

SOUTH WEST AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION (SWACT)

Meeting Minutes March 13, 2020 Coquille, Oregon

❖ Roll Call ❖

Vice-Chair Rick Skinner called the meeting to order at 10:02 am. Roll was called and quorum confirmed. Three members called-in (Chris Paasch, Don Baglien, and Theresa Cook) and the rest were present in person. (15 voting members present. V = voting member for this meeting. Quorum = 12 (50% of filled [currently 23] membership positions.)

Commission Members and Alternates in Attendance (alphabetical)

Baglien, Don	Douglas County Stakeholder (Primary)	V
Boyer, Brant	Douglas County Stakeholder (Primary)	V
Christensen, Richard	Curry County (Alternate)	
Cook, Theresa	Aviation (Primary)	V
Dolgonas, Dick	Bicycle & Pedestrian (Primary)	V
Elliott, Brian	Douglas County City-At-Large (Primary)	V
Hossley, Jim	City of Coos Bay (Primary)	V
Hunter, Chris	ODOT (Primary)	V
Jensen, Matthew	Coquille Indian Tribe (Primary)	V
Kohn, Robert	Coos County City-At-Large (Primary)	V
Neavoll, Darrin	ODOT (Alternate)	
Paasch, Chris	Curry County (Primary)	V
Poole, Art	Coos County Stakeholder (Alternate)	
Pryce, Loree	Bicycle & Pedestrian (Alternate)	
Rainville, Lonnie	Douglas County City-At-Large (Alternate)	V
Skinner, Rick (Vice-Chair)	Coos County Stakeholder (Primary)	V
Stump, Jeff	CTCLUSI (Primary)	V
Sweet, John	Coos County (Primary)	V
Vitek, Charmaine	Port (Primary)	V

ODOT Staff in Attendance

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Birch, Naomi | ODOT STIP Coordinator |
| 2. Cornutt, Lisa | ODOT Planner |
| 3. Latham, Dan | ODOT Project Information Specialist |
| 4. Reading, Frank | ODOT Region 3 Manager |
| 5. Wade, Joanna | ODOT Administrative Specialist |

Guests in Attendance

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. Callery, Martin | Oregon Transportation Commission |
| 2. Dunning, Mike | Port of Coos Bay |
| 3. Gilbert, Kristi | City of Sutherlin |

❖ Public Input ❖

None.

❖ Approval of Minutes ❖

- **Motion made and seconded to approve the January 10, 2020 SWACT Minutes. (Charmaine Vitek / Jim Hossley)**
- Discussion: None.
- *Motion carried.*

❖ Membership Updates ❖

Positions to approve: Jay Trost for Aviation Alternate Representative, Mike Dunning for Port Alternate Representative, Lonnie Rainville for Douglas County City-At-Large Primary Representative, and Sean Negherbon for Douglas County City-At-Large Alternate Representative.

- **Motion made and seconded to approve all membership updates. (John Sweet / Robert Kohn)**
- Discussion: Lonnie excluded himself from this decision as he is applying for the Douglas County City-At-Large Primary Representative position. Rick Skinner acknowledged other currently vacant positions asked to spread word of these vacancies: Coos County City-At-Large Alternate Representative; Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua & Siuslaw Indians Alternate Representative; Coquille Indian Tribe Alternate Representative; and Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians Primary Representative.
- *Motion carried.*

❖ 21/24 STIP Presentation ❖

Presentation: Naomi Birch, ODOT STIP Coordinator, gave an overview of how to make a public comment for concerns or questions on projects. Comments can be made online or on comment cards available in the SWACT meeting room. Projects can be reviewed online on both the open house and STIP page. The proposed projects section is where you can submit comments. Dan will review highlighted Region 3 projects later in meeting. Once a comment is submitted you will receive a response within 4-5 business days.

