

REGION 1 AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION

Meeting Minutes

March 7, 2016 Portland, Oregon

Attendees: Bill Avison, Steve Bickford, Mayor John Cook, Councilor Peter Cornelison, Mayor Doug Daoust, Councilor Craig Dirksen, Jess Groves, Councilor Jeff Gudman, Mayor Brian Hodson, Neil McFarlane, Commissioner Diane McKeel, Bill Merchant, Commissioner Steve Novick, Chris Oxley, Chair Ron Rivers, Curtis Robinhold (alternate), Commissioner Roy Rogers (Chair), Steph Routh, Commissioner Paul Savas (Vice-Chair), Pam Treece, Julie Wehling, Pia Welch, Rian Windsheimer

Absent: Sam Breyer, Tom Chamberlain, Mayor Krisanna Clark, Mayor Jef Dalin, Mayor Denny Doyle, Mayor Lori DeRemer, Brian Newman, Joseph Santos-Lyons

Commissioner Roy Rogers called the meeting to order and opened a round of introductions.

Region 1 Manager Updates

Rian Windsheimer provided the following ODOT Region 1 updates:

- The Historic Columbia River Highway 100th anniversary is coming up in June.
- A new transit pilot project will be starting in the Gorge, serving Multnomah Falls. The Multnomah Falls parking lot has safety and capacity issues, and transit has been discussed in that segment of the Gorge for a while. The pilot project will use Ainsworth and/or Rooster Rock as a park-and-ride for when the Multnomah Falls parking lot is full. The transit shuttle will run 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays this summer.
- The Governor's Transportation Vision Panel will be holding a regional forum Monday, March 14, at 5:30 p.m. at the Portland Airport. ACT members were encouraged to attend and provide input.

Public Comment

Commissioner Roy Rogers provided an opportunity for public comment.

Commission Administration

Motion: Chair Ron Rivers moved, and Councilor Jeff Gudman seconded, to approve the minutes from the February 1 meeting with the amendment of a typo on Page 4.

- ✓ The meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

Area Manager Updates

ODOT Region 1 Area Managers Shelli Romero and Rich Watanabe provided an update on projects currently underway around the region.

Mayor John Cook asked for clarification on what is meant by a “fast” bridge replacement.

Shelli Romero answered that “rapid bridge replacement” is when the bridge itself is fabricated off-site and then moved to the site and set into place, as opposed to being built on the site. This process minimizes impacts to the traveling public.

Rian Windsheimer added that the Oregon City Jughandle project is an example, in which the bridge was built adjacent to the site and then moved into place over just one weekend.

2015-2018 Region 1 FAST Act Projects Discussion

Kelly Brooks gave an overview of the federal FAST Act and Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) action on the distribution of funds. The FAST Act is a five-year bill. The funding in it is modest but provides more stability than we have seen for some time. It also provides some new programs, specifically as it pertains to freight. The OTC is programming that new funding to invest it strategically.

Up until this point funding to the states has been flat, but now it is going slightly up. Not just state funding, but also the money that goes directly to the largest Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) is going up. Counties and cities are also seeing increases under the bill.

The FAST Act added formula money that goes to freight projects. In Oregon that means projects predominantly on the interstate system, and the funding can be used for construction or project development. For the 2019-21 STIP, there is a strategic bottleneck study being done to identify the worst freight bottlenecks to direct formula dollars for that STIP cycle.

Another new component is a competitive grant program called FASTLANE. For 2016 there will be \$800 million in grants. Projects must be over \$100 million, with a minimum application for \$25 million, but must have 40% match and 25% of the match must come from non-federal funds. If we were to put in a project for the 2016 round, we would need to obligate funding in 2018 and have shovels in the ground in 2019.

The OTC has two actions coming up: to add the projects for 2016-18, and to allocate program funding for 2019-21.

Projects for the 2015-18 STIP need to be on the interstate system and need to be selected quickly. One that jumps out is the southbound auxiliary lane on I-5, which was to Carmen Drive, and then was extended to Lower Boones Ferry, and with this money we can extend it all the way to I-205. \$13 million won't be quite enough; it really needs \$15 million. ODOT staff talked to Washington County staff about the Allen-Denney collector road project. We can take the construction phase of that, bring \$2 million over to I-5 and then take the remaining \$4 million to design the Highway 217 project and put the collector road in the right place. Washington County, Beaverton, Tigard and Tualatin have all submitted letters of support for this change. By taking those funds and reallocating them, they can develop a larger project that would be competitive for future state or federal funding.

Rian Windsheimer mentioned that it frees up STIP funds for planning on Highway 217, since Highway 217 won't be eligible for FAST Act freight funds.

Kelly Brooks continued to discuss I-205: Stafford to 99E, a bottleneck for quite some time and a known priority. This could also be competitive in the FASTLANE grant program. We have asked the OTC to put resources into developing that project.

