

MEETING REPORT

DATE OF MEETING: Thursday, January 13, 2000

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

PERSONS ATTENDING: Members: Chair Jon Kvistad; Kay Van Sickel, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT); Jim Kight, Cities of Multnomah County; Andy Ginsburg, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ); Don Wagner, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT); Dean Lookingbill, Southwest Washington RTC; Dave Lohman, Port of Portland; Sharron Kelley, Multnomah County; Karl Rohde, Cities of Clackamas County; Ed Washington, Metro Council; Bill Kennemer, Clackamas County; Charlie Hales, City of Portland; Rob Drake, Cities of Washington County; Roy Rogers, Washington County; Fred Hansen, Tri-Met.

Guests: David Bragdon, Rod Monroe, and Bill Atherton Metro Council; Scott L. Rice, Cornelius City Council; Tom Brian, John Rosenberger, and Dennis Mulvihill, Washington County; Lou Ogden, City of Tualatin; Rod Sandoz, Clackamas County; Dick Feeney and Bob Stacey, Tri-Met; Dave Williams, ODOT; Chuck Green and G. B. Arrington, Parsons Brinkerhoff; Mark Lear and Marc Zolton, City of Portland; Tom Markgraf, Congressman Blumenauer's office; Karen Schilling, Multnomah County; Jim Howell, AORTA; Don Odermott, City of Hillsboro; Martha Bennett, City of Milwaukie; Paul Silver, City of Wilsonville.

Staff: Andy Cotugno, Mike Hoglund, Mike Hoglund, John Cullerton, Tom Kloster, Sharon Kelly, Gina Whitehill-Baziuk, Dave Unsworth and Rooney Barker.

SUMMARY:

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

MEETING REPORT:

The meeting report of December 9, 1999, was moved by Commissioner Kelley, with a second by Mayor Drake, for approval as submitted. The report was unanimously APPROVED.

SOUTH CORRIDOR TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Dave Unsworth of the High-Capacity Transit staff, in Ross Roberts' absence, gave the committee an update of the South Corridor Study, using a handout. He said that the Study was entering the alternatives analysis phase in which the Study is looking at a wide range of alternatives to address transportation problems in the South Corridor. Mr. Unsworth described the South Corridor Study structure of citizen working groups, a project committee and a technical group. Mr. Unsworth commented on previous studies as well as new alternatives, going into more detail on the alternatives. The alternatives he described were: no-build, busways, bus rapid transit, high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, peak period pricing, commuter rail, river transit, and intelligent transportation systems and TSM. Each alternative he described had other possible variations as well. Each alternative mode could be applied differently to each of the three Study segments.

Regarding commuter rail, Commissioner Rogers said when the jurisdictions were given the commuter rail ride late in 1999 they had to change engines in Beaverton. He asked if, with a DMU, there would be any difficulty. Mr. Unsworth explained that the DMUs could be used to push or pull cars and switching engines around would not be required. Commissioner Rogers asked about the potential connection into the Wilsonville-to-Beaverton commuter rail line. Mr. Unsworth responded that the Tillamook Branch line from Milwaukie and Lake Oswego could connect into the Wilsonville-to-Beaverton line in Tualatin. This connection could provide an opportunity for passengers to transfer between the lines at Tualatin. These lines would be grade separated and no track connection could easily be made. A track-to-track connection could be made in the vicinity of Bonita Road.

Commissioner Rogers then asked if there are any other underutilized lines in the Milwaukie area or if that was the only line. Commissioner Hales replied that the Union Pacific line is the main line but there are branch lines where one would need to connect to that main line. He added that that line is double-tracked but not necessarily underutilized. He said it's handling a lot of service; he wasn't sure how much more it could handle. Mr. Rogers asked if there was a natural connection to IMAX or to any light rail. Mr. Hansen replied that light rail comes over the Steel Bridge, and this line would be on the railroad part of the Steel Bridge, assuming it stayed on the track. It would be difficult to find a way for them to run on the same track, but it would certainly be easy to move people relatively easily between the two, in a station-sense. It would be like a subway system where there are crossing lines, he said.