Dan Latham, ODOT Project Information Specialist, reviewed some of the proposed projects from Region 3. He noted that the online open house address is on the comment cards (<https://www.OREGOn.gov/ODOT/STIP/Pages/Current-Future-STIP.aspx>). The following were the highlighted projects discussed:

- I-5 Exit 125 NB at Garden Valley in Roseburg
 - 3 million dollar project to add a dedicated right turn lane to ease congestion
- I-5 wrong-way driver mitigation (SW Oregon)
 - Add more wrong-way signs, do not enter signs, and raised pavement markers
- Highway 42 Winston to I-5 improvements

- Add safety features and new pavement
- Coos County OR 241 Chandler Bridge
 - 4.5 million dollar project to fix corrosion and repaint
- Gold Beach US 101 Rogue River Bridge
 - 25 million dollar project to fix corrosion problems

Discussion: Dick Dolgonas asked if tire poppers are ever used to prevent wrong-way driver problems. Chris and Darrin said no; that would create other safety issues. Rick Skinner asked for more explanation of the red buttons for wrong-way driver mitigation. Darrin explained that if you are going the wrong way you will see red but if you are going the correct way it will not look red. Ron Kutch asked for timeframe on the Chandler Bridge project. Chris and Dan said they are not sure since ODOT is just now setting project dates. Chris said we only highlighted a few projects here, but the open house online has many more projects within the area and statewide. Dan noted that there are 20-30 projects in Region 3 and reminded everyone that comment cards are on the table in back.

❖ OReGO ❖

Presentation: Michelle Godfrey, Public Information Officer representing OReGO with ODOT, presented on Oregon's Road Usage Charge Program. OReGO has been running for 5 years. It is an alternative to the gas tax and is a pay-as-you-go system. This system helps to maintain roads as vehicles are getting more efficient and using less gas. Oregon introduced the gas tax in 1919 and the first weight-mile tax for heavy vehicles in 1947; it is time for an upgrade to transportation funding. In 2015 Oregon launched OReGO, which is based on a user pays principle similar to how we pay for electricity or water. As hybrid and electric vehicles gained popularity the State came up with OReGO. It is needed to keep usage fees coming in as vehicles become more fuel efficient. Electric vehicles are becoming so popular and common that the Governor is working to have an all-electric fleet in the future. How do people pay for roads currently? Fuel tax, title, and registration. High MPG vehicles pay more in registration fees. With time cars impact roads at the same rate, but construction and maintenance costs are increasing due to inflation. All vehicle types impact road at the same rate. A road usage charge (RUC) is similar to fuel tax as a funding model. With OReGO drivers pay month to month instead of a high 2 year registration fee. Drivers save money if they join OReGO. As part of the education and outreach Michelle does she focuses on these savings to drivers as well as reminding them what the roads mean to each of us. Keep Oregon connected is all about what the roads mean to drivers. They keep us connected and get us where we need to go. They connect communities and economies. Where are we with road funding? If your car check engine light comes on you take it to the mechanic. With roads we don't have funding to respond to needs as they come up, but it is cheaper to maintain than rebuild. OReGO helps to protect our investments. How does OReGO work? It is a technology based system, requiring a dongle that plugs into the car's data port. The dongle connects wirelessly to an account manager and reports mileage and gas consumption. The user pays for mileage minus gas consumption. Many states have joined and are investing to research road usage charges and programs. OReGO is voluntary and is capped at the annual registration surcharge amount. When other states are on-board and connected to our system we can monitor other state drivers' usage of Oregon roads and charge them. This year we are testing to elevate RUC's to local governments. The goal is a connected vehicle ecosystem. The data is already out there, we just need to figure out how to create a hub where those who need the data can access it. The private sector is being leveraged to look for a single user account system where all transportation costs can be paid for (including tolls and public transportation fees). We are getting closer to a State mandate, but it might not be until 2029 until OReGO is fully mandated.

