

MEETING REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: June 8, 2000

GROUP/SUBJECT: Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation (JPACT)

PERSONS ATTENDING: Members: Jon Kvistad, Chair, and Rod Monroe and Ed Washington, Metro Council; Roy Rogers, Washington County; Serena Cruz, Multnomah County; Royce Pollard, City of Vancouver; Karl Rohde, Cities of Clackamas County; Rob Drake, Cities of Washington County; Bill Kennemer, Clackamas County; Fred Hansen, Tri-Met; Charlie Hales, City of Portland; Craig Pridemore, Clark County; Mary Legry, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); Jim Kight, Cities of Multnomah County; Dave Lohman, Port of Portland; Grace Crunican, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT); Andy Ginsburg, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ).

Guests: Elsa Coleman, City of Portland; Ted Spence, Citizen; Susie Lahsene, Port of Portland; Dean Lookingbill, Southwest Washington RTC; Bill Atherton, Metro Council; Jim Howell, Association of Oregon Rail & Transit Advocates (AORTA); Lynn Peterson, 1000 Friends of Oregon; Chuck Green, Parsons Brinkerhoff; Ross Williams, Citizens for Sensible Transit; Dick Feeney, Tri-Met; Jason Daughn, Senator Ron Wyden's Office; Martha Bennett, City of Milwaukie; Ron Papsdorf, City of Gresham; Beckie Lee, Commissioner Serena Cruz's Office; Dennis Mitchell, ODOT; Dave Williams, ODOT.

METRO STAFF: Andy Cotugno, Mike Hoglund, Ross Roberts, Chris Deffebach.

SUMMARY:

The meeting was called to order and Chair Jon Kvistad declared a quorum.

MEETING REPORT:

Action taken: The meeting report of May 11, 2000, was moved for approval by Mayor Drake, with a second by Councilor Rohde. The motion passed unanimously.

RESOLUTION NO. 00-2960 – FOR THE PURPOSE OF APPROVING I-5 HIGH-OCCUPANCY VEHICLE FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Councilor Monroe said that this was presented last month to the committee as an informational item, and that this resolution is the recommendation from the Bi-State Committee. Tuesday, June 6th, the Southwest Washington Regional Transportation Council (SW RTC) adopted this

recommendation with one clarification introduced by Mayor Pollard. That clarification is marked on the first page of the resolution, item 2., the underlined text, "It is the intent of this resolution that the recommended I-5 HOV facility minimum through-lane configuration by 2 + 1, two (2) general purpose lanes and one (1) high-occupancy vehicle lane." Councilor Monroe briefly reviewed the resolution.

Mayor Pollard added that a lot of work went into this resolution and he encouraged JPACT to step up to the plate with their approval of the resolution which offered a short-term, at the least, and perhaps a long-term solution to some of the congestion. He said this resolution was a good piece of work and he supported it.

Councilor Rohde asked how safety/enforcement issues were being addressed. Councilor Monroe said the Bi-State Committee has spent a lot of time on these issues. Safety was one of the main reasons why HOV doesn't work over the current Interstate Bridge; it was recognized that HOV only works if there is major enforcement. Currently there's a grant being used to enforce the northbound lane in Oregon. He said his understanding is that after HOV is in place in Washington, there will be significant enforcement. When you achieve 85% to 95% compliance, that's considered satisfactory. If compliance falls below that percentage, the public no longer accepts what's happening and the whole system breaks down. We recognize that enforcement is critical.

Councilor Rohde pointed out that enforcement was not part of the resolution. Councilor Monroe agreed, saying it's a given.

Mary Legry said the immediate opportunity for HOV coincides with the Washington construction project due for completion October 2001. Washington's Olympia Traffic Office is assisting with an analysis on the safety issues that have been raised, and she expects to have that report back by the end of June. The WSDOT Commission has asked that they come before them in August with information and how they want to proceed. The Commission is very interested because this will be the first Washington HOV lane outside of the Puget Sound area. We will be asking for part-time hours for this, which is different from how the Puget Sound area one operates. She said just by chance the day before, she had had an opportunity to meet with the head of their State Patrol who did know about this new HOV lane and said she thought there would be six motorcycles available which would make enforcement both possible and affordable.