The next steps, Mr. Unsworth informed the committee, would be working groups (which will hold their first meeting on January 19th), public workshops scheduled for February, hiring a consultant for design, traffic and public involvement assistance, and then, in June, policy group decisions to narrow the alternatives. This would allow staff to quickly move into a Draft EIS, hopefully completed in June 2000.

Mr. Cotugno added that this was all related to the federal strategy, the objective being to have a clear definition of that final project so that three years from now, when the next authorization of the federal bill comes up again for the next six-year period, a clear-cut project is identified. In the meantime, smaller appropriations can be asked for in the current bill over the next three years while the committee is defining the big authorization that to be sought in the following bill. This study process is integrated with the federal priority strategy.

Councilor Rohde said that he didn't believe the City of Lake Oswego was represented on any of the working groups, and asked if they could be on the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). He said, relating to this, part of the solution to some of the congestion going into the South Corridor would be to move some of the cross regional traffic off McLoughlin Boulevard going into Portland and get it going through Lake Oswego on commuter rail ~~or however it's decided~~.

Commissioner Kennemer thanked Mr. Unsworth for his presentation, and also thanked Mr. Cotugno, Mr. Brandman and Mr. Roberts for expediting the project. He said he would like to see this Corridor continue as a regional priority and the project move forward quickly.

Mr. Hansen reported that one of the things JPACT did was approve the dollars to be put into enhanced transit, and one of the first investments Tri-Met did with these funds was on the #33 line. He said the preliminary numbers for the first three months are remarkable, that normally it takes two to three years to get transit ridership up to the numbers they've achieved. The public has immediately responded to the service, and no one should worry that these types of improvements in service would not be utilized.

Secondly, he said, relating to river crossings and commuter rail, he hoped options wouldn't be dismissed from any discussions if they're not easy to connect to commuter rail. As an example, he cited HOV lanes that may not work within the Portland city limits so are rejected because they won't get people back into Washington County. Mr. Hansen said these types of issues may not need to be fully analyzed, but they also should not be dismissed. They should at the least be evaluated in terms of other regional priorities.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Cotugno explained that the Summary of Council Changes document, included in the agenda packet, was an annotation to all the amendments that were adopted December 16th by the Metro Council in Resolution No. 99-2878B. He explained that at the last JPACT meeting, there were still approximately two weeks remaining in the public comment period. The Council deferred action on any amendments that resulted from this comment period. These comments, he said, are now included in Resolution No. 00-2888. Mr.

Cotugno added that all comments received between October 1 and December 16, 1999, are in the bound document entitled 1999 Regional Transportation Plan, Public Comment Report.

Chair Kvistad indicated that the yellow pages included the additional comments the committee needed to consider today, a few for discussion, most by consent. These pages included Resolution 00-2888 which, when adopted, will be the resolution that incorporates all amendments to the 1999 Regional Transportation Plan.

Mr. Cotugno said the Resolution has two sections of comments: Approval by Discussion and Approval by Consent. He suggested the Discussion comments be addressed by the committee individually. He also suggested that any items the committee wished to remove from the Consent List onto the Discussion List be determined first.

Approval by Consent:

Action taken: Chair Kvistad asked if there were any items to be moved from the Consent List. There were none. Councilor Rohde moved, with a second by Mayor Drake, to approve the Consent List as submitted. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Approval by Discussion:

Comment 1. Mr. Cotugno said this comment regarding special needs transportation was included in the Discussion List mainly to get it on the radar screen. A comment received from Multnomah County prompted staff to see that the RTP is skimpy in all aspects of special transit services and it needs attention over the next six months. For the time being, staff has suggested some minor edits to include in the RTP. Multiple agencies have responsibilities and there is some effort underway to integrate better services. This can be a useful exercise to better determine some of these service improvements as the legislature will provide the money to implement some of them. Basically, this area needs more work.

Councilor Rohde asked if this meant they'd beef up the elderly and disabled portions in the RTP in the same way they're going to create a financially constrained network before we actually adopt the ordinance. Mr. Cotugno replied that for now this comment could be used in the version of the RTP that is published next month, but in the ordinance it would be stronger.

