

## **MEETING SUMMARY- SOUTHERN OREGON REGIONAL SOLUTIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

September 19, 2017

Medford Fabrication Conference Center, Medford

### Committee members present:

Bill Thorndike, convener\*

Jackson County Commissioner Rick Dyer\*

Josephine County Commissioner Lily Morgan

John Roberts

Emily Mostue

SOU President Linda Schott

\*Executive Committee

### Regional Solutions Team:

Art Anderson, Department of Transportation

Marta Tarantsey, Business Oregon

Kate Jackson, Department of Environmental Quality

Josh LeBombard, Department of Land Conservation and Development

Alex Campbell, Coordinator, Governor's Office

Kim Travis, Oregon Housing and Community Services (via phone)

### Guests:

Greg Holmes, 1000 Friends of Oregon

John Underwood, Timber Products

Rob Merriman, SOREDI

### **Advisory Committee (AC) New Member**

The Josephine County Commissioners have altered some of their responsibilities and Commissioner Morgan is taking Commissioner DeYoung's place on the AC.

### **2017-2018 Regional Infrastructure Finance (RIF) Project Selection Process**

Alex shared the up-coming process: a request for interest will be released shortly; responses will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee; selected projects will be presented to the legislature during the short session. This "pre-" round is primarily informational, to create engagement between project sponsors and the team and AC members, and to share the need for funding for quality projects. A more formal application process will take place in 2018, to present recommended projects for presentation to the legislature. \$4 million are currently appropriated; each region will receive a minimum of 5%.

Bill noted that there are shifting trends in the legislature in terms of using sub-allocation approaches similar to Connect Oregon, on the one hand, and direct earmarks on the other. In

addition, stakeholders such as League of Oregon Cities and Association of Oregon Counties, had requested a more open process. Alex noted that this will be an open process, but that Committee members were encouraged to identify or bring forward worthwhile projects.

Bill asked Marta if there were any impacts on Business Oregon infrastructure programs from changes in the federal administration. Marta said no program changes, but there have been some funding reductions.

Commissioner Morgan asked if a regional project might be of interest to the legislature. Alex replied he thought it could be. Bill replied that he thought the best use of funds was to push forward long-term priorities.

John Roberts and Emily Mostue expressed disappointment in the veto of funding for the Bradshaw Drop project

Commissioner Dyer noted that Medford school district and several skilled trade organizations were cooperating on a program that could support pre-apprenticeship training in schools. The project would ultimately benefit greatly from a significant improvement of a 12,000 sq. foot space, likely to cost \$8-9 million.

Commissioner Morgan noted similar efforts are underway in Josephine County, reaching down to middle school with STEM and similar efforts. She shared frustration that some BOLI restrictions prevent early work experience.

### **Housing: Local Efforts & Regional Solutions Pilot/Request for Interest**

Alex Campbell shared the results of the team's research about existing efforts around housing in the Rogue Valley. There are numerous groups meeting—a Grants Pass Task Force, Medford Task Force, and discussions organized by health care players—these do largely fall into work on Affordable Housing and/or land use and related code reform efforts.

We have identified a few specific projects to work with. For instance, Josh described how DLCD/ODOT's joint Transportation Growth Management program is being used to support City of Talent's planned "gateway" urban renewal project. Once a developer is selected, TGM will work with the City and the developer to produce a market feasibility analysis to document the "achievability" of community aspirations—and quantify what might be the required subsidy or land cost right down to make such a project pencil.

Commissioner Morgan shared that she thought some additional flexibility was needed. For instance, allowing accessory dwelling units on Rural Residential land or providing for some more building code flexibility. Josh noted that for affordable and workforce housing, we should also consider location and transportation accessibility and cost.

Josh is heavily involved in the development of a Regional Housing Strategy. The project is being funded by the six cities that participated in Regional Problem Solving. It will include an audit of city development codes to identify policy barriers and propose improvements and best practices. The project also includes developer interviews and will offer suggestions of what kinds of additional programs or supports might be needed to stimulate additional “missing middle” housing production. Project is likely to be completed this year.

Alex shared that there is now out a Request for Interest regarding public-private partnerships to address workforce housing issues from the Regional Solutions program. Some state tools have been identified that could support such efforts and we are trying to gauge interest.

