

RVACT *Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation*

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To: Members, Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation

From: Pat Foley, RVCOG

Re: Summary of July 11, 2006, RVACT Meeting, ODOT Conference Room,
100 Antelope Road, White City

Date: July 19, 2006

Members and Alternates in Attendance: Arthur Anderson and John Vial, ODOT; John Morrison, Ashland; Hank Williams, Central Point; Jim Lewis, Jacksonville; Jim Raffenburg, Josephine County; Skip Knight, Medford; Marian Telerski, Talent; Laurel Samson, Grants Pass; Jim Wear, Phoenix; Craig Stone, Stacey Kellenbeck and Mike Montero, private sector representatives from Jackson and Josephine Counties.

Members Absent: Butte Falls; Cave Junction; Eagle Point; Gold Hill; Jackson County; Rogue River; Shady Cove; RVTD; MPO Policy: Reeve Hennion, Alan DeBoer, James Lowe, Richard Smith, Jeff Hunter, David Straus, Jackson and Josephine Counties private sector representatives.

Staff: Paul Mather, ODOT; Pat Foley, RVCOG.

Other: Paula Brown, Ashland; Kay Harrison, Central Point; Alex Georgevitch, Medford; and Tom Humphrey, Central Point.

1. Roll Call

Chair Mike Montero asked all participants to introduce themselves. A quorum was not present.

2. Approval of Minutes

Members requested no corrections to the minutes of the March 14, 2006 meeting. The minutes were approved as written.

3. Public Input

There was no public input.

4. Connect Oregon Projects

**Reference Material: 2007 Connect Oregon Applications, Consensus Committee Recommendations*

Art Anderson reviewed the Connect Oregon projects from Region 3 that have been recommended by the Consensus Committee to be presented to the OTC for final approval.

Projects that will have the most affect on the local area are:

- Rogue Valley International Airport: Multi-modal Airport Improvement Project
- Central Oregon & Pacific Railroad, Inc.: Winchester Freight Rail Yard

Other Region 3 projects:

- Coos County Airport District: Runway, Apron and Air Freight Facility
- Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, Southport Barge Slip-N-Split
- Oregon International Port of Coos Bay, Phase II Coos Bay Railroad Bridge

Other projects not recommended will be in the queue for funding if something goes wrong with one of the forwarded projects. Art said the final approval of projects will be on the OTC's agenda on July 19th.

Mike Montero, who sat on the Consensus Committee, thinks that the selection process went well. There were incredibly good projects, many of which did not get funded. Speaking for himself, Mike feels that the process worked so well he is optimistic that there will be a second round. The Consensus Committee had a regional distribution goal for project selection. The projects selected represented the greatest statewide benefit. Mike added, the projects that did not get selected this time will not have an institutional spot in the queue.

5. Operations, Safety, Preservation, Bridge and Interstate Maintenance Project Presentations for 2008-2011 STIP

Reference Materials: 1) Region 3 Allocations, 2) 2006-2009 PNRS Projects, 3) 2008-2011 State Bridge Draft STIP, and 4) Summary of Bridge STIP

John Vial updated the RVACT on programs/projects around the state that will affect the area. The group is not being asked to prioritize these projects. His presentation is for informational purposes. John distributed a new handout which summarized the different programs:

Operations Program - Region 3

The Operations Program is designed to improve the existing system. These are small projects that allow for more capacity and to make the system operate more efficiently.

John summarized the projects that will affect the RVACT area:

- RWIS / Traffic Cameras sites \$ 500,000
RWIS – Road & Weather Information System – provides temperature, wind speed + data for TripChek.
- New Signal @ North Ross Lane \$ 250,000
- New Signal @ River Street, Cave Junction \$ 500,000
- Regionwide Signal Upgrades \$1,000,000
Most money will be spent on the coast due to corrosion.

Interstate Maintenance

The Interstate Maintenance Program is managed at a statewide level. There are no splits to regions. The statewide program is \$127,000,000 per year. For the 2010/2011 period, there are no projects in this area.

