

Oregon Freight Plan Steering Committee Meeting # 2
8:00 to 11:30 am – December 10, 2008
ODOT Region 1 Building

DRAFT Meeting Summary

Steering Committee Members Present

Dave Lohman, OTC Commissioner
- *Steering Committee Chair*
Mike Burton, Affiliated Tribes of NW
Indians
Hugh Bynum, Bicycle Transportation
Alliance
Mike Card, Combined Transport
Susie Lahsene, Port of Portland
Mike Montero, Montero & Associates
Brock A. Nelson, Union Pacific Railroad
John Porter, AAA Oregon-Idaho
Bob Russell, Oregon Trucking Associations
Paul Zalec, Portland & Western Railroad
Tom Zelenka, Schnitzer Steel Industries,
Inc.

Steering Committee Members Absent

Scott Cantonwine, Cascade Warehouse
Gary Cardwell, Northwest Containers, Inc.
Peter Kratz, Harry & David's

David Kronsteiner, Int'l Port of Coos
Bay/West Coast Contractors, Inc.
Linda Modrell, Benton County
Commissioner
Mike Noonan, Oregon Wheat Grower's
League

Visitors Present:

Patty Penick, ODOT
Michael Rock, ODOT
Lucia Ramirez, ODOT
Chuck Green, PB Americas
Betsy Imholt, ODOT

Project Staff Present:

Jerri Bohard, ODOT
Michael Bufalino, ODOT
Lloyd Fobi, ODOT
Vaughn Brown, JLA Public Involvement
Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement

Introductions and Opening Comments

Commissioner Dave Lohman opened the meeting by introducing himself and presenting a brief explanation of the project schedule. He noted that because of the short 18-month schedule and preference for ending the project before the next legislative session, meetings should be as productive and focused as possible.

The Commissioner explained the vision of the Oregon Freight Plan (OFP) as a document that lies somewhere between policy and a project list. The OFP should provide guidance for choosing projects that will benefit the freight system. The Steering Committee membership is broader than that of the Oregon Freight Advisory Committee in order to include a complete range of stakeholders interested in or affected by decisions regarding Oregon's freight system.

Vaughn Brown introduced himself as facilitator of the meeting, and Steering Committee (SC) members and six attending visitors briefly introduced themselves.

Vaughn reminded SC members that the goal of today's meeting was to settle on a set of objectives for the OFP in alignment with the framework in the Oregon Transportation Plan. This would not be a final draft of objectives; the draft produced in today's meeting will be a living document, further refined by ODOT staff and open to discussion by the SC as the OFP process continues. The objectives are the core guidance from the SC to OFP Working Groups.

Project staff noted that the current plan is to provide ODOT with technical memos and eventually a draft OFP using the Steering Committee's feedback. After revisions, a second draft plan will be composed, and eventually become adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) as part of the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP).

Interactions with Media:

The Project Team requested of the SC members that, when speaking to media or outside sources about the OFP, they clarify that they are speaking from a personal viewpoint. The SC agreed that only Commissioner Lohman should represent the views of the Committee as a whole to media.

Meeting Notes:

SC members agreed that meeting notes would be distributed as meeting summaries rather than detailed minutes. The names of individual SC members would not be attached to their comments in meeting summaries but general themes and observations would be outlined. Actions items and decisions will be documented.

OFP Overview

Mike Bufalino distributed copies of the Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), gave a brief overview of the OTP, and explained the purpose of modal and topic plans, including freight, as a means to implement the goals of the OTP. While the OTP covers freight as a topic, the OFP is meant to create a more cohesive strategy, since Oregon has historically lacked a freight plan.

Staff noted that ODOT plans to run further economic scenarios, to understand the current and future business environment that the OFP should respond to.

SC members expressed concern over the way that transportation responds to natural disasters, and questioned how the OTP prioritizes safety and security regarding natural disasters. The Project Team noted that while the OTP has safety among its goals, OTP goals are not prioritized. The Oregon Highway Plan has designated "lifeline routes" that are currently being updated. GIS has helped ODOT to identify limitations on some of these routes. Secondary routes also need to be identified as back-ups if lifeline routes fail. SC members will be kept apprised of the lifeline route update process.

Freight in Context

SC members and the project team noted that many national overlays of security requirements exist that impact different transportation modes. In some instances, security requirements will supersede other goals, such as land use and environmental goals. While the new OFP will need to be created in the context of OTP goals, other regulations, especially federal requirements, may

override OTP objectives and thus set the context of transportation and impose limitations on freight within the transportation system.

The Steering Committee discussed the framework of the OTP, and whether the goal was to refine the existing freight conditions, or on the other hand to improve freight and add to the system. Members agreed that they would like to create a plan which speaks to a more ideal freight system that would work better in the future. However, they also recognized that a freight plan must be realistic with regards to finance. The Commissioner noted that OTP includes three investment scenario levels, and that the third scenario which envisions a high level of funding should be seen as a ceiling for the OFP. In drafting the OFP, members should analyze the current freight situation, identify deficits, and provide a matrix of possible strategies that are reasonable relative to probable funding limitations and other policy constraints.

