

# ***RVACT*** *Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation*

155 N. 1st Street • P.O. Box 3275 • Central Point, Oregon 97502 • 541-664-6674  
FAX 541- 664-7927

**To:** Members, Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation

**From:** Pat Foley, RVCOG

**Re:** Summary of March 13, 2007, RVACT Meeting, City Council Chambers, Grants Pass, OR

**Date:** March 14, 2007

**Members and Alternates in Attendance:** Arthur Anderson and John Vial, ODOT; John Morrison, Ashland; Russell Groves, Eagle Point; Royal Gasso, Gold Hill; Frank Bosshardt, Josephine County; Skip Knight, Medford; Mark Reagles, Rogue River; William Cecil, Talent; Tim Cummings, Grants Pass; Carlos DeBritto, Phoenix; Mike Quilty, MPO Policy; Ernie Garb, RVTD; Tony Paulson, Cave Junction; Alan DeBoer, Reeve Hennion, Craig Stone, Stacy Kellenbeck, James Lowe, Richard Smith, Jeff Hunter and Mike Montero, private sector representatives from Jackson and Josephine Counties

**Members Absent:** Butte Falls; Jackson County; Jacksonville; Central Point; Shady Cove

**Staff:** Mike Baker and Gary Leaming, ODOT; Pat Foley, RVCOG.

**Other:** Alex Georgevitch, Paige West, Jim Wear, Dan Moore, Jeff Griffin, Shayne Maxwell, Jenna Stanke and Lynn Perkins

## **1. Roll Call**

Jeff Hunter

Chair Jeff Hunter asked all participants to introduce themselves. Roll was taken. A quorum was present.

## **2. Approval of Minutes**

Jeff Hunter

Jeff Hunter asked if there were any changes to the January 9, 2007 RVACT minutes. Paige West, RVTD, said there was wrong information regarding the RVTD update. After discussion it was decided that a RVTD ridership presentation would be given at the next RVACT meeting. The minutes were approved with abstentions; Skip Knight, Royal Gasso, Carlos DeBritto, Stacy Kellenbeck and Tim Cummings.

## **3. Public Input**

Jeff Hunter

There were no comments from the public.

#### **4. Draft 2010 – 2013 STIP Criteria**

Mike Baker/Mike Montero

*Handouts:*

- *Project Eligibility Criteria and Prioritization Factors - Summary of proposed changes*
- *DRAFT Project Eligibility Criteria and Prioritization Factors for Development and Construction*
- *Project Eligibility Criteria and Prioritization Factors – Process Description and Guidance*

Mike Baker reviewed the changes to the 2010-2013 STIP Project Eligibility Criteria and Prioritization Factors as agreed to by the STIP Stakeholder Committee at their February 5, 2007 meeting.

ACTs and MPOs should evaluate how proposed projects leverage additional funding and public benefits to make efficient use of infrastructure and natural resources. Examples of leverage and public benefits for D-STIP modernization projects are:

- Other funding contributions such as additional federal funds, local matching funds or provisions of project right of way, private funding.
- Bundling with other infrastructure projects.
- Environmental enhancement, such as culvert replacement and improved drainage.
- Leveraging additional funds that contribute to transportation system effectiveness, system operations, and revitalization of the downtown or main street.
- Direct benefits to multiple modes of travel, advancement of modal choice and intermodal activities.
- Local circulation improvements that support and complement the state highway project.
- Improvements in Oregon's economy by addressing transportation challenges such as key bottlenecks or improving transportation service delivery.
- Projects that implement other innovative finance techniques.
- Would facilitate public and private investment that creates or sustains jobs.

The Transportation Commission has included a look-back provision to look at projects already in the STIP to see if there are any changes needed. Mike went on to say that there is no guarantee that projects will remain in the STIP.

#### **5. Oregon Gateway Proposal**

Mike Montero

*Handout: The Southwest Economic Transportation Team's Oregon Gateway Report*

Mike Montero introduced the Oregon Gateway Proposal with an overview of its beginning. Nine or ten months ago Oregon Representative Susan Morgan pulled together a group of people to explore economic growth through transportation investments. This group is composed of representatives of 40 private and public transportation stakeholders from five counties. The group is known as the Southwest Economic Transportation Team. Mike said that he has never worked with a group of private and public sector folks who have come together and worked to achieve their agreed upon vision as this group has: A seamless and interconnected transportation system that facilitates the efficient movement of goods and services, promotes a strong and growing economy, and enhances the quality of life for Southwest Oregon. The long term goals job creation, expansion and retention, and strategic investment of limited resources.

