

**BIENNIAL REPORT OF THE
MID-WILLAMETTE VALLEY AREA COMMISSION ON TRANSPORTATION
(MWACT)
October 2007**

The Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation (MWACT) was created in early 1997 as the result of recommendations from the "Mid-Willamette Valley Blue Ribbon Committee on the Formation of an Area Stakeholder Group." The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) adopted a provisional charter for MWACT in February 1997 and the first meeting was held in May 1997. The OTC adopted MWACT's final charter in October 1997. MWACT was the first area commission chartered by the OTC.

The charter describes MWACT's mission as follows:

- To provide a forum for the discussion and coordination of long-range transportation issues affecting the area's livability.
- To prioritize state transportation infrastructure and capital investments through the development of an implementation strategy based on transportation plans related to the Mid-Willamette Valley area.
- To advocate Mid-Willamette Area transportation issues to neighboring regions and other outside organizations.
- To advise the Oregon Transportation Commission on state and regional policies affecting the Area's transportation system.

MWACT adopted its first Operating Agreement in August 1997. The Agreement has been amended several times over the years to respond to the evolving needs of the Commission. The Operating Agreement is in full compliance with the OTC's "Policy on the Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs)."

The information below describes the structure and operation of MWACT.

ACT Boundaries

MWACT's boundary includes Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties. These three counties, and the cities and transportation stakeholders contained therein, face many similar transportation issues. Among these issues are regional travel to and through the area (including congestion on major highways), transportation and traffic safety, and provision of alternate modes of transportation. The MWACT boundary contains an area of common interest and there is no desire to change it at this time.

MWACT Membership

The MWACT Charter identifies the voting membership as follows:

- Salem-Keizer MPO (SKATS) Members
 Polk County (elected official)

- Marion County (elected official)
- City of Salem (elected official)
- City of Keizer (elected official)
- Salem-Keizer Transit (elected official)
- ODOT Area Manager (non-elected)
- Other Cities by transportation corridor¹ (elected officials)
 - Hwy. 99W/18/47 (Yamhill County)
 - I-5 Corridor (Marion County)
 - Hwy. 22W/99W/51 (Polk County)
 - Hwy. 22E (Marion County)
 - Hwy. 99E/213 (Marion County)
- Yamhill County (elected official)
- Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (elected official)
- Private sector - one selected by each County Commission²

75% (12 of 16) of MWACT's voting members are elected officials.

MWACT is proposing to expand its membership to include a representative of the recently formed Yamhill County Transit Area.

MWACT's membership also includes ex-officio (non-voting) members. The ex-officio membership includes representatives of adjacent area commissions (Cascades West ACT and Northwest Oregon ACT), the Metro Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation, and state legislators representing Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties.

MWACT believes its membership is broadly representative of the transportation interests in the three-county area. In addition to local elected officials, the membership includes representatives of alternate modes, tribal governments, agricultural interests, local business, and real estate. Although not specifically listed as ex-officio members, representatives of all of the groups identified in the OTCs Policy on Formation and Operations of ACTs (Section IV.B.) receive notice of, and agendas for, all MWACT meetings and are encouraged to attend.

Coordination with Adjacent ACTs and the Legislative Delegation

Adjacent ACTs and the three-county legislative delegation are ex-officio members of MWACT and receive meeting notices and agendas, and are invited to attend the Commission's meetings. MWACT has invited representatives of Cascades West ACT, Northwest ACT, and Metro (JPACT) to meet with the Commission and share information of mutual interest.

The Commission has also held a forum for the legislative delegation, local elected officials, and candidates for office in Marion, Polk, and Yamhill Counties. This forum has usually been held shortly before the start of the biennial session of the Legislature. The purpose of the forum is to

¹ The Charter specifies the cities in each corridor. The cities in the corridor are responsible for selecting their representative.

² County Commissions select private sector representatives through a public solicitation process.

acquaint these officials with transportation issues in the area. The MWACT charter states that such a forum would be conducted "biennially."³ MWACT would like to remove this requirement from the charter as the forum has not been very effective in opening a dialogue with legislators and the commission would like to explore alternative methods of engaging the local legislative delegation. Alternate approaches of outreach could include more focused one-on-one education of transportation needs as well as coordinating outreach efforts with other ACTs.

Work Program

MWACT adopts a work program every six months that is used as a guide to build agendas for the monthly meetings. The current work program focuses on the review and evaluation of projects proposed for inclusion in the FY 2010-FY 13 STIP and ConnectOregonII.

Public Involvement/Meeting Notice

Notice of MWACT meetings and meeting agendas are provided to an extensive list of organizations, elected and appointed officials, and interested individuals. The following describes in more detail how notice is provided.

Meeting Notice - ODOT Region 2 Public Affairs staff send a press release to all media outlets in the area approximately 10 days prior to the regular meeting (which is always held on the first Thursday of the month at 3:30p). At this time, the agenda is also posted on the ODOT - MWACT web site. The agenda always includes time for public comment, as well as opportunities for members of the legislative delegation or the OTC to provide comments, if present.

