

Joint Interim Committee on Transportation Preservation and Modernization
Meeting Summary – Woodburn/Aurora Tour, MWACT Working Lunch
Friday, May 27th, 2016

Members Present: Sen. Beyer, Co-Chair; Sen. Boquist, Co-Vice-Chair; Sen. Edwards, Sen. Johnson, Sen. Monroe, Sen. Winters, Rep. Lively, Rep. McLain, Rep. Smith, Rep. Smith-Warner

Members Excused: Rep. McKeown, Co-Chair; Rep. Bentz, Co-Vice-Chair; Sen. Girod, Rep. Olson

Woodburn Tour

The Committee met at the Woodburn Park and Ride facility, located at the intersection of Interstate 5 and Highway 214. Introductions were made by Tim Potter, Region 2 Area Manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). The Woodburn interchange was funded, in part, with moneys from the Jobs and Transportation Act (House Bill 2001, 2009 Session), commonly referred to as JTA, and included the park and ride facility where the tour took place.

Scott Derrickson, Woodburn City Manager, noted the rapid growth that has occurred in Woodburn and how the city has worked through the land use process to develop both the residential lots necessary to accommodate that growth and the buildable industrial land necessary to provide the funding base for infrastructure needed to accommodate that growth. The investment in improvements at the interchange, he asserted, would benefit future development opportunities for the city. He opined that the Portland metropolitan area will need to expand south, toward Woodburn, after years of expansion to the west. The interchange project itself had been in planning and development for years and was designed to improve traffic flow by eliminating left-hand turns that caused traffic to back up onto the interstate several times each year, a problem that was exacerbated with the completion of the neighboring Woodburn Premium Outlet Stores.

Kristy Kummer-Pred, General Manager for the Woodburn Premium Outlet Stores, noted that while the shopping center does draw many visitors it is only one of several factors that caused traffic problems at the interchange. However, given that the backups typically occurred right in front of the Outlet stores, it was vital to their continued success that the improvements be made. She asserted that there has been a marked improvement since the new interchange opened, and expressed thanks to lawmakers for approving funding for the project. She also applauded ODOT for early project completion and for managing impacts during construction.

Kerry Kuenzi, K&E Excavators, discussed the importance of a good working relationship between ODOT and the project manager. He outlined the types of technology that helped with the design of the interchange improvements, which allowed shortening the project from three phases to two, shortening construction time and lessening transportation impacts.

Committee questions and comments included: the suggestion that superior performance contractors should be incentivized to finish early and/or under budget; breakdown of the project

cost by funding source (\$43 million from the JTA, \$25 million from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program [STIP], and contributions from City of Woodburn and the federal government); and the importance of an open line of communication between ODOT, contractors, stakeholders and local government.

Aurora Tour

The tour then shifted seven miles north on Interstate 5 to the Aurora/Donald interchange. Mr. Potter provided a brief history of the interchange, indicating that the last STIP included \$3.3 million to develop a management plan for the interchange, which will allow preliminary design to begin. With work underway on the Newberg-Dundee bypass, there is increased truck traffic utilizing the interchange, which is resulting in a rise in congestion due to an awkward five-way intersection and multiple, problematic left-hand turns.

Marion County Commissioner Sam Brentano further discussed the problems that are associated with the interchange in its current alignment. He noted that there are times when traffic at the interchange results in cars and trucks backed up onto Interstate 5, adding that trucks must often cross multiple lanes of traffic when entering or exiting the interstate. As the Newberg-Dundee bypass project moves forward these impacts are expected to worsen.

Committee questions and comments included: use of the interchange to divert to Highway 99E by northbound traffic to avoid congestion farther north; 30 percent of vehicles moving through the interchange are trucks; ability to develop properties at or near the interchange; and the proximity to the Woodburn interchange, which experienced similar problems prior to the reconfiguration.

Working Lunch with Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation

Members of the Joint Committee attended a working lunch with members of the Mid-Willamette Valley Area Commission on Transportation (MWVACT). Topics of discussion included the need for new, unrestricted revenue sources to provide operating funds for transit services; high-priority transportation projects for MWVACT, and the importance of state moneys to move forward with projects currently lacking the funding to move forward.

Attending the working lunch were: Ken Woods, Jr., ACT Chair and Dallas City Councilor; Craig Pope, Polk County Commissioner; Susan Morgan, Oregon Transportation Commissioner and Douglas County Commissioner; Jennie Messner, Deputy Director of the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments; Cathy Clark, Mayor of Keizer; Bob Andrews, Mayor of Newberg; and Stan Primozich, Yamhill County Commissioner. Staff present included Jennie Messner and Mike Jaffe, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments; Sonny Chickering and Tim Potter, ODOT; Robin Maxey, Senate President's Office; Patrick Brennan, Committee staff; and Daniel Houser, Association of Oregon Counties.