The Rose Quarter is also a long-known bottleneck that has been part of a number of past unsuccessful proposals. A joint planning process with the City of Portland came up with a plan that rebuilds structures across I-5 and adds lanes while creating new surface street connections. The last round of Enhance put some money into planning; this \$2.5 million in FAST Act funding would go to design.

Kelly Brooks showed a series of additional funding program allocations through the FAST Act.

Curtis Robinhold asked about the 75/25 split between Fix-It and Enhance.

Kelly Brooks responded that in the 2015-18 STIP the OTC set the 75/25 split. Enhance for that STIP cycle was for anything that added capacity. Even with the new funding, we're still about at that ratio. For 2019-21, the OTC said to focus more heavily on Fix-It and went to about 87.5%. The OTC has heard comments supporting spending more on Enhance.

Curtis Robinhold asked if the Enhance is just non-highway.

Kelly Brooks answered that it is anything on the list that adds capacity. The draft letter to the OTC asks to go back to the 75/25 split. The OTC is so focused on Fix-It because pavement conditions over the 2019-21 timeframe will decline significantly, and the need for bridge repair will go back up in the future after the three OTIA investments. There is also the hidden problem of culverts. ODOT has 34,000 culverts statewide. If we want to just take care of the existing ones it would cost \$90 million per year. We currently spend about \$12 million per year.

Commissioner Roy Rogers thanked the group for allowing him to write the previous letter to the OTC after the previous month's meeting. That letter spurred a great deal of interest, and the OTC

is very interested in some projects in our area. We can tinker with the list, but we need to be cautious about making sure we are drafting a letter clearly stating priorities.

Councilor Craig Dirksen said that the opportunity represented by this letter highlights the benefit of having a Region 1 ACT. He is a big fan of the bottleneck study and of adding the I-5 auxiliary lane. This is a huge benefit to people living in Clackamas County, particularly Tualatin and Wilsonville. He clarified that comments he previously made to the OTC were to find additional project development funds as part of the 2019-21 process, and to ask to return to the 75/25 split to be able to set aside more FAST Act funds to identify those priority projects. He supports going back to the 75/25 split, even if it's just for the increase from the FAST Act. He recommends changing the last paragraph on the first page, third line, to be consistent with the project list from the second paragraph and specifically call out Highway 217. He would like all three projects referenced in the same clause.

Commissioner Paul Savas asked about the costs outlined, based on Councilor Dirksen's suggestion for adding Highway 217.

Rian Windsheimer answered that the difference is that there are specific dollar amount recommendations for I-205 and the Rose Quarter. There is already \$4 million for 217 and some funding for I-205 and the Rose Quarter. The totals will not likely end up matching these numbers anyway, so he doesn't see a problem.

Councilor Craig Dirksen shared that he had done his own calculations for what those projects would need for project development, \$31 million, so the money would be there for those projects.

Rian Windsheimer responded that we don't really know. The money for Highway 217 is about defining with the project really is, what's the scope, and determining some additional refinement. It is currently just to add an additional lane, but should the project be something larger?

Curtis Robinhold shared Councilor Dirksen's assessment that those projects are the right three. The Port just finished a project with ODOT, Business Oregon and the Department of Agriculture about shipping around the state, and these projects are all on that list of freight bottlenecks. He thinks there is something to putting our own skin in the game, so when we do our regional federal flexible funds those projects should be prioritized.

Neil McFarlane commended the letter and expressed TriMet's support for it. He suggested that in the third paragraph on the first page some language be added about looking forward to being ODOT's partner. If we are asking this of the OTC, we should make clear that we will be a strong partner and be willing to allocate funding for it. On the second page, we should steal some Governor's Transportation Vision Panel language about growth and the region's role as the state's economic development lynchpin. That's a priority here as opposed to the rest of the state where Fix-It is the predominant need.

Commissioner Steve Novick supported adding a little “oomph,” but that depends on surety of the numbers. As the FAST Act numbers came in, Region 1 appears to be getting about 14% of that in 2015-18, and we represent about 45% of people in the state.

Rian Windsheimer reiterated the plus-up for Enhance. The City of Portland testified at the OTC about revisiting allocations for the 2015-18 STIP, and the OTC said they don’t want to revisit those allocation levels. If we want to add that request to the letter we can, but it likely won’t change their minds.

Commissioner Steve Novick responded that if we’re going to ask them to add money to projects like Rose Quarter, we are already asking them to revisit it.

Rian Windsheimer replied that it was to highlight the strategic investment fund and the opportunity there. There will also be \$49 million for strategic bottlenecks, and ODOT is doing the bottleneck study to identify those projects for funding from that pot of money.

Commissioner Roy Rogers said that what the OTC hears is that “one Oregon” is an important point being made, so we need to be very careful to not appear to be too greedy or asking for a direct allocation so as to not invite backlash, but we should add something to the effect of our region seeing a large population increase that needs to be addressed.

