

Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT)

May 10, 2001
Meeting Notes

MEMBERS PRESENT

Rod Monroe, Chair
Lou Ogden, alternate
Rod Park
Bill Kennemer
Charlie Hales
Fred Hansen
Rex Burkholder
Stephanie Hallock
Dave Lohman, alternate
Craig Pridemore
Karl Rohde
Kay Van Sickel
Don Wagner
Roy Rogers
Larry Haverkamp
Dean Lookingbill, alternate
Lonnie Roberts

AFFILIATION

Metro
City of Tualatin, representing Cities of Washington County
Metro
Clackamas County
City of Portland
Tri-Met
Metro
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Port of Portland
Clark County
City of Lake Oswego, representing Cities of Clackamas County
Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) – Region 1
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
Washington County
City of Gresham, representing Cities of Multnomah County
SW Washington Regional Transportation Council (RTC)
Multnomah County

GUESTS PRESENT

Bruce Warner
Neil McFarlane
Steve Kelley
Deb Wallace
Martha Bennett
Ross Williams
Ron Papsdorf
John Rist
Steve Dotterer
Lynn Peterson
Judy Edwards
Bernie Bottomly
Beckie Lee
Brian Newman
Dr. Jane Moore
Scott Bricker
Susie Lahsene

AFFILIATION

Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT)
Tri-Met
Washington County
Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT)
City of Milwaukie
Citizens for Sensible Transportation/CLF
City of Gresham
Clackamas County
City of Portland
Tri-Met
Westside Transportation Alliance
Tri-Met
Multnomah County – Serena Cruz's Office
Milwaukie-Clackamas Cities
Oregon Health Division
Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA)
Port of Portland

GUESTS (continued)

Marc Zolton
Nina DeConcini
Victoria Brown
Stephen Lashbrook

AFFILIATION

City of Portland
Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)
Tualatin TMA and Chamber
City of Wilsonville

STAFF

Andy Cotugno
Richard Brandman
Ross Roberts

Bill Barber
Francine Floyd

SUMMARY

The meeting was called to order and a quorum declared by Chair Rod Monroe at 7:36 a.m.

Rod Monroe introduced Bruce Warner, Director of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). Mr. Warner referred to the letter from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) dated March 7, 2001 addressed to him regarding "Oregon Highway Plan Alternative Mobility Standards" (handout). He suggested the JPACT Committee review and share this letter with their staff. Then if there are further comments, give them to Andy Cotugno and/or Bruce Warner. Mr. Warner suggested they compile the comments into a draft joint response to be shared with JPACT at their next meeting. Then if there is agreement, send the letter out. Finally, Mr. Warner suggested that Dave Cox (Regional Division Administrator) come to JPACT for a dialogue with the members regarding mobility standards and to address Mr. Cox's concerns. Mr. Warner already met with David Cox so he is aware that we want to jointly respond to his letter. Bruce Warner said Mr. Cox would probably be willing to meet with JPACT.

Fred Hansen asked that at the state level, are we at a decreasing level of buying power with the gas tax? We are at some risk in losing our ability to match federal dollars coming our way. Mr. Hansen asked Bruce Warner to give a numeric time when we would be impacted. Mr. Warner clarified Mr. Hansen's questions. When do we lose our ability to match federal dollars that come our way? Mr. Warner said they are watching this closely. Right now, we are not in danger. If we get large infusions of new cash from the federal government for new programs, there may be problems. There was discussion on the rail corridor and some major investments. Mr. Warner is working with the legislature. There are some current bills that may allow us to trade out state funds for federal funds to meet state law for modernization requirements. This would free up some of the state dollars. If we can't utilize our federal dollars effectively right now, and can't do switches, then we could be in trouble in the near future. Mr. Warner didn't have a date when this could happen.