Mr. Hansen said he thought the staff language on this comment reflects the current state of development. There's an effort underway now to begin analyzing even more than the transit needs and how it can be integrated. That work will be going on as a study, assuming there will be some state funding. There'll be considerable opportunity for this body to participate in that process, he said.

Commissioner Rogers said he wasn't sure, financially, what that meant. There is little or no money anywhere so he asked if Mr. Hansen were referring to a reallocation of transit dollars or perhaps other transit services to be taken away to provide this service.

Mr. Hansen said as they are obviously within the RTP, they're not yet looking at financially constrained activities. He said the obvious issue is to identify what the needs are and how to think about them. At the moment, what is being talked about in terms of allocation, he said, are the additional dollars the state put in, not to transit, but specifically to elderly and disabled services and Tri-Met is looking at how to best make use of that. Generally speaking, those dollars that legally flow through the transit entities throughout the state are principally going to private entities to be able to provide additional services. In Washington County, there are obviously issues right now under ADA; Tri-Met is required to provide service for the disabled within three-quarters of a mile of any fixed route service. That leaves quite a few gaps, let alone people outside of the district boundary. Those issues will need to be engaged, and this is a part of that, but there are no issues on money now.

Councilor Washington said he'd heard quite a bit regarding the elderly and disabled, but nothing on low income. That's probably bigger than the other two categories, he added. Probably more poor people than disabled people have transportation needs. If it's in there, it should also be in there that something is going to be done about it. If this committee is serious about providing service to all, it needs to include the poor people, too.

Mr. Cotugno replied that the low-income population is already a major user of the transit system and a strong part of why that service is provided. He said this funding issue has been dealt with in the past under a federal welfare to work initiative to enhance that service for that population. He says he thinks the staff comment is inclusive and meaningful.

Action taken: Mr. Hansen moved, with a second from Commissioner Kelley, to accept the TPAC recommendation on **Comment 1**. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Comment 2. Mr. Cotugno said this committee had a discussion at their last meeting about whether the strategic system was too big, that it's much more than the resources we know are available. The focus of a previous conversation was underscoring the importance of having a specific constrained scenario developed because we're not going to have extra resources, which means we're not going to achieve the strategic, but we're going to get something more than existing resources. We need to figure out what the revenue level will be and then focus our energy into defining what systems that will build. It's important that we're clear on our priorities.

It's already been concluded that that step needs to happen, he said. And we've said we also need a financial strategy which gets us to the strategic system. We might use the

financial strategy and analysis to scale back the strategic system. This is the difference from where we left this last month. We are now saying we might scale back if we don't think we can get to the strategic.

Mayor Drake asked if his assumption of the strategic being approximately a \$7 billion need with approximately \$2.3 billion being identified was accurate. He said he asked because of the important ballot measure coming up later this year. He thought it important that the public understand the huge deficiencies, and yet we want the region to achieve its long-range planning goals. Just because we don't have the funding, we should not refuse to look forward. He said that the vision for 2040 could not be achieved if the bar is set too low. He doesn't want to settle for second best, even if, realistically, it turns out that way. We're not being leaders, he said, if we don't look forward.

Mr. Ginsburg asked for the timeframe for developing a funding plan, and asked for clarification that, once that's realized and assuming it was a realistic plan to achieve that much funding, would it not raise the financially constrained up to that level, leaving the strategic where it is. Mr. Cotugno replied that the constrained is, under the federal definition, a fairly conservative plan of what you can justify or defend as the level of resources you can raise. The strategic, he said, is what we actually want to try to pursue. You never know if you'll be successful, but you need that target to shoot for. The fiscally constrained is a sort of fall-back scenario that says we'll spend money on the basis of the fiscally constrained scenario, but we're going to pursue these other projects in the long-term. As the individual funding actions become real, then they get folded into the fiscally constrained scenario. But the financing actions could be twenty years out. Mr. Ginsburg, for clarification, restated that the funding plan would include things that might not fit the federal definition but would be things to shoot for. He then asked what the funding plan was. Mr. Cotugno said staff is working to develop that over the next six months. Mr. Kvistad said the June/July date for the RTP Ordinance is the adoption date staff is looking at.

