

## **Road User Fee Task Force June 17, 2020 Meeting Minutes**

**Task Force Members in attendance:** Chair Councilor Craig Dirksen, Vice Chair Rep. John Lively, Rep. Margaret Doherty, Jeff Allen, Marie Dodds, Martin Callery, and Susan Morgan

**ODOT Staff in attendance:** Daniel Porter, Jenna Adams-Kalloch, Linda Beuckens, Lucinda Broussard, Maureen Bock, Michelle Godfrey, Nicholas Herrera, Peter Alotta, Roberto Coto, Randal Thomas, and Travis Brouwer

**Public in attendance:** Anne Buzzini, Brian Worley, Craig Baxter, Dan Chia, Dan Jarman, Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, Greg Alderson, Gwenn Baldwin, Jason Hinton, Jean Senechal Biggs, Jocelyn Blake, Jordan Bice, Judith Gray, Maddy Do, Marianna Lomanto, Mazen Malik, Mia Noren, Michael Criss, Patrick Watson, Peter Carr, Rahul Shah, Ryan Winn, Sara Wright, Vickie Dewey, Whit Jamieson, and Yasuyo Okumura

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Chair Councilor Craig Dirksen convened the task force at 1:03 pm.

### **Approval of February 2020 Minutes**

Meeting minutes for February 2020 approved by the task force.

### **OReGO (HB 2881 Implementation), RUC West, and Local RUC Updates**

Maureen Bock, Chief Innovation Officer, shared work progress overview. Ford, Toyota, Audi, and Nissan are some of the Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) that have engaged in conversations with the Office of Innovation (OI) concerning RUC program partnership. OI continues outreach through Open Houses taking place summer of 2020, to engage the public and inform Oregonians how transportation funding works. Regarding the federal Connected Vehicle Ecosystem (CVE) grant funding application, ODOT awaits for announcement. The CVE application can potentially assist with reporting, gathering, and validation of data.

RUC West membership is now composed of 17 state transportation organizations with Alaska being the latest DOT to join. The consortium, managed by Randal Thomas at ODOT, brings together various transportation agencies to share best practices and research RUC. With all Western states in the table, Kansas and South Dakota DOTs are also interested in joining the consortium. OI applied for two RUC West federal grants, and is waiting for funding opportunities announcements.

## **Economic Implications for the Highway Fund**

With light vehicle fleets experiencing continued improvements in fuel efficiency, ODOT's dependency on fuel tax complicates financial outlook for the agency. The COVID 19 pandemic and severe reduction in travel has alarmingly complicated things for ODOT and other DOTs across the US. Daniel Porter, ODOT Lead Economist, shared that during the first week of stay-at-home and business shutdown orders, Oregon experienced 50% reduction in travel. Subsequently, metro areas throughout the state noticed a reduction in congestion as residents stayed home or worked remotely. Daniel assessed that less congestions means vehicles reaching better fuel efficiency, which results in less fuel tax for the state.

## **Approach to Medium Duty Study**

Jenna Adams-Kalloch, Policy Advisor in the Office of Innovation, continues the conversation on medium duty fleet. This segment of vehicles (8,000-26,000 lbs. vehicles) are too light to be included in the weight mile tax as heavy duty, but use highways and city streets as commercial and service fleet. Medium Duty is of importance since in the last ten years, this type of fleet grew by 35%. Some of these vehicles are registering as passenger vehicles although they are being used for commercial purposes, bypassing licensing requirements and safety courses. ODOT's study on medium duty aims to assemble information on travel patterns, revenue collection, safety compliance, and best practices from other states.

The task force asked whether this is an issue that need legislative action. Daniel and Jenna reiterate that at the moment the study would collect information and data needed, so in the future ODOT and RUFTF could look into legislative opportunities for next session. Marie Dodds questioned if ODOT knows what the registration gap is, considering some vehicles avoid paying commercial licensing. Daniel indicated the study would look into such question to better appreciate the issue. The task force encouraged ODOT to look into the matter and report back to RUFTF in the future.

## **Legislative Opportunities**

The task force would like to advance more mandatory legislation that enrolls drivers incrementally in a road usage charge system, starting with newer vehicles. Members of the task force also recognized that ODOT is facing operational funding issues, making the need for RUC to move forward even more pressing.

Maureen proposed to include car share, rental vehicles, and public fleet mandates sooner than private vehicles. ODOT staff is presenting on next steps and options on legislative action in future meetings.

## **Metro Presentation on Congestion Pricing**

Elizabeth Mros-O'Hara, Regional Congestion Pricing Manager of Metro, provided project scope and outcome overview. Elizabeth shared with the task force congestion numbers indicating serious traffic

growth in Portland metro where they are expecting 500,000 new residents by 2040. Metro is partnered-up with TriMet, ODOT, City of Portland, and TPAC-JPAC to study congestion pricing.

### **Office of Urban of Mobility Introduction**

Lucinda Broussard, Tolling Program Director, presented the Office of Urban of Mobility (OUM) to RUFTF members and shared that in summer 2020, OUM will commence I-205 NEPA, and preliminary I-5 NEPA. Due to the pandemic and resulting traffic decline, the office is facing unexpected struggles studying congestion and tolling.

### **Public Comment**

Dan Jarman, on behalf of Tesla, recommended the task force not to undermine electric vehicles as it moves forward with RUC. Mr. Jarman encouraged the task force to incentivize EV users for polluting less. Also, recommends for EVs to be included in the medium duty study ODOT.

Jason Hinton, OReGO participant and EV owner, commented that it looks bad for a RUC program to mandate efficient fuel vehicles and EVs enroll into the program. He encouraged the task force to mandate participation of all vehicles regardless of their fuel/electric use.

The meeting adjourned at 2:48pm.