

**BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE  
SOUTHEAST AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION (SEACT)**

**August 2013**

Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties, in a Memorandum of Understanding approved on October 6, 1999, formed the Southeast Regional Alliance (SRA) to address common community and economic development issues. As transportation was consistently identified as one of the top regional concerns, the SRA board submitted a proposal to form an Area Commission on Transportation in the region. The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) approved the provisional charter of the Southeast Area Commission on Transportation (SEACT) on October 11, 2000 and granted subsequent charters on August 19, 2004, October 10, 2006 and August 17 2011. Since 1999, SEACT has met regularly in conjunction with the SRA, with a specific portion of the agenda dedicated to SEACT business.

**Geographic Coverage**

The SEACT region corresponds to the geographical boundaries of Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties. These three counties, along with the cities, Burns Paiute Tribe, and other stakeholders in the area, make up a community of interest dealing with similar transportation issues. Grant, Harney and Malheur Counties have also established uniform regional boundaries for a variety of other state programs.

**SEACT Membership**

The current membership of the SEACT is as follows:

Voting Member Positions	Number Of Members	Elected, Government or Private Sector
Grant County Court	1	Elected
Harney County Court	1	Elected
Malheur County Court	1	Elected
Burns Paiute Tribe of Harney County	1	*Elected
Cities of Grant County	1	City Government – Non-elected
Cities of Malheur County	1	City Government – Non-elected
Cities of Harney County	1	City Government - Elected
At Large Members – Grant County	3	1 Private Sector 1 Private Sector – City Government Elected 1 County Airport
At Large Members – Harney County	2	2 Private Sector
At Large Members – Malheur County	3	1 Private Sector 1 City Government – Non-elected 1 State Government – Non-elected
ODOT Voting Member	1	State Government – Non-elected

At Large – Bicycle/Pedestrian Member	1	Government or Private Sector
At Large – Transit Member	1	Government or Private Sector

\* As stated In Part IV, Section B. Membership in the *Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs)* "Tribal Governments, Port officials and Transit officials will count toward the requirement of at least 50% elected officials."

Ex-Officio (Non-Voting) membership shall include:

- a. The Oregon Transportation Commission Liaison to the ACT
- b. A representative of the Oregon Department of Aviation
- c. The Eastern Regional Coordinator for the Governor's office
- d. Members of the Governor's Regional Solutions Team
- e. State legislators representing districts in the region
- f. Representatives of each county road department or road district
- g. Representatives of regional groups that have an interest in transportation issues (e.g., housing advocates, law enforcement agencies, etc.)

**Membership Representation**

Due to the large geographic area, the small population and cities that have all volunteer elected officials, the SEACT may include less than 50% elected officials as voting members; to meet the intent of the policy guidelines, membership, at a minimum, shall include:

- One member of the Grant County Court
- One member of the Harney County Court
- One member of the Malheur County Court
- One member representing the cities of Grant County
- One member representing the cities of Harney County
- One member representing the cities of Malheur County
- Three at-large representatives from Grant County
- Two at-large representatives from Harney County
- One representative for the Burns Paiute Tribe of Harney County
- Three at-large representatives from Malheur County
- ODOT Region 5, District 14 Assistant District Manager
- One at-large representative for Bicycle/Pedestrian
- One at-large representative for Transit

Every effort will be made to assure that there will be broad representation from interested stakeholders including, but not limited to:

- Various modes of transportation
- Business

- Natural resource industries
- Public lands
- Education
- Land use
- Public safety providers
- Non-profit organizations
- Local citizens

### **Coordination with Adjacent ACTs and Legislators**

There are four ACTs adjacent to the SEACT region. Central Oregon ACT, Lower John Day ACT, North East ACT and South Central ACT are on the SEACT mailing list and receive agendas and minutes from each meeting. Also on the mailing list are ODOT Region 5 employees that work with the SEACT. Regional state legislators are ex-officio members of SEACT.

### **Work Program**

SEACT develops biennial work plans. The 2013-2015 Work Plan is enclosed with this report.

### **Public Involvement**

SEACT complies with the requirements of the Oregon Public Meetings Law ORS 192.610 to 192.690 and all relevant federal laws, regulations and policies for public involvement. All SEACT meetings are open to public attendance.