MEETING REPORT

Action taken: Karl Rohde moved, with a second by Roy Rogers to approve the April 12, 2001 meeting report. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 01-3064 FOR THE PURPOSE OF ENDORSING THE SOUTH CORRIDOR POLICY GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS REGARDING OPTIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT. (Informational)

Rod Park introduced the resolution as an informational item and explained that Metro Council had already adopted this resolution. He said that Council wanted to ensure that JPACT was aware of the resolution. Rod Monroe added they received numerous calls and meetings on this resolution. Council members supported the approval of this resolution.

Richard Brandman presented a progress report and background on the South Corridor. The South Corridor is actually "three legs" (segments) of the transportation system in Clackamas County: 1) starting at downtown Portland, going through southeast Portland to Milwaukie; 2) Milwaukie to Clackamas Regional Center; 3) Milwaukie to Oregon City. When the process began in October 1999, there was no "Plan B" for options other than light rail in the South/North Corridor. Technical information was developed by project and hundreds of meetings were held in the community and with the three citizen working groups (one for each segment of the corridor). Each of the three segments had different needs and viewpoints of what needed to be done. A policy committee was also established. In addition, random sample surveys were conducted to get community opinions. An alternatives analysis was performed during the last year. Mr. Brandman referred to the "South Corridor Update – Policy Group Actions" report (green handout). At the end of the process, the public in the three segments had different viewpoints as to what should be considered further in the environmental impact statement. This is the stage of the process we are in now. We are not making decisions about what to build, but are making decisions about what to study further in the environmental impact statement. The segment that had the strongest consensus was Milwaukie to Oregon City. There was a strong recommendation from the public to keep things somewhat as they are, but improve some intersections for faster flow of buses (BRT option).

Lonnie Roberts asked, how are things now (for the Milwaukie to Oregon City segment)? Richard Brandman explained that Tri-Met recently added more service so there are a fair number of buses running through that corridor. What the issue is on South McLoughlin Boulevard is that it's not pedestrian friendly, and there are signals that slow down buses. There are things that can be done both for pedestrians to cross the street to board the buses and improvements to the signal system so buses can go faster.

Rod Monroe pointed out that BRT improvements would continue all the way to Clackamas Community College from Milwaukie. Bus rapid transit allows buses at intersections, where there's congestion, to have a short exclusive lane to bypass the congestion. Also by allowing buses to trigger signals, they can move through congested traffic with less disruption.

Lonnie Roberts asked, is this without adding lanes? Rod Monroe answered “yes.” You don’t add new lanes, but rather small queue bypass lanes at the intersections. This is without taking a lane out of service for automobiles. Fred Hansen explained that Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) queue bypass lanes enable buses to move faster. No auto lanes are removed. What is at issue is the ability to space bus stops better and to improve pedestrian connections and safety. Referring to McLoughlin and the segment of the South Corridors between Milwaukie and Oregon City, he said it is difficult to safely get across the multiple lanes and these issues need to be dealt with.

Richard Brandman said the citizens and working groups between Milwaukie and Clackamas Regional Center had more diverse interests. In that corridor there was interest in examining HOV lanes, the busway and the BRT option. In the Portland to Milwaukie segment, there was not much support for any of the options that were studied in the process during last year. There was limited support for the BRT option and for the commuter rail option. There was some opposition to the busway and HOV option. The community asked, was there any way to reexamine light rail in the corridor? Was there any way to have a lower cost light rail option? They came to the Policy Group meeting on December 11 and gave a presentation on why they felt as they did.

On December 11, 2000, the Policy Group narrowed alternatives that would be potentially included in the EIS (“Narrowing of Alternatives” — green handout). The immediate question was, could there be a significantly cheaper light rail option?

A lower cost light rail option than the old South/North LRT line was developed by Tri-Met. By using the Hawthorne Bridge rather than constructing a new bridge across the Willamette River and single-tracking parts of the line—the cost of a potential line from Portland to Milwaukie could be reduced to \$357M. Work was also performed during the same timeframe not only on the light rail option, but also on the busway and HOV options. The Policy Group reviewed these findings in March.

