

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

September 2006

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 the last charter on August 19, 2004. Since 1999, SEACT has met monthly in conjunction with the SRA, with a particular emphasis on SEACT business during alternate months.

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

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
Representing Cities of Grant County	1	City Government – Non-elected
Representing Cities of Malheur County	1	City Government – Non-elected
Representing Cities of Harney County	1	City Government – Non-elected
At Large Members – Grant County	3	2 Private Sector 1 County Airport
At Large Member – Harney County	2	2 Private Sector
At Large Member –Malheur County	3	2 Private Sector 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 officialswill 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 Eastern Regional Coordinator for the Governor's office
- 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 serve the SEACT. Regional state legislators are ex-officio members of SEACT.

Work Program

SEACT develops biennial work plans. The 2006-2008 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 one week 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 each month except December 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 Canyon City.

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 South Area Manager, the ODOT technical staff, and SEACT support staff. The Area Manager assures that SEACT receives the educational presentations that enable them to better carry on the business of the ACT. ODOT staff, working on behalf of SEACT, 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 Area 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 2006-2008 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 South Area Manager.

Key Work Efforts

A primary focus of SEACT during 2004-2006 was on providing educational presentations to the members. Even after six years in existence, many members of the SEACT board are unaware of some aspects of ODOT operations and gaining knowledge was determined to be the top priority. Most educational programs were presented by ODOT technical staff.

The *ConnectOregon* project review, prioritization and recommendation process was an important function of SEACT and continues to be a major area of interest. The other chief focus of SEACT has been to take a proactive role in the addressing of such issues as:

- State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)
- Oregon Transportation Plan Update
- Freight Route Analysis
- OTIA III Local Bridge Projects

SEACT also participated in all transportation planning efforts affecting the area. Members assured coordination between transportation planning efforts and community development planning efforts.

Staff Support

The Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) provides administrative staff to supply support to SEACT. GEODC staff works closely with the ODOT Region 5 South Area 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.