Commissioner Steve Novick suggested adding a footnote to note for the record that Region 1 is 45% of the state population and got 14% of the funding.

Pia Welch asked whether this information tells how much money just ODOT is getting. Some funding passes through for some things to Metro and other agencies. Is any of the FAST Act money going to other agencies, and can we partner with them for some of these projects? For instance Metro is tasked with monitoring capacity.

Kelly Brooks answered that the “off the top” allocations go to Metro and other MPOs across the state, so yes, some of that money funnels through. The state is different from an MPO. We have a capital program and we manage fluctuations in our capital program by adding construction phases, etc. Metro awards grants. They would need to explain what they have in terms of what might change in regional flexible funds and other sources. For the freight formula funds, none of that goes through to the MPOs.

Pia Welch asked where Metro gets the money for regional flexible funds.

Kelly Brooks answered that it comes from those listed programs. Portions of those also go to Eugene, Salem and elsewhere.

Pia Welch asked where the weight mile tax money goes.

Kelly Brooks answered that any revenue the state takes in goes back out on the 50-30-20 split shared with local governments. 50% stays with the state, 30% goes to counties and 20% goes to cities.

Councilor Craig Dirksen added that a certain percentage of federal funding comes directly to ODOT and another portion goes directly to the MPOs. The portion that the MPO gets is the regional flexible fund, and it less than ODOT gets, but by being “flexible” it isn’t confined to highways. It can be used for any kind of transportation project.

Pia Welch asked what happens to the 1% that comes out of the state budget for bicycle projects.

Rian Windsheimer responded by offering to sit down and describe the breakdown of all these state and federal allocations. He had asked staff to focus this conversation on where the opportunity is for this group to have a direct ask for the OTC. The coming update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) will have an opportunity to identify new priorities. Where this freight formula money can be spent is on a very limited network. Within the MPO it will be Metro’s obligation to identify additional freight routes on top of the interstate system in partnership with ODOT.

Councilor Craig Dirksen added that one of the responsibilities of JPACT and the Metro Council is to create the RTP. This document is what the system looks like when it’s “done.” That then creates a list of projects, and we as a region have an opportunity to agree on which projects are most important.

Councilor Peter Cornelison said that he recently watched the OPB program “Unprepared,” which discussed seismic issues. Because of the proximity to the coast, while \$35 million is allocated for seismic, shouldn’t we make light of the fact that the metro area will be more impacted than the rest of the state?

Steph Routh added that she lived through the Boxing Day Tsunami in 2004 and is glad to see seismic on the list. She would like to add more “what” to the “why,” including a sentence about why jurisdictional transfers are of strategic importance.

Commissioner Roy Rogers agreed.

Chris Oxley expressed support for the letter and appreciated the energy toward these projects. As a business representative, the Rose Quarter piece is absolutely critical to the regional economy. The Rose Quarter is a regional issue in a lot of ways, and he appreciated the supportive comments around the table. As it relates to the cost of congestion and the challenges we face, the allocation split should be addressed here or as a prelude for future discussion.

Commissioner Roy Rogers responded that we’re the newest ACT, and the other areas of the state have come to expect we will seek to gobble up all the funds. This region has been a great partner. Around the state a lot of folks just say, “ODOT, pay.” We come in and say we’re a huge

contributor, yet we get a very small portion back. But in priorities, how do you move that barometer? We're a player for the first time, and I think it showed that some of the top projects in the state are right here, but how far can we push the needle?

Rian Windsheimer sought to summarize the suggested changes: add Highway 217 to paragraph four, add language around partnerships and having skin in the game to paragraph two, explaining the region's growth and using some Governor's Transportation Vision Panel language, and adding language around the strategic importance of jurisdictional transfer.

Motion: Commissioner Paul Savas moved, and Curtis Robinhold seconded, to approve the letter with those amendments.

✓ The motion was approved unanimously.

Connect Oregon

Kelly Brooks explained that feedback from the Enhance process was that the group would appreciate a little more time to have the conversation about projects on the list. So today members will be handed a list of projects and the FTP link for where the full applications can be viewed. There will be an optional workshop to ask questions of ODOT Freight staff on March 29 at noon, and it will include remote access. On April 4 we will discuss projects, answer any questions about the rankings, and then come back in May to finalize the rankings.

Rian Windsheimer added that the "Instructions for Reviewers" document is very helpful in understanding the ACT's role and what other work guides that process.

Kelly Brooks added that the staff review has already happened, the modal committees are currently reviewing projects and then all of those rankings will come to the ACT to be the first opportunity to look across and rank all modes' projects. They then go on to a statewide review committee and finally the OTC.

Bill Avison asked about a total dollar amount.

Kelly Brooks answered that there is \$43 million statewide. Each region is guaranteed at least 10% of it.

Councilor Jeff Gudman praised the way the process was described, and asked for more processes like this in the future and less visioning.

Commissioner Roy Rogers adjourned the meeting.