

**BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE  
SOUTHEAST AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION (SEACT)**

**August 2011**

Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties, in a Memorandum of Understanding approved on October 6, 1999, formed the Southeast Regional Alliance (SRA) to address common community and economic development issues. As transportation was consistently identified as one of the top regional concerns, the SRA board submitted a proposal to form an Area Commission on Transportation in the region. The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved the provisional charter of the Southeast Area Commission on Transportation (SEACT) on October 11, 2000 and granted subsequent charters on August 19, 2004 and October 10, 2006. Since 1999, SEACT has met regularly in conjunction with the SRA, with a specific portion of the agenda dedicated to SEACT business.

**Geographic Coverage**

The SEACT region corresponds to the geographical boundaries of Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties. These three counties, along with the cities, Burns Paiute Tribe, and other stakeholders in the area, make up a community of interest dealing with similar transportation issues. Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties have also established uniform regional boundaries for a variety of other state programs.

**SEACT Membership**

The current membership of the SEACT is as follows:

Voting Member Positions	Number Of Members	Elected or Private Sector
Grant County Court	1	Elected
Harney County Court	1	Elected
Malheur County Court	1	Elected
Burns Paiute Tribe of Harney County	1	*Elected
Cities of Grant County	1	City Government – Non-elected
Cities of Malheur County	1	City Government – Non-elected
Cities of Harney County	1	City Government - Elected
At Large Members – Grant County	3	1 Private Sector 1 Private Sector – City Government Elected 1 County Airport
At Large Members – Harney County	2	2 Private Sector
At Large Members – Malheur County	3	1 Private Sector 1 City Government – Non-elected 1 State Government – Non-elected
ODOT Voting Member	1	State Government – Non-elected

\* As stated In Part IV, Section B. Membership in the *Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs)* "Tribal Governments, Port officials and Transit officials will count toward the requirement of at least 50% elected officials."

Ex-Officio membership shall include:

- The Oregon Transportation Commission Liaison to the ACT
- A representative of the Oregon Department of Aviation
- The Governor's Regional Solutions Team
- Members of the Governor's Economic Revitalization Team
- State legislators representing districts in the region
- Representatives of each county road department or road district
- Representatives of regional groups that have an interest in transportation issues (e.g., housing advocates, law enforcement agencies, etc.)

**Membership Representation**

Due to the large geographic area, the small population and cities that have all volunteer elected officials, the SEACT may include less than 50% elected officials as voting members; to meet the intent of the policy guidelines, membership, at a minimum, shall include:

- One elected member of each County Court
- One representative of the incorporated cities within each county
- One representative of the Burns Paiute Tribe

Every effort will be made to assure that there will be broad representation from interested stakeholders including, but not limited to:

- Various modes of transportation
- Business
- Natural resource industries
- Public lands
- Education
- Land use
- Public safety providers
- Non-profit organizations
- Local citizens

## **Coordination with Adjacent ACTs and Legislators**

There are four ACTs adjacent to the SEACT region. Central Oregon ACT, Lower John Day ACT, North East ACT and South Central ACT are on the SEACT mailing list and receive agendas and minutes from each meeting. Also on the mailing list are ODOT Region 5 employees that work with the SEACT. Regional state legislators are ex-officio members of SEACT.

## **Work Program**

SEACT develops biennial work plans. The 2011-2013 Work Plan is enclosed with this report.

## **Public Involvement**

SEACT complies with the requirements of the Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610 to 192.690 and all relevant federal laws, regulations and policies for public involvement. All SEACT meetings are open to public attendance.

Meeting Notification-Notice is given to all persons and stakeholder groups included on the SEACT mailing list approximately 10 days prior to a meeting. A press release is sent to area media. The agenda is posted on the ODOT-SEACT and the Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) websites.

Meeting Materials-An agenda and support materials are e-mailed to board members and others requesting the full packet at least ten days prior to the regular meeting.

Meeting Schedule and Location- Regularly scheduled meetings are held in conjunction with the Southeast Regional Alliance on the fourth Monday of alternate months at 10:00 AM (Pacific Time) or 11:00 (Mountain Time). Meeting locations rotate among the three counties.

Meeting Minutes-Minutes are prepared following each meeting. They are e-mailed to all interested parties and are posted on the ODOT-SEACT and the GEODC website. All past minutes are on file at the GEODC office in Pendleton.

Special Meetings/Electronic Meetings-To date, SEACT has held no special or electronic meetings.

## **Work Program Guidance and Operational Structure**

The monthly work of SEACT is guided by the Chair, the ODOT Region 5, District 14, Assistant District Manager, the ODOT technical staff, and SEACT support staff. The Assistant District Manager ensures that SEACT receives the educational presentations that enable them to better carry on the business of the ACT. ODOT and/or GEODC staff supplies handouts and informational packets as needed.

A two-year work plan is created and is used as a basis for development of the agenda. Working with the Assistant District Manager assures that issues are addressed in a timely manner enabling SEACT to reach goals and/or to submit comments to the OTC or other entities, as appropriate. The 2011-2013 Work Plan is attached.

Other agenda items may be added at the request of ODOT technical staff, SEACT members or other stakeholders.

### **Technical Assistance**

SEACT receives technical assistance from a variety of sources. The primary source of technical information comes from ODOT under the direction of the Region 5, District 14, Assistant District Manager.

### **Key Work Activities and Efforts**

The SEACT continues to focus its efforts on education about a wide range of transportation issues for members and the public in order to enhance program delivery. These efforts center on safety and economic benefits to the three counties as well as transportation users and ODOT. Generally education programs are prepared and presented by ODOT technical staff.

