

MINUTES

Lane Area Commission on Transportation (LaneACT)
McLane Room
Oregon Department of Transportation, Area 5
644 A Street, Springfield, OR 97477

August 10, 2016
5:30 p.m.

- PRESENT:** Jerry Behney, Coburg
Tom Munroe, Cottage Grove
Dave Stram, Creswell
Maurice Sanders, Dunes City (via teleconference)
Claire Syrett, Eugene
Mike Miller, Florence (via teleconference)
Mike Cahill, Junction City
Steve Paulson, Lowell
Jim Coey, Oakridge
Hillary Wylie, Springfield
Sandra Larson, Veneta
David Reesor, for Sid Leiken, Lane County
Chief Warren Brainard, Confederated Tribes
Don Nordin, Lane Transit District (LTD)
Charles Tannenbaum, Highway 126 East
Nancy Rickard, Port of Siuslaw
Jeff Paschall, Lane County Roads Advisory Committee (LCRAC)
Frannie Brindle, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Paul Thompson, Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)
Holly McRae, Bicycle and Pedestrian Designated Stakeholder
Rob Zako, Environmental Land Use Designated Stakeholder
Scott Parkinson, Rail Designated Stakeholder
George Grier, Other Stakeholder
Shelley Humble, Other Stakeholder
Eugene Organ, Other Stakeholder
Ryan Papé, Other Stakeholder
- ABSENT:** Westfir; Jason Muggy, Trucking Designated Stakeholder; Jennifer Jordan, Other Stakeholder
- OTHERS:** Jenna Berman, Bill Johnston, Jae Pudewell, ODOT; Michelle Amberg, Gary Mounce, Creswell; Rob Inerfeld, Eugene; Emma Newman, Springfield; Ric Ingham, Veneta; Kelly Hale, AJ Jackson, Tom Schwetz, LTD; Daniel Callister, Denise Walters, Lane Council of Governments (LCOG); Ken Rivernider, Emerald Valley Chapter of the Blind.

Distributed to LaneACT members prior to the start of the meeting were the following documents: *Oregon's Road Usage Charge Program, Area 5 2018-21 STIP Enhance proposals—150% scoping list*, and *ConnectOregon VI Final Review Committee Prioritized Funding Recommendation*.

1. Call to Order (Welcome and Introductions)

George Grier called the meeting of the Lane Area Commission on Transportation (LaneACT) to order at 5:32 p.m. Members and the audience introduced themselves. Mr. Grier welcomed Bill Johnston, newly hired ODOT Region 2 Area 5 Planner.

2. Review Agenda – Additions or Deletions

There were no changes to the agenda.

3. Consent Calendar

A. Approve Minutes (June 8, 2016)

Consensus: The Minutes of June 8, 2016 were approved as submitted.

4. Comments from the Audience

Ken Rivernider, Emerald Valley Chapter of the Blind, had attended the Joint Committee on Transportation's public hearing. He noted several people spoke about safety concerns on Highway 126 West. To reduce overall traffic on the highway, Mr. Rivernider recommended LTD provide more transit service to Veneta. He suggested state or federal grants be used to pay for the pilot project.

5. Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Enhancement Scoping Results Update

Mr. Johnston reviewed the *Area 5 2018-21 STIP Enhance proposals—150% scoping list*. He noted the estimated cost of the Veneta-Elmira Multi-use Path had increased from \$870,900 to \$1,573,600. Project estimates for the Springfield and Eugene projects had decreased which is an unusual outcome of the scoping process. Mr. Johnston said the regional SuperACT meeting was scheduled for the first week in September. At that time, the list would be narrowed to a 100% proposal. Given the MPO-LaneACT working agreements, Mr. Johnston said the question before the Commission was to affirm or switch the relative position of the Veneta and Florence projects.

LaneACT members questioned how the scoping had changed the estimated costs. Mr. Johnston explained the methodology in detail. Ms. Brindle added ODOT also included up to a forty percent contingency factor. The Veneta project had an environmental impact component that might significantly raise the cost. Since project overruns were the responsibility of the local agency, it was better to add the contingency factor and fully fund the project.

When Councilor Wylie and Mr. Thompson questioned why the Springfield match amount was unchanged even though the overall project cost had decreased, Mr. Johnston responded ODOT staff had carried forward the originally proposed match because it was more than the minimum required. He said the scoping results had just been released and ODOT was open to discussions with the local agencies. Mr. Johnston thought adjusting the match to the minimum 10% required was acceptable.

Discussion turned to the Florence project. Mr. Miller explained the original proposal had been the first phase of a larger project. Now community members were working to fund the entire \$6 million project. Ms. Brindle explained ODOT had put the highway repaving project on hold for a year to enable Florence to raise the total amount needed. Some funding was coming from the urban renewal agency. Responding to questions from Mayor Coey, Mr. Miller said they had identified \$3 million and were still looking to fund an additional \$3 million to cover the total \$6 million. If they were not able to raise the additional money, they would return to the phased approach.

