

# **South East Area Commission on Transportation**

## ***Grant, Harney, and Malheur Counties***

BOARD MINUTES  
September 25, 2025  
Hybrid meeting VIA TEAMS Meeting  
Grant County Regional Airport

### **Board Members Present:**

Grant County:	Harney County:	Malheur County:	Bike/Ped, Transit, Freight:
Jim Hamsher Bryan Montague	Judge Bill Hart	Andy Wood Jim Maret Mike McLaughlin Dan Cummings	Brittany White

### **State/Regional Agencies:**

Ken Patterson, Region Manager ODOT	Michelle Owen ODOT LAL
Sheri Folsom, Executive Support Specialist	Vicki Moles, PIO
Angie Jones, Transit, ODOT	
Sean Maloney, Area Manager	
Paul Woodworth	

### **Guests:**

Melissa Bethel Justin Walker Courtney Crowell OTC Commission Phil Chang	Presenters: Paul Woodworth Ken Patterson
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### **Public and/or Stakeholder Comments: N/A**

Approval of Minutes: Mike McLaughlin made a motion to approve, Dan Cummings Seconded – minutes approved

### **Regional Updates – Ken Patterson**

- ✓ Bryan Strasser has been promoted to CPM in the Ontario Construction office and continues to work on the ADA projects as well
- ✓ Potential layoff notices took up a large part of the summer, some summer projects were rescheduled.
- ✓ Quiet fire season with no road closures
- ✓ Region 5 is leading the state with 2700 ADA curb ramps being completed, expected final completion date in 2027. Region 5 was able to develop better ways to meet the specifications
- ✓ Quarterly project reviews are ongoing, senior staff is coming out and meeting with the Project Delivery staff to talk through the projects and determine any issues that may arise

- ✓ Centralization is affecting the region. This is pulling resources into Salem. Geology, Hydro and Right of Way will have managers in Salem while they remain working out of the region headquarters
- ✓ Between the layoffs and accountability conversations, there have been opportunities to make changes in the organization. High Level management has been flattened, the Deputy Director has moved to a new agency, Office of Civil Rights is moving to a high level manager rather than reporting to the Deputy Director. Division Administrative Director position is vacant but will be filled at a later date. Lindsey Baker and Leah Horner have resigned and positions will not be filled. Mike Kimlinger, State Engineer is retiring as well as the State Maintenance Engineer

### **Local Area Liaison – Michelle Owen**

- ✓ SCA agreement in place for the latest award recipients-Jordan Valley for SEACT
- ✓ Open SCAs for Canyon City and Vale.
- ✓ New SCA projects going on in Burns, Prairie City and Seneca.
- ✓ The SCA Advisory committee is in need of a person to represent Eastern Oregon.
- ✓ The Oregon Bike Ped Advisory Committee will also need a person to represent Eastern Oregon when Mavis Hart's term is up
- ✓ One local agency bridge replacement (Potter Swamp) in Harney County will be in the 27-30 STIP
- ✓ NOFO for Rural & Tribal assistance applications open Sept 8-Oct 8  
[Rural and Tribal Assistance Pilot Program | Build America](#)

### **Construction Updates – Sean Maloney**

- ✓ Burns ADA is completed
- ✓ US Hwy to Idaho Stateline project is complete
- ✓ Eastern Oregon Camera project is completed
- ✓ US20 culvert project is completed
- ✓ OR 86 guardrail is finishing up, some bridge work will extend into next Spring
- ✓ Vale sidewalk project has move to Spring
- ✓ Farewell Bend/Huntington Bridge project will be completed shortly
- ✓ Burns Hines ADA is complete however have two culverts to repair

### **Roundtable Updates:**

- ✓ RST – There are a few projects happening across Eastern Oregon. Oregon Solutions highway project will be hosting a public webinar today which will be recorded. The kickoff was on 9/16 in Juntura. Malheur Counties Reload project is looking to potentially sell to a private company to run. Good progress in Malheur County with Aquatic invasive species inspection sites. Setting up a boat inspection right before Owyhee Reservoir and will look to ODOT for maintenance on the roadway. RST is embarking on an effort with ODFW, ODOT, DEQ and others to start addressing the carcass debris removal issues.

- ✓ Greater Eastern Oregon Solutions Advisory Committee has been tasked to identify opportunities for District 14 housing and childcare resilience. There is interest in Rural Transit and will reach out to Angie Jones for ideas on how to improve
- ✓ Ken Patterson is open to coming out to communities and holding town hall type meetings to discuss winter operations
- ✓ Ontario – Airport security fencing is 80% complete. SE 5<sup>th</sup> Ave project is nearing completion and should close out next week
- ✓ Harney County – A new City Administrator, Roxanne Worley has been hired and doing well in her new position. The county is trying to do some Fall time work to mitigate Spring flooding. Culverts may be added to Foley Drive
- ✓ Transit – Malheur County Transit Development Strategy plan is underway. Interviewing State Parks for data on getting some park transit buses. Waiting for the Special Session to be finalized to see how the layoffs will go
- ✓ Jim Maret – SCA finished up with drainage project, functioned flawlessly. Well project and some other parks projects are finishing up

#### Impacts of ODOT Budget Shortfall

Paul Woodworth, District 14 Manager spoke about the impacts that ODOT's budget will have on our winter operations and level of service that they will be able to provide and how we got to the situation that we are currently experiencing.

- ✓ More efficient vehicles and alternate fuel vehicles result in declining fuel tax revenue
- ✓ Increasing labor, equipment and materials costs have exhausted the State Highway Fund balance
- ✓ Current cost reductions that have been made include holding vacant positions open, purchasing less equipment and materials
- ✓ District 14 has 69 total snowplow operators, 15 of those employees have received layoff notices, 14 positions are vacant for a total of 29 lost positions which total 42% of the labor force. This will affect the level of service by reducing daytime plowing, no responses to most crashes and roadway obstructions at night, less likely to staff road closures or to sort traffic at those closures. No nighttime plowing or treatment with sand or deicers on any state highway other than I84

Full presentation is available upon request

#### Legislative Funding Package Updates – Ken Patterson

- ✓ Budget reductions started in 2019, holding vacant positions, holding off on projects
- ✓ The Highway Fund is hovering around zero balance
- ✓ Despite efforts, the Legislature adjourned late on June 27<sup>th</sup> without passing a transportation funding package
- ✓ Agency-wide impacts include 932 positions across all divisions. This will impact the Level of Service that ODOT provides to the traveling public, Project Delivery
- ✓ The Bill for automating WorkZone speeds and compliance did not pass
- ✓ There needs to be work around housing impacts, more middle housing and proposals to analyze impacts to transportation

## Agenda Build

- ✓ Color of money, how to make changes to it
- ✓ Develop a survey – where do you want funding to go and how much to each
- ✓ Cameras on stop lights discussion and auto enforcement, what are other states doing
- ✓ Update ByLaws

### **Next meeting:**

Joint ACT on November 6, 2025  
OTEC Facility  
Baker City

**Respectfully Submitted,**  
Sheri Folsom