

**SCOACT**  
**South Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation**

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Representing Counties:

Klamath County  
Lake County

Representing Cities &  
Communities:

Bonanza  
Chiloquin  
Klamath Falls  
Lakeview  
Malin  
Merrill  
Paisley  
Beatty  
Bly  
Chemult  
Christmas Valley  
Crescent  
Fort Rock  
Gilchrist  
Silver Lake  
Summer Lake

Representing Transit Districts:

Basin Transit Service

Representing ODOT:

Region 4 – Central Oregon

Representing Others:

South Central Oregon Regional  
Partnership  
Transportation Stakeholders  
Citizens at Large

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**2007-2008 Biennial Report**  
**June 2008**

Since its last report to OTC, the South Central Oregon Area Commission on Transportation (SCOACT) has continued to establish its role as key participant in addressing Transportation issues in Klamath and Lake County as well as the region and state. SCOACT provides an open forum for discussion and coordination of projects and planning involving common transportation issues and needs.

**Geographic Boundaries**

The SCOACT serves the Klamath and Lake Counties region of southern Oregon. These boundaries are consistent with the South Central Oregon Regional Partnership and the South Central Oregon Economic Development District. The region is linked economically and by common transportation facilities and the services of highway, bus, rail, and air.

Major Highway routes include U.S. Route 97, a major north-south highway which runs through the state of Oregon from the California border, south of Klamath Falls, to the Washington border on the Columbia River. With the exception of Interstate 5, US 97 is the most important north-south highway corridor in the state. Oregon Route 140 is the primary connection between Medford and Klamath Falls. The stretch of OR 140 between the two cities is known as the Lake of the Woods Highway. It then runs along the southwestern shore of Upper Klamath Lake, where it is part of the Volcanic Legacy Scenic Byway. OR 140 then continues east towards Lakeview as the Klamath Falls-Lakeview Highway and into Nevada as the Warner Highway.

**SCOACT Membership and Voting**

The SCOACT Charter was adopted [by the Oregon Transportation Commission \(OTC\)](#) in 2004. [The SCOACT Board took the opportunity to review the Charter at the August 18 and September 12, 2008 meetings. The updated Charter has been submitted to the OTC and is awaiting their review/approval.](#) The SCOACT membership is the same as the membership of the South Central Oregon Regional Partnership. It is broadly based and consists of at least fifty percent elected officials from Counties, Cities, Tribal Government, and Transit within the ACT boundaries. The remainder consists of local

citizens, business, education, State agencies, State Representatives, State Senator and other stakeholders within the ACT boundaries.

### **Coordination with adjacent areas and state legislators**

The SCOACT sends meeting agendas and minutes to adjoining ACTs and legislators. The SCOACT chair has made personal contacts with adjoining ACT chairs to discuss common issues with transportation corridors. During the Connect Oregon I and II process, SCOACT had representatives attending the Region 4 Super-ACT to prioritize Connect Oregon projects for submittal to the Oregon Transportation Commission. State and federal legislative representatives attend the SCOACT meetings several times a year and are encouraged to participate.

### **Work Activities and Initiatives**

The SCOACT views safety and economic development as the top two priorities for the ACT, with safety as the primary focus. The South Central Oregon ACT is bisected by two major highways: Highway 97 running north and south, and Highway 140 running east and west. The ACT sees both highways as necessary to the viability of our communities. Highway 97 receives top priority status with Highway 140 second based on usage.

Due to the construction on Interstate 5 and increase of fuel prices, we have experienced an increase in truck traffic on our highways as truckers try to find the shortest fastest routes. We have worked with ODOT staff to address our concerns regarding the safety issues associated with this increased traffic.

Highway 97 Issues - In 2007 the shift of truck traffic from I-5 to Highway 97 to ease congestion during OTIA construction officially started. In cooperation with freight mobility, our area placed planned projects for work on Highway 97 around the lake to a later time frame to accommodate the need for unimpeded truck travel. This increased truck traffic on Highway 97 has caused increased accidents and safety concerns. From 2002 to 2006 the fatal accident rate on Highway 97 increased 42%. To address this issue, The SCOACT requested support from the Governor's office in having additional Oregon State Police troopers stationed in the area to provide additional patrols on Highway 97. The number one priority for future projects is additional passing lanes in the area between Spring Creek Hill and Diamond Lake Junction, as well as the LaPine area to reduce accidents.

Highway 140 Corridor - SCOACT has continued its work on Highway 140. The SCOACT considers continued improvement of Highway 140 critical to its economic growth and vitality for the South Central Oregon area. The SCOACT prioritized a needs list for the corridor and identified potential sources of funding for those improvements.

