

Biennial Report for the Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation April 2006

Since the initial “Charter,” the Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (COACT) has shown outstanding leadership, coordination, cooperation, public involvement and outreach, and decision-making regarding transportation issues in Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties. COACT provides an open public forum for discussion and coordination of projects and planning involving common transportation issues and needs, and has always reached consensus on decisions they have been given to make.

COACT adopted updates of the Operating Guidelines in July 2003 and January 2006 (see attached for current edition) as an effort to continue better aligning itself with the Oregon Transportation Commission “Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation.”

Geographic Boundaries

COACT serves Crook, Deschutes, and Jefferson counties and all of their communities. These boundaries also line up with several other “tri-county” organizations, such as the Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council (which also currently serves as the administrative support for COACT) and the Central Oregon Region Economic Revitalization Team. The Area is linked economically and by common transportation facilities and the services of highway, rail and air.

COACT Membership and Decision-Making

Refer to “Operating Guidelines” (attached) for detailed membership and decision-making information. As noted above, COACT has always reached consensus in decision-making.

Coordination with Adjacent Areas and State Legislators

Refer to “Operating Guidelines” (attached) for detailed principles on coordination. Coordination efforts over the past few years have included regular attendance by OTC members at the formal COACT meetings, as well presentations and visits from statewide leaders in various transportation and land use arenas. COACT members also participate in other regional and statewide teams and forums regarding transportation, such as Oregon’s Freight Advisory Committee.

Work Activities and Initiatives

During the past few years, COACT has been engaged in many educational, information gathering, outreach, advisory, coordination and decision-making activities, which include the following:

- Initiation of the concept for a complete area “Transportation System Plan”, which has become a regular agenda topic for both the full COACT board and the Technical Advisory Committee,
- Development of a formalized transportation “needs list” for Central Oregon, including needs on the integrated local, state and tribal systems,
- Development involvement of the 2006-2009 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program,
- Development and monitoring of the programming and delivery of projects in the 2004-2007 and 2006-2009 STIP, including the Oregon Transportation Investment Acts I, II, and III,
- Continued understanding of overlapping state land use and transportation policies and direction,
- Education, awareness and coordination of rail/highway crossing needs and processes, including development of relationships with the Oregon Department of Transportation Rail Division
- Development of coordination and cooperation with the Bend Metropolitan Planning Organization
- Establishment of a new COACT Freight Advisory Committee,
- Facilitation of Local Programs (Transportation Enhancements, OTIA III Local Bridges, Bicycle-Pedestrian Program, etc.) coordination and project proposals,
- Developed broader working relationship with adjoining ACTs,
- Ongoing applications and assignments for the COACT Technical Advisory Committee,
- Updates and works directly with staff and advocate representatives during State and Federal Legislative Sessions, and
- Ongoing education for COACT members on transportation funding – earmarks, federal, etc.

Public Involvement

Refer to “Operating Guidelines” (attached) for detailed public involvement processes, commitments, and expectations. In the past few years, COACT has invited members of the public to “sit at the table” during formal meetings. Agendas always begin with an open forum for input from the general public. COACT members believe that the actual forum between elected officials and stakeholders is a good way to keep the public involved in transportation issues in Central Oregon.

Key Work Areas

Activities will continue along the same lines as those identified in the “Work Activities and Initiatives” section; particularly an area “Transportation System Planning” concept. New challenges and opportunities will include more in-depth involvement in rapid growth issues throughout Central Oregon, freight mobility and freight corridor planning,

job creation issues as they relate to transportation, transportation financing and funding partnerships (including public-private partnerships), safety and pavement preservation needs, improved coordination of modes, involvement with the Oregon Transportation Plan update process, and hosting of transportation forums on various subjects.