Mayor Coey asked if the other applicants had secured the entire amount of match needed. Mr. Ingham (Veneta), Ms. Newman (Springfield), and Mr. Inerfeld (Eugene) assured him their respective agencies had done so. Mayor Coey suggested moving the Florence project to the bottom of the list.

Mayor Cahill recalled the discussion LaneACT members had in April to determine the priority of the 150% list. The only thing that had changed was the cost estimate. He supported leaving the priorities as they were. Councilor Syrett concurred.

After Mr. Thompson reviewed the funds available (\$10.5 million for Region 2, LaneACT's 150% list was \$3.5 million), Mr. Zako observed prior to the scoping there had been a sense the funding was assured for all the projects. With the increase in the Veneta project, it was possible those lower on the list would not proceed. He emphasized the importance of supporting rural communities.

Councilor Wylie echoed support for rural communities. She suggested in the future the group consider the cost of projects as part of balancing rural and urban distribution of funds to be strategic in the prioritization of projects given overall funding available.

Mr. Grier asked if there consensus to leave the projects prioritized as they were.

Consensus: The LaneACT STIP Enhance proposals' rank order was unchanged.

6. OReGO Update

Mr. Grier, a participant in the pilot OReGO program, described his experiences. He had chosen the high tech option and found it easy to use and quite informative. His only issue to date was that the mileage he incurred using the private road on his farm was included in the road use fee. The pilot program was open for another year. Mr. Grier encouraged LaneACT members, with vehicles newer than 2004, to enroll in the pilot.

Responding to a question from Ms. Brindle regarding record keeping of gas purchases, Mr. Grier explained gas usage was calculated based on the vehicle's manufacturer's estimated miles per gallon. Actual gas purchases were not tracked.

When Councilor Syrett asked if it was only the state gas tax that was credited to his account, Mr. Grier assured her it was. Neither federal nor local gas taxes were included.

Mayor Munroe thought a zone approach was more equitable. People who lived in Eastern Oregon did not have transit opportunities and had to travel longer distances.

Mr. Grier said there were not enough people in Eastern Oregon participating in the pilot program to provide meaningful data to decision-makers. Mr. Thompson added the technology allowed for a zonal approach as well as other modifications such as increased fees during times of high traffic congestion.

7. ConnectOregon Update

Mr. Johnston referred LaneACT members to the *ConnectOregon VI, Final Review Committee Prioritized Funding Recommendation* spreadsheet. He noted those highlighted in yellow were from ODOT Region 2. Mr. Johnston had added a column in which he had annotated the regional ratings of LaneACT applications. He said the final review committee recommended funding through item 39. The only proposal from Lane County in the top thirty-nine projects was the Lane Transit District's Santa Clara Community Transit Center and Park & Ride.

Mr. Thompson described the process used by the final review committee. He emphasized the "straw man" proposal developed by ODOT staff equally weighted ODOT statutory scoring, modal committee rankings, and regional priorities. Mr. Thompson distributed another spreadsheet entitled, *Region 2 ConnectOregon VI Applications: Presented in order of ODOT staff starting ranking for final review committee*. He summarized the results of ODOT's methodology as "scrambling" the ACT's priorities. Mr. Thompson felt the process undermined and undervalued the work done by the MPOs and ACTs. They were also the only forums for public input regarding the proposals. The MPO had reviewed the results in July and Commissioner Leiken testified at the July 21,

2016 Oregon Transportation Committee (OTC) public hearing in favor of a different ranking system.

Mr. Grier and Councilor Wylie said the same problem (the regional priorities were given less weight) had occurred in earlier *ConnectOregon* funding cycles. They had expressed their unhappiness with the process at previous statewide ACT chair meetings.

After Ms. Brindle suggested LaneACT develop a specific proposal to present to the OTC, Mr. Thompson said the MPO staff were working on different approaches to weight the three criteria and planned to present the options to LaneACT at a later meeting.

Ms. Humble thought another valid approach, one used in the past, was to start the list by using each region's top priority.

When Councilor Syrett asked if there were a possibility of changes in the final recommendation, Mr. Thompson opined minor adjustments were possible. For example, sometimes project costs changed or the applications were withdrawn and the funding was extended further down the list. Items 40 and 41 were both from Region 2, but the final recommendation was the reverse of the regional priority. If funding were made available, the Mid-Willamette Valley ACT was requesting the regional priority be honored.

Mr. Grier reminded LaneACT members that each region was allocated a minimum amount of money and some adjustments to the proposed final list were inevitable.