Chris Deffebach added that during the Bi-State Committee discussions, there were presentations from the Oregon Department of Transportation on their continuing to work with the City of Portland to resolve their issues, particularly in making this HOV lane permanent. This resolution does include a statement to continue to resolve those issues without specifying how, but recognizing they're close. It does give support and direction for working to make that lane permanent.

Action taken: Councilor Monroe moved, with a second by Commissioner Pridemore, to approve Resolution No. 00-2960A. The motion passed unanimously.

SOUTH CORRIDOR STUDY SURVEY RESULTS

Ross Roberts gave a quick update on the South Corridor Study. As of May 10, the Study's Scoping Phase was completed. One consistent comment received from the Southeast Portland segment was that they would like to see light rail come back. The general consensus of the South Corridor Policy Group was that light rail is very intriguing; however, the non-light rail options should be brought up to the same level of detail as light rail so they can be understood better. Then in the fall, the Policy Group will make a determination about how they want to compare light rail with the other options.

In this Scoping Phase, public comment was received through public meetings, written materials, e-mail, and from the Transportation Hot Line. We know that often the people who come to the meetings and send in their comments aren't necessarily those who represent the broader community. That's why Moore Information, Inc., was retained to obtain more information through a telephone survey of households in the Corridor. The survey was structured to get statistically significant results in each segment of the Corridor. The Study is looking at three distinct segments and we wanted to treat them differently and make sure we address their needs. This survey is important for us to understand how people are thinking in Clackamas County.

Mr. Bob Moore provided an overview of the survey (a copy of the results is included in the record). Nine hundred people were interviewed, aged 16 and older, in the South Corridor area which extends from inner southeast Portland and includes most of Clackamas County east of the Willamette River. The first piece of information gleaned was that people in the area are very optimistic about what's going on, basically fueled by a booming economy. The three segments Mr. Roberts referred to are southeast Portland down to the northern third of Milwaukie; the southern third of Milwaukie through Oregon City and down towards Canby; and the eastern third of Milwaukie out Hwy. 224, Clackamas and beyond, past Boring.

Mr. Moore then went through more of the data results. He pointed out that the South Corridor has the lowest transit ridership in the metropolitan area. What the survey showed is a public that is fairly optimistic and complacent, with no burning issues; they don't know what the biggest transportation problem is, they don't know how to solve the biggest transportation problems, but they're open to a whole variety of solutions.

Mr. Hansen commented that he was struck by the 80% of the respondents on Question 25 saying they they felt the solution to their traffic problems were alternatives to SOVs. He thought that was significant because he'd have thought the answers would have been in the South Corridor would have been much heavier on the auto side, and yet 80% chose something other than just more capacity for that auto. He said this body would need to keep that in mind as they begin working on solutions.

In response to a question from Commissioner Cruz regarding the 67% of people who don't ever ride the bus yet want other people to ride it, Mr. Moore said there were many people who would

never be able to ride transit because they need their cars at work or they don't like the idea of riding transit for the inconvenience.

Commissioner Kennemer added that part of the low ridership is due to topography or the street grids, and some of it is limited service. The demand is there. He said he gleaned from the survey that there is substantial support for the bus, and if property taxes are increased, there will be some disparity. Clackamas County voters don't want to fund a lot of options, so exploring the bus system is good because it's less expensive and yet acceptable.

Andy Ginsburg noted that a Park-N-Ride option was not listed in the survey. In this suburban environment, he thought this could be effective, and asked Mr. Moore why it hadn't been included. Mr. Roberts replied, saying that in the network areas being looked at, Park-N-Ride is a component, but it wasn't specifically included in the survey.

There were comments regarding the members of this committee's leadership role in their communities, and the need for them to not only connect with the business community but to communicate effectively the need for solving the transportation issues and congestion before they get to the gridlock stage and affect the economic viability of the region.

Mr. Cotugno had one observation to make regarding the survey. It showed the dividing line showing the strong preference in southeast Portland for transit generally and light rail specifically, and in Clackamas County there's a strong preference for roads generally and buses. Mr. Cotugno said he was impressed that, while that was borne out in the survey, it was a fairly narrow difference and that there was strong support the other way, as well.

Andy Ginsburg asked how the residents of the South Corridor voted for the original configuration of MAX a few years ago. Being told they voted for it, he then said maybe they'd be willing to support a local system. Commissioner Kennemer said that while the opponents are not the majority, they are extraordinarily vocal.

