

NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation

September 7, 2006

Rockaway Beach Community Center

Rockaway Beach, OR

The meeting was called to order by Lylla Gaebel, Chair. The following members and guests attended:

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| Rita Bernhard – Columbia County Commission | Don McDaniel – Port of Astoria |
| Clark Berry – Washington County | Ray McFarlane – City of Rockaway Beach |
| Sue D’Agnese – ODOT Region 1 | Larry McKinley – ODOT Region 2 |
| Mark Gervasi – City of Tillamook | Matt Mumford – Tillamook County Transit |
| Valerie Grigg Devis – ODOT Region 2 | Eileen Phelan – Region 1 Mobility Engineer |
| Randy Hamlin – City of Rockaway Beach | Ron Puzey – City of Clatskanie |
| Dick Hellberg – City of Warrenton | Shawn Reiersgaard – Tillamook Citizen-at-Large |
| Senator Betsy Johnson – State Legislature | Jeff Scheick – ODOT Region 2 |
| Shirley Kalkhoven – City of Nehalem | Dave True – Clatskanie Public Works |
| David Kim – ODOT Region 1 | Russ Warr – City of Astoria |
| Mark Labhart – Tillamook County | Lonny Welter – Columbia County |
| Rosemary Loerke – Columbia Citizen-at-Large | Pete Williamson – Port of St Helens |
| Kathi McConnell – ODOT Region 2 | 1 |

Excused: Ron Blin, Don Otterman, Ed Wegner, Tim Wilson

1. Welcome and Introductions: Members and guests introduced themselves. Welcome to new members:
2. NWACT Minutes/Updates:
 - Approval of July 6, 2006 Minutes – Approved unanimously. (CB, SR).
 - Public Comment – None
 - Legislative Comment –
 - Region 2 Update – Larry provided a status report on the Lindsey Creek and Nehalem/Wheeler paving projects. Hwy 30, east of Astoria will be getting double striping soon. Other projects underway: Rockaway Beach and Hwy 101 at Jetty Creek and the Youngs Bay Bridge painting. ODOT is requesting a \$500,000 earmark for repair of the Hwy 101 rock wall around Neahkanie Mt, which would be matched with the previously submitted Scenic Byway application. A motion to submit a letter in support of the earmark was unanimously approved. (ML, RB) Region 2 has hired a 3rd project leader.
 - Region 1 – David provided a status report on the Columbia City bridge and preservation work being done. Rainier has received a transportation improvement grant, which will address freight mobility. An issue is whether to have bike lanes on this area of Hwy 30; a community meeting is being held to discuss.
 - Oregon Transportation Commission – Jeff Scheick reported that 100% of the OTIA 1 and 2 projects are either done, in design or engineering – excellent. Sixty-four percent of the OTIA III projects are similarly done or underway. The Oregon Transportation Plan is moving forward. The OTC has approved the management plan for the Woodburn interchange.
3. NW Oregon Freight Mobility

Bob Russell – Looked at expanding the freight routes in the last Legislature, which sparked a great deal of discussion. Truck routes are those that route trucks away from congested transportation routes which share the road with other vehicles. Of primary concern is safety, which is why local communities have the authority to establish truck routes through their towns. Freight routes are a land use designation which describes which can be done with the road itself and the uses of land along the designated freight

route. Typically, it means that there is restricted access to designated freight routes. Width and height road clearances are also important to these routes.

Number one issue is safety. Understand livability of local communities, but also need to get freight through efficiently and safely. Many people don't really understand the size ramifications of large trucks, referred to as the dimensional ability of trucks to get through communities.

Also want to develop our highway system by establishing priority for freight mobility projects, thereby directing funding for moving freight.

Hwy 101, there are no designated freight routes in the NWACT region. Astoria to Tillamook is a key stretch of Hwy 101 to the Trucking Association. Designating a stretch of highway a freight route will not result in more truck traffic. (A truck route would because it directs truck traffic to that route). At this time, the Trucking Association will not be asking to designate Hwy 101 a freight route. However, given that Hwy 101 needs improvement, having the highway designated a freight route could help bring more resources to make needed improvements.

NWACT response – The biggest concern to local communities on having a designated freight route, was losing the ability to have local control over how access to the highway is managed. Russell response – Trucking Association works with local communities when livability becomes affected. Speed of moving a truck through a community is a lower priority than safety. Truck drivers live in the local communities and want to be able to have a workable solution for all.

4. Safety Priority Index System (SPIS)

The system ranks and prioritizes projects for safety funds. NWACT issues – because of high tourism (seasonal) traffic, how does that get averaged in for safety indexing, as well as where (proximity to mileposts) a crash is recorded.

SIP – Volume of crashes, number per 5 mile stretch. Does not look at the severity of the crash. Helps determine how safety funds are used on preservation projects.

SPIS – Weighting system for volume and characteristics of crashes, including time of day, highway conditions, traffic volume, etc. Relative number over 1/10th mile sections over a 3 year time frame. Used with high SIP areas. Top 5% SPIS sites along with a solution and its associated cost must be reported to the Federal government. If one of those sites is not being addressed, an explanation must be provided – not having the funds is not a reason for correcting the problem. ODOT conducts cost/benefit analysis of the SPIS sites. Oregon receives safety funds from US DOT, with corresponding criteria that must be met to access the funds.

Question – How is the number of deaths factored?. Response – The actual number of deaths is not directly a decision factor, fatalities are just weighted approximately 10 times higher than non-fatal accidents in the SPIS analysis.