The Team elected to use the nationally-recognized Regional Economic Models (REMI) as its analysis platform. From this analysis, the Team developed two recommendations:

1. Dredging and widening the channel in the Port of Coos Bay and upgrading the Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad Coos Bay Line, which connects Coos Bay to the nation's Class 1 rail network and other short lines.
2. Supporting existing businesses by improving capacity on existing transportation systems, specifically Oregon Highway 41 and Interstate 5, the CORP Siskiyou Line from Eugene to California and at the regional airports in Medford and North Bend.

These recommendations match the Team's long-term goals.

1. Oregon Gateway: Coos Bay would provide the needed capacity for freight movement from Asia to North America, with benefits extending throughout Oregon and along the West Coast.
2. Supporting Existing Businesses:
  - Highway improvements projects from year 2006 to 2030 located on Oregon Highways 38, 42, 62, 138, US Highway 101, 199 and Interstate 5 are included on the project list.
  - Regional airports improvements to the Rogue Valley-Medford International Airport and the Southwest Oregon Regional Airport are recommended by the Team to focus on both air freight and passengers.
  - The Team recommends rail improvements to the CORP Siskiyou Line from Eugene to Black Butte, CA.

Mike went on to review private-sector projects that would benefit from these transportation investments and gave an economic summary.

## **6. Oregon 140 Study**

Art Anderson

*Handout: OR HWY 140 -Updates*

Art Anderson briefly reviewed the Highway 140 project handout which included milestones from January 3, 2007 to September 15, 2007. Julie Rodwell, ODOT, is scheduled to give the RVACT an update this summer.

## **7. Rogue River Greenway Update**

Shayne Maxwell

*Handouts: Rogue River Recreation Corridor & Greenway – Bicycle / Pedestrian Bridge  
Rogue River Recreation Corridor & Greenway: 2007-2009 Priority Projects*

Shayne Maxwell, Chair of the Rogue River Greenway Foundation, started her presentation with an overview of the Rogue River Recreational Corridor and Greenway. The project is described as an emerald necklace of parks, public access areas and water trails along the Rogue River linked by bicycle and pedestrian trails from the city of Grants Pass through Rogue River, Gold Hill, and Central Point where it will connect to the existing 20 miles of the Bear Creek Greenway that continues to the city of Ashland. Upon completion, bicycle/pedestrian trail will link 8 cities, 2 counties (Jackson and Josephine). It will create over 50 miles of regional connectivity in southern Oregon. The project will provide economic, environmental, educational, air quality, transportation safety and recreational resource benefits by:

- Providing additional parks and public access areas to the Rogue River for fishing, picnicking
- Developing new water trails for rafting, kayaking and numerous water activities
- Linking scientific and historic sites
- Providing non-motorized alternative transportation for the I-5 corridor in Jackson and Josephine counties
- Enhancing tourism
- Stimulating economic development by creating jobs through small businesses rentals, construction and maintenance, etc.
- Improve air quality by providing alternative non-motorized transportation routes
- Providing close-to-home recreational access

The second “Ride the Rogue” event will occur on September 15, 2007. This event is expected to attract 1,500 cyclists and hikers to the area.

Shayne went on to say that an important element in the project is a bicycle/pedestrian bridge crossing the Rogue River. This bridge is a key element of the development a recreation network of trails, parks and historic sites, and will provide a transportation option. The Oregon Parks and Recreation Department has submitted a FY 2008 – Oregon Federal Appropriation Request for funding the bridge project. Shayne explained that this earmark is allocated from a different source of funds and would not diminish funding for transportation projects. Shayne asked the RVACT for a letter of support.

Jenna Stanke, RVCOG, reviewed the handouts and went over the planned route shown on a wall map. She went on to say that the request is for \$4.1M which will be spent on the design, engineering and construction of the bridge.

Mike Montero made a motion that a letter of support by the RVACT be drafted. Mike Quilty seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous in favor of a letter of support.

## **8. Break**

## **9. Oregon Transportation/Highway Plan and Area Inventory Updates**

Mike Baker

*Handouts: OTC & OHP mailer dated January 2007*

*OTP Key Initiatives A, B, C, D, E & F*

Mike gave an overview of the OTC and OHP plans. The adopted plans show the need to plan transportation as one integrated system. The key initiatives identified in the plan are to:

- Maintain the existing transportation system to maximize the value of the assets
- Optimize system capacity and safety through information technology and other methods
- Integrate transportation, land use, economic development and the environment
- Integrate the transportation system across jurisdiction, ownerships and modes
- Create a sustainable funding plan for Oregon transportation
- Invest strategically in capacity enhancements

To address the current revenue shortfall and to anticipate potential future revenues, the OTP includes three funding levels the state could face:

- Level 1: Current revenue levels decline over the plan period due to inflation

Investment priorities will have to be determined in order to preserve and maintain our system.