Meeting Materials - the agenda package is mailed to Commission members, ex-officio members, and others requesting the full package approximately one week prior to the meeting. The agenda only is sent at the same time to individuals and organizations requesting it.

Meeting Location - Regular meetings are held in the Senator Hearing Room at Courthouse Square in downtown Salem. This building is adjacent to Salem-Keizer Transit's downtown transit center and is ADA accessible. In the event that this room is not available, MWACT will meet in the ODOT Building in Room 123 or some other appropriate location.

Meeting Minutes - Meeting minutes are prepared for each meeting. After the minutes are approved by the Commission (at the next meeting), they are posted to the ODOT - MWACT web site.

³ The OTC made this amendment to the MWACT Charter in 2003. Previously, the Charter indicated that a legislative workshop would be held at least annually.

Operational Structure

The work of MWACT and the Commission staff is guided by a Steering Committee that consists of the Chair, Vice Chair, ODOT Representative, the immediate past MWACT chair, and one or more Commission members selected by the membership. The Steering Committee reviews and approves the six-month work program and forwards it to the full Commission for approval. The Steering Committee and Commission give staff the discretion to deviate from the work program as necessary to build agendas that meet the evolving needs of the Commission over any six-month period. The Steering Committee has also been empowered by the full Commission to make decisions on the Commission's behalf if such decision is required before MWACT's next regular meeting.

Technical Assistance

MWACT receives technical assistance and information from several sources. Primary sources of technical information include ODOT, as directed by the Area 3 Manager, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments. MWACT has also appointed a Technical Advisory Committee, made up of staff from ODOT and jurisdictions in the three-county area, to assist in the review of technical information. The Technical Advisory Committee meets on an as-needed basis as directed by the Commission.

Key Work Efforts Addressed by MWACT Since 2005

MWACT has been very busy over the last two years. Work efforts included:

- STIP Update
 - ◆ Develop prioritization process
 - ◆ Solicit projects for consideration
 - ◆ Hear presentations from project proponents
 - ◆ Hold Public Hearing
 - ◆ Prioritize projects
 - ◆ Meet with other Region ACTs to develop recommendation
- Held briefing for legislators and local elected officials and candidates regarding Mid-Willamette Valley Transportation issues
- Review progress/status of projects and area issues:
 - ◆ Salem-Keizer MPO Update
 - ◆ Polk County Transportation Needs and Progress
 - ◆ Marion County Transportation Needs and Progress
 - ◆ Yamhill County Transportation Needs and Progress
 - ◆ FHWA Bottlenecks Initiative Presentation
 - ◆ Highway 18 (Fort Hill-Wallace Bridge)
 - ◆ ODOT Incident Response
 - ◆ Transit Planning for Rural Areas and Small Communities
 - ◆ I-5/Woodburn Interchange
 - ◆ Salem River Crossing EIS

- ◆ Newberg-Dundee Transportation Improvement Project Updates
- ◆ Highway 18/22 Interchange project
- ◆ Salem-Keizer Regional Transportation Systems Plan Update
- ◆ Highway 22 Expressway Management Plan
- ◆ Southeast Salem Area Transportation Study
- ◆ Highway 22/Fort Hill
- ◆ Stayton-Sublimity Interchange

Provided input to:

- ◆ The Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP) Update
- ◆ Transportation Enhancement Prioritization
- ◆ ODOT Freight Mobility Section related to the Freight Priority Project List
- ODOT Region 2 Large Project List
 - ◆ Reviewed and ranked large transportation projects in the MWACT area
 - ◆ Developed the ODOT Region 2 Large Project List in conjunction with the other Region 2 ACTS
- ConnectOregon
 - ◆ Develop project selection process
 - ◆ Project review and prioritization

Commission Staffing

Beginning in August 2003, staff support for MWACT is provided by the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) with the assistance of ODOT Region 2.

Decision-making Process

MWACT uses a consensus-based decision-making process. The MWACT Operating Agreement describes this process as follows:

MWACT will use a consensus decision-making process and will foster a collaborative approach to problem solving. Consensus means that all members agree to support the decision. Members may choose not to block the consensus even though they do not fully agree with the decision. They may need to register their view about it, but are willing to support the decision because they trust the wisdom of the group on the issue.

The Operating Agreement also provides for a voting procedure if consensus cannot be reached. The intent is to use the voting procedure infrequently in an effort to foster collaboration between the members. The voting procedure has not been used to date.

Summary of Requested Charter Changes

1. Expand the MWACT membership to include a representative of the Yamhill County Transit Area.

2. Replace the requirement for a biennial Legislative Forum with a more flexible direction to:
“inform and educate members at the state legislature and local elected officials on transportation issues generally and specific to the Mid-Willamette Valley area.”

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