An advance agenda shall be provided one week prior to the meeting, either by e-mail, on a SEACT website or through the mail. A press release is sent to area media.

Meeting agenda and support materials are e-mailed to board members and others requesting the full packet at least one week prior to the regular meeting.

Meeting Schedule and Location- Regularly scheduled meetings are held in conjunction with the Southeast Regional Alliance on the fourth Monday of alternate months at 10:00 AM (Pacific Time) or 11:00 (Mountain Time). Meeting locations rotate among the three counties.

Meeting Minutes are prepared following each meeting. They are e-mailed to all interested parties and are posted on the ODOT-SEACT and the GEODC website. All past minutes are on file at the GEODC office in Pendleton.

Special meetings may be called by the chair or a minimum of three SEACT Board members with a minimum of 24 hours advance notice must be given to all appropriate parties.

Electronic meetings may be held by electronic means including video-conferencing, telephone conferencing or personal computer. All regular meeting requirements apply to electronic meetings. Actions taken at an electronic meeting shall be ratified at the next regular meeting.

## **Work Program Guidance and Operational Structure**

The bi-monthly work of SEACT is guided by the Chair, the ODOT Region 5, District 14, Assistant District Manager, the ODOT technical staff, and SEACT support staff. The Assistant District Manager ensures that SEACT receives the educational presentations that enable them to better carry on the business of the ACT. ODOT and/or GEODC staff supplies handouts and informational packets as needed.

A two-year work plan is created and is used as a basis for development of the agenda. Working with the Assistant District Manager assures that issues are addressed in a timely manner enabling SEACT to reach goals and/or to submit comments to the OTC or other entities, as appropriate. The 2013-2015 Work Plan is attached.

Other agenda items may be added at the request of ODOT technical staff, SEACT members or other stakeholders.

## **Technical Assistance**

SEACT receives technical assistance from a variety of sources. The primary source of technical information comes from ODOT under the direction of the Region 5, District 14, Assistant District Manager.

## **Key Work Activities and Efforts**

The SEACT continues to focus its efforts on education about a wide range of transportation issues for members and the public in order to enhance program delivery. These efforts center on safety and economic benefits to the three counties as well as transportation users and ODOT. Generally education programs are prepared and presented by ODOT technical staff.

SEACT participates in transportation planning efforts affecting the area. Members coordinate between transportation planning efforts and community development planning efforts. SEACT takes a proactive role in addressing transportation-related issues, such as:

- Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- ConnectOregon IV
- Senate Bill 264
- Transportation Enhancement Program
- Jobs and Transportation Act
- Oregon Transportation Investment Act
- American Recovery and Reinvestment Act

SEACT reviews and makes recommendations for a wide variety of programs for priority consideration of transportation projects. Below are highlights of specific projects and programs SEACT has implemented as the transportation leader in the 3-county area:

### **ConnectOregon Program –**

The ConnectOregon project review, prioritization and recommendation process is an important function of SEACT and continues to be a major area of interest. During the ConnectOregon IV, the SEACT worked with the NEACT under the Super-Act to help prioritize Region 5 requested projects. Working together on the prioritization list, the SEACT was able to receive funding for two important transportation projects within their area. These projects were the Grant County Runway/Taxiway Rehabilitation Project and the Wyoming Colorado Railroad Malheur Junction Wye upgrade. The SEACT was awarded \$4,028,177 under ConnectOregon IV to help fund these projects. These projects are now being completed and are helping to serve the transportation needs of the communities and the people of the state.

### **2012 – 2015 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) -**

In July of 2010, the SEACT started working with ODOT staff on developing the Draft 2012-2015 STIP. On June 2, 2011 Region 5 held public review meetings within each county of the SEACT. The comments from these meetings helped develop the 2012 – 2015 STIP.