- Level 2: Revenues stay even with inflation but do not meet the forecasted needs, or
- Level 3: Revenues meet current and future transportation needs
  - The gas tax has not been increased since 1993. There are three scenarios being investigated:
    - i. Replace gas tax
    - ii. Index gas tax to inflation
    - iii. Replace gas tax and index it to inflation

Comments:

Mike Montero pointed out the fact that automobiles are getting better gas mileage today.

Ernie Garb is concerned about who pays for improvements.

### **Area Inventory Update**

#### **10. Local Construction Projects**

Gary Leaming

Highway 199: There was a public hearing on February 9, 2007 where the public was invited to give public comment on the Draft Environmental Assessment. A local group called ACCESS presented an alternative plan that is being modeled. There will be a Citizens Advisory Committee meeting on April 12<sup>th</sup> and a Project Development Team meeting the following day.

Illinois Valley Bridges: The four bridges will be completed this year.

Highway 199 & Laurel St.: There is a meeting scheduled today with the contractor. This project is for the construction of three lanes from Laurel Street to the city of Cave Junction.

South Medford Interchange: Aerials showing the ongoing construction were viewed – beam set for on and off ramps.

Seven Oaks Interchange: Work is being done on the bridges over rail road.

Fern Valley Interchange: The Citizens Advisory Committee and Project Development Team selected two alternatives to be forwarded and studied in the Environmental Assessment.

Walker Avenue to I-5: Improvements are being done on Highway 99.

#### **11. Regional Problem Solving Transportation Update**

Steve Rehn

Steve Rehn, RVCOG Associate Planner, gave a presentation on the “Transportation Needs of Regional Problem Solving Urban Reserve Areas.” He started by stating the mandates of both the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Regional Problem Solving (RPS):

- MPO mandate: regional coordination of all aspects of transportation planning within the Rogue Valley urbanized area. (25 year plan horizon)

- RPS mandate: long-range planning for anticipated population growth, in more or less the same region. (50 year plan horizon)

The concerns of the MPO include:

- How will development of the proposed urban reserve affect regional transportation demand?
- What policies would ensure continued progress toward regional transportation goals?
- What measures should be taken locally and regionally to implement these policies?

Steps that have been done include:

- Policy review – The RPS goals are in synch with the MPO goals.
- Base case modeling examines the question, “What would be the performance of the regional transportation system, given 1) existing development policies, and 2) transportation system improvements recommended by the RPS Policy Committee.

The RPS project has been 1) creating scenarios for alternative development patterns and transportation system improvements, and 2) travel demand model comparisons of the alternative scenarios.

In the future the RPS project will 1) recommend a preferred scenario, including transportation system improvements, 2) recommend policies and strategies for bringing about the preferred scenario, and 3) recommend provisions for a regional RPS stakeholder agreement that would implement these policies.

The elements for creating Alternative Scenarios include:

- Base Case – Hypothesize any new transportation facilities necessary to achieve OHP performance standards.
- Regional attractors in the Urban Reserve – Hypothesize significant increase in developments that attract travelers from throughout the region and beyond.
- Nodal Development – Maximize the amount of development that occurs in high-intensity mixed-use nodes with transit connections.
- UGB Amendment timing – Hypothesize timing URA inclusion to increase land use intensities in urban core areas.
- Gather local input.
- Convert local knowledge into 4 sets of 1) alternative transportation networks, 2) household distributions, and 3) commercial/industrial attractors.

The elements for modeling Alternative Scenarios include:

- Run RVMPO Travel Demand Model for each scenario. Calculate basic performance measures for travel time, mode split, etc.
- Compare performance results.
- Compare levels of infrastructure investment.

The final products are recommendations to RPS Stakeholders by MPO Policy Committee which should happen during the summer of 2007.

Steve emphasized that the project will not include, 1) precise corridor locations, 2) explicit land use map for the URA, and 3) Project list for future transportation facilities.

Steve asked if there were any questions today and gave out his email address inviting future questions.

Comments:

Mike Quilty said that this is the kind of information needed in order to plan for the future. If we plan right, there will be fewer impacts on the systems.

**12. Oregon Transportation Commission/Legislative Updates**

John Vial

John Vial gave an overview of Legislative issues which included transportation funding, potential gas tax increase in the Portland/Metro area and ODOT's ability to regulate billboards.

**13. Agenda Build for Next Meeting**

Art Anderson

Art explained that several of the agenda items for the next meeting are items that were planned for this meeting. Due to time constraints they will be on the next agenda.

1. TE Prioritization
2. Elect new Jackson County ACT Chair
3. Review JJTC Bylaws
4. Private Sector Representatives
5. Earmark Issues
6. RVTD Update
7. OTC

The next RVACT meeting is scheduled for: Tuesday, May 8, 2007  
9 p.m.  
ODOT Conference Room B  
100 Antelope Road, White City, OR

**14. Adjournment**