



Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation

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Biennial Report Presented to the Oregon Transportation Commission

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The Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACT) received its charter from the Oregon Transportation Commission in October 1998. For nearly a decade prior to this date the Transportation Advisory Committee of Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments (OCWCOG) served in many respects as an Area Commission on Transportation, providing a forum for regional transportation dialogue, coordination, and decision-making. The CWACT continues to operate as a standing commission of the Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, wherein the OCWCOG Board of Directors appoints CWACT members annually.

The Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation operates under the following mission statement:

The concerns of the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACT) shall include issues that affect the regional transportation system and its links to areas beyond the region. The Commission recognizes that developing and improving the transportation system is a long-term process. Therefore, CWACT strives to build and sustain the consensus and support for project priorities, plans and policies that benefit the region's transportation system.

This report summarizes the structure and recent activities of the CWACT in the fulfillment of its mission.

Geographic Boundary

Extending from the crest of the Cascades to the central coast, the communities of Benton, Lincoln, and Linn Counties are linked by several important transportation facilities. Interstate 5, US101 and US99 provide north-south connections not only between communities in the region but also between the CWACT region and Washington, California, Canada, and Mexico. US20 (and its connections with OR34) stretches from the eastern CWACT boundary at the crest of the Cascades to the western boundary of the coast, connecting every CWACT community with a population of more than 5,000 with the exception of Lincoln City.

The CWACT area is served by the Union Pacific mainline which, together with two connecting short line freight rail systems, is an important economic factor for many local communities. Nine airports serve the CWACT area: Albany Municipal (Linn County), Corvallis Municipal (Benton County), Davis Airport (Linn County), Lebanon State (Linn County), Newport Municipal (Lincoln

County), Public Santiam Junction State (Linn County), Siletz Bay State (Lincoln County), Toledo State (Lincoln County), and Wakonda Beach State (Lincoln County). Three ports (Alsea, Newport, and Toledo) serve the CWACT area.

It is important to note the significant role the ports play in the local and regional economy, including the economic impact of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Marine Operations Pacific Center in Newport, home to the Pacific Fleet, the Northwest Fisheries Science Center Groundfish and Ocean ecology programs, the Alaska Centers Behavioral Ecology Branch, and the Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory. NOAA is co-located with the Hatfield Marine Science Center with its extensive university, community, and industry partnerships.

The CWACT area corresponds to ODOT's Region 2, Area 4 and Maintenance District 4.

Membership and Organization

Each public jurisdiction within the three counties is eligible to participate as a CWACT member. The current voting membership includes twenty cities, three counties, two port districts and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians. Representatives of jurisdictions are elected officials and alternates may be staff members. Additionally, each county appoints two private sector members and the current representatives have substantial backgrounds in private business, transit, bike/ped, rail, freight and ports. The ODOT Area Manager also serves as a member.

Ex officio (non-voting) members include all state legislators that represent portions of the three counties, the Oregon Coastal Zone Management Association, a staff member of the Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, a staff member of the Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Chairs of the Cascades West Senior Services Advisory Council and the Cascades West Disability Services Council. Additionally, a member of the Mid-Willamette Valley ACT (MWACT) serves as an ex-officio member, and a CWACT member serves as an ex-officio member of MWACT.

The organizational structure is outlined in the attached Bylaws that were adopted in April, 1999, and amended in 2001 and January 2005. CWACT jurisdictions believe its current membership broadly and accurately represent the integrated transportation interests in the three-county area. This Spring, CWACT underwent an analysis of the structure and membership make-up of all ACTs in the state for comparison.

CWACT has a written protocol with the Albany Area MPO and the Corvallis Area MPO to ensure coordinated efforts.

Decision-Making Process

CWACT uses a consensus-based decision-making process, building on a foundation in the Bylaws: *Decisions shall be reached by a consensus process whenever possible. If it is not possible to obtain concurrence of all voting members present, a seventy-five percent concurrence of the voting members present shall be necessary for approval.*

Technical Assistance

The CWACT Technical Advisory Committee continues to play a key role in the review of proposed projects and the development of proposed transportation policy. Composed primarily of public works and urban planning staff from the member jurisdictions, the committee often reviews, makes preliminary recommendations/rankings, and comments on issues before they are presented to CWACT.

Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments provides administrative and technical support to CWACT with funding provided through an Intergovernmental Agreement between ODOT and OCWCOG. CWACT also receives technical assistance and information from the ODOT Area Manager and other ODOT staff members.

Public Involvement

CWACT members encourage and support stakeholder participation and public involvement in regional transportation items. As indicated in its Bylaws, CWACT encourages and supports public involvement by implementing the methods outlined in the attached Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation, adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission on June 13, 2003.

The Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation uses videoconferencing technology for its bimonthly meetings. The videoconference connects members at the OCWCOG office in Albany with members attending at the Toledo office of OCWCOG. With the large size of the CWACT region videoconferencing allows the public to be involved in meetings without the need to travel long distances.

Highlighted Work Efforts Addressed by CWACT in 2014-2016:

Reviewed applications and developed recommendations on:

- *Connect Oregon VI projects:*
 - City of Newport – Newport Communication Ground-Link and AWOS Update, \$25,000
 - City of Corvallis – Rehabilitate Runway 9-27, Install Perimeter Fence, \$642,222
 - City of Harrisburg – Harrisburg Boat Landing, \$315,000
 - Port of Toledo – Boatyard Environmental Work Building \$2,013,900
 - Port of Newport – Develop Existing Port Property, \$4,000,000

- *State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) 2018-21 projects:*
 - The City of Newport – US 101: NE 25th to NE 36th Street Sidewalk Improvements, \$655,736
 - Benton County – Chapel Drive Bikeway Improvements, \$805,000
 - City of Depoe Bay – US 101: South of Bridge Streetscape, \$750,000

Other activities:

- Hosted the Governor's Transportation Vision Panel, January 2016 in Albany
- Provided letters of support for Federal Lands Access Program proposals, June 2016:
 - Lincoln County, Five Rivers Road Overlay project
 - Linn County, North River Drive Roadway Improvements
 - ODOT, US 20 Slope Stabilization Slide Repair
 - Oregon Cascades West Council of Governments, South Fork Road Improvement Planning project (Benton County)
- Continued coordinated work with MPOs, including information-sharing regarding regional planning projects and work programs.
- Completed a review of CWACT Bylaws and composition of voting membership as compared with other ACTs across the state.
- Developed an inventory of transportation services in the region describing transit programs, rail lines, airports, and other modes.
- Participated in regular updates regarding legislative topics, local transportation projects, ODOT projects, etc. via meeting presentations.