

RVACT *Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation*

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To: Members, Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation

From: Kathy Helmer, RVCOG

Re: Draft Summary of May 9, 2005, RVACT Meeting, Jackson County Auditorium

Date: May 11, 2005

Members and Alternates in Attendance: Arthur Anderson and John Vial, ODOT; John Morrison and Ann Seltzer, Ashland; Jim Raffenberg and Robert Weber, Josephine Co.; Hank Williams, Central Point; Jeannell Wyntergreen and Jim Wear, Phoenix; Ken Johnson, Rogue River; Marian Telerski, Talent; Sherry Young and Royal Gasso, Gold Hill; Dick Bailey, Shady Cove; Rich Fahey and Laurel Samson, Grants Pass; Michael Quilty, MPO Policy; Craig Stone, Alan De Boer, Stacey Kellenbeck, Mike Montero, Richard Smith and Jeff Hunter, private sector representatives from Jackson and Josephine Counties.

Members Absent: Butte Falls; Cave Junction; Eagle Point; Jackson County; Jacksonville; Medford; RVTD; Reeve Hennion, private sector representative from Jackson County.

Staff: Lisa Cortes, Paul Mather and Gary Leaming, ODOT; Kathy Helmer, RVCOG.

Other: Dan Moore, RVCOG; Kay Harrison, Central Point City Council; Steve Hodge, Josephine Co. Public Works; Alex Georgevitch, Medford Public Works; Shelly Root, ODOT; Gary Hall, consultant; and Bob Nelson.

1. Roll Call

Co-Chair Mike Montero directed that the roll call be conducted at 9:05 AM. A quorum of 14 was present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Members identified no corrections to the minutes of the March 2005 meeting. Alan DeBoer moved, and Mike Quilty seconded, their acceptance as written. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Input

There was no public comment.

4. 2006 – 2009 Draft STIP Preservation Program

John Vial made a PowerPoint presentation on this program. He explained that ODOT seeks the concurrence of RVACT with its preservation plan. Currently, preservation projects underway in our region include the North Ashland to Medford I-5 project, the OR 238 to Long Gulch project, and the OR 62/230 to Diamond Lake Highway project. In the 06-07 STIP, there will be projects on OR 140, US 199 and OR 99. John noted the importance of paving before conditions go below a certain level. Preservation projects are not selected on a ‘worst first’ basis, since it is more costly to preserve highways in bad condition. ODOT’s goal is to have 85% of the roads/highways in “fair or better” condition. By 2007, 100% of the system will be in fair and better condition.

Craig Stone asked if funds were being identified for the Y intersection in Grants Pass. Art Anderson answered that he and his staff had been working with Grants Pass city personnel on that. Planning dollars had been identified and the intersection area may be positioned for an EA or an EIS in the next STIP cycle.

Alan DeBoer expressed his concerns about work proceeding on Highway 99 in Talent and on I-5 at the same time. Simultaneous work on the main and alternate routes can create problems. Art Anderson said that the plan had not been to do so, but that it was going to be unavoidable due to the necessary rebidding of the Talent project. Art noted that the traffic impacts should not be as bad as they had been elsewhere, due to a variety of factors.

5. Overview of ACTs for New Members

Lisa Cortes of ODOT made a presentation on the mission and goals of ACTs. ACTs are to provide a forum for discussion among local stakeholders regarding transportation improvements. The ACTS enable coordination and communication among local stakeholders and the Oregon Transportation Commission. With respect to our region, RVACT gives Josephine County a voice that it otherwise would not have, if the Metropolitan Planning Organization were the only organization to focus on transportation. Art noted that the primary focus of the ACT is the use of modernization funds. Mike Montero added that a region’s transportation system reflects a region’s personality. Differences need to be honored while applying a set of criteria to appropriate scarce dollars.

6. 2008 – 2011 STIP Timeline

Lisa Cortes provided an overview of this timeline, referring to the development timeline in the meeting packet. She said that it was a good time for City Councils to begin discussing the projects they would like to get on the STIP. In the fall, the STIP dialogue will begin. Art Anderson suggested that jurisdictions come to the table with multiple projects. Then, if additional funds become available in other funding streams, they can be used to fund additional projects. Mike Montero noted the existence of two new planning documents, namely the Medford Transportation System Plan (TSP) and the Jackson County TSP. These will be mined for the new STIP.

7. Transportation Enhancement (TE) Letter

Art Anderson referred participants to the letter drafted to the TE program officer in Salem and asked people to review it and get back to him with any changes they would like to see. The letter will be revised accordingly and mailed in a week.

8. Project Updates for New ACT Members

Art Anderson referred the group to the tables in the meeting packet on the 2006 – 2009 STIP. He reviewed the projects listed for Region 3. Some current projects enhance the freight corridor to the Blackwell Road. One is a request for the next step in the Highway 62 Corridor project. Another requests funds for final solutions to issues with US 199 in Grants Pass.

