



Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation

A local advisory body chartered by the Oregon Transportation Commission

Chair
Councilor Ken Woods, Jr.
City of Dallas

Vice Chair
Mayor Cathy Clark
City of Keizer

October 1, 2015

Chair Tammy Baney and Commissioners
Oregon Transportation Commission
355 Capitol Street NE MS #11
Salem, OR 97301-3871

Chair Baney and Commissioners:

The Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation (MWACT) is pleased to submit our biennial report for the years 2014 and 2015 to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC). MWACT is proud of the role we have played since 1997 assisting the OTC in advocating for transportation issues and projects in our area and throughout the region and state. Our accomplishments over the last two years are described in the attached report.

In the last two years, MWACT's two long-time highest priority projects, the Woodburn/I-5 Interchange and the Newberg-Dundee Bypass, have started construction; and the interchange is complete and open to traffic. These projects represent solutions to significant congestion problems in our area and will improve access to major drivers of the local and regional economy. The Commission is also proud of its role in advancing other high priority projects in the area since our initial chartering. Those projects include the OR 99W/OR 22 (Rickreall) Interchange, the OR 22/Cascade Highway (Sublimity/Stayton) Interchange, and significant safety improvements in the OR 18/22 (Polk and Yamhill Counties) and OR 99E (Marion County) corridors - improvements that were originally identified in studies requested by MWACT.

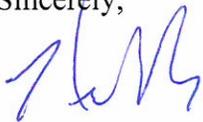
We have also been active in advancing projects through funding programs such as STIP Enhance and the various iterations of *ConnectOregon*. We are currently working with ODOT to evaluate project proposals through the Non-Highway Enhance program. This is a good opportunity for ODOT to partner with local agencies to advance projects that will improve accessibility and safety for bicycle/pedestrian and transit facilities.

As we look forward, MWACT has discussed our goals and needs for the future. We are interested in working with the OTC and our local and regional partners in advancing the discussions on the following issues:

- Stable funding for transportation – at the state and national level, this is a very important issue. We are all aware there are significantly more transportation needs than can be funded with current sources. The continued status of the federal Highway Trust Fund is also a major concern.
- ACT participation in STIP funding programs – MWACT has appreciated the opportunity over the years to participate in, and prioritize, projects for the various ODOT funding programs. We are concerned, however, that sufficient time be given for our local partners to develop project proposals and that the ACTs have the time necessary to evaluate and recommend proposals to be advanced for funding. Also, specifically as it relates to *ConnectOregon*, the input of the ACTs needs to be considered on equal footing with that of the modal advisory committees. The ACTs have a unique perspective in that we have a “big picture” view of project proposals which should be considered equally with the focused view of the individual modal committees.
- Safety corridors – safety has always been the highest priority for MWACT. We are concerned about the decommissioning of designated safety corridors, generally because they have been successful. We would like a role in discussing safety corridors, especially those designated for decommissioning.

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you and our partners and constituents in the mid-Willamette Valley area. We look forward to meeting with you to discuss our biennial report.

Sincerely,



Ken Woods, Jr.
MWACT Chair

Attachments: Biennial Report
MWACT Charter
MWACT Operating Agreement

KW:lm

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**BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE
MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION
(MWACT)
September 2015**

The Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation (MWACT) was created in early 1997 as the result of recommendations from the "Mid-Willamette Valley Blue Ribbon Committee on the Formation of an Area Stakeholder Group." The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) adopted a provisional charter for MWACT in February 1997, and the first meeting was held in May 1997. The OTC adopted MWACT's final charter in October 1997. MWACT was the first area commission chartered by the OTC.

MWACT's mission is described in the charter as follows:

- To provide a forum for the discussion and coordination of long-range transportation issues affecting the area's livability.
- To prioritize state transportation infrastructure and capital investments through the development of an implementation strategy based on transportation plans related to the Mid-Willamette Valley area.
- To advocate Mid-Willamette Area transportation issues to neighboring regions and other outside organizations.
- To advise the Oregon Transportation Commission on state and regional policies affecting the Area's transportation system.

MWACT adopted its first Operating Agreement in August 1997. The Agreement has been amended several times over the years to respond to the evolving needs of the Commission. The Operating Agreement is in full compliance with the OTC's "Policy on the Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs)."