RTP FINANCE DISCUSSION

Mr. Cotugno gave a quick recap of last month's presentation on options (green sheets), then said he was hoping to get direction on a transportation finance approach. This committee needs to finalize what to say about finance in the RTP document, he said, because it's up for adoption next month. Public comments are coming in, and these will be brought back to this body with recommendations before the adoption. The chapter in the RTP dealing with finance is general, and he said he's looking for anything particular that JPACT believes should be adopted into the document, or a follow-on activity they may want so that they're comfortable with what is brought before them to adopt next month.

First, Mr. Cotugno said, the plan as it is now has a manageable price tag if we stay on track for the size system that's been defined and not scale it back. Second, we need to be more strategic about what we are going to pursue at the state level. We can't go for everything at that level.

Should we focus on state help for maintenance or modernization, or vice versa, but not go for both. These are directions that need to be determined. His third major point was that something needed to be done at the local level to raise funds. He said we can solve our local problems, but if we care about the state system, we need to be in front of the state legislature for that, as well. Abandoning the state approach and doing everything locally isn't a viable option, nor is relying upon the state approach only. His fourth major conclusion was that pursuing other creative sources must begin. His final conclusion was that regardless of what is pursued for funding, it won't be there for a while. Whatever the agenda is for pursuing funding, operating in the next five to ten years will be done in an environment of limited resources. The whole subject of prioritization and what's most important and how we ration out limited resources is a bigger deal and will continue to tighten up regardless of what's done on raising new funds. These are some bottom line major conclusions articulated in the RTP.

Andy Ginsburg asked Mr. Cotugno to relate either the 4 cents or the 2 cents to the strategic system vs the constrained system. Mr. Cotugno replied that right now the RTP assumes that if you have 2 cents a year, and that's all, you can fund maintenance. The other sources that we already get would fund the constrained system. All existing sources fund the constrained system (Tri-Met payroll tax, federal flexible funds, 2 cents of the state gas tax that now go to modernization, federal highway demo funds, etc.). The next 2 cents funds the whole strategic system. Or, if not the 2 cents a year, then some of the other funding mechanisms mentioned earlier.

Mr. Ginsburg then said that at the committee's last meeting Commissioner Cruz has asked about discussing principals for funding, and he wondered if staff has had a chance to look at that yet. Mr. Cotugno replied that they had not. Mr. Ginsburg said perhaps, if there could be agreement reached on some of the principals, that would be useful for the RTP and, at some point, for the public debate about it.

Commissioner Rogers asked what Commissioner Cruz meant. Commissioner Cruz said she had asked what the committee was looking for specifically – would they be funding sources that impact personal behaviors, funding sources relative to who wins/loses, how they would affect or how would they be relevant to people on fixed incomes. She had asked what the pieces were that this committee wanted to think about, and when agreement to that is attained, then the committee would be able to move forward with their choices.

Commissioner Kennemer asked Mr. Cotugno to consider the use of the word "locally" throughout the report. He said he was reading it as being used as a mixture of regional and local. He asked how much of that meant individual initiative and how much was JPACT. Mr. Cotugno replied that that would really be JPACT's direction to set.

Dave Lohman drew two additional conclusions from the past few years: the voters seem unwilling to be able to hand over additional authority to the elected officials, and that the more specific the leaders can get regarding projects, the better it will be. As far as dealing with maintenance, he suggested perhaps a specific effort related to indexing funding for maintenance. Trying to convince the voters, outside the context of modernization, that this is a critical way to

spend their money. The second additional conclusion was related to innovative measures, which included the public/private partnerships referred to, and it is that we haven't figured out a way to talk with the business community yet in a way that makes them feel they'll gain from some particular project, that there is a return on their investment. Maybe being more project oriented would help in that, as well.

Mayor Drake agreed with Mr. Lohman, saying it's this body's responsibility to stay engaged with the citizens and continue to keep them informed so that when the region comes to a true crisis stage, the prep work will have been done to lead them to a likely conclusion. People are very smart, he said, and the polling is saying that maybe its not as bad as we think it is. As leaders we need to continue to remind people that there is a price.