Bill asked if RST involvement might be useful as SOU is struggling with affordability issues for students and staff. SOU is considering possibly redeveloping some existing land. President Schott shared that housing is a very pressing issue for the student body and is driving some students to transfer away. The new VP of Finance and Administration will be charged with addressing the issue. Are there any resources to provide advice on foot-print and approaches to this kind of development.

***Action item: Josh will follow up with President Schott regarding possible use of TGM program to support such an effort.***

### **Industrial Electrician Pipeline & Business Education Partnership**

John Underwood is a human resources manager with Timber Products. Soon after he joined the company 7 years ago, he recognized that they were facing a dramatic demographic shift: 25-30% of their workforce, representing much of their leadership and high skilled workers, are nearing retirement age. That motivated him to set up an internal leadership university and get involved with regional workforce development efforts.

He joined the Rogue Workforce Partnership board, and also became involved in the Business Education Partnership, established with support from SOREDI and RWP. Their goal is develop a talent pipeline, to connect kids with careers. The work has been somewhat slow up to this point, as the group is committed to getting its scope of work right, and is now beginning its real work. Eagle Point, Grants Pass, and Medford school districts are all setting good examples. In October, several area representatives will be visiting Kentucky to learn more about their “FAME” model.

In part because of the energy generated at the BEP, connections have been made with Governor’s office to try to shift some policies around industrial electrician licensing.

Several AC members echoed the need for kids to be exposed to alternative paths to college. President Schott noted, also, a great need for educational pedagogy improvement, more integration of experiential learning in multiple subjects. SOU is now training some teachers in proficiency-based approaches. John noted that RWP recently supported teacher “externships” where teachers were exposed to work environments over the summer.

Rob shared another initiative SOREDI is leading to increase local students’ awareness of local businesses and career opportunities: a virtual scavenger hunt called Quest. They will have 1,000 high school sophomores in 4 high schools participating in a pilot this year. Rob also shared the agenda of the upcoming October 6 Manufacturing Summit, which will provide an opportunity for industry members to visit RCC’s Table Rock Campus and learn about their expansion plans.

### **Team Reports**

Art shared several ODOT updates:

- ODOT is currently accepting requests for projects to the local bridge infrastructure fund.
- Highway 62 work is on schedule for December 2018 opening.
- Work on Caveman Bridge in Grants Pass has begun
- The new transportation funding bill includes a \$35 million seismic “triage” plan for southern Oregon, which would more to make sure I-5 would remain open to the south and keep the valley connected to Hwy. 58 and Hwy. 140. Jackson and Josephine Counties are beginning work on a parallel local effort.

WISE project: Alex shared efforts to seek funding to complete the Bradshaw Drop funding package. To meet Bureau of Reclamation’s timeline, construction should commence in fall of 2018. Kate shared that HDR’s work is underway for the next level of design and the water rights study is nearly complete. Greg Holmes noted that 1000 Friends is supportive of the project and would support it at the legislature.

Kate shared that DEQ is preparing to do the drain-field investigation for a new sanitary sewer treatment system for North Valley Industrial Park. Commissioner Morgan noted that the expansion of service to the airport could stimulate significant economic development.

Marta shared that the Dimmick Hospital project brownfields investigation has become focused on larger underground storage tank than was expected. The tank has leaked, and part of the plume is under one of the remaining buildings.

Marta shared that Business Oregon is also providing interim financing to Grants Pass Irrigation District to construct needed repairs at Sandy Creek. FEMA funds for the project are frozen due to hurricane activity.

Marta shared that she has been working with the Medford SBDC on arranging the Rogue Business Summit, which will be October 20.

Alex shared that a follow-up meeting to the Illinois Valley CDO strategic plan summit last fall is in the works to check on progress of various projects. He has also been collecting economic impact information related to the fire season in preparation for a Governor's Office recovery plan. He also met with Mayor Russell regarding the Butte Creek Mill, which has made real progress. Mayor Russell has secured a commitment for a major in-kind effort by the Timber Framers of American for summer of next year to frame the building. Progress is also good on the Emigrant Lake Boathouse and Gold Hill White Water park projects.

Greg Holmes provided an update on the work of Rogue Valley Food Systems related to managing conflicts between the cannabis growers and traditional agriculture. Both Jackson County and Josephine County have set up cannabis advisory committees. Commissioner Morgan suggested a presentation on the RVFS work and findings would be useful for the Josephine County group.