Discussion: Frank Reading asked how the gas stations will adjust as drivers switch to OReGO. Michelle replied that the statement sent to drivers will show road charges for mileage minus the credit for the gas tax already paid at the gas station, so it will not affect gas stations. The idea is to make up the funding gap, so if vehicles are too efficient they will not receive a refund. Dick Dolgonas asked about the vehicle taxes and fees graph and whether it was complete. Michelle replied that the chart only shows the major funding sources (fuels tax, title, and registration). States are trying the system out and most likely the federal

government will take it over in the future. Rick Skinner asked why the process is so slow; 2029 seems like a long way off. Michelle answered that there are political road blocks that slow the process down. The good news that technology is improving and people are getting more comfortable with GPS and tracking. The Governor is considering using OReGO as part of greenhouse gas legislation. Martin Callery serves on the RUC board. He commented that there just is not enough funding to complete the projects and ideas we need. The funding gap is getting bigger and we need a solution. OReGO is one way to fill the funding gap and connect data. Loree Pryce added that she recently renewed her registration and was offered this tracking device. She expressed concern about getting fines for speeding. Michelle reassured her that there are steep restrictions on data sharing and data maintenance. There are privacy issues, but it is not as much of an issue as it was even 10 years ago. The State cannot share data and must destroy it after so many days. Michelle added that privacy has been a concern among the public. How do we get people engaged in this? A new electric vehicle could cost as much as \$600 up-front in registration fees. Enrolling in OReGO will save drivers money. Michelle pointed out that registration fees pay for entry into the system and the ability to access roads, whereas a road charge is for the use of the road. Chris Hunter shared that he is signed up for OReGO. From his experience, the owner will receive data and information on their driving habits, but that information is not shared. This driver data can be useful for the owners. For example, parents can capture data on their teenage drivers. John Sweet asked how payment will be enforced. What if you don't pay? Michelle says there is technology to prevent any tampering and there are consequences if you do not pay the bills. The State will have a right to collect and will find a way to do so.

❖ ODOT Region Contacts Briefing ❖

Presentation: Chris Hunter, Southwest Area Manager with ODOT, gave a brief overview of the Region 3 management structure and roles. He explained how the roles of the Planning, Maintenance, and SW Area Managers differ and who can be contacted for what. He shared an organizational chart highlighting these business lines. As the SW Area Manager Chris' primary roles are project development (STIP, scoping, schedule, and budget), project delivery (construction), and community relations. Chris and Darrin Neavoll's roles overlap some on community relations. They both work on building relationships within the communities, although Chris focuses more on funding aspects than Darrin. Lisa Cornutt, Region 3 Principal Transportation Planner, gave an overview of ODOT's Planning Department. Mike Baker is the Transportation Planning Manager, he manages planning and programming for Region 3. There are seven planners between the White City and Roseburg offices. Lisa explained that in planning development review is short-range planning, permit planning helps to implement construction projects, and access engineering helps with the placement of driveways and access to properties. STIP funding starts early in the planning process to develop funding needs. Planning grants and the transportation management program provide funds for transportation and land use planning. Lisa noted that the organizational chart Chris showed does not include Jennifer Boardman, ODOT's Region 3 Transit Coordinator, or Jenna Marmon, ODOT's Active Transportation Liaison. Planning works with the community to develop projects early on. Darrin Neavoll, ODOT's District 7 Manager, gave an overview of the Maintenance Department. He explained that District 7 is broken down into Operations and Highway Maintenance. Operations includes permits, incident response, emergency preparedness management, requests for information, and community outreach. Highway maintenance includes pavement, vegetation management, snow removal, signs, electrical and traffic signals, corridor review, bridge, striping, and accident response. Darrin introduced Glen Pederson, Assistant District Manager, and explained that he handles operations including utility permits. Planning handles the engineering side of access, but Darrin's crew handles permits. District works with communities on parades and adopt-a-highway permits. District handles requests for information and local jurisdiction requests. Darrin mentioned that most importantly if you are confused on who to call you can contact either Chris or Darrin and they will make sure your questions are answered.