9. Fern Valley Interchange

Art Anderson referred members to the handout in the meeting packet that displayed all Fern Valley Interchange project cost estimates, local and developer matches. He described the two-month process that resulted in these private and public investments in the project. If all goes as projected, there will be a net increase of \$4.7 million to the project.

This type of funding partnership is the prototype for future funding processes, given projected funding levels. Paul Mather noted that the modernization allocation would be cut statewide to about one-half of what it had been in the past. It may be necessary to enlist the assistance of the state legislature to find additional funds.

10. RVACT By-Laws

The by-laws had been revised per members' comments at the last meeting. The 2/3-majority vote had been reinstated. Another change was to limit absences by private sector representatives to three, after which new representatives would be identified.

Laurel Sampson was concerned with an apparent change in how members were appointed from the private sector. The verbiage was now that RVACT would approve candidates, implying that RVACT made the decision on new members, rather than each county doing it as they preferred. It was suggested that the words "for approval" could be removed. The next sentence would be eliminated. Jim Raffenberg agreed with Laurel's perspective. Mike Montero suggested memorializing Josephine County's concerns and getting some guidance from the OTC before taking a vote on the issue.

Alan DeBoer pointed out the lack of a provision for special or additional meetings. He moved that the by-laws provide for additional meetings upon 10 days notice, as determined by the chair. The vote was unanimous in favor of this change.

John Morrison questioned the phrase "governing bodies" in the third paragraph on page 3 of the by-laws. He asked if that phrase referred to just counties or also included cities. He suggested that it should be singular, "body", if it referred only to counties. Laurel Sampson and Jim Raffenberg described the collaborative, informal process that the city of Grants Pass and Josephine County use to identify candidates. Mike Montero said that he would get guidance from the OTC on this issue. Craig Stone suggested having the Chambers of Commerce in each county appoint the private sector representatives.

Laurel Samson said that there had been talk of incorporating a reference to the Equity Resolution into the by-laws, but that had not yet occurred. Mike Quilty asked over what period of time the balance would occur. It is to be reviewed every 5 years, per the resolution.

Since the group would need 2/3 of the membership to vote on by-laws changes, Alan encouraged the officers to stress the importance of attending the next meeting.

11. Local Construction Projects

Before Gary Leaming began his presentation, John Morrison explained to the group that Ashland staff member Ann Seltzer would serve as his alternate on RVACT. Paula Brown's departure to serve in Iraq had led to Joe Strahl and Ed Olson being hired to fill her shoes in Ashland's Public Works Department.

Regarding ongoing projects, Gary said that the Seven Oaks Interchange Open House had occurred in April. The bridges over the tracks will be replaced. The new design will be more conventional. The southbound off ramps will change considerably; there will be no more stop signs. The Depot Street Bridge will be moved to its new alignment sometime in December. This event will be featured on television. Construction on Table Rock Road, from Pine St. to Wilson, is underway. It will be a 3-lane road with a center turn, sidewalks and gutters. Construction at the I-5 southbound off ramp at Central Point aims to increase capacity. It will be finished in June. The I-5 Ashland to Medford preservation project will move to nighttime operations in June. The North Medford Interchange is in its last 6 months. The ramps will be open in July.

12. West Coast MPO Meeting

Dan Moore made a PowerPoint presentation on this coalition of MPOs, DOTs, and business interests in California, Oregon and Washington. The purpose is to enhance freight movement on the West Coast with federal funds obtained via lobbying efforts. He noted that truck traffic would double on the West coast in the next 20 years. The West Coast handles ½ of the USA's container shipments and 20% of domestic interstate trade. Dan will report back to RVACT on a quarterly basis regarding the efforts of this coalition. Craig Stone asked why ODOT was unable to participate in this coalition. Mike Quilty responded that ODOT was concerned that it might be abandoning its fiduciary responsibility if, as part of the coalition, it voted on federal appropriations and that resulted in a decrease in funds for Oregon. They could be held accountable for that.

14. 2005 –2007 Discretionary Grant Program

Connie Skillman was unable to attend and give this presentation, so it was postponed.

15. Josephine County Private Sector Representatives

Laurel explained that they are actively recruiting private sector representatives in Josephine County.

16. OTC Update

Paul was to provide this update, but he was unable to disengage from a priority phone call.

17. Agenda Build/Next Meeting

It was decided that RVACT would follow its regular meeting schedule and meet on July 12th. Staff will contact all members to ensure their attendance at the meeting, so that by-laws revisions may occur.

Agenda items for the next meeting will include:

- Review of revised by-laws
- Update on the STIP
- Update on the TPR
- West Coast corridor update
- Financial overview that identifies the projects committed to and the budget to be spent

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 AM.