How does a citizen know at what point an accident site can qualify for safety improvements? Make sure all accidents are reported, since only 30% of all accidents are reported, and that accidents are reported accurately in terms of specific location relative to the 1/10th a mile. First, talk to local city or county transportation person, next would be the ODOT Area Manager, then potentially the project would come to NWACT. ODOT Traffic also goes out and directly investigates specific sites.

Region 2 – None of the top 5% sites are located in NWACT. Approximately 8 top 10% sites: Four new sites that will be investigated: Astoria Roundabout, Seaside Holliday Dr intersection, two in Tillamook, one on each side of the couplet, Wilson River Loop Rd intersection, 2 on Hwy 26, lower Columbia River Hwy.

Region 1 – Biggs Rd outside of Vernonia, on Hwy 30 – Deer Island Rd, St Helens Rd, Sykes Rd, Bennett Rd, Berg Rd, Maple/Santash Rds and High School Rd. In Washington County – Strassel Rd, Dudley/Dilley and Verboort/Purdin. Improvements to Staley's Junction should address the Strassel Rd site.

One role for NWACT would be when preservation projects are being proposed would be to comment on any potential safety improvements. Larry and David will get a copy of those lists to Mary who will distribute them out to NWACT members. Can be a lot of accident causes that have nothing to do with an intersection or stretch of highway, eg, speeding, inattentive drivers, improper lane changes, etc.

5. Cost Trends in ODOT's Construction Program

Since 2004, annual increases have averaged 13% due to general inflation, commodity (steel, oil) cost increases, increases in construction materials, increase in number of projects, national weather disasters, the economic recovery causing more demand for products. Materials – expected to increase 12% next year, with asphalt showing the highest increase at 25%. Difficult to predict more than a couple of years out, because can identify supply side two years out. Labor – Given the impacts of retirements and normal turnover, an additional 2,200 workers will be needed by 2008. OTIA III Program boosts levels of highway construction 50% over historical peaks. Washington and Idaho have similar increases. Contractors are being spread thinner, and bidding on fewer projects. Contractors are more selective and not bidding as low. ODOT has had to increase its annual inflation factor from 3.5% to 4.3%. Will mean fewer projects can be added to the STIP. Areas of concern: Fewer bridge and maintenance work done.

Mitigation measures – Using cost escalators for material prices to manage contractor risk, material substitutions (where quality can be maintained), extending construction time frames to deal with material shortages, working with community colleges and other agencies for workforce development and training, increase the numbers of apprentices and on-job trainees, timely execution of design contracts and construction bid lettings getting ahead of Washington and Idaho projects, assisting Disadvantaged, Minority, Female and Emerging Small Business firms expand construction and design capacity.

West Eugene Highway – ODOT has been working on this project for almost 20 years. Current estimate for the project was over \$100 million, closing in completion of the environmental work. The City of Eugene had a change of mind over the direction the project has been taking, and wants to look at other options for the corridor. Thus the Oregon Transportation Commission is pulling back the balance of the \$17 million allocated for the environmental work – approximately \$12 million. The Commission has not decided what will happen with the remaining \$12 million. Scheick is proposing Region 2 pull together a straw proposal of the top projects, that would be agreed upon by all ACTs in the Region. At this time, the OTC has not made a decision whether that money will be re-distributed to Region 2.

Question – How will Oregon begin paying back bonds. OTIA 1 and 2 came from increased vehicle taxes. OTIA 3 payback doesn't start until 2008, and by that time construction projects will be finishing up. However does mean that there will be less funding for mod projects after 2012.

6. 2008 – 2011 STIP Open Houses

Region 1 – Columbia County – Will be in November, at a date/time and location to be determined.
Washington County – will be November 13th, from 5 – 8 pm, at the Beaverton Community Center.
Region 2 – Clatsop County – Will be October 24th, from 4 – 7 pm, at the Chisholm Senior Center,
Tillamook County will be October 25th, from 4 – 7 pm at the Tillamook Forestry Center.

7. Draft NWACT 2005 – 2006 Biennial Report

Mary handed out a draft report. Additions noted by Board members were: Adding the City of Warrenton to NWACT list of cities, add the Transportation Growth Management projects supported by NWACT, and change the 2008 – 2011 Columbia County “D” STIP project to read Hwy 30 turn lane at Tide Creek Rd to turn lane at Van St. Members were encouraged to get any other changes or additions to Mary before the next meeting. Mary will also check NWACT's bylaws to see if the actual timing of when the report is presented to the OTC is specified, eg, every two years from November when NWACT received its permanent charter, or every two years in January – when the last biennial report was presented.

8. Proposed Bylaws Amendment

Bylaw amendments must be proposed at one meeting, and then voted on at the following meeting. Proposed is to amend Section IV. F. Election of Officers : Following the first sentence, NWACT's Chair, Vice-Chair, and Second Vice-Chair shall be elected annually, add “a Nominating Committee shall be appointed by the Board Chair one meeting prior to the last scheduled meeting of the year to recommend the annual NWACT officer slate.” Chair Gaebel noted that it will be important to remind NWACT members that attendance will be important at the next meeting as two-thirds of the membership is needed to amend the bylaws.

9. New Business

- November Agenda – Presentation on rail transportation through Columbia County, Bylaws amendment, Nominating Committee recommendation for the 2006 Officers, Julie Rodwell – to receive feedback on the Connect Oregon process.

Recorded: Mary McArthur, Staff

Lylla Gaebel,-Chair