The Policy Group met again on May 7, 2001. There was agreement on some segments of the corridor and work to be done on other segments of the corridor (“Refinement of Alternatives” — green handout). Mr. Brandman referred to “South Corridor Busway and Light Rail Comparison” (page 2, green handout). He explained estimated ridership, capital costs and travel time comparisons of light rail and busway. The next meeting for the policy group is scheduled for June 5 at 7:30 a.m. Mr. Brandman added that he hoped there would be some narrowing decisions made on June 5, in order to reduce the cost and complexity of the EIS and to keep on schedule.

Bill Kennemer said he appreciated the effort that has been put into this study. He asked, “what are we trying to achieve? We have a common goal of finding an affordable, efficient system. Two major concerns being focused on are congestion in 1) the McLoughlin corridor and 2) the Clackamas Regional Center area. Milwaukie neighbors are cooperating in trying to find solutions.

Rod Monroe said this was a resolution from Metro Council endorsing the South Corridor Policy Group recommendations and process.

2002 – 2005 MTIP SCHEDULE, PROCESS, ISSUES

Andy Cotugno discussed a proposed public meeting scheduled for June with JPACT and Metro Council. This is an opportunity for the public to 1) review the MTIP technical ranking of the projects, 2) to provide feedback on what additional considerations should be given to which projects of the highest priority, 3) to comment on the technical rankings and provide comments on additional considerations, and 4) to provide input on what the right modal mix and cost of all these projects should be. Mr. Cotugno proposed Tuesday evening, June 19, 2001 as a public meeting date. *In the past, what worked well was a room for an “open house” with information available and opportunity for people to ask questions. Additionally, breakout sessions will be provided with members of the JPACT committee and the Metro Council to listen to individual and group comments. Mr. Cotugno suggested this meeting follow a similar process as in the past.

Andy Cotugno outlined the expected timeline for the MTIP schedule and process as follows: 1) Available information about the project rankings was scheduled for June. Public input on those rankings was planned for the week after the next JPACT. Last month at the JPACT meeting, Andy Cotugno asked what portion of the short list should be funded at a balanced program level. The input from JPACT would help in getting a final recommendation for public hearing purposes. 2) In July, there would be an initial ranking. At the meeting in July, make a short list—a first cut in order to get a more focused consideration of what the choices are. 3) In September there would be a final cut and recommendation, review, and potential JPACT/Council action.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATUS REPORT

Andy Cotugno explained that this item was included in the agenda because an action from DLCD was expected last Friday; however, that didn't happen. This agenda item was postponed for one month. At the last JPACT meeting, a packet was distributed on potential amendments to the RTP. Those amendments seem to be satisfactory to the staff of DLCD. He said there seemed to be continued disagreement between Metro and DLCD staff over the exceptions that Metro proposed on the two major highway corridors (Sunrise and Tualatin/Sherwood Expressway). He hoped to have closure on those issues by the time the Commission meets again on June 15, 2001 to review the RTP.

METRO 2040 RE-ENGAGEMENT

Andy Cotugno commented on the memo addressed to JPACT regarding the “2040 re-engagement: Key Products; Status Report (purple handout). In addition, he summarized the

**Actual meeting date has since been set for Monday, June 18, 2001 at 6:00 p.m. at Metro.*

2040 Re-engagement: Where do we grow from here? Spring 2001 - Winter 2002” (attachment A). Mr. Cotugno said suggestions over the past few years indicated the need to get more active in the community and re-engage the community in the 2040 process. Some questions to be addressed included: 1) how are we doing as a community with handling growth pressures in the region? Are there adjustments that we need to consider? Where do we go in the future? In the growth area of Metro’s work program, there’s a strict deadline to conclude our Urban Growth Boundary (UGB) reevaluation by the end of 2002. At that time, Council will consider 1) whether or not there is a sufficient 20-year land supply within our UGB, 2) how to deal with any shortfalls in that supply, 3) whether there are opportunities to change plans in order to accommodate more growth within the current boundary or add to the boundary—and where to add to the boundary.