Discussion: None.

❖ Local Construction Project Updates ❖

Presentation: Dan Latham, ODOT Project Information Specialist, gave an update on local construction projects.

- Roberts Mountain Climbing Lanes
 - I-5 milepost 112-117
 - Intermittent I-5 closures, but not much work this time of year
 - Schedule 2019-2021
- Scottsburg Bridge
 - OR 38 milepost 16
 - New bridge, wider, less curve before and after bridge
 - Last month or two has been mostly clearing space to begin construction in Spring
 - Road under the bridge will be closed for 2 or 3 weeks
- Rhoda Creek Culvert Replacement
 - Improvements to drainage and fish passage
 - Some traffic impacts
- McCullough Bridge
 - US 101 milepost 234
 - Re-painting
 - Continue through October 2021
- Rogue River Bridge
 - Gold Beach, US 101 milepost 327
 - Improvements, strengthen to handle bigger loads and resurfacing
 - Work at night, so minimal traffic impacts
 - Schedule January to November 2020
- Hooskanaden Slide
 - US 101 milepost 343
 - Return road to original alignment
 - Summer construction and completion

Discussion: Rick Skinner asked if these projects are on budget. Chris Hunter said Robert's Mountain has current issues with an old slide that might run us over budget. Rick asked if Hooskanaden is over budget currently. Dan replied that the project recently went out to bid and prices were aligned with our expectations. Frank added that this was the second bid round since the first round came back much higher than we anticipated. Dan also mentioned that there are federal funds available because it is an emergency project.

❖ OTC and Region Manager Update ❖

Presentation: Frank Reading, ODOT Region 3 Manager, and Martin Callery, Oregon Transportation Commission Member, discussed recent Region 3 and OTC updates. Frank reminded everyone of ODOT's new organizational structure that he shared in January and mentioned that we are still adjusting to the changes. The February OTC meeting was canceled, so there is not a lot to share at this time. The March OTC meeting has been canceled due to the COVID-19 virus. ODOT and the OTC have been dealing with adjusting meeting times due to the virus. Martin added that the I-5 Rose Quarter agenda items bring in many members of the public and they do not want to risk exposure. Frank expects the next OTC workshop to look at the threshold dollar amounts for the next STIP update, whether or not there will be an enhance program, the next legislative session concepts, and recommendations to modify key performance measures. Frank explained that key performance measures look at pavement conditions, bridge conditions, the number of fatalities, and the number of serious incidents to see if as an agency ODOT is hitting the mark like it should be and make adjustments if it is not. Martin added that key performance measures were revised in February. Martin gave a legislative update stating that only 1 bill passed the recent legislative session that had any impact on ODOT: house bill 4061 increased the surcharge for the cultural trust license plate, which dedicates money to the Oregon Cultural Trust. Otherwise, everything else was considered but not passed.

Discussion: Rick Skinner asked for an update on the Continuous Improvement Advisory Committee (CIAC). Martin replied that the scope of CIAC will be looked at during the April OTC meeting. The CIAC will likely focus more on how to increase revenue.

❖ **NOA's & May Agenda Build** ❖

Presentation: The May SWACT meeting will cover the Co-Vice Chair topic. Chris commented that ODOT does not recommend it based on how other ACTs are organized; most other ACTs do not even have a Vice-Chair position.

Discussion: Rick Skinner reminded us to continue to participate in SWACT. The COVID-19 virus is affecting the local economy and we need to do our best to stay healthy and use common sense to stay safe. John Sweet mentioned that he is normally not an alarmist, but his daughter studies public health and has expressed concern. He reminded us to avoid unnecessary crowds. Because we are rural and remote we are safer than cities, but we are not immune.

The Vice-Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:52 am.

Next SWACT Meeting: Friday, May 8, 2020, at 10 am in Coquille, OR