SEACT participates in transportation planning efforts affecting the area. Members coordinate between transportation planning efforts and community development planning efforts. SEACT takes a proactive role in addressing transportation-related issues, such as:

- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- ConnectOregon III
- Senate Bill 264
- Transportation Enhancement Program
- Jobs and Transportation Act
- Oregon Transportation Investment Act
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

SEACT reviews and makes recommendations for a wide variety of programs for priority consideration of transportation projects. Below are highlights of specific projects and programs SEACT has implemented as the transportation leader in the 3-county area:

## 2010 – 2013 Final STIP Projects -

Canyon City (Grant County) – West Bench Road and Pine Creek Bridge Overlay West Bench Road and Pine Creek Bridge

Grant County - Izee – Paulina Highway Reconstruction Rebuild 10 miles of County Road that serves as an alternate to US 26 during closures.

Harney County – Double “O”/Narrows – Princeton & East Steens Reconstruct and widen Double “O” Road and East Steens Road Reconstruct, widen and realign.

City of Burns (Harney County) Monroe Street Intersection Improve Multi-legged Intersection.

Malheur County – Lytle Blvd. & Associated Street Rehab & NW 36th St Bridge Overlay Lytle Blvd, Enterprise & Glen Street (Vale) Rehabilitation and NW 36th Street Bridge replacement.

City of Nyssa – Locust Avenue & Third Street Improvements Reconstruct Locust Avenue to Urban Standard from US 20/26 to Third Street, will also provide Pedestrian Improvements.

Malheur County – NW Washington Avenue Realignment Realign to remove curve.

City of Ontario – East Idaho Avenue Paving & Traffic Paving and intersection improvements on East Idaho Avenue (US30) between Fourth Street and Idaho Stateline.

## ConnectOregon Program –

The ConnectOregon project review, prioritization and recommendation process is an important function of SEACT and continues to be a major area of interest. During the ConnectOregon III, the SEACT worked with the NEACT under the Super-Act to help prioritize Region 5 requested projects. Working together on the prioritization list, the SEACT was able to receive funding for 3 important transportation projects within their area. These projects were the City of Ontario Runway/Taxiway Rehabilitation Project, PC Energy LLC Recondition Rail Siding for Access to Biodiesel facility and the Wyoming Colorado Railroad Malheur Junction Wye upgrade. The SEACT was awarded \$4,028,177 under ConnectOregon III to help fund these projects. These projects are now being completed and are helping to serve the transportation needs of the communities and the people of the state.

## 2012 – 2015 Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) -

In July of 2010, the SEACT started working with ODOT staff on developing the Draft 2012-2015 STIP. On June 2, 2011 Region 5 held public review meetings within each county of the SEACT. The comments from these meetings help develop the 2012 – 2015 STIP.

While working on the 2012-2015 Draft STIP, the SEACT developed a list of projects that were important to each community. While these projects are currently unfunded; they are noteworthy to

these communities and provide a “readymade’ list of projects, should funding become available. These projects are shown below:

- Route to PC Energy (Ontario)
- SE 2nd Street from Idaho to 18th Street (Ontario)
- N. Oregon St, Phase 2 (Ontario)
- NW Washington at Yturri Beltline—signal or roundabout (Ontario)
- New interchange on I-84 at SW 18th Ave. (Ontario)
- E Idaho Underpass (Ontario)
- Caution light at Hwy 20/26/Thunderegg Blvd and Locust Ave (Nyssa)
- Locust Ave Railroad Crossing improvements (Nyssa)
- Locust-Long Dr intersection alignment (Nyssa)
- Hwy. 20/26 intersection to Lytle Blvd at bridge (Vale)
- Hwy 201—reinforce slope in front of high school (Adrian)
- Repair storm drain/diversion box at Hwy 201 and Washington St (Adrian)
- Monroe Street sidewalk (Burns)
- Intersection of Broadway and Highway (Burns)\* in 2012-2015 Draft STIP
- Left turn lane at Chickahominy Reservoir (Harney County)
- Malheur Lumber Company access (Grant County)
- Improve commercial trucking route bypass/Becks Road (Nyssa)
- Improve 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue from SW 4<sup>th</sup> to Hwy. 201 (Ontario)
- Sidewalks, west side of Hwy. 395, from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Grant Union H.S. (John Day)
- Length restriction change – Hwy. 395 – Mt. Vernon to Pilot Rock (Grant County)
- OR 201/US 20/US 26 Intersection Improvements (Malheur County)
- Phase II of Transportation Enhancement Grant (John Day)

## **Staff Support**

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) provides administrative staff to supply support to SEACT. GEODC staff works closely with the ODOT Region 5, District 14, Assistant District Manager.

## **Decision Making Process**

SEACT generally uses a collaborative approach to problem solving. All members and interested participants are encouraged to voice their views. Most decisions are made by consensus. When it is felt that an official action should be taken and recorded, all members of the board cast a vote as per generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.

## **SEACT Success**

SEACT has functioned as an ACT since the provisional charter was approved in October 2000. An existing entity, the Southeast Regional Alliance, was identified as a cohesive group that could build on existing strengths by serving as an ACT. Since the three member counties make up 26% of the land mass of Oregon, attending a meeting is an all-day commitment. Combining functions has been an effective way to achieve multiple goals in one meeting and retain quality representation. The meetings rotate among the three counties, to better meet the needs of all participants.

The geographical size, however, can also be a detriment to participation. A weakness has been the lack of consistent broad-based stakeholder participation. This issue continues to be addressed.

Board members feel that they have benefited from their involvement in SEACT. The education has made them more effectual advocates for transportation in the region.