8. Debrief on Joint Legislative Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization Lunch and Public Hearing

Mr. Grier described the day spent (July 20, 2016) with the interim Joint Committee on Transportation. Many LaneACT members had attended some or all of the event. The record was open for public comment until the end of September. Mr. Grier said the Steering Committee had not proceeded with submitting written testimony as discussed at the June meeting because they thought it was more effective to tailor the letter to the needs of the committee. He referenced the draft letter from the MPO in the agenda packet and suggested it was a starting place for a letter from LaneACT.

Ms. Brindle suggested the letter explicitly support an increase to the gas tax, e.g., raise the gas tax by at least xx cents. The members of the Joint Committee on Transportation needed to hear there was broad community support for a significant increase.

When Mr. Papé asked what amount of an increase was being discussed, Mr. Grier explained it needed to increase by at least thirteen cents per gallon to provide \$300 million/year. Ms. Brindle added it was important to include an index for inflation.

Mr. Thompson said the MPO members had reviewed the draft letter and suggested there be more emphasis on passenger rail, more specificity on the gas tax amount, and an additional section on seismic vulnerability.

LaneACT members suggested the following concepts be included:

- In addition to an increase in gas tax, look at other funding mechanisms to create a comprehensive funding strategy (increased vehicle registration fees, sliding vehicle registration fees tied to vehicle cost, toll roads, carbon tax, retail marijuana tax, and/or entertainment tax).
- Amend current policy to better address needs of rural communities, for example, lower the project cost threshold for eligible bicycle/pedestrian projects or extend the time frame cities had to spend their gas tax revenue.
- Include ideas on how to best explain to the public the need for an increase in the gas tax.
- Advocate for better passenger rail service, including service to rural communities.

Mr. Grier asked LaneACT members to e-mail other suggestions to Ms. Walters next week. Mr. Thompson and she planned to draft the letter for the Steering Committee to review at their August 18, 2016 meeting. The final review of the letter was scheduled for the September 14, 2016 LaneACT meeting.

9. LaneACT Member Presentation Concept

Mr. Grier shared that the Steering Committee members had received a request from Mr. Organ to ask each LaneACT member to give a short presentation on their transportation issues. Mr. Organ suggested starting with the smaller entities. When Mr. Parkinson noted the memo in the agenda packet had specified cities, Mr. Grier said the intent was for all members to participate. Commission members had a choice as to whether they wished to give the presentation or wanted to ask a staff person to do so.

Consensus: LaneACT members agreed member presentations should be added as a standing agenda item.

Mr. Papé suggested the presentations last about ten minutes and be at the beginning of the meetings. Mr. Zako added the presentations should begin the next month.

Mr. Reesor volunteered Lane County as the topic for the first presentation.

10. Announcements and Info Sharing

Ms. Brindle announced the OTC's next meeting was August 18, 2016 and August 19, 2016 in Klamath Falls. Major agenda topics included: *ConnectOregon* VI project selection; Oregon's American with Disabilities Act (ADA) Transition Plan; Interchange Area Management Plans; and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding. Ms.

Brindle also discussed the design process underway for the Delta Highway/Beltline interchange. She anticipated public outreach efforts would begin in October.

Ms. Rickard thanked ODOT staff for the paving improvements and bridge maintenance projects on Highway 126.

Mr. Parkinson described the recently awarded \$11 million federal Fostering Advancements in Shipping and Transportation for the Long-term Achievement of National Efficiencies (FASTLANE) grant to the Port of Coos Bay for rail tunnel improvements. He noted the Coos Bay Rail Line Railroad recently celebrated its one hundredth year anniversary. Mr. Parkinson also said Greenhill Road in Eugene had reopened. A short closure was planned in the fall to improve the railroad crossing.

Mayor Coey said the first meeting of Travel Oregon's bicycle tourism studio on East Lane County regional bicycle routes had been scheduled for October 20, 2106. He thanked the Marine reserves for their work on the North Shore road.

Mr. Zako announced the auditor who had been hired to perform the audit on the ODOT had been let go.

Mr. Thompson said the MPO had been given a presentation on the findings from the Cascadia Rising emergency preparedness exercise. He thought LaneACT members would find the presentation of interest. Mr. Thompson also shared a recent interpretation of Measure 97 which asserted corporate taxes from revenues related to automobiles (approximately \$250 million annually) had to be dedicated to the transportation system. If so, and the measure passed, it was possible support for increasing the gas tax might wane.

Ms. McRae shared a recent experience of being first on the scene of an accident on Highway 126. A person had died while they were waiting for emergency services to arrive. She emphasized Vision Zero needed to be the highest priority when weighing grant or project applications. Mr. Thompson added the MPO/Lane County Safety Plan included a Safe Communities staff position.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

(Recorded by Beth Bridges)