Chair Kvistad reminded the committee that what they do with the RTP is directly related to the state level. He asked Grace Crunican what she thought and how this group could provide support. Ms. Crunican said that, no matter what, this group needs to stay coordinated. Working at both the state level and at this level needs to continue. Responding to Mr. Lohman's comment on being more project specific, she said ODOT was as specific on projects as they'd ever been and yet were defeated significantly. The business community does understand the problem, she believes. She's met with them throughout the state, and they are aware of the problem and are willing to step up to the plate. In the past, successful packages meant that they got through the legislature. Successful packages have never made it through the vote of the people, statewide. She said that brought her back to the question of what it would take to get a successful package through the legislature. A successful package in the past has meant a combination of highway and other transportation modes. Small gains are made in other modes as small gains were made in the road system. She said the cities, counties and the state need to be together, and that includes the Metro region, to make sure there's a multimodal aspect to any request.

ODOT has had some discussion with AAA and the truckers, she continued, and now the truckers said they would like a place at the table. AAA now is a little emboldened. On the other hand, they also know that there is a burden on them to say what they're for, from even their members. People have told me what they've said to the AAA board, and so AAA will have to find some reason to find something they're in favor of. They are not in favor of doing away with weight/mile.

Chair Kvistad agreed that there are stabilization issues. He asked Ms. Crunican if she thought it was time to go to the legislature with an indexing proposal on the gas tax to at least keep it stable. Ms. Crunican said it was difficult to say what would and would not work. Tradition has said a gas tax and vehicle registration fee, but that doesn't take it into the future very far. A new way of business needs to be found. Nothing is off the table; creativity is something people welcome. She also thought there needed to be work done in the metropolitan region to talk about if it is a taxing authority. It's a touchy subject, she said, but whether it's the three counties, whether it's Metro, Tri-Met, the Port, whatever the arrangement is, the activity would be how to come together if there were a metropolitan package, not the what of it, but maybe what the basis is and the combination of transit and highways or other and highways. This is a good discussion

point for this body without leaping to a conclusion. She said she thought everyone ought to stay open for a while.

Councilor Monroe said one of the problems with taxes in this state is that we tend to rely heavily on single kind of general taxes, which is why we have one of the highest income taxes in the nation, that's why we have historically had one of the highest property taxes in the nation, one of the highest gas taxes in the nation. It's because we don't have diversity in our tax system, we rely on one heavy, great big tax, and we're going to need to move away from that. He wasn't saying to ignore what the legislature is doing, but to be supportive, helpful and encouraging. We can no longer rely, though, on the legislature to provide the money to solve our problems, whether highway and roads or transit. He said he thought the opportunity to get the legislature to raise the payroll threshold from the current 6/10 of 1 percent would be an extremely difficult sell down in Salem. He agreed that new, creative, diverse ways need to be found to fund both our highway needs and our transit needs, regionally, while continuing to work with the legislature.

So he said he was intrigued by things like urban renewal, when it can be used, transit utility fee, and parking taxes and other kinds of creative ways to take small bites of the apple that add up to a significant amount of money to provide resources for us. The question becomes, because Metro has very limited taxing authority, whether these creative new taxes are going to have to be done by the cities and counties and if they're done with or without a public vote. He said he'd like to find ways where this can be accomplished in a cooperative way between the counties, Metro and the cities without having to take a public vote.

Councilor Rohde said, regarding the leadership issue, that this committee becomes extremely familiar with the road needs in the region and in the state. And yet there is not a problem to the majority of the public. To most people, things are fine. He agreed with Councilor Monroe that the job of the people on this committee is to provide the leadership to do things ahead of time before they become twice as expensive to repair once they become a crisis. Maybe an answer would be to let a bridge collapse from lack of maintenance. That would actually get people to realize that there's a crisis. Unfortunately, we're in a situation where we have a public out there that thinks things are fine. Looking through the survey results, or just about every study you'd look at, people are talking about how congestion is not a problem, it's tolerable, they can handle it. The people who are complaining about congestion are the ones who are riding the bus. He said he thought JPACT needed, rather than constantly asking for funding, to do a much better job on convincing the public that there is a need.

Mr. Lohman agreed with Councilor Rohde, and wanted to respond briefly to Ms. Crunican. He didn't disagree with anything she said, but wanted to clarify that when he said to be more project oriented, he wasn't sure it would appeal at the state level, but at the regional level he thought it would look to the voters as if they were being handed a bunch of projects that would seem like a lot of general authority. It seems like it would be worth trying going to, say Clackamas County, saying we've got a package that will be a big improvement in the South Corridor over the next twenty years. What he was really thinking of, he said, was the I-5 Corridor, which is actually a bunch of projects that are being looked at together to try to solve one big problem. On the business side of it, he agreed that progress has been made in dealing with the business

community, but primarily with the "big boys," i.e., banks, utilities, high tech companies, who tend to see a benefit from the rising tide that they believe will benefit them. But the little guys still don't see it, he didn't think, and they need to see a specific return on investment. That's particularly true on a specific type of innovative project we talked about.

