

## NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation

November 4, 2021

Zoom Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 1:03

The following members and guests were in attendance:

Ken Shonkwiler, Bill Jablonski, Henry Heimuller, Michelle Bradley, Tom Messenger, Mike Borresen, Michelle Bradley, Marsha Kirk, Jon Paul Bowles, Erin Skaar, Tracy MacDonald, Steve Wright, Mary McArthur, Ayreann Colombo, Jim Knight, Lianne Thompson, Liane Welch, Jeff Harrington, Juliet Hyams, Bruce Jones, Chris Laity, Joe Younkens, Mike Russell, Dave Sukau, Mark Bernard, Trevor Beltz, Kathy Kleczek, Arla Miller, Jerry Willey, Melanie Olson

Item 1 Welcome and Introductions

Congratulations to Bill Jablonski to Area Manager position

Item 2 NWACT Minutes/Updates

September 9 Meeting Minutes Reviewed: Mike Borreson and Tom Messenger

Public Comment: Lianne Thompson congratulates Bill Jablonski

ODOT Region 2 Updates: Ken Shonkwiler shares details on ODOT scoping the 150% list. US 30 at Gobbel Creek Bridge replacement being scoped. Bridge at Port of Tillamook Bay crossing Salmonberry Trail being scoped. Signal work in Astoria on Highway 30 and Megler Bridge at Uniontown, Gearhart at Pacific Avenue. Oregon 6 at Wilson River Loop 6 improvements. Numerous other projects are under scope as well. Tracy McDonald mentions concerns about signals; Shonkwiler confirms it will be a full replacement.

Shonkwiler adds current construction costs are coming in higher than originally bid due to inflation and shortage of materials. EG: guardrails have a 300 day wait and therefore becoming more expensive. Paving has also been hampered by early rains.

Planning updates: Garibaldi rail project is moving forward into public engagement with construction beginning in 2024. Facility planning for Gearhart has an online open house going on right now.

Bill Jablonski says that he is excited to be the Area Manager after working in the area for 18 years and want to focus on team building and collaboration. Also mentions materials shortages and mitigating those challenges with pre-procurement of known projects.

ODOT is understaffed with half a dozen or so vacancies. Recruiting on the North Coast is challenging, and they are looking at remote positions where possible.

Washington County Update:

Joe Younkens updates the group on Western Washington County projects. Design continues for Main Street in Banks. Banks Vernonia trail parking improvements on the way. Hwy 47 & Mountain Road

improvements continue. Martin Road shoulder work will go to bid next spring. Salmonberry Trail should get \$220,000 to the foundation to support capacity building. Several other projects are also underway.

Commissioner Willey reported on a presentation regarding the Cascadia Subduction Event and offers to provide information to this group.

#### Item 3 Request to Re-Appoint Jim Knight to COAR

Jim had served on the Aviation Review Grant Committee for several years and has worked with airport managers around the state. Motion by Michele Bradley; seconded by Lianne Thompson; motion passes.

#### Item 4 Connect Oregon Letter of Support Requests

Sarah Lu gave high level project requests from Tongue Point, Port of Astoria, and Teevin Brothers. Cmsr Thompson endorses the Teevin Brothers project and moves to prepare all three letters of recommendation. Tracy McDonald seconds. Motion passes.

#### Item 5 Review NWACTION Regionally Significant Projects

Lianne shared that an ad hoc group met to review the project list. Ken Shonkwiler requested addition of the Northwest Transit Access project and the ACT agreed. Messenger questioned the details provided around Highway 6 safety measures and Commissioner Skaar pointed out detailed in the narrative and the high-level nature of this document. Bruce Jones acknowledged the Astoria Working Waterfront projects. Younkins recognized that each project is important and will align with different funding opportunities. Consensus to alphabetize called-out projects on list.

Chris Laity brought up concerns about moving heavy freight and equipment over rural bridges; weight limits are pushing trucks to fewer and fewer routes.

Move to approve list with two changes made by Tom Messenger; Seconded by Kathy Kleczek

#### Item 5 ODOT ACT Reset/Policy Change Discussion

High level review of the Policy markup with requests to send change recommendations to Cmsr Heimuller and Sarah Lu Heath. ACT staff will collate feedback and prepare feedback for ODOT. Cmsr Thompson would like clarity on 'what ACTs are good for' from ODOT. Steve Wright: concern was the same - OTC goes from "give significant weight to" to "carefully consider" our recommendations.

#### Item 6 Federal Infrastructure Bill

Travis Brouwer presented presentation on the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which he anticipates will pass. It's a \$1 trillion bill that includes transportation, broadband, and wastewater. Some of his money is 'new' some is reauthorizing existing programs. In Oregon \$1billion in additional highway funding; \$200 million for public transit. USDOT will also host funding opportunities.