Safety

The Safety Projects are small projects designed to improve the safety of the road. These projects typically include left turn and passing lanes, intersection improvement, etc. This program is managed at a regional level. Two projects for the 2010/2011 timeframe are in the local area:

- Jaynes Drive, Grants Pass (left turn lane) \$1,500,000
- 1-5 truck climbing lane (Sexton/Smith/Stage Passes) \$1,000,000.

The designated monies for the climbing lanes will be used as seed money in order to seek federal earmarks or team up with other projects. If the monies are not used, the funds will be redistributed to other projects.

Pavement Preservation

Pavement Preservation Projects are managed at a regional level. Highway 101 has a lot of pavement problems so the bulk of the program is addressing these problems. Two projects are in the local area.

- Highway 99, Rapp Road to Valley View Drive (paving). \$1,800,000
- Highway 140 from White City to the Brownsboro area (chip seal). \$ 600,000

Bridge Program

Three projects are located in the area. John pointed out that these funds are in addition to the OTIA Bridge Program.

- Neil Creek Bridge, Hwy 21 at MP 4.26 – replacement \$1,901,000
- Dodge Bridge, Hwy 234 – repair \$ 490,000
- Steinman Bridge, Old Siskiyou Hwy – rehab \$ 229,000

Discussion:

Regarding seed money for climbing lanes: The projects may be done in phases. Mike Montero asked if these funds can be cross designated with funding sources such as MOD and PRES. John replied that the truck climbing lanes are under the Safety Program. The Commission sets the guidelines. We try to honor the Commission's funding designations but there is no hard and fast rule. There are times when we do cross over. ODOT staff is going to suggest truck climbing lanes be included in every MOD Program. Mike Montero asked if the proposed climbing lane projects have been reviewed by the Oregon Freight Advisory Committee. Mike said there have been requests from area commissions for the OFAC to give consideration and support for specific programs. It was suggested that a letter be drafted by the RVACT to ask for OFAC support.

Regarding Bridge Projects: John Morrison asked what criteria were used to place bridges on the "Bridge Projects" list verses the OTIA list. Response: The OTIA list is focused on mobility on the interstate. The "Bridge Projects" are located on secondary routes.

6. Local Construction Projects

Art Anderson gave an update on local transportation projects.

- South Medford Interchange

The project has broken ground. Piles are being driven for work bridges. Piles are also being driven for the northbound detour bridge. A demarcation line has been set between ODOT's ROW and the Manor Property. The contractor on this project is Wildish. It was bid as a five year project but we think it will be completed in 3 ½ years. Art added that there will be no impact to the traveling

public except when detours are switched and when work is being done on the Barnett Bridge structure.

- Bybee Corner
The bridge is in place. Rains washed away a lot of the plantings. These will have to be replanted.
- Culver/Rapp Roads – Talent
Paving is complete. The curbs and sidewalks are in. There is still some work to be done under the bridge. Scouring occurred with recent rains.
- North Medford Interchange
Closure is near. We are in the discussion with the contractor. They are way over their contract completion date.
- I-5 Siskiyou Pass
The right side of the interstate washed away last winter. LTM just completed this job. They did an awesome job of getting the drainage system in place and constructing new detention ponds. This is a great example of getting a job done quickly in an emergency situation..
- Fern Valley Interchange
The CAC and PDT are still working to come up with alternative solutions. A recent newspaper article asked ODOT to remove the SPUI alternatives from consideration. Art said that the NEPA process has to look at all viable alternatives.
- Highway 199 EA
There has been a lot of support from the county and city in terms of the direction to not build the frontage road now. ODOT has been working with the county on alternative access to the fairgrounds. The next step will be the South Y Study. This study will give broader picture of how to fix the north/south connection (possibly a fourth bridge) and east/west corridor with access control.

Discussion:

Laurel Samson asked when the Grants Pass 6th/7th Street Project will be completed. Art said it will be completed this summer.

Recent Mail Tribune coverage of local transportation projects was discussed. There is the feeling by RVACT members that some information given to the public had flawed facts and that the transportation planning process has been misunderstood. Events surrounding the Fern Valley Interchange project were discussed.