The structure and operation of MWACT are described in the information below.

ACT Boundaries

MWACT's boundary includes Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties. These three counties, and the cities and transportation stakeholders contained therein, face many similar transportation issues. Among these issues are regional travel to and through the area (including congestion on major highways), transportation and traffic safety, and provision of alternate modes of transportation. The MWACT boundary contains an area of common interest, and there is no desire to change it at this time.

MWACT Membership

The amended MWACT Charter identifies the voting membership as follows:

- Salem-Keizer MPO (SKATS) Members
Polk County (elected official)

- Marion County (elected official)
- City of Salem (elected official)
- City of Keizer (elected official)
- Salem-Keizer Transit (elected official)
- ODOT Area Manager (non-elected)
- Yamhill County Transit Area (appointed)
- Other Cities by transportation corridor¹ (elected officials)
 - Hwy. 99W/18/47 (Yamhill County)
 - I-5 Corridor (Marion County)
 - Hwy. 22W/99W/51 (Polk County)
 - Hwy. 22E (Marion County)
 - Hwy. 99E/213 (Marion County)
- Yamhill County (elected official)
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (elected official)
- Private sector - one selected by each County Commission²

70.5 percent (12 of 17) of MWACT's voting members are elected officials.

MWACT's membership also includes ex-officio (non-voting) members. The ex-officio membership includes representatives of adjacent area commissions (Cascades West ACT and Northwest Oregon ACT), the Metro Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, and state legislators representing Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties.

MWACT believes its membership is broadly representative of the transportation interests in the three-county area. In addition to local elected officials, the membership includes representatives of alternate modes, tribal governments, local business, and real estate. Although not specifically listed as ex-officio members, representatives of all of the groups identified in the OTCs Policy on Formation and Operations of ACTs (Section IV.B.) receive notice of, and agendas for, all MWACT meetings and are encouraged to attend.

Coordination with Adjacent ACTs and the Legislative Delegation

Adjacent ACTs and the three-county legislative delegation are ex-officio members of MWACT and receive meeting notices and agendas, and are invited to attend the Commission's meetings. MWACT has invited representatives of Cascades West ACT, Northwest ACT, and Metro (JPACT)³ to meet with the Commission and share information of mutual interest. Designated MWACT members periodically attend NWACT and CWACT meetings.

Members of the local legislative delegation occasionally attend MWACT meetings.

¹ The Charter specifies the cities in each corridor. The cities in the corridor are responsible for selecting their representative.

² County Commissions select private sector representatives through a public solicitation process.

³ In the future, these notices will be sent to the Region 1 ACT (R1ACT).

MWACT members developed and distributed an informational and educational brochure, which has been distributed to the OTC and others.

Work Program

Attempts to prepare a six-month work program have been hampered by changing STIP development schedules and the current fiscal climate. The Commission works with staff to develop meaningful agendas based on current circumstances. The Commission has adopted an “every other month” meeting schedule unless more frequent meetings are dictated by the work load.

Public Involvement/Meeting Notice

Notice of MWACT meetings and meeting agendas are provided to an extensive list of organizations, elected and appointed officials, and interested individuals. The following describes in more detail how notice is provided.

Meeting Notice - ODOT Region 2 Public Affairs staff send a press release to all media outlets in the area approximately 7-10 days prior to the regular meeting (which is always held on the first Thursday of the month at 3:30 p.m.). At this time, the agenda is also posted on the ODOT - MWACT web site. The agenda always includes time for public comment, as well as opportunities for members of the legislative delegation or the OTC to provide comments, if present.

Meeting Materials - the agenda package is mailed to Commission members, ex-officio members, and others requesting the full package approximately one week prior to the meeting. The agenda only is sent at the same time to individuals and organizations requesting it.

Meeting Location - Regular meetings are held in the offices of the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments, 100 High Street SE, Salem, OR. This building is ADA accessible. In the event that this room is not available, MWACT will meet at another appropriate location – timely notice of change in location of an MWACT meeting will be provided to all interested parties.

