

Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization
Meeting Summary – Lane ACT working lunch, Eugene/Springfield tour
Wednesday, July 20, 2016

Members Present: Sen. Beyer, Co-Chair; Sen. Girod, Sen. Johnson; Rep. McKeown, Co-Chair; Rep. Bentz; Rep. Lively; Rep. McLain, Rep. Olson, Rep. Smith, Rep. Smith-Warner.

Visiting Legislators Present: Sen. Prozanski; Rep. Holvey, Rep. Nathanson.

Members Excused: Sen. Boquist, Sen. Edwards, Sen. Monroe, Sen. Winters.

Working Lunch with Members of North East Area Commission on Transportation

Committee members shared a networking lunch with members of the Lane Area Commission on Transportation and the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Policy Board. Welcoming remarks were provided by Sid Leiken, Lane County Commissioner and ACT Chair. Other attendees included: Susan Morgan and David Lohman, Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) members; Jay Bozievich, Lane County Commissioner; Rob Zako, Donald Nordin, Eugene Organ and George Grier, Lane ACT; Paul Thompson, Central Lane MPO; Rob Inerfeld, Transportation Planning Manager, City of Eugene; Christine Lundberg, Springfield Mayor; Sean VanGordon, Springfield City Councilor; Gino Grimaldi, Springfield City Manager; Jerry Behney, Coburg City Councilor; Sandra Larson, Veneta Mayor; Kate Bork, Community Development Director, City of Veneta; Jim Coey, Oakridge Mayor; Tom Schoetz, Gary Gillespie and Gary Wildish, Lane Transit District (LTD); Nancy Rickard, Port of Siuslaw Commissioner; Mike McArthur, Association of Oregon Counties; Richard Reed, staff for Congressman DeFazio; Karmen Fore and Jackie Mikalonis, Governor's Office; Frannie Brindle, Sonny Chickering, Angela Beers-Seydel and Bill Johnston, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT); Robin Maxey, Senate President's Office; Nicole Stoenner, staff for Rep. McLain; and Meliah Masiba, staff for Co-Chair McKeown.

Eugene/Springfield Tour

The Committee assembled outside the Lorry I. Lokey Education Building at University of Oregon and boarded a Lane Transit District bus for a tour of transportation projects in the Eugene and Springfield area. Welcome remarks were provided by Oregon Transportation Commission members Susan Morgan and David Lohman, as well as Co-Chair Beyer and Frannie Brindle of ODOT.

Eugene Amtrak Station

The first stop on the tour was the Eugene Amtrak station, where Rep. Nancy Nathanson, who discussed efforts to develop a more rapid, more robust passenger rail service in the Pacific Northwest between Eugene and Vancouver, British Columbia. She provided statistics demonstrating growth in ridership in the corridor and emphasized the important role that passenger rail service plays in a diverse people-moving system. She noted how rail service is used in conjunction with intercity bus routes to increase mobility for students, youth and those with limited mobility. Eugene Mayor Kitty Piercy also spoke about her experience as co-chair of

the Passenger Rail Leadership Council and the need for additional rail investments and capacity on the corridor. Betsy Boyd of the University of Oregon commented on the potential for passenger rail service from Portland to University of Oregon sporting events.

Windshield Tour Part I

Upon departing the Amtrak station, the Committee continued on a windshield tour of several transportation facilities, including I-105/Delta Highway, Beltline Highway, Pioneer Parkway, Main Street and Franklin Boulevard. Jay Bozievich, Lane County Commissioner, discussed the need for jurisdictional transfers of transportation facilities between state and local governments, the state of seismic resiliency of Willamette River bridges, and the negative impact on road maintenance resulting from an end to federal timber payments. He noted the recent increase in industrial development, which has increased traffic in many areas.

Gary Wildish, Lane Transit District board member, provided statistics regarding ridership and area of operations for public transit in the Eugene/Springfield region, as well as information regarding land being acquired for expansion of services. He noted that LTD's EmX bus rapid transit service was the first of its kind in the United States, describing it as "light rail on rubber" in that it is designed to travel on alignments separate from passenger vehicle lanes. He also emphasized the important role that transit plays for University of Oregon students, noting that the university is the largest in the nation without a parking garage.

Christine Lundberg, Mayor of Springfield, commented on preparations for the 2021 World Track and Field Championships, which will be hosted in Eugene. She also noted structural changes made to Franklin Boulevard, which are designed to slow traffic in order to boost safety while also enhancing the beauty of the corridor.

Interstate 5 Willamette River Bridge and Viaduct

The second stop on the tour was near the Interstate 5 Bridge across the Willamette River. Scott Williams of Hamilton Construction provided an overview of the \$149 million project, which involved 97 subcontractors, of which 85 percent were Oregon companies, and on which 12.6 percent of worker hours were performed by apprentice-level workers. The project was completed ahead of schedule and under budget and replaced a weight-limited, seismically-vulnerable bridge.

Windshield Tour Part II

The Committee then boarded an EmX bus to the return trip to University of Oregon. Alan Zelenka, Eugene City Councilor, offered additional details on the operation of bus rapid transit, which operates on fixed systems separate from passenger vehicles and with some limited ability to adjust traffic signals to keep moving at a fast pace.