Mike Montero said that before the meeting started, Skip shared his concerns about some of the recent media coverage, perceived by some as a lack of planning. Years of planning have gone into the Regional Transportation Plan. Mike said there has been no shortage of planning. Mike asked the group for ideas on how to work with the press. Art Anderson said that Gary Leaming is actively involved with the press. ODOT does an aggressive job of trying to stay connected with the Mail Tribune, radio and television stations.

Jim Lewis suggested having a periodic insert in ODOT's Moving Forward highlighting the extensive current planning.

Skip Knight said that he called the author of a recent article and indicated to him what he thought the shortcomings of the article were. Skip is concerned with the gloom and doom presentation to

the public of local transportation projects and the perceived notion that there is a lack of planning. He suggested that the reporter should start attending meetings where these planning ventures are taking place.

Craig Stone thinks the RVACT ought to seek to publish a guest editorial where the corrected facts can be stated. He feels this should be done quickly. He not sure who should initiate the article, maybe ODOT. A meeting should be set up with the staff at the Mail Tribune. He feels that we have a responsibility and duty to try and correct the misinformation.

If a meeting is set up, Laurel feels it would be nice to have a public and private sector person attend so it isn't just ODOT's opinion being expressed. Art Anderson agreed that it definitely needs to be a non-ODOT person. Tom Humphrey suggested contacting TRADCO so see if someone on the Economic Development Committee would be willing to write a guest editorial.

John Morrison said that when the SOMI project was getting bad press, there was a meeting held with Bob Hunter to present the facts. The newspaper did change its tone for a period of time. It is something that you have to keep after all of the time. John said Bob is generally pretty reasonable in these cases and particularly if they produced an editorial that contains inaccuracies, I think that pointing those out would be a good way to get them to change the direction.

Craig Stone feels that before an editorial is written, a bulleted list of inaccuracies should be presented to Bob.

Break

John Morrison said that Paula Brown feels that often times it is best to go in with a positive approach. She feels that it might be possible to purpose a fourth installment in this series, one that would give us the opportunity to talk about what is being done in positive terms. This may be a way to approach Bob Hunter that would be positive and productive.

Mike Montero felt that this was a good approach.

7. Address JJTC's Suggestion to Disband

**Reference Material: Jackson Josephine Transportation Committee letter dated March 8, 2006*
Tom Humphrey reviewed the letter sent to the RVACT. There was a time when the JJTC was more active in reviewing technical documents and bringing proposals to the RVACT. Because the JJTC has not been meeting on a regular basis due to busy schedules and a lack of specific assignments from the RVACT, the question of the JJTC's value and possible redundancy came up during their last meeting. The JJTC would like direction from the ACT regarding the ongoing JJTC role. He went on to say that the JJTC members would not be offended if the JJTC was to disband. Many JJTC members attend both RVACT and JJTC meetings. Laurel Samson added that there was real frustration at the last meeting because they didn't have enough technical information to do any kind of additional analysis.

The history of the creation of the JJTC was discussed. Before the creation of the RVACT, RVCOG established the JJTC to help provide technical expertise. When the MPO was established the JJTC was kept in place to ensure representation from Josephine County.

Mike Montero believes the JJTC continues to have an important role. He feels that the JJTC provides a local perspective, in addition to the state's perspective. He would like to see the JJTC's process streamlined. Mike would not like to see JJTC disband.

John Morrison agreed with Mike's comments. He said he is not a technical person but serves on the RVACT as a policy maker. He relies on the information provided by ODOT to make decisions. He does feel that the JJTC's local perspective is an important element in making decisions. He went on to say that we may need to look more carefully at criteria and how we operate so that the JJTC feels that their mission is being fulfilled. Losing the JJTC would be a disservice to our two counties.

John Vial suggested that the focus of the JJTC be changed to become the RVACT's Technical Committee. The JJTC would activate when the RVACT requests input on specific issues. They would not meet on a regular basis.

Art Anderson added, since the JJTC was formed by the RVCOG, there may be a need to establish the JJTC as a new RVACT working group. Art will contact the RVCOG to discuss the JJTC. He suggested developing a set of Bylaws for the group. This item will be placed on the next RVACT agenda.