Commissioner Rogers wanted to interject that the committee often tries to promote things and ideas that are not necessarily understandable to the public. He said when they use the terms constrained, preferred, strategic, they ought to use euphemisms that make sense to the citizens. As they promote transportation plans, they need to display the perils of the system by using common words that everyone understands. "Preferred" and "strategic" are not good names for plans, they just don't work.

Mr. Hansen asked for verification that the committee would be taking action on the strategic level. He added that he was sympathetic to Mayor Drake's comments, and thought it would be good to have a few touch points along the way to be certain the plan was aggressive enough yet still had a sense of reality.

Action called for: Chair Kvistad asked for a motion to accept TPAC's recommendation on **Comment 2**. There was no motion made.

Comment 3. Mr. Cotugno said there has been concern that there were other measures that should be paid attention to on the adequacy of our transportation system besides this suggestion to drop the level of service (LOS). He agreed that congestion is certainly a front-and-center issue and that it is on the public's minds. As a result, staff doesn't think we ought to drop it, but that there ought to be more measures. The ability to use more measures has been provided in the plan, and it's been suggested not using congestion measures in places where congestion doesn't matter that much, and there will be further development of other measures besides congestion. TPAC thinks the movement should go in that direction, and that's their suggestion, but it doesn't mean dropping LOS altogether.

Mayor Drake said he couldn't imagine dropping the LOS designation. It needs to be left in for the public because they do understand it. Councilor Rohde agreed with the recommendation to have other benchmarks because if one can only rely on single-occupancy vehicles as a benchmark then people aren't being shown the successes that might be achieved.

Action taken: Councilor Rohde moved, with a second by Councilor Kight, to approve the TPAC recommendation on **Comment 3**. Commissioner Rogers said he agreed with Councilor Rohde that there needs to be an array of benchmarks, that he would prefer the motion include either enhancement of benchmarks or provision of more benchmarks. Mr. Hansen said Councilor Rohde's motion was to approve the TPAC recommendation which was to not drop the level of service. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Mr. Hansen asked the committee if they had accomplished their purpose by taking no action on **Comment 2**. Councilor Monroe agreed that JPACT's inaction might be misunderstood.

Action taken: Councilor Monroe moved, with a second by Mr. Hansen, to approve the TPAC recommendation on **Comment 2**. The motion PASSED unanimously.

Mayor Drake, referring to the January 12th letter to the committee from the City of Hillsboro regarding RTP 2020 Population Projections, said that they would like to request that language in the RTP be looked at for evaluating population estimates more accurately and more frequently. When cities experience such huge growth, as Hillsboro did, the RTP needs to keep pace. Mayor Drake said he would like to make certain that some time between now and RTP adoption this be looked at so that individual variables can be accounted for.

FEDERAL PRIORITIES POSITION PAPER

Chair Kvistad, said there are some jurisdictions who would still like to have more discussion on this topic, so it would be set aside until the February meeting. Mr. Cotugno then gave a general overview of the projects listed in the paper.

Mr. Cotugno said this was actually draft #4. He said he'd gotten lots of comments and suggestions as a result of the first two drafts being circulated, and this was the current rendition. The Interstate MAX, the South Corridor and Commuter Rail are the big scale projects for which the paper lays out the strategy on how to move forward and implement them. Currently, Mr. Cotugno said, tackling these three at the same time in the federal arena is no small challenge. The format of the paper is intended to lay out a strategy that actually gets us there and moves all three projects at once. The paper is not ready to adopt yet because there is disagreement over whether or not it's feasible to move all three projects at once, or in fact does it need to be more explicit as to who comes first and under what conditions. That needs more discussion over the next month prior to committee adoption. He said he wanted to highlight some of the other projects that may have been eclipsed by the discussion on the three big corridors. These are projects that need to have attention paid to because what the federal government does might impact us. It could benefit the region or it could hurt, depending upon what happens at the federal level. This body needs to understand the issues and make sure that our delegation understands the issues as well.