Project Schedule

Mike Bufalino reviewed the 18-month project schedule, the purpose of working groups and SC member participation in these groups, and the development of technical memos. He noted that two SC members will be a part of each of the 3 task-oriented working groups. Key milestones of the project schedule include:

- May/June 2009: Draft technical memos by ODOT and working groups
- June 2009: SC Meeting to review draft technical memos
- End of 2009: Draft OTP

The SC members noted that they would like to schedule all meetings well in advance, including SC and working group meetings. They also requested that ODOT provide a list of the project's technical memos, and a list of each consultant's role in the project.

ODOT-Steering Committee Communication

ODOT indicated that it would provide newsletters or periodic updates with key materials to SC members over the next 6 months. Ultimately, ODOT will have a webpage to provide the public with SC activities and OFP progress.

Working Group-Steering Committee Communication

SC members stressed the importance of strong communication between Working Groups and SC members and requested that they receive Working Group meeting notes or updates on their activities and progress. ODOT noted that there may be crossovers in topics that Working Groups discuss, in which case several groups may work together. While the number of Working Groups and their respective topics has been established, this can be amended if the SC decides that an additional or different Working Group topic would be useful.

Freight Plan Draft Objectives

Mike Bufalino handed out copies of draft objections for the OFP for discussion. Vaughn Brown facilitated the process of discussing and revising objectives. Throughout this discussion, project staff and SC members exchanged ideas and considered the best use of language for each of the six draft OFP objectives. Individual objectives were discussed though at times the conversation

shifted back and forth between objectives. While this SC Meeting was not intended to “wordsmith” the language of the objectives, at times specific words were debated in order to give each objective the most precise meaning possible. The objective language below captures the general outcomes and conclusions that the SC and ODOT staff made regarding the 6 objectives.

The six Objectives are written below in their original language, with an additional “possible revision” for each. This revision represents the concepts that the SC members discussed and generally agreed on, including changes to language, inclusion of elements considered missing, and deletion of ideas considered unnecessary. These possible revisions should not be considered final statements of each objective, but rather provide direction to ODOT staff who will be responsible for revising the objective statements and sending the updated version to SC members

Objectives – Overall:

SC members noted that objectives statements should be concise, but not extremely specific; objectives should be written in general enough terms to be easily amenable to future changing political environments.

Some SC members preferred to use the term “considerations” in place of “objectives”.

Objective/Consideration 1: Implement OTP goals, policies, strategies, and key initiatives

Possible revision: Interpret OTP goals and policies

SC Members noted that this objective seems to read like the mission statement but generally felt that it should not be the most highly prioritized objective. They noted that although the OFP will need to respect the OTP guidelines, the OTP may similarly need to be amended to work with the OFP. The OFP, after all, is creating a freight plan that does not currently exist and in that respect may affect the OTP. The SC would like to see a very concrete outline of the OTP’s “goals, policies, strategies and key initiatives” that impact freight because it is unclear what these are.

In general, the SC members indicated that they agree with the idea of implementing, or rather “interpreting”, OTP goals, but not its strategies and key initiatives until it is more clear what exactly this implies.

Objective/Consideration 2: Serve the material and economic needs of Oregon’s people and businesses.

Possible Revision: Serve the economic needs of Oregon’s people and businesses through the freight transportation system.

SC members felt that this was the most important of the objectives. As written, however, it seems to include land use and other concerns. The statement would be more precise if it explicitly limited itself to “freight”. The word “material” seemed too vague to remain in the statement.

The SC discussed the danger of planning the freight system in isolation. Freight routes are inherently interconnected across state lines. Other public concerns such as land use planning and environmental constraints must also be considered.

More broadly, SC members agreed that the OFP should make explicit to consumers the effects of an ineffective freight plan – such as negative environmental impacts, job loss, higher costs of goods, etc. The OFP should make clear that a shift in investment to freight is a good investment and leads to job creation.

Objective/Consideration 3: Support a multimodal and interconnected freight system, including highway, rail, marine, and pipeline and air networks.

Possible Revision: Optimize a seamless multimodal and interconnected freight system, including highway, rail, marine, and pipeline and air networks.

SC members agreed that the concept of “not planning in isolation” could be captured in this objective. The word “interconnected” in this statement highlights the fact that, while the Oregon Plan is Oregon-centric, it does serve local, regional, and global economies, and should take into account the universe of influences that is specific to freight.

The Steering Committee also discussed the competitive environment of freight and the differences in East-West and North-South freight flows that may require different strategies.

While the SC preferred the word “optimize” over “support” in the statement, they felt that even this terminology seemed limiting. They would like a term that implies a change in the freight system rather than limiting the OFP to the current system. Some other suggestions included “preserve”, “expand”, or “optimize a level of service”.