8. 50th Anniversary of the Interstate

**Reference Material: 50th Anniversary of the Interstate Highway System - webpage*

Art Anderson was asked if there is information available regarding the 50th Interstate Highway System anniversary. Art has folders on the 50th anniversary. The ODOT website has information on Oregon's portion of the interstate; i.e. images of the interstate, links to related web sites, interesting facts and information. The Oregonian ran a front page story and Channel 10 and 12 covered the anniversary.

Skip Knight said AASHTO website has a lot of information. He said there is a caravan going across the US retracing the original route that Eisenhower traveled in 1918/19. At that time he recognized the need for an interstate system to move military equipment across the U.S. When he became president he went to congress and started the process.

Stacy Kellenbeck asked if this information could be used to start positive spin on setting the media and planning issues straight. This is probably the best symbol of 50 years of productive planning for the Department of Transportation.

9. RVACT Prioritization of TE Projects

Art said that when we looked at TE projects during last cycle there was a question as to whether ranking would cause discontent between the jurisdictions because we do not have guidelines that relate to equity (30 – 70 split) between Jackson and Josephine County projects. It was decided that the RVACT would not prioritize the projects. At the last RVACT meeting Pat Fisher was asked if prioritization would do anything for our local TE projects. She commented that there are times when ranking could add points. Alan DeBoer asked that we revisit prioritizing TE Projects.

Current TE list includes the following projects;

1. Laurel Street, Ashland

2. Highway 99 Streetscape, Central Point
3. Hwy 199 Landscaping, Grants Pass
4. Bear Creek Greenway/Rogue River Greenway, Jackson County
5. C Street Improvements, Jacksonville
6. 4th Street/Bartlett Streets Improvements, Medford
7. Evergreen Mixed-use area, Medford
8. Oregon Welcome Sign, ODOT
9. Rogue River Greenway Trail, Rogue River
10. Umpqua National Forest

Discussion:

Stacy Kellenbeck said that she has a difficult time comparing landscaping projects to bike and pedestrian projects.

Jim Raffenberg suggested having a rotation system.

Craig Stone asked if other regions are prioritizing projects and are we diminishing our ability to garner funds in a statewide competition by not prioritizing? Paul Mather replied that some ACTs do prioritize their projects. In regard to not having a project selected because it is not prioritized is debatable unless prioritizing would break a tie.

Stacy Kellenbeck made the suggestion that the RVACT allow communities to present their projects. Some years there may be a project that multiple communities find important. At that time we can decide if we want to rank projects. Maybe one or two projects will be ranked and the other projects will be submitted as a group.

Marion Telerski agreed with Stacy's suggestion.

This suggestion will be discussed at the next RVACT meeting.

10. Voting Procedures for Roll Call Votes

Mike said our Bylaws do not make a provision for when votes are done by roll call.

Skip Knight suggested that a roll call vote should be determined by the importance of the issue. If the committee is not comfortable with a regular vote and a member says they would like to have a roll call vote, then do so. He does not think the Bylaws need to be changed.

Mike said that it is his understanding that there is nothing in the Bylaws that would preclude the RVACT from calling for a roll call vote. He suggested that the RVACT continues as it has done when taking votes and if there is an issue that comes forth for which a member of the committee feels as though a roll call vote is needed, that request would be honored.

Additional agenda item; Selection process for Private Sector Representatives

Mike said an item not on today's agenda that needs consideration are modifications that were made to the Bylaws which states that if a private sector member fails to attend RVACT meetings for a prescribed number of times, unless excused, then it is up to this body to seek his/hers

replacement. David Strauss a Jackson County Private Sector member has been absent several times. Pursuant to our Bylaws it is up to the committee to replace this member. There is an alternate Jackson County Private Sector representative, Alan DeBoer who has voted in the past when David has been absent. An issue has been raised by a letter sent to the RVACT in regard to substituting Alan DeBoer for David Strauss which entertained the selection of additional private sector individuals who would serve as alternates for other private sector representatives. Art and Mike looked at what has historically been done and it was determined that we have not extended the selection process to alternates. Mike went on to say that the strength of this group is the members. There is a long learning curve and commitment to serve on the committee. He asked the committee if the current process followed for replacement of regular voting members should be extended to private sector alternates. Josephine County has a process for selecting private sector members. This is done by the city or BOC. Jackson County solicits applications for membership. These applicants are then reviewed and selected by the RVACT.