Meeting Summary - Meeting summaries are prepared for each meeting. After the summaries are approved by the Commission (at the next meeting), they are posted to the ODOT - MWACT web site.

Operational Structure

The work of MWACT and the Commission staff is guided by a Steering Committee that consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, ODOT Representative, the immediate past MWACT chair, and one or more Commission members selected by the membership. The Steering Committee has been empowered by the full Commission to make decisions on the Commission's behalf if such decision is required before MWACT's next regular meeting.

Technical Assistance

MWACT receives technical assistance and information from several sources. Primary sources of technical information include ODOT, as directed by the Area 3 Manager, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments. MWACT has utilized a Technical Advisory Committee, made up of staff from ODOT, jurisdictions, and other stakeholders in the three-county area, to assist in the past, and will do so again, as needed.

Key Work Efforts Addressed by MWACT Since 2013

MWACT members held a new member orientation session to familiarize several new members with the purpose and history of cooperative regional transportation planning in the Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties.

Work efforts and issues reviewed by MWACT members since 2013 include:

- STIP Update FY 18-FY 21 STIP
 - ◆ Informational updates to MWACT on OTC discussions and decisions on funding allocations for Fix It and Enhance
 - ◆ Review of the Enhance and Fix-it Programs
 - Review eligibility criteria
 - Review eligible project types
 - ◆ Review of Enhance Non-Highway Fund Pre-Proposals
 - ◆ Prioritize Enhance Non-Highway Fund Project Applications in the MWACT region (expected in the first half of 2016)
- Review progress/status of projects and area issues:
 - ◆ Salem-Keizer Regional Transportation Systems Plan and Air Quality Conformity Determination Update (RTSP/AQCD)
 - ◆ Oregon Greenhouse Gas Rules
 - ◆ SKATS FY 15-FY 20 Transportation Improvement Program and Air Quality Conformity Determination (TIP/AQCD)
 - ◆ Salem River Crossing Project
 - ◆ OR 99E Woodburn to Aurora Corridor Segment Plan
- Reviewed and provided input related to:
 - ◆ Federal Lands Access Program Capitol (FLAP) Projects
 - ◆ Safety Data Collection and Analysis
 - ◆ Highway 22 Safety Corridors
 - ◆ Economic Impact of Cycling to Oregon
- Received reports related to:
 - ◆ Construction Season Previews and Post Season Reports
 - ◆ MWACT Enhance Funding and Unmet Needs
 - ◆ ODOT State of the System
 - ◆ ODOT Access Management Program/Senate Bill 264
 - ◆ Regional Transit Plan
 - ◆ Regional Solutions Team Mission

- ◆ Taxation for Distance Traveled
- ◆ Oregon Passenger Rail EIS
- ◆ All Roads Safety System
- ◆ ODOT Resilience Report
- ◆ ODOT “Rough Roads Ahead” Report
- ◆ ODOT Seismic Plus Report
- ◆ Oregon Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan
- ◆ Oregon State Rail Plan
- ◆ Transportation Options Plan
- ◆ I-5 Optimization Study
- ConnectOregon 5 & 6
 - ◆ Overview of ConnectOregon 5 process
 - ◆ Preview of MWACT area ConnectOregon 5 projects
 - ◆ Project application review by MWACT commission members
 - ◆ Project prioritization and ranking
 - ◆ Status report of ConnectOregon5 projects
 - ◆ Overview of ConnectOregon 6 process
 - Meet with the OTC
 - ◆ Biennial Report
 - ◆ Meeting with ACT chairs in 2015

Commission Staffing

Beginning in August 2003, staff support for MWACT is provided by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) with the assistance of ODOT Region 2.

Decision-making Process

MWACT uses a consensus-based decision-making process. The MWACT Operating Agreement describes this process as follows:

MWACT will use a consensus decision-making process and will foster a collaborative approach to problem solving. Consensus means that all members agree to support the decision. Members may choose not to block the consensus even though they do not fully agree with the decision. They may need to register their view about it, but are willing to support the decision because they trust the wisdom of the group on the issue.

The Operating Agreement also provides for a voting procedure if consensus cannot be reached. The intent is to use the voting procedure infrequently in an effort to foster collaboration between the members. The voting procedure has not been used to date.

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