

# MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

March 2, 2023  
11:30 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Steve Moe, Chair; Sean VanGordon (City of Springfield); Lucy Vinis (City of Eugene); David Loveall (Lane County); Nancy Bell (City of Coburg); Susan Cox, Kelly Sutherland (Lane Transit District); Vidal Francis (Oregon Department of Transportation), members; Tom Schwetz for Jameson Auten (Lane Transit District), *ex officio* member.

Paul Thompson, Dan Callister, Drew Pfefferle, Ellen Currier, Kate Wilson, Kelly Clarke, Rachel Dorfman (Lane Council of Governments); Rob Inerfeld, Jenifer Willer (City of Eugene); Sandy Belson (City of Springfield); Megan Winner (City of Coburg); Bill Johnston (Oregon Department of Transportation); Sasha Vartanian (Lane County); Andrew Martin, Theresa Brand (Lane Transit District); Neil Moyer (Metro TV).

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

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

## **APPROVE February 2, 2023, MPC MEETING MINUTES**

Mr. Loveall, seconded by Ms. Vinis, moved to approve the February 2, 2023, meeting minutes as submitted. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0.

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

Mr. Moe stated there had been some discussion at the last meeting to move to in-person meetings, but there had been some reluctance so meetings will continue to be virtual.

## **COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE**

There was no one wishing to speak.

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

### **MPO Redistribution Funding Recommendations**

Mr. Callister provided a brief overview of the Transportation Planning Committee's (TPC) recommendations regarding programming of \$2.4 million in federal STBG redistribution funds received by the MPO. The following five proposals were received and recommended for funding:

- Eugene - Bikeshare Operations & Expansion \$600,000.00
- Eugene - Hunsaker Safety Improvements project additional funding \$500,000.00
- Lane County - Coburg Rd and Game Farm Rd local overmatch \$198,304.00
- Lane County - Clear Lake Rd project local overmatch \$242,432.40
- Springfield - Mill St Reconstruct South A St to Centennial Blvd \$859,263.60
- Total: 2,400,000.00

Mr. Callister said the MPC had held a public hearing on the proposals at its February 2, 2023 meeting and responses received during the public comment period were included in the agenda materials. He asked that the MPC approve the recommendation and amendment to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Mr. Thompson added that the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) goals, objectives, and direction were responsible for the proposals rising to the top. The MPC's work refining the RTP goals and policies had influenced the type of projects being submitted for funding consideration.

Ms. Vinis, seconded by Ms. Bell, moved to approve Resolution 2023-01 programming funds and amending the Transportation Improvement Program. The motion passed unanimously, 8:0

### **Oregon MPO Consortium (OMPOC) 2023 Legislative Priorities**

Mr. Thompson reported that OMPOC met recently and reviewed a preliminary list of transportation related legislation and discussed what issues OMPOC might want to address during the legislative session. A list of proposed potential priorities was included in the agenda packet. He briefly reviewed the status of each bill and said OMPOC was requesting input from the individual MPOs. He asked MPC members to provide feedback to Mr. Moe in anticipation of the next OMPOC meeting.

Regarding the Great Streets initiative, Ms. Vinis said that communities had state highways that are now local jurisdiction streets in their downtown areas. She asked if OMPOC had taken a position on that issue. Mr. Thompson said OMPOC shared that concern and supported making Great Streets funding available not just to state highways, but to local streets that served at Great Streets.

Ms. Vinis agreed that electric vehicles (EV) should contribute to the cost of roads. She asked if EVs had a higher registration fee or other means of contributing to that cost instead of the gas tax. Mr. Thompson said he would research what fees were paid by EV owners, as well as the issue of what types of fees would more closely tie vehicles to their use of the roads.

Mr. Francis said he would be willing to provide more information at a future meeting on a move away from the gas tax to other approaches to raising revenue for roads.

Mr. VanGordon expressed interest in knowing more about the issue and whether there was a study from ODOT that looked at the share EVs paid for maintenance of roadways compared to conventional automobiles.

Mr. VanGordon asked what additional uses were proposed for the use of gas tax revenues under SJR 2. Mr. Thompson said currently the Oregon Constitution restricted gas tax dollars to uses within the roadway right-of-way. The proposed amendment would allow use outside the right-of-way as long as that use reduced the burden on the right-of-way or pollution from vehicles on roads. The intent was to use funds for infrastructure outside the right-of-way that reduced emissions or traffic, such as bike paths. No hearing on the bill had yet been held.

Mr. VanGordon preferred to see OMPOC remain neutral on SJR 2 until more information was available. Mr. Thompson said he would report back if there was any activity related to the bill.

Mr. Loveall said in order to support the legislation related to tolling he wanted to see an amendment to the language that specified when large major projects were paid for, the tolling was removed.

Mr. Thompson said staff would provide Mr. Moe with a summary of comments from MPC members to share at the next OMPOC meeting. He asked if the MPC was interested in a future agenda item addressing the nexus between EVs and funding for roads. Mr. Moe determined there was consensus to add that item to a future agenda.

Mr. Loveall commented that part of road maintenance and construction requirements are based on weight and EVs were considerably heavier than combustion vehicles and one consideration was to eliminate the gas tax in favor of a flat registration fee that was higher.

### **Legislative Update**

Mr. Thompson provided a brief update on the bills related to transportation MPO staff are tracking. He said there has been little movement on most of the bills, although first hearings had been held on bills related to photo radar and ODOT's funding exchange program. He said there was a bill related to the Department of Land Conservation and Development's (DLCD) Climate Friendly Community rules that were adopted in 2022. The bill would suspend implementation of the rules and require DLCD to revisit them and revise. There had been no action on the bill to date.

Mr. Thompson shared a list of legislation the LaneACT would be considering at its next meeting. The list was the same as that being considered by OMPOC, with the exception of SB 445 that would establish a rural traffic safety grant fund to provide grants to rural cities for installation and improvement of traffic control devices and crosswalks. This bill is of particular interest to the LaneACT.

Ms. Bell said as a representative of a rural community she supported SB 445. Coburg struggled as many smaller cities did because its main street was a county road and a transportation and freight corridor. She understood that a traffic diversion study would be conducted, but was not certain of its status.

In response to a question from Mr. Moe, Mr. Thompson said SB 445 was not on OMPOC's list of priorities because MPOs tended to address issues related to urbanized and metropolitan areas and the bill related to rural communities. He said the bill defined rural as a city, town or community within the state with a population of 15,000 or less; Coburg would be eligible for the program. He asked if the MPC wanted to weigh in on the bill as the MPC had a seat on the LaneACT.

Mr. Moe determined there was consensus to convey the MPO's support for SB 445 to the LaneACT.

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

- **ODOT Update**—Mr. Francis reported that the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) would review a draft of the 2024-27 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) at its March 9 meeting. The public comment period for the draft STIP would also commence on that date. He said the STIP included projects within the Central Lane MPO. He said the comment period would conclude at the end of April and listed a number of opportunities for sharing comments and concerns.
- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Changes**—There were no questions.
- **Next Meeting/Agenda Build**— Virtual Meeting, April 6 - Virtual Meeting, May 4 - Virtual meeting, June 1 - Virtual Meeting

Mr. Thompson welcomed Susan Cox and Kelly Sutherland as the new Lane Transit District representatives on the MPC.

Mr. Moe adjourned the meeting at 12:45 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)