

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

December 11, 2017

Medford Fabrication Conference Center, Medford

### Committee members present:

Bill Thorndike, convener\*

Jackson County Commissioner Rick Dyer\*

Eagle Point Councilor Jonathan Bilden\*

Steve Roe (by phone)\*

John Roberts

Emily Mostue

SOU President Linda Schott

\*Executive Committee

### Regional Solutions Team:

Art Anderson, Department of Transportation

Kate Jackson, Department of Environmental Quality (by phone)

Josh LeBombard, Department of Land Conservation and Development

Alex Campbell, Coordinator, Governor's Office

### Guests:

2 members of the public

### **Approval of Minutes**

Bill Thorndike requested approval of minutes from the September 19, 2017 meeting. Minutes were accepted by assent as presented in the meeting packet.

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

Alex reviewed the process: responses will be reviewed by the Advisory Committee today to select projects to 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%.

Alex reviewed the 5 projects that were put forward. Discussion of projects primarily focused around level of other funds provided or secured (i.e., match or leverage) and timing of projects in comparison to when funds will be available. Commissioner Dyer shared that discussions between the County and City of Gold Hill about operations of the planned white water park are on-going, but have not been resolved.

Bill Thorndike suggested focusing on projects that have strong ties to job creation, but the Spalding project is a big lift. Croman and Ashland Railroad property could have strong private sector development interest. Alternative state sources of funding for Spalding were discussed.

Bill made a motion to move the full list forward, with a prioritization of the Croman Infrastructure and Railroad Property Master Plan listed as priorities. Commissioner Dyer seconded. Motion passed with four votes in favor (Schott, Dyer, Thorndike, Roe); three abstentions.

### **Chetco Bar Fire Recovery Council**

Alex reviewed the work of the Chetco Bar Fire Recovery Council, with some particular attention to Oregon Shakespeare Festival's request. Agency and Governor's Office staff are reviewing the recommendations to identify existing resources and any new resource needs.

### **WISE Update**

Kate shared progress made over the past 3 months. HDR's engineering work is (finally) underway. Rogue River Valley Irrigation District has received a "water smart" grant to assist with planning; they are also working with Farmer's Conservation Alliance on a modernization plan. A push to restore state funding for Bradshaw Drop will be made in the short session. Project representatives need to re-affirm some of the assumptions regarding Medford Water Commission and City of Medford's interest in specific project components, including water re-use. There is a January deadline for another "water smart" grant program that could provide up to \$100K to support building the larger stakeholder group that is needed.

Alex noted that the engineering team is currently looking at two alternatives (one that would guarantee a certain level of pressure to all users; the other is substantially less expensive). Selecting one of these routes is a big decision for the project.

Bill asked John Roberts for his thoughts: John noted that water levels are declining significantly in recent months. Drought may be what drives some urgency for the project.

### **North Valley Industrial Park**

Kate reported that DEQ staff made a visit to the site adjacent to the airport to test the adequacy of the soils in the proposed drain field to absorb the level of flow envisaged.

Alex noted the taxiway project is complete. The AC agreed that Grants Pass Airport would be a good location for the next meeting.

### **Housing: Local Efforts & Regional Solutions Pilot**

Josh LeBombard reviewed the work of the Regional Housing Strategy and some of the work that City of Medford is doing around housing development.

Alex shared that the State's request for applications for workforce housing projects is now out. It is a pilot providing incentives for directly involving employers in developing housing.

President Schott reported that she had met with Josh around possible collaboration. The campus focus right now is on developing student housing, though there is a lot of interest from employees in the issue as well.

Steve Roe noted that Asante regularly keeps several hotel rooms for visiting nurses and doctors. Housing availability at any price is an issue.

### **Round-table Reports**

Art Anderson shared that the new retail development in Central Point is impacting traffic mostly as expected. The county is widening an artery and ODOT will be adding an additional off-ramp lane. Highway 62 work is still on schedule for December 2018 opening. Interviews for a project manager who will work on the seismic "triage" plan for southern Oregon are taking place this week.

Bill complimented President Schott on her recent guest editorial in the Mail Tribune, which was adapted from remarks she made at the Oregon Business Summit regarding education modernization.

Kate shared that several comment periods are now open, on: Cleaner Air Oregon; municipal storm water general permit renewal; and an on-site wastewater permit for agricultural food processors.

Josh shared an overview of the "Blue Zone" project that is underway in Grants Pass. Blue Zone work is designed to adapt practices from communities with high levels of quality of health and longevity. The effort is foundation and private sector led and will run for three years, focusing on the built environment and physical activity; healthy food availability; and tobacco cessation.

### **Public Comment**

No comments from the public were made.

*Meeting adjourned at 3 PM.*