Objective/Consideration 4: Support freight planning processes that coordinate the interaction between public and private infrastructure owners and private sector customers.

Possible Revision: Ensure that freight planning processes facilitate: (or address challenges to) the interaction between public and private infrastructure owners and private sector customers.

The SC discussed the vagueness of the term “private sector customer” in this statement, which could refer to shippers, highway carriers, all users of the transportation network, system users, industrial customers relocating to Oregon, stakeholders, etc.

The role of the OFP is not so much to “coordinate” as it is to facilitate. However, the word “facilitate” may be too vague, as it does not specify to what end facilitation would occur. The goal of facilitation might be to achieve the end result of construction, maintenance and operation of an efficient freight plan, or alternatively to create a freight plan that makes the most economic sense, linking this objective to Objective # 2.

Some SC members noted that this statement was limiting in referring only to “interaction between public and private infrastructure owners and private sector customers”. As written, it does not extend to freight planning processes and the relationship with other modal planning processes such as land use, transit, and bike/ped as well as coordination

with shippers and potential new companies. These themes should be highlighted in this objective or in other objectives of the OFP.

SC members also noted that this objective might be stronger if it referred to the inclusion of various jurisdictions and agencies within the freight planning process.

Objective/Consideration 5: Develop standards, definitions, processes, and procedures that support the movement of freight.

Possible Revision: Develop performance standards, definitions, processes, and procedures that support the movement of freight.

The SC considered including the term “measurements” in this statement but some believed that this would allow the government to have more influence over choosing winners and losers in freight, rather than allowing the market to play this role. The term “performance standards” implies measurement and was preferred by most SC members. This term is also regularly used by ODOT and is understood to include measurement.

“Performance Standards” should be narrowed down to a specific set of objective standards, which could include measuring congestion, reliability, predictability, environmental impact, carbon footprint, etc. The purpose of this would be to allow for performance validation. If funds are being allocated to freight, a policing system should be in place to ensure the most effective use of funds.

The SC also discussed the term “definitions” in this statement. They agreed that clarification of certain definitions is necessary and that many definitions exist relative to freight. Those terms that are used disparately across different entities should be clarified and revised in relevant manuals or documents which use these terms.

Purpose Statement

While reviewing the OFP draft objectives, SC members agreed that, in addition to the existing objectives, an overarching umbrella statement should be added to stress the importance of key issues.

This purpose statement should capture the following:

- Freight is competitive by nature.
- Freight has a positive effect on and is vital to trade and the economy.
- The OFP must strengthen freight in order to be competitive in a global economy.
- The OFP should result in the best payback for the investment in freight.
- Freight does not exist in a closed system. It is global and spans state, regional, local, national and global jurisdictions and agencies.
- Freight has a positive impact on job creation, environmental regulation, and lowering cost of transported goods.

Conceptual Instructions to Working Groups

The purpose of the Conceptual Instructions is to give further directive to working groups as they consider specific topics relevant to the OFP. In general, SC members agreed that the Steering Committee should have more control over the big picture questions of the objectives and OFP direction, and that the working groups would work on technical aspects within these parameters. Technical memos resulting from working group meetings will be reviewed and reworked by the Steering Committee.

The SC reviewed the six Conceptual Instructions:

1) Work with ODOT to develop technical memos

SC members agreed that this instruction was superfluous and should be dropped altogether.

3) Focus primarily on the technical aspects of the effort and refer big picture issues to the Steering Committee

Possible Revision: Focus primarily on the technical aspects of the effort and recommend potential strategies or initiatives to the Steering Committee.

SC members felt that the original language of this directive would possibly offend Working Groups. Groups should be able to focus on big picture issues as well and make recommendations to the SC based on their insights. SC members also thought that Instructions 3 and 5 could be combined to create one statement.

4) Through the development of the Technical Memos, screen potential strategies or initiatives that address technical issues.

Possible Revision: Through the development of the Technical Memos, screen potential strategies or initiatives that address identified objectives (considerations/guidance).

The term “technical issues” seemed to be limiting.

Working Groups Budgets

ODOT noted that it had scoped out six technical memos and has the Working Group budget for these six. At this point, the assumption is that these memos are all that will be required. If the SC were to see the need for additional technical memos it will require more budget.

Action Items

ODOT Staff:

- Provide more complete information on lifeline routes
- Create and announce schedule of Steering Committee and Working Group meetings well in advance
- Provide to SC members a list of project’s technical memos
- Provide to SC members a list of each consultant’s role in the project

- Provide to SC members an outline of OTP “goals, policies, strategies, and key initiatives” that impact freight
- Provide to SC members newsletters or periodic updates over the next 6 months

Working Groups

- Provide SC members with meeting notes and working group outcomes

Things to consider:

- Develop a separate page to explicate each of the objectives/considerations of the OFP
- OFP should be marketed well. Currently, freight’s message is unclear and consumers do not understand its importance in promoting the well being of Oregon’s economy.

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