Commissioner Rogers said that Washington County, regarding the RTP, has convened its business community, major investors as well as the utilities, and they are in the process of looking at the various issues being spoken of here. Not speaking for the cities in Washington County, he said the County Board was not anxious to enter into any real discussion on financing at this point. He said his observation is that they're still trying to understand what the state system is and what the regional system is, and are not sure that the current designations are correct. Being a part of the business community himself, he knew that they're trying to understand what they would be buying. His observation is that unless the region has a good idea of the parameters being dealt with, he doesn't think Washington County would be an adversary, but won't necessarily be a proponent, either.

Chair Kvistad said the one thing about the financing numbers on the green sheets was that this committee has agreed in the last year-and-a-half that these are the needs that have to be addressed. What needs to be done now with the RTP is to move it forward and at least have the strategies addressed. In light of previous discussions, JPACT will need to start looking and reflecting on going outside the lines a bit, at disparity and perspectives. The funding strategies on the first page were agreed to.

He then asked for general discussion on having the RTP move forward at this point. Ms. Cruz raised an objection because she said she was not prepared to pick an option and she didn't feel JPACT had fully discussed the options as something that JPACT should be forwarding. She didn't mean to say the process should be slowed down, but said, relevant to Councilor Rohde's comment on the bridges collapsing, that when they do fall down, the folks won't knock at his door, but at her door. Even though the bridges are clearly the county's concern, they're very important regionally. She agreed with Commissioner Rogers on how the system works and who pays for it is frustrating, and agreed completely on how creative thinking needs to be taken into strong account. At the same time, Multnomah County will lose millions of dollars over the next few years if they can't come up with match money before a solution is found. Multnomah County is going to have to find some type of local solution, and she doesn't think it ought to be just Multnomah County but a regional thing. This body needs to think about what the pieces are that have to be done in the next couple of years that need our focus so we can show some progress and some direct connection to our region. She said the tax ought to be related to the use, the burden issue needs to be thought through so it's not primarily born by individuals but with a balance between individuals and corporations, and that this thinking be done as a region. She said that while she was saying to step back from this particular set of options, she was not saying slow down nor was she saying the committee shouldn't be moving very concretely and very directly in a particular direction.

Mr. Lohman agreed, and said the committee needs to be careful not to go too far away from being regional. Regional facilities, like the bridges, happen to be in Multnomah County, but

they're still regional facilities. The same is true of the marine and air terminals. Everyone receives the benefit, so with respect to actual regional facilities, everyone should bear the burden. Also, he asked if it would be possible to, instead of calling these options, call them discussion concepts. The purpose is not to say that this committee endorses these options, but to get them out there for everyone to see. Mr. Cotugno agreed, and Chair Kvistad said that could be done.

Mayor Drake agreed with Mr. Lohman that JPACT has been discussing these for a long time, and calling them discussion points would be acceptable, but to ignore them would not be. They need to stay on the record as something we've worked on very hard for a number of years, and although the May 15th vote certainly was a knock on the side of the head, the fact is that these needs exist and we need to be frank about how we get to either ideals or at least workable points.

Regarding the Clackamas County infrastructure and transportation, Commissioner Kennemer mentioned Clackamas County's newly created Concurrency Task Force and said their report should be available at end of this month. He said he would share that report with JPACT.

Mr. Hansen said he was in agreement with the dollar amounts given on the green sheets but was concerned with the way it was worded. It was agreed that these would be circulated to JPACT before it was finalized with a five-day turnaround so they could have one last look at it.

Mr. Ginsburg said it would be helpful, in addition to having the four discussion packages laid out, to have a matrix of some principals against the different funding mechanisms so that, for example, you could look at the state vs. local gas tax, or a parking tax or a payroll tax, and see how it would fall against principals such as Commissioner Cruz mentioned, and also include how it affects demand management and other factors. If we provided more information, it would make it more useful in terms of evaluating the various options.

Chair Kvistad said a work session may be scheduled on major principals, issues, etc. There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rooney Barker
Recording Secretary