Mr. Cotugno cited the I-5 Trade Corridor as another large problem corridor that potentially is going to produce a very significant project down the line. Staff is currently working on developing an improvement strategy in that corridor. As a result of the Federal Highway Borders and Corridors program, he said we think that because we got a planning grant out of that program now that the result of that will position us to fund a project out of that category down the line. We could fund perhaps small phases, small meaning in the \$5 to \$10 million range over the next couple of years. We think it might be feasible to fund a bigger I-5 project in the next Authorization Bill three years from now, if they reauthorize the Borders and Corridors program. If they eliminate the program, obviously there's no prospect there. But this is one, again, where we're trying to position ourselves to take advantage of a particular funding category that we think can produce money for this corridor.

We've also acknowledged the last bullet, because there might be opportunity to access the Water Resources Development Act for railroad-bridge improvements. About ten years ago we received funding through this act for funding to replace the railroad bridge across the Willamette just south of the St. Johns Bridge; this is the one across the Columbia, just west of the I-5 bridge. There are issues there relating to how many times the Interstate Bridge has to lift, as well as the need to accommodate additional rail traffic, and to accommodate more high-speed rail between Portland and Seattle. We've got issues that need some attention on that as well. Our transit objectives could benefit our freeway objectives and benefit our inner-city high-speed rail agenda.

The Columbia River Channel Deepening, #4. This has been included in our priorities in the past, and it's now past the point of having a federally approved project as there was a Record of Decision issued last month. Our request for additional appropriations to begin that project is the next phase.

Under #5, Willamette River Bridge Funding, there are categories that we think could be earmarked for the Willamette River bridges. We're not asking for funds on those right now because the county doesn't have a match for the projects, but we are indicating that we may want to see funding maybe in next year's appropriation or the following year's Authorization Bill.

On #6 FAA Reauthorization, we've raised an issue with the FAA Bill. Congress has attempted for the last several years to adopt the reauthorization of the FAA bill. One of the issues of debate in that bill has been whether or not that money can be used for transit projects like rail connections. It's very contentious elsewhere in the United States. We already have federal approval to use passenger facility charges for the Interstate MAX project and we want to make sure Congress doesn't take that away because that bond payment schedule is already dependent upon that resource over the next 5-10 years. That's one to protect.

Regarding #7 Amtrak South Station, the work is underway to site an Amtrak Station on the south side of the region. Mr. Cotugno said he thought there would be an opportunity to get that funded through the Amtrak Capital Program, and said he's calling that out as one that the committee may want to obtain Congressional support for.

On #8 Interstate MAX Revitalization Program (TCSP), the Interstate MAX construction project is linked to revitalization in North Portland. This is an attempt to leverage that construction project by doing more revitalization in the corridor, and redevelopment around the stations in the corridor. There is, he said, a particularly attractive opportunity here under the TCSP program, which is a land-use related program, to allow for some development projects to proceed soon. This could, in effect, seed the urban renewal district that will eventually provide funding for more redevelopment in the corridor as well as contribute toward the financing plan of the light rail itself. There are multiple objectives that this can help on down the line. This seeks support of the application being submitted and requests an earmark if Congress chooses to earmark.

#9 High Speed Rail. There have been appropriations out of the Rail Crossings category for improvements in the past, up and down the valley. We think there's an opportunity to see more of those improvements and would be supportive of that.

#10 Intelligent Transportation System. The region has been part of a statewide program to ask for funds to be earmarked. This continues to have us as part of the statewide program. We're asking for \$6.5 million dollars where we're supporting a state request for \$6.5 million statewide of which we would be a piece.

#11, Central City Streetcar. The project from PSU north is funded. The project from PSU south, ending in the N. Macadam District, is partially funded. This recognizes that some non-New Starts categories might be appropriate for that project, EPA and HUD being among the possibilities.

