

NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation

November 6, 2008
Chisholm Community Center
Seaside, OR

The meeting was called to order by Shirley Kalkhoven, Chair. The following members and guests attended:

John Baker—ODOT	David Kim—ODOT Region 1
Rita Bernhart—Columbia Co Commission	Rosemary Lohrke—Columbia Co Citizen-at-Large
Clark Berry—Washington County Transportation	Steve Marx—Congressman Wu's Office
Ron Bline—Sunset Empire Transit District	Ray McFarlane—City of Rockaway Beach
Mark Gervasi—City of Tillamook	Matt Mumford—Tillamook County Transit
Allison Hamilton—ODOT Office of Innovative Partnerships and Alternative Funding	Shawn Reiersgaard—Tillamook Citizen-at-Large
Dan Hess—Port of Astoria	Kathy Sanders—Port of Astoria
Jim Hunt—Clatsop Co Citizen-at-Large	Mike Schroeder—ODOT Region 2
Senator Johnson—Oregon Legislature	Ingrid Weisenbach—ODOT Region 2
Shirley Kalkhoven—City of Nehalem	Russ Warr—City of Astoria
	Lonny Welter—Columbia County

Excused: Ron Bline, Val Folkema

1. NWACT Minutes/Updates:

- Approval of September 11, 2008 Minutes—Approved unanimously. (RW, MM).
- Public Comment—None.
- Legislative Comment—Still digesting the election results. Governor's budget will be out December 1st about the same time the latest revenue projections will be out. Will be starting out the session with at least a \$.5 billion deficit, and several new expensive projects requiring funding. Legislators will be meeting in Astoria to organize for the session. Governor's budget will have a new transportation package, potentially including new fees and/or gas tax. Will also be looking whether there will be a ConnectOregon III.

Shirley mentioned that as Chair of the Community Development Forum, they priorities identified have included: Transportation, infrastructure funding, energy/climate change and economic development. Economists are divided on how long they think the current recession will last.

If there is a Federal stimulus package, ODOT has projects ready to go, as does the Oregon Economic and Community Development Department. Having lists of ready-to-go projects prioritized for funding will be critical. According to Steve Marx, from Congressman Wu's office, it is still unclear whether funding will be allocated by project or by funding category. There may be some additional FEMA funding coming to Oregon's disaster-declared counties. Will be looking for projects that are do-able, quick, with demonstrable results. Focus will be on construction projects, that will be in construction next Summer. Since these will be Federal funds, there will also be attached Federal regulations and permitting required. David will work with Larry on getting the word out on regarding potential projects, as will John Baker.

- Big Look on Transportation—Shirley is sitting on the Freight sub-committee. Where freight comes from, how it is moved, what is needed to make it move better, what investments are needed.
- Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad Update—In order for the Port of Tillamook Bay to run the rail successfully, an increase to shippers will be required. Still need to identify clear cost to repair the railroad; currently ranges between \$30 to \$60 million, which potentially could mean up to a \$15 million match. To decommission the rail would be very expensive as well. Views of the environmentalists must be reconciled with the needs of shippers.
- Region 1—David Kim reported that the OTC, at their annual meeting, reviewed a list of approximately 50 recommended earmark projects. The Commission's draft report on the ACTs in Oregon is out for review. Mary will list on the NWACT website. May be looking at more inter-regional communication. Development activities on the 2010—2013 STIP projects is being delayed until after the Legislative session. Within ODOT, there is a hold on replacing vacancies. Working on Hwy 6 at MP 33.
- Region 2 Update—Mike Schroeder reported on projects: Trip check camera at the Bradley Summit on Hwy 30, paint the Megler Bridge, pavement markers on Hwy 101, 12th St to Farmer's Ck paving on Hwy 101, and patching Neahkanie Mt Rock Wall. Most of projects are wrapping up for the winter.
- Clatsop County Transportation—Met in Miles Crossing on potential transportation projects. Public meeting tonight on Seaside's Transportation System Plan. Two bids were received on the ConnectOregon

II air service project. Neither bidder came in with proposals that exactly match the specs in the RFP, but each had proposals worthy of consideration. Still uncertain is whether a proposal can be accepted if it doesn't exactly match the original bid specs. One included a potential connection to Seattle, which is of interest to Astoria. NWACT could potentially be asked to weigh in.

2. Surface Transportation Authorization Forum Update

Seven people from the NWACT region attended. Clear message that we can no longer continue to view transportation as have in the past. Need operational maintenance funding to keep current operations going, not just always building more roads. One idea is to look at having one central funding, rather than funding project by project. Need a new Transportation Act for the 21st century, reduce down to 10 or so programs, rather than dozens. Need to also look at all the federal regulations that make building and maintaining roads so laborious and expensive.

3. Federal Earmarks (John Baker)

The OTC has established the following criteria for projects seeking earmarks: Project addresses a problem on Oregon's transportation system, meets STIP criteria, has local support, can be completed within a specific time period, and has sufficient funding to cover match and any project funding shortfall. Typically, earmarks are rarely fully funded, and generally the funding represents only a small portion of a project's overall cost. Typical match required is approximately 11%. Earmark funds can only be used on the project requested, with the project meeting all Federal regulations and requirements. Projects less than \$1 million in funding probably aren't a good fit for a Federal earmark because of all the Federal requirements. Will be starting earmark process for 2010.

Question: How do Federal elected officials prioritize all the different earmarks from all the different entities? JPACT is doing that for the Portland metro region—pulling together a regional list. NWACT needs to look at the local priorities as well. Will be added to the January agenda.

4. The Oregon Solar Highway (Allison Hamilton)

ODOT has more than 16,000 lane miles of right-of-way. Solar arrays on 120 miles could supply all 45 million kilowatt hours ODOT. Implementation would involve public-private partnerships, with incentives for utilities to install the technology. Next step is implementation of a "proof of concept" 100 kilowatt project with PGE, to be completed by the end of 2008. This installation will be at no cost to ODOT, with PGE paying for the installation and maintenance. Goals of the program are to complement the current transportation system, supply needed electricity, develop sustainable energy at no greater cost than electricity from the grid, add value to right-of-way assets, and build a foundation for solar highways throughout Oregon and the nation.

5. NWACT Public Involvement Plan

Need to get information out on what the NWACT is to the general public as well.

6. Nominating Committee Report

Nominating Committee composed of Mark Labhart, Kathy Sanders and Rosemary Loehrke proposed the following NWACT Slate of Officers: Shirley Kalkhoven—Chair, Ron Blin—Vice Chair and Rita Bernhart—Second Vice-Chair. The Slate will be voted on at the January NWACT meeting. Shirley noted that she has been elected Chair of the League of Cities, and may be needed in Salem next Spring at the Legislature.

Recorded: Mary McArthur, Staff

Shirley Kalkhoven, Chair