Highway 140 Study – The study is being carried out by the Freight Mobility section of ODOT. The primary proponents for the study are members of the trucking industry. Highway 140 is the most direct East West route to Salt Lake City and Reno from Southern and Central Oregon. The other routes require travel North to connect with I-84 or US 20 or South to connect with Hwy 89 or I-80 in California. Highway 140 is approximately 100 miles shorter than these parallel routes. The primary focus for this study is the 161 miles east from Klamath Falls to the Nevada border. Within that segment there are a total of 97 miles requiring length restrictions which limit freight

hauling. Currently trucks traveling 140 between Klamath Falls and the Nevada border are limited to a total length of 65ft. from Medford to Lakeview, and 60 ft. from Lakeview to the Nevada border. This study will look at what improvements are needed to allow the length restriction to be removed. It will also determine the economic benefits to Southern and Central Oregon from removal of these restrictions. The current standard trailer size in use is 53 ft. – the use of smaller trailers requires more trips. The use of the parallel routes results in higher costs and fewer deliveries.

Primary areas of concern are:

- ◆ No shoulders or guard rails in many areas
- ◆ Steep grades in some areas including Doherty Slide – a four mile section at 8%
- ◆ Poor sight lines in many sections
- ◆ Substandard length and width clearances

The study includes interviews with shippers, carriers, and growers in the region. The proposed cost to perform a complete overhaul of the entire route to current industry construction standards is approximately \$100+ million. To complete the projects that would physically eliminate the length restrictions is expected to cost approximately \$53.2 million.

During the past few years, SCOACT has also been involved in a variety of activities and issues that include:

Prioritization and Review of Projects – The SCOACT has worked closely with ODOT staff to develop a needs list of projects in the South Central area.

#### 2008 – 2011 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

In 2006, the SCOACT looked at projects for our region with a focus on the 2008 - 2011 STIP. We participated in the STIP review process, answered questions for the Highway 140 Study, and discussed the expected impact on US 97 of the transfer of truck traffic from I-5 due to the construction. The SCOACT members reviewed and ranked all of the projects submitted for Connect OR in our area and region.

In 2006 the following SCOACT Construction projects were completed:

1. Spring Creek Hill – North Shady Pine Road.
2. Replacing Spencer Creek Bridge over the Klamath River.
3. Highway 39 and South Side Bypass (140) junction – installation of turn lanes
4. Replacing Silver Creek Bridge in Silver Lake.
5. Washburn Way – US 97 – installation of passing lane and repaving.
6. Lake of the Woods (Doak Mtn) – Installation of passing lane and repaving

In 2007, the SCOACT worked with ODOT staff to update the STIP priorities. In the last quarter of 2007, the SCOACT worked with ODOT staff to refine the list to account for the expected budget shortfalls.

In 2007 the following SCOACT Construction projects were completed:

1. OR 140 Lakeshore Drive – Greensprings Highway (66) – paving, installation of a signal and turn lane.

2. OR 140 Drews Gap – Maddock Corner - paving

CONNECT Oregon II

The Oregon Department of Transportation received more than 70 applications for the \$100 million multimodal transportation funding program, Connect Oregon II. The Oregon Transportation Commission selected 30 projects to receive funding. Of the six proposals submitted from the SCOACT region only one project was selected for funding – the Modoc Northern Railroad Co. and Lake County received \$648,000 to provide new rail infrastructure in four key areas to accommodate growing shipping needs while allowing increased speed and handling efficiency. It will also improve economic opportunities and reduce transportation costs in the area.

Other Klamath and Lake County projects recommended by Region 4 but not funded were:

1. Klamath Northern Railway Company and Interfor pacific Inc - \$720,000 for a KNOR 286K upgrade and installation of light weight rail (ranked 31st);
2. City of Klamath Falls Airport - \$6,360,000 for a new Terminal building
3. City of Klamath Fall Airport - \$11,150,000 for an Aviation Maintenance Technical Center

The SCOACT has reviewed and made recommendation for priority of Transportation Enhancement Projects, Pedestrian and Bike Grant Projects, and other projects requiring ACT review.

**Public Involvement**

Notice of SCOACT meetings and meeting agendas are provided to an extensive list of organizations, elected and appointed officials, and interested individuals. The agenda always includes time for public comment, as well as opportunities for SCOACT members of the legislative delegation or the OTC to provide comments.

**Staff Support**

SCOACT is an integrated part of the South Central Oregon Regional Partnership and South Central Oregon Economic Development District (SCOEDD). ODOT has entered into an Intergovernmental Agreement with SCOEDD to provide the necessary staffing for SCOACT.