Federal Funding could go into effect as early as July 2022. Climate change projects, bridges and electric bridges have special funding. Usual planning is four years, this funding has a four-month runway. Despite additional funds for bridges, we cannot replace only repair. Oregon funds bridge repair and replacement at 30% of the existing need.

Updating the State Transportation Plan – due to short runway with Federal Funds, ODOT is planning to work with OTC in January and March to discuss funding if passed. Projects approved in March 2022. ODOT is looking to ACTs on how to allocate funding.

Themes of Public Input on the 2024-2027 STIP: Support to increase funding for Public and Active Transportation; Support for Fix-It investments and reluctance to cut spending on bridge and pavement preservation; Support for Enhance Highway investments to reduce congestion and aid economic development.

Questions for ACTS:

Given the investments already made in the STIP and the federal infrastructure bill, how should the OTC allocate flexible funding to best advance the OTC/ODOT Strategic Action Plan and the state's transportation goals?

Do priorities expressed in 2020 – particularly strong support for public and active transportation and Fix-It remain? Or have these priorities changed in some ways?

What are the specific priorities for investment of funds in public and active transportation? (Among categories and programs, not projects)

Discussion:

Heimuller: with a goal of having zero fatalities and death rates going up, it seems like speeding and distracted driving are contributing factors. So, what investments are being made in state police and other on-road enforcement of safety laws? Brouwer: Safety is engineering, enforcement, and education. There is very little Federal support for traffic safety enforcement, as its considered a state/local responsibility.

Tracy MacDonald: Sidewalks and curbs are important in rural areas and still lacking in our region.

Liane Welch: Resiliency could always use more funding in preparation for earthquakes. Also highway intersections of major trail systems need to be made safe.

Juliette Heims: Can we an emphasis on carbon reduction efforts?

Jon Paul Bowles: Advocates for funding that accomplishes multiple existing goals like separate paths that encourage safe, active transportation. Those projects decrease carbon output, make communities more livable, and promote economic development.

Kathy Kleczek seconds Bowles comments.

Ayreann Colombo: Will investments for electric vehicle charging stations to include an expansion of the electric grid to support? Brouwer: We have not contemplated that. Much of the funds would go to high-use corridors between communities. With the fast-charging units we're looking at, we may use electric grid improvements at the local level. Its unknown whether we can use these funds to expand utility infrastructure.

Tom Messenger: Will internet infrastructure be included in ODOT's plans? Related to bridges, how are interstate bridges treated? Brouwer: We would partner with Washington DOT as we do for preservation and maintenance of interstate bridges now. For broadband, the federal monies will flow through other agencies. ODOT is looking at ways to use right of way to access and support broadband.

Lianne Thompson: Advocates for rural spending of these funds; DEI efforts should include distribution throughout the road system and across the state; safety improvements at recreation sites/trailheads;

bicycling options. Brouwer: We've heard concerns about geographic distribution and the OTC is looking at how to fairly fund projects. There are also more public comment opportunities coming.

#### Item 7 NWACT Business/Member Updates

Michele Bradley notes that Port of Tillamook Bay will receive \$500,000 for an airport project. She introduced Jon Paul Bowles as the Director of the Salmonberry Trail Foundation. Bowles notes collaboration on Barview to Garibaldi trail section for ODOT match proposal.

Jeff Harrington: City of Astoria has Hwy 202 sidewalk project along Youngs Bay Bridge, scheduled for construction 2023, after a water line project is complete. Recently legalized right of way of Tongue Point access road. Rapid flashing beacon coming to 23<sup>rd</sup> and 101.

Dave Sukau: City of Scapoose is in second year of local fuel tax which is funding a sidewalk project. Also moving forward with City wide street light project switching to LEDs. Will be installing EV charging stations at city hall and parks. Congestion around schools is becoming a problem due to lack of buses.

Tom Messenger: Highway 6 community meeting was well attended and provided feedback to ODOT. Additional community meetings are anticipated. Erin Skaar adds appreciation for ODOTs attendance, signage additions, and adding gravel to pull-outs. Notes that on-going advocacy may go state-wide. Heimuller asks that as Highway 6 improvements are made that NWACT is notified.

Kathy Kleczek notes that there are carpool options available through the transit agencies to help relieve bus driver shortages.

Chris Laity notes that load-posting on bridges grows every week. Tillamook County applied for NOAA funding and will receive \$2.5 million to fund three bridge projects. Many bridge projects are upcoming in the next several years. Also have used US Forest Service funds for bridge work.

Meeting adjourned at 3:15pm.