

MINUTES

Metropolitan Policy Committee Virtual Meeting via Zoom

March 7, 2024
11:30 a.m.

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

Brenda Wilson, Paul Thompson, Dan Callister, Jacob Callister, Michael Wisth, Ellen Currier, Kelly Clarke (Lane Council of Governments); Rob Inerfeld (City of Eugene); Drew Larsen, Sandy Belson (City of Springfield); John Marshall, Megan Winner (City of Coburg); Sasha Vartanian, Cassidy Mills (Lane County); Theresa Brand (Lane Transit District).

WELCOME, CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

Mr. Moe called the meeting to order and a quorum was established.

ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA/ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM MPC MEMBERS

Mr. Thompson noted that technically the agenda item related to an update on the Climate Friendly Equitable Community initiative was not a federal MPO matter; it was a state issue.

COMMENTS FROM THE AUDIENCE

There was no one wishing to speak.

APPROVE February 1, 2024, MPC MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Farr, seconded by Ms. Vinis, moved to approve the February 1, 2024, meeting minutes as submitted. The motion passed, 8:0:1, Mr. Groves abstaining.

METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) ISSUES

Appoint Oregon MPO Consortium (OMPOC) Member

Mr. Farr, seconded by Mr. Groves, moved to appoint Susan Cox as an OMPOC member. The motion passed unanimously, 9:0.

Project Proposals for MPO Redistribution Funding

Mr. Loveall opened the public hearing.

Dan Callister explained that because the Central Lane MPO had done a good job of obligating its funds, it was able to receive a share of the state's redistributed funds. The MPO's share was \$1,049,387. He reviewed the following proposals for redistribution of the MPO's FF2023 Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) redistribution funding.

- 8th Avenue Streetscape and Bikeway (Eugene)
- River Road at Irving Road/Hunsaker Lane (Eugene)
- Gilham Road: Ayers Road to Mirror Pond Way (Lane County)
- Low- or No-Emission Mini Street Sweeper Purchase

Mr. Callister said STBG dollars were some of the most flexible of federal transportation funds and could be used for a wide range of projects, but had to be obligated within a short period of time. The proposed projects were capable of using the STBG funds quickly.

Mr. Farr stated that he supported the Gilham Road project safety improvements as its current condition was unsafe for children walking to school. He also noted the need for Hunsaker Lane safety improvements.

Mr. Groves said many of the projects included needed safety improvements and he strongly supported those.

There being no one wishing to speak, Mr. Loveall closed the public hearing. He said the MPC would vote on the proposals at its April 2024 meeting.

Climate Friendly Equitable Community (CFEC) Governing Body and Status Update

Ms. Clarke used a slide presentation to explain the CFEC rules that required jurisdictions in the MPO to implement the existing Central Lane Scenario Plan (CLSP) developed in 2015 by the Central Lane MPO, and jointly develop regional performance measures and targets to measure and track progress towards implementation of the preferred scenario and meeting the region's Greenhouse Gas (GHG) reduction target. She reported that the scenario plan had been completed and a work plan to achieve the rules was submitted and approved. The MPC had unanimously voted to act as the governance structure and amended its bylaws to formalize the agreement. She said work plan elements included identification of performance measures and a progress tracking strategy.

Ms. Clarke said a team to help achieve CFEC requirements had been established and consisted of consultants from Parametrix and RSG, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and a project management teams composed of jurisdictional partners. Outcomes would include assessing the status of implementation actions since 2015, reviewing performance measures and targets to track progress and defining and developing an implementation chapter. She said a more detailed work plan and schedule would be presented at the MPC's April 2024 meeting.

Mr. Francis joined the meeting at 11:50 a.m.

Broadband Planning Update

Jacob Callister used a slide presentation to provide an update on broadband planning. He said currently the definition of broadband was high-speed internet, but there needed to be clarification of that term in download and upload megabyte per second (Mbps) speeds in order to prioritize the use of funds for implementing it appropriately and identifying underserved areas. He described the various tools for providing internet access, with a focus on fiber optic cable. Closing the digital divide meant providing access to high-speed internet to everyone in the region and governments were critical partners in that endeavor. He said there were a number of key local and regional groups working collaborative on broadband planning and described the inter- and intra-regional assets available to optimize broadband access. The recent passage of several pieces of federal legislation had made significant funds available to support the work. Those funds had been used to support regional broadband strategic planning efforts,

secure the help of consultants, hire a regional broadband coordinator, support current staff engaged in a wide range of activities in support of regional broadband and provide a set aside match for federal funds.

Mr. Callister described the work that had been completed to date and said a draft of the first phase of the strategic plan would be available in late spring. Phase 2 would include applications for additional funding, with a partner already in place and good relationships with the players involved. Still to be completed was a comprehensive and enduring regional broadband coordination. A request for proposals for an internet service provider (ISP) to serve specific areas within the region received seven responses. Douglas Fast Net had been selected and negotiations to serve six rural Lane County regions consisting of over 1,000 addresses were in progress.

Mr. Moe stated he was a strong supporter of broadband expansion. He said the current situation in Springfield was complicated with a number of entities involved.

Mr. Francis asked if there were efforts to reach out to the public about ISP preferences. Mr. Callister said a component of Phase 1 was to move quickly with existing data. He described Phase 1 as quantitative and Phase 2 as qualitative. The state criteria were very straightforward with a focus on determining whether areas within the region were un- or underserved. There was an ongoing conversation in the region about digital equity and whether residents understood what was available, what was necessary to access service and whether there was a desire to access that service. A stakeholder group would be used to help develop that information.

Mr. Francis asked if there was competition among technologies such as fiber, satellite and cable or just among providers of a particular service. Mr. Callister replied that fiber was the best solution, but until fiber was available wireless was an acceptable tool in the interim until a longer term solution was achieved for the future.

Mr. Marshall the City of Coburg had fiber infrastructure, but asked why satellite service was not an available alternative. Mr. Marshall said the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) national broadband map showed service everywhere in the country. Although coverage was strong, those who had to rely on satellite indicated that service was unreliable and those areas were identified as underserved. Satellite would remain a key part of any resilience model, but the federal government was seeking a more reliable long-term solution.

Mr. Loveall remarked that the Mohawk Valley experienced service interruption during the recent ice storm and residents had reliable service expectations and specific customer service contacts. Mr. Callister said customer service was a key criterion in the search for an ISP partner.

Mr. Loveall said current ISP contracts did not include requirements to repair connections within a specific length of time. Those types of issues must be spelled out in future contracts. Mr. Callister agreed and said that competition had a positive impact on services.

Follow-up and Next Steps

- **ODOT Update**— Mr. Francis said ODOT was tracking a number of bills during the short legislative session, although none were significant. Most of the focus during this session was on Measure 110 issues and homelessness. ODOT was focused on the next session and making itself whole in terms of projects and maintenance capacity. He said there would be a comment period on proposed toll-making rules. Environmental work on Highway 126 improvements had been completed and would be issued for review.

Mr. Thompson added that the 30-day public comment period for the state's tolling policy would open on April 1, 2024. He asked if the MPC would like to have a presentation on the subject at its next meeting.

- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Project Changes**—There were no questions.
- **Next Meeting/Agenda Build**—April 4 - Virtual, May 2 - Virtual

Mr. Loveall determined there was consensus to have a presentation on the proposed tolling policy. Mr. Thompson said there would also be a presentation on ODOT's recently set greenhouse gas target.

Mr. Loveall adjourned the meeting at 12:42 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)