Laurel is not quite sure why somebody would want to come to these meetings because they can't vote or be a part of the discussion.

Stacy Kellenbeck agrees with Laurel. She wouldn't want to sit here if she couldn't vote. Likewise, she doesn't know if she would want an alternate to vote in her place if they haven't been involved.

Art Anderson said the Bylaws do not cover the question, does an alternate automatically move up to the primary's spot. He feels we need to solicit names for the primary spot. Alan DeBoer could be in the pool of names if he chose to be a Private Sector Representative. If applicants are solicited for, we could then have a primary and an alternate.

Skip Knight feels that when you have a primary and an alternate, common sense tells him that the alternate would take the primary's place on a permanent basis.

Mike reviewed the paragraph in the Bylaws that states; In addition, up to four non-voting alternate community members may be appointed from each county. Mike went on to say that the Bylaws do not cover the appointment process. Mike feels that in Alan's case, because the learning curve is so steep, the RVACT has been the beneficiary of his knowledge. He suggested that Alan be asked at the next meeting if he wants to stay engaged and be willing to step up as a primary member. There is still the question of what process will be used to identify alternates.

Marian Telerski wondered who the Private Sector Representatives are responsible to. When you represent a city you are responsible to the city council and your citizens. You report to them. She does not think that the role of the private sector representative has been defined, especially in regard to whom they are responsible and where do they go with information gathered.

Laurel Samson feels that an effort should be made in making sure members attend the meetings. If members can't attend and they do not feel the meeting is important, then they should acknowledge that it is not important and leave the group.

Stacy suggested that an email be sent to non-attending private sector members stating how many meeting they have missed. Laurel added that we need to keep track of meeting attendance.

In response to Marian Telerski's questions, Mike Montero said that as a Private Sector Committee member he reports to himself. He said that Private Sector Representatives volunteer their time for a lot of different reasons. In his case it is his very small way of making a difference in the livability of the community that he lives in. He feels that Private Sector Representatives must have a two county perspective because if they don't they are not representing their charge. Private Sector Representatives bring a unique perspective to the process, albeit it is an independent perspective. In his case it probably reflects the business community as well; timber producers in Josephine County or mail order companies in the city of Medford. He thinks there is a migration that private sector representatives go through, going from a policy making representative's standpoint and then try to migrate over to the private sector. That is a mental dynamic you have to get your head around. When you step out of that position and step over into the private sector you have to represent District 8. That is the way you have to vote. You have to vote your consciences.

Kay Harrison said that she agrees with Mike. Kay is on the MPO PAC and an elected official for the City of Central Point. When she is serving on the MPO, it is for whole area. It is not just Central Point because whatever affects the area, affects my city. We are all tied together. You have to look at things on a broad basis.

Mike asked if anybody was opposed to the ODOT staff soliciting for alternatives. There were no objections.

John Morrison said he thinks we should try to fill the alternate positions, four from each county. He feels that participation by private sector people is extremely valuable. Our structural presumption is that we have automatic seats for elected bodies. It is harder to get private individuals to become a partner. The concept of an alternate applies to voting but he doesn't read anywhere that it applies to participation. He thinks that the alternate should be able to come and sit at the table and discuss issues. This opportunity would be a magnet for participation. He would like to have 8 private citizens, 4 voting and 4 alternates, here all of the time.

Art summarized what had been discussed. He will be soliciting names to fill the Private Sector Representative slot. It has to be decided if an alternate automatically becomes the primary.

Mike Montero agreed. At the next meeting there will be a decision as to whether Alan becomes the permanent replacement for David Strauss and who, if anybody, become an alternate.

11. Agenda Build/Next Meeting/Adjourn

The next meeting will be held at the Grants Pass City Council Chambers on September 12, 2006. Agenda items will include:

- JJTC issues, Bylaws

- TE prioritization issue

- Discuss RVTD and changes they are undergoing and the possible ramifications on the transportation planning structure.

- Revisit our area inventory

- Selection of Private Sector/alternate representatives

Mike Montero adjourned the meeting at 11:15 AM.