#### **2012 – 2015 STIP Projects:**

##### **Grant County:**

US 26/Main Street and Canyon Blvd: Sidewalk/Beautification

US 395 Curve Realignments to reduce curvature at MP 31.0 and MP 38.0

##### **Harney County:**

US 20 Riley – Fry Road Sign Replacement

Idlewild Snow-Park Relocation

Burns Signal Improvements – Improve radius for Broadway at Monroe, Upgrade signal controllers, communication and VI

##### **Malheur County:**

OR 201: Adrian Erosion Control – Bike/Ped quick fix erosion control project

US 20: Drinkwater Pass – Malheur River Pavement – High Volume chip seal projects at multiple locations in District 14

US 20/US 26: 11<sup>th</sup> Street (Nyssa) – Idaho State Line Project – replace sidewalks using SWIP funds and Pavement

#### Ontario Railroad Underpass Rehabilitation and Reconstruction

While working on the 2013-2015 Draft STIP, the SEACT developed a list of projects that were important to each community. While these projects are currently unfunded; they are noteworthy to these communities and provide a “readymade’ list of projects, should funding become available. These projects are shown below:

- Route to PC Energy (Ontario)
- SE 2nd Street from Idaho to 18th Street (Ontario)
- N. Oregon St, Phase 2 (Ontario)
- NW Washington at Yturri Beltline—signal or roundabout (Ontario)
- New interchange on I-84 at SW 18th Ave. (Ontario)
- E Idaho Underpass (Ontario)
- Caution light at Hwy 20/26/Thunderegg Blvd and Locust Ave (Nyssa)
- Locust Ave Railroad Crossing improvements (Nyssa)
- Locust-Long Dr intersection alignment (Nyssa)
- Hwy. 20/26 intersection to Lytle Blvd at bridge (Vale)
- Repair storm drain/diversion box at Hwy 201 and Washington St (Adrian)
- Monroe Street sidewalk (Burns)
- Intersection of Broadway and Highway (Burns)\* in 2012-2015 Draft STIP
- Left turn lane at Chickahominy Reservoir (Harney County)
- Malheur Lumber Company access (Grant County)
- Improve commercial trucking route bypass/Becks Road (Nyssa)
- Improve 18<sup>th</sup> Avenue from SW 4<sup>th</sup> to Hwy. 201 (Ontario)
- Sidewalks, west side of Hwy. 395, from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Grant Union H.S. (John Day)
- OR 201/US 20/US 26 Intersection Improvements (Malheur County)
- Phase II of Transportation Enhancement Grant (John Day)

## **2015 – 2018 Draft State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) -**

The expectations from the Governor's office and the Oregon Transportation Commission was to involve the ACTs to take a more active Regional approach when developing the STIP. The SEACT used guidelines and considerations established by the OTC when making project selections; Solution-based projects, Balance, Transportation System, Efficiency and Leverage, Goals, Objectives and Priorities.

A list of proposed 150% list of SEACT projects:

### **Grant County:**

US Hwy 395 Sidewalks/Bicycle Lane Improvements

US395 Canyon Creek Flood/Road Closure Mitigation

### **Harney County:**

US20/395 Burns Pedestrian Improvements

### **Malheur County:**

Commercial Avenue West Extension to Stringer Rd.  
OR 201 Yturri Beltline: NW Washington Traffic Control  
Vale School Bus Route  
SE 2nd Street: SE 14th Ave.-E. Idaho Ave.

### **Staff Support**

Greater Eastern Oregon Development Corporation (GEODC) provides administrative staff to supply support to SEACT. GEODC staff works closely with the ODOT Region 5, District 14, Assistant District Manager.

### **Decision Making Process**

SEACT generally uses a collaborative approach to problem solving. All members and interested participants are encouraged to voice their views. Most decisions are made by consensus. When it is felt that an official action should be taken and recorded, all members of the board cast a vote as per generally accepted rules of parliamentary procedure.

## **SEACT Success**

SEACT has functioned as an ACT since the provisional charter was approved in October 2000. An existing entity, the Southeast Regional Alliance, was identified as a cohesive group that could build on existing strengths by serving as an ACT. Since the three member counties make up 26% of the land mass of Oregon, attending a meeting is an all-day commitment. Combining functions has been an effective way to achieve multiple goals in one meeting and retain quality representation. The meetings rotate among the three counties, to better meet the needs of all participants.

The geographical size, however, can also be a detriment to participation. A weakness has been the lack of consistent broad-based stakeholder participation. This issue continues to be addressed.

Board members feel that they have benefited from their involvement in SEACT. The education has made them more effectual advocates for transportation in the region.