in three years. The program was a good thing for the community.

Mr. Groves closed the public hearing.

Ms. Buch, seconded by Mr. Moe, moved to approve Resolution 2022-06 adopting the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program amendment. The motion passed unanimously, 7:0.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)/Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill Update

Mr. Brouwer used a slide presentation to provide an overview of the Oregon Transportation Commission's (OTC) decisions regarding use of the approximately \$1.2 billion in federal funds that resulted from the IIJA and how input from stakeholders had influenced those decisions. He shared the major themes that arose from stakeholders across the state. He provided a brief description of each of the funding categories to which the OTC had allocated \$412 million in discretionary funds as follows:

Program Area	Funding (Millions)
Enhance Highway	\$50
Fix-It	\$75
Maintenance and Operations	\$40
Great Streets	\$50
Safe Routes to School	\$30
Innovative Mobility Program	\$10
Local Climate Planning	\$15
ADA Accessibility	\$95
Match for Competitive Grants	\$40
Business and Workforce Development	<u>\$ 7</u>
	\$412

Mr. Brouwer also reviewed how the OTC had allocated \$119 million in bridge funding to local governments and \$204 million in bridge funding to ODOT, although he acknowledged that there would need to be additional investments in bridges. He said there were significant opportunities for local governments to seek funding from a number of statewide discretionary grant programs.

In response to a question from Mr. Groves, Mr. Brouwer said the term "urban boulevard" referred to a facility that was oriented to local community needs than serving through traffic. The Great Streets program was designed to make those routes better suited for biking, walking and public transportation.

Mr. Groves asked why Highway 58 and Highway 126 had not received priority for electric vehicle (EV) charging stations as those vehicles would become more predominant for those traveling to the coast or into the mountains in the future. Mr. Brouwer replied those highways had not been submitted by the state to the federal government for priority designation. The OTC supported EV charging and would be supplementing federal dollars with state dollars for community-based charging. He urged the MPC to raise the issue of those highway designations with ODOT's Climate Office which developed those recommendations.

Mr. Groves said the Interstate 5 bridge over the Columbia River was becoming a more prominent topic and asked if funding would be diverted to that project from other parts of the state. Mr. Brouwer said ODOT was working on a concept to present to the 2023 legislature that would describe the enabling legislation needed in order to build that bridge in partnership with the State of Washington that would not take dollars from existing funding.

Mr. VanGordon observed that the private and public sectors were struggling with staffing capacity to execute major projects with the additional funds that were becoming available and asked how ODOT was addressing the need for additional staffing at the state and local government levels. Mr. Brouwer said ODOT had just received approval from an Emergency Board subcommittee of a request to add 76 positions in order to be able to deliver on the new programs. There would be a request next year for 43 more positions and possibly an addition request later.

Mr. VanGordon asked what support local governments could offer to assure that ODOT and local jurisdictions would be able to demonstrate to the people of Oregon that the best use was made of the additional funding. Mr. Brouwer said support as necessary for ODOT's requests to the legislature and continuing to build strong partnerships between ODOT and local governments would help ensure success.

Mr. VanGordon asked if there were success measures attached to the various funding categories and whether climate grants would be made to local jurisdictions to help fund capacity for climate planning. Mr. Brouwer said a series of key performance metrics had been approved by the legislature, ranging from the

numbers of fatalities on the state highway system to the condition of the transit fleet, bridges and pavement and the miles of bike lanes and sidewalks on the state highway system. Climate planning grants would be managed by ODOT's Climate Office and they were designed to help local governments subject to the Department of Land Conservation and Development's new Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities rules do the planning and implementation that was required.

Mr. VanGordon said it was important that the funds could be used by local governments for consultants and staffing for local agencies. He said broadband was important to the rural parts of Lane County and asked if ODOT was consulting with counties as it was considering investments in rural infrastructure. Mr. Brouwer said ODOT was close to publishing its agency-wide broadband strategy that looked at how state highway resources could be used to make the system smarter and potentially provide broadband access for social purposes. ODOT was looking actively at partnerships with local governments as systems were built out.

Ms. Buch urged ODOT to involve counties in developing the state's broadband strategies. Counties were very invested in rural broadband outreach and action at the state and county levels. Mr. Brouwer said he would address that issue with the team coordinating ODOT's broadband work.

Beltline Project Overview

Ms. Cary and Ms. Carroll used a slide presentation to provide an overview of the Beltline Highway: River Road to Delta Highway project.

Ms. Carroll described the project timeline, elements implemented to date and problems that needed to be addressed through improvements. Mr. Gamble explained conditions that that produced major traffic backups in the event of an accident, including impacts to traffic on Interstate 5 and surrounding communities.

Ms. Carroll reviewed the current concept design for the entire project and provided details of designs for the four separate sections on the corridor. She said public engagement activities included websites, social media, interested parties lists, presentations to community groups and organizations, a community advisory committee, individual outreach and newsletters. She said public comments centered on cost, congestion, safety and climate change.

Ms. Cary said the project cost was approximately \$350 million and explained how the project had been divided into sections for funding purposes. She said an urban growth boundary amendment was required to build the local arterial section because part of the facility was within Lane County and part was within the City of Eugene. ODOT wanted to pursue grants in conjunction with the city, county and LTD.

Mr. Groves asked about the location of the bike/pedestrian bridge over Beltline to connect two section of a neighborhood currently bisected by Beltline. Ms. Cary said the location was on the western portion of River Road outside of the project area.

Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) Climate Friendly and Equitable Communities (CFEC) Rulemaking Update

Ms. Newman said LCDC began its rule-making process as a result of Executive Order 20-04, signed in March 2020 that directed several state agencies to reduce climate pollution. A rule-making advisory committee was established and representatives from local jurisdictions served on that body. The reason for the initiative was that Oregon was not meeting its greenhouse gas emissions targets, particularly in the area

of pollution from transportation. She said the vision and intent of high level goals for the process were very good and the rules primarily would apply to the metropolitan areas of the state as set forth in agenda materials. She said areas of concerns had arisen as the rule-making process moved forward. There was a disconnect between discussion of the rules at LCDC meetings and the actual content of the rules. Mayors from Eugene and Springfield had urged flexibility in the process by establishing an end goal and allowing cities and counties some flexibility on how to achieve that goal. She said it was concerning that there were proscriptive and inflexible details in the rules and cited examples. Those details would require additional staff capacity to implement and local governments would require additional funding. She outlined the timeline and next steps in the rule-making process and described the work that would be required to develop and adopt a regional scenario plan.

Mr. Smith commented that small cities like Coburg had no resources to meet all of the mandates they currently faced. Coburg addressed those issues it felt were most important in those mandates. He was concerned that temporary rules would be put in place, only to be replaced by permanent rules. He said while Coburg supported the goals of the CFEC initiative, it simply did not have the staff capacity or financial resources to respond to all of the mandates, such as the effort Ms. Newman had indicated would be required to develop and implement a regional scenario plan.

Mr. Groves agreed that local governments were facing many unfunded mandates.

Mr. VanGordon agreed with Mr. Smith. He said although Springfield was a larger city, it would struggle to find resources to meet the mandate. He said jurisdictions around the state were concerned with the unfunded mandate and where they would find the resources needed to address it. He agreed with the goals of the initiative, but disagreed with the rules. He advised jurisdictions and staff to continue to raise objections and point out how the work related to the CFEC initiative would slow down other projects on which communities were working. He suggested a letter from the MPC urging a slow down in the rule-making process.

Mr. Johnston said ODOT had budgeted some funding to assist local governments in complying with the new requirements. \$15 million had been committed for consulting support for local governments. He said while it was DLCD's rule-making process, ODOT would be involved in implementing it and anticipating helping local jurisdictions to the extent possible.

Mr. Moe agreed with the goals, but local jurisdictions would need funding and time to respond and should push back on the timing.

Mr. Thompson noted that Mr. Brouwer had agreed to look into whether funding could be used by local jurisdictions and added that at a recent rule-making advisory committee meeting members had been unable to get answers to their questions about the amount of funding that would be available, how it could be used and how it would be distributed.

Ms. Newman agreed that there appeared to be little funding for local jurisdictions; most funding would go to LCOG and it was an unfunded mandate. She was hopeful that some of the IJA funds would be available to local jurisdictions as Mr. Brouwer had suggested although there still remained a funding gap and clarity on how the funds would be distributed in order to get the work done.

Mr. Johnston said the \$15 million had already been programmed and ODOT recognized that amount was insufficient to meet the needs of local jurisdictions and was exploring options for additional funding.

Mr. Smith expressed his appreciation ODOT's offer to help Coburg fund its planning efforts, but the mandates that were involved were beyond the city's scope, even with additional funding.

MPC Summer Meeting Schedule

Mr. Thompson said only the Metropolitan Cable Commission would meet in July and the full MPC would meet in August and September.

Follow-up and Next Steps

- **ODOT Update**—Mr. Gamble said he was available to answer any questions about the 2022 World Athletics Championships to be held in Eugene July 14-24 and ODOT's operations plans for the event.
- **MTIP Administrative Amendments**—There were no questions.
- **Next Meeting/Agenda Build**—July 7 Virtual Meeting (Metropolitan Cable Commission only), August 4 Virtual Meeting, September 1 Virtual Meeting

Mr. Groves suggested that a letter be sent from the MPC, as the second largest metropolitan area in the state, to make its concerns and interests known on the issue of EV charging facilities.

Mr. Thompson said in April of 2022 Lane County's climate issues lead staff, along with other county staff, had contacted LCOG to ask for assistance in developing an EV charging strategy for the county. Discussions had been in progress since then and there had been outreach to ODOT's Climate Office and the designation of Highway 58 and Highway 126 had been specifically mentioned. He said the Climate Office had responded that those two highways could be very high on the nomination list for priority status next year. He said LCOG was developing staffing to research grant opportunities for funding to create a strategy and communicating with the state. He said if the MPC wished a letter could be drafted, but perhaps since the next round of nominations for priority corridor status was several months away staff could provide an update in the fall and a more specific letter could be developed at that time.

Mr. Groves determined there was consensus to review a draft letter in August or September.

Mr. VanGordon requested that staff draft a letter to DLCD asked that additional rules not be adopted in July.

Mr. Smith agreed with Mr. VanGordon's request and asked that the letter specifically address the unfunded mandate issue and how that would exceed staff capacity and distract from the work local jurisdictions were already focused on.

Ms. Buch agreed with the concerns about unfunded mandates but said it could be problematic to request adoption of rules be delayed. She said agreement with the intent should be expressed, while pointing out issues with implementations that were critical to local agencies without proper funding, support and staff capacity.

Ms. Wilson reminded the MPC that the rules were directed at local jurisdictions, not the MPO because the state had no jurisdiction over MPOs, which were federal entities. She clarified that a letter would need to come from local jurisdictions, not the MPO. She said LCOG would assist agencies in drafting letters.

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

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)