



Metro | *Memo*

Date: Friday, June 29, 2012
To: Metro
From: Pam Welch, Records and Information Analyst
Subject: Potential Missing Record – June 12, 2002 Greenspaces Technical Advisory
Committee (GTAC) Agenda

An attempt was made to locate the missing record by consulting with staff and going through meeting records from 2002. However, a copy of the agenda could not be found.

May 24, 2002

Andy Cotugno, Chair, JPACT
600 NE Grand Ave.
Portland, OR 97232

RE: GTAC response to MTIP questionnaire

Dear Mr. Cotugno:

I am writing this letter on behalf of the local and regional park providers, natural resources agencies, non-profit conservation and trail advocate groups that are represented on the Greenspaces Technical Advisory Committee (GTAC). We have reviewed the MTIP Questionnaire and offer these comments regarding the policy issues that we believe to be relevant to implementation of the Regional Trails Plan component of the Regional Transportation Plan.

A regional system of trails and greenways is an important element of the Metropolitan Greenspaces Master Plan. The Master Plan was adopted by the Metro Council in 1992 and supported by all 24 local cities and 3 counties. In the 2000 RTP update, many regional trails were included as important transportation facilities that provide the region's residents alternatives to their cars and help improve air quality. These are both important objectives of the federal funds provided to the region and administered through the MTIP process.

A defining program objective for the MTIP funding allocation should be to increase the use of non-auto alternatives for transportation. As one GTAC member put it "people in the region should have the basic right to walk". This means improving accessibility, increasing safety and ease of use for citizens in all of our transportation system improvements. This objective should be given a higher priority than it currently receives as it also contributes to improving the livability of the region.

An additional important objective noted by GTAC members is to continue to develop criteria that address transportation improvements as systems, not just as projects. Specifically, the Regional Trails and Greenways Plan needs to be considered as a system, and the commitment to that system should be better articulated in the Regional Transportation Plan and through the MTIP allocation process. Completing gaps in existing systems, such as the Regional Trails Plan, should rank as a high priority in the MTIP process. This policy objective was reflected in the last round of MTIP funding with the priority given to completion of a gap in the Springwater Trail Corridor. To build on this policy direction from the Metro Council and JPACT, it should be incorporated in the criteria and program objectives.

GTAC recommends that MTIP funds continue to be used for Pedestrian and Bicycle Projects. We considered the addition of a separate "Regional Trails" category, but have mixed opinions about how it might be reflected in the allocation process. It may be that Regional Trails are better represented under the existing pedestrian and bicycle categories or there may be a need for a combined category for bike, ped and trails projects. Overall, GTAC believes that bike, ped and trails projects should become higher priorities for MTIP funding in particular and for the region's transportation investments in general. There is a proven connection between improving alternative modes and decreasing the use of vehicular travel.

Even though Transportation Enhancement funds were not available last year during the MTIP process, it is GTAC's understanding that those funds will again become available in subsequent years. It does not appear that a number of the categories for which those funds are targeted are addressed by any of the MTIP criteria. In particular we would point to "historic preservation", "scenic easements", "landscaping", and "rail corridor preservation." Many Regional Trails projects would meet a number of these criteria and these aspects should be included in the future -- if not in the technical ranking then in the administrative review whenever these funds are included. Metro should coordinate with ODOT to implement projects that can meet these other criteria.

Below is a summary of GTAC member comments taken directly from the questionnaire. There was not agreement by all members on all questions so I am including only the high points where there tended to be the most agreement among the members.

Program Objectives

Overall agreement that (#10) "Providing alternative travel options to vehicular congestion" was a top priority for GTAC members.

Application Process

Overall members thought that staff were responsive to requests for assistance and information but that the schedule for applying for these flexible funds has not always been well known outside of transportation circles and that the application process can be difficult to understand by trail planners. The need for more time to complete applications was indicated by some smaller jurisdictions.

Existing Project Categories

Overall members agreed that the MTIP funding should be used within the existing project categories. Possible exceptions to this were freeways and freight. A number of our members did not feel that these projects were appropriate for this funding.

Potential New Categories

In general members agreed that a limited number of new categories were appropriate. A new "Green Streets" category was generally supported. In addition, some supported "Culvert Repair" and "Regional Corridors".

A new category "Regional Trails" was recommended for addition. As an alternative, this specific project type could be combined with the existing Bike and Pedestrian improvement projects as a single category.

In general there was a concern that there may be too many categories and that certain types of projects (such as regional trails and fish and wildlife passage issues) were not being adequately considered and given high enough priority in the criteria and ranking.

Technical Ranking Criteria

The technical ranking criteria that were important to GTAC members included:

- Safety issues, particularly on road, boulevard and freight projects
- Level of use such as increasing mode share for walking, reducing auto trips, and increasing transit ridership.

Additional technical criteria were suggested by GTAC members, including:

- More emphasis on alternative (non-motorized) transportation projects
- Consideration of environmental (fish and wildlife habitat and passage and water quality) impacts
- Citizen support and involvement
- Partnerships between agencies and citizens or private funding sources.

Focusing projects in existing "2040 areas" (e.g., regional and town centers, main streets, etc.) is generally seen as a higher priority.

Selection Process and Public Participation

In general it was agreed that the current selection process was adequate. It is important to continue to improve public participation and to strive to make the selection process as accessible to the public as possible.

Additional Comments

There were several GTAC members that were complimentary of the effort that has been made by the transportation planning staff to make the MTIP process more accessible and easier to understand for other stakeholders.

Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Charles Ciecko
Chair, Greenspaces Technical Advisory Committee

cc: GTAC, via email