#12 Stark Street Boulevard (181 – 197th). Stark Street in the Rockwood light rail area was funded partially with the High Priorities funding category out of the T-21 Authorization. The request here is to pursue grants of up to \$2 million to complete that project, again, out of the TCSP category because of the connection with the Rockwood Town Center development area.

Finally, regarding #13 TEA-21 Technical Corrections, it's possible Congress is talking about the possibility of adopting a Technical Corrections Bill. You never quite know what constitutes a technical correction vs. a major policy shift, so it always requires attention to make sure they don't do something that hurts our region. Of the formulas that were adopted in T-21 to distribute funds, generally they were advantageous to Oregon. That's the kind of thing where there are always attempts to tweak and he said he thinks that needs attention to make sure they don't get tweaked the wrong way.

There are other issues, Mr. Cotugno said, that our delegation should be on notice to pay attention to that might be technical corrections in our favor, such as allowing us to recapitalize the Infrastructure Bank. The Infrastructure Bank was authorized under the last bill, ISTEA, and was included under this bill, although four new states were allowed to start an Infrastructure Bank. He said it's a pretty confusing situation. It's been a useful tool in loaning dollars out for projects. Based upon the monies that were put into that bank from the last bill, this request is for authorization to continue to use that as a tool.

There's been a contentious issue in T-21 as well as in the Appropriations Bill to put minimum and maximum formulas on the transit programs, minimum allocations to the smaller states and maximum caps to the bigger states. He said either one is a bad idea, as either would be disadvantageous to us because of the discretionary funds we seek in the New Starts program. Both would jeopardize our ability to access the New Starts funds, and therefore that needs our attention.

Finally, there was a firewall built between the Transportation budget and the rest of the federal budget. It sort of guaranteed a program "off-budget," so to speak. That's still an issue of ill will and contention in Congress, and if there's a Technical Corrections bill opened, it's something that could be threatened. If it's threatened, then it decreases the money that will flow through the formula programs that we've already committed to projects. This is another one that needs attention.

He said he realizes there's a lot of detail in all of these listed project, but that they're fairly significant in terms of impacting all of the projects we're trying to get funded, so he added that he wants to make sure they aren't eclipsed by the larger discussion of how we move Interstate MAX, the South Corridor and the Commuter Rail project at the same time.

Chair Kvistad asked for comments. Councilor Monroe asked if there was still any talk about possibly connecting the N. Macadam streetcar to the Lake Oswego streetcar line

and making that a commuter opportunity for folks in Lake Oswego. Commissioner Hales said that is still a possibility. There is work underway, he said, on finalizing the alignment in the North Macadam District. There is certainly a good possibility that that right-of-way would be used for a portion of the streetcar's operation and to figure out how to make it work for both the Willamette Shores trolley that currently exists and the streetcar. There is certainly some interest in seeing how far south beyond Bancroft Street it can go. He said he doesn't believe streetcar service should stop at Bancroft Street, but it should ultimately reach farther south. This is being done in stages now, though, and they're trying to figure out how to get from the current terminus at 10th and Mill to Riverplace; the next stage is to figure out how to fund and construct portions of the North Macadam District. The driver there, he said, is not either the federal process or the conventional realities of funding; they have to see some redevelopment activity in the North Macadam District before it makes sense to proceed south of Riverplace.

Commissioner Rogers asked if the gauge of the rail would be such that it could accommodate commuter rail on a trolley car line. Commissioner Hales said it's the same gauge as MAX, which he thinks is standard gauge. In terms of running other equipment on the tracks, there may be structural issues but not a gauge issue. Mr. Hansen said there may be a weight issue where the bed hasn't been structured to it when it goes to full commuter rail, but the gauge probably won't matter.

Commissioner Rogers said that he doesn't want to preclude options with the feds. Commissioner Hales said he felt that use of the same tracks was not a problem, but that a diesel unit in downtown Portland was inappropriate.

There were no further comments on projects #3 through #13. Chair Kvistad said he believed there was a way to achieve language in the Priorities Paper that everyone would agree with, and that he and Mr. Cotugno would be working with the committee to accomplish that.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Rooney Barker
Recording Secretary