Mr. Cotugno discussed the “2040 Re-engagement Status Report – Spring 2001” report. He briefly outlined planned activities, outreach efforts and available products for Metro’s 2040 re-engagement process. Andy Cotugno referred to the Regional Livability Conference scheduled for March 14-16, 2002. This is a major growth conference for discussion on issues, trade-offs and to get public feedback on which preferred choices can best implement the 2040 Growth Concept. After the spring conference dialogue, a decision and adoption mode will follow in the Fall 2002. There will be more public involvement and activities along the way.

CLEAN AIR ACTION DAYS

Nina DeConcini, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) presented the Clean Air Action Days agenda item. Ms. DeConcini reported that she had checked to ensure that JPACT’s represented organizations were signed up to receive the advisory notifications on the days that DEQ issues clean air action days. These days are during the summer when there is little or no wind, hot temperatures and high ozone levels. She gave an overview of what DEQ is doing this summer because it differs from what has been done in past summers. Usually, these advisories are triggered on days when temperatures are 90 degrees or higher and wind speeds are below 10 mph. This year, DEQ proposed implementing a two-tier system. The reason for this is to better predict the advisories. Weather patterns can quickly change during the day. They can only predict advisories about 36 hours in advance. The Clean Air Action Day Program would be implemented on both moderate and high action days. Nina DeConcini said the program focuses on public’s health issues in regards to the high ozone levels.

Fred Hansen said that keeping the buses running is what helps to make a difference on the moderate/high ozone alert days.

Nina DeConcini showed a video on TV advertisements produced in the United Kingdom. These TV clips addressed environmental concerns including: clean air, conserving energy, water quality, and recycling.

WELL-DESIGNED COMMUNITIES – THE HEALTH CONNECTION

Councilor Rex Burkholder presented a brief summary on “Sprawling Cities and Spreading Waistlines” – from New Urban News (ivory handout) that included research on the link between community design, people’s physical activity and health. Mr. Burkholder introduced Dr. Jane Moore, Oregon Health Division, who is active with the Oregon Chapter of A.C.E. health professionals.

Dr. Jane Moore presented explanations on the handouts provided which included the following: “Well-Designed Communities—The Health Connection,” “BMI for Adults (Body Mass Index),” “Active Community Environments,” “Focus on Livable Communities—Why People Don’t Walk and What City Planners Can Do About It.” (“Keeping Oregon Healthy” booklets were also available on the table.) Dr. Moore’s presentation included community design and public health connections. She provided study results of obesity across the United States and in Oregon including: 1) obesity and disease risks, 2) causes of death related to obesity, 3) the surgeon general’s recommendation for physical activity, and 4) moderate physical activity health benefits.

Dr. Moore introduced Scott Bricker from Bicycle Transportation Alliance (BTA). She said that bicycling and walking (including safe, accessible facilities) are included in Metro’s Regional Transportation Plan (RTA). Dr. Moore added that the RTA addressed livable communities, healthy environments, and stable economy; however, didn’t mention healthy people.

OTHER BUSINESS

Fred Hansen announced that a shutdown over the Steel Bridge is scheduled for tomorrow. Tri-Met is moving track about 10 feet for a smoother operation. Shutdown is scheduled for 11 p.m. Friday, May 11. They will work seven days a week until completion.

An additional announcement was that Martha Bennett is leaving to go work with the Columbia River Gorge Commission.

Andy Cotugno referred to the Willamette Valley: Choices for the Future Conference in Corvallis held in April 2001. He asked whether JPACT would be interested in inviting those groups from the conference to present their issues here. A June meeting was suggested.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Francine Floyd
Recording Secretary