LOWER JOHN DAY AREA COMMISSION

ON TRANSPORTATION (LJDACT)

Meeting Minutes

October 2, 2017; 10:00 A.M. ~ 12:00 P.M.

Bob’s Texas T-Bone Restaurant

101 Main Street; Rufus, OR 97050

In Attendance:

1. Gary Thompson, Sherman County Judge, LJDACT Chair

2. Gary Farnsworth, ODOT Region 4

3. Pat Cimmiyoti, ODOT District 9, The Dalles

4. Matthew Klebes, City of The Dalles

5. Dave Anderson, City of The Dalles Public Works Director

6. Rod Runyon, Wasco County Commissioner

7. Jacque Schei, MCCED

8. Perry Thurston, Moro City Council

9. Carol MacKenzie, City of Wasco Mayor

10. Peter Mitchell, Port of Arlington

11. Kathryn Greiner, City of Condon Administrator

12. Matthew Fletcher, Western Federal Lands FHWA

13. Denny Ross, City of Maupin

14. Arthur Smith, Wasco County Public Works

15. Chuck Covert, Columbia Gorge Regional Airport

16. Lynn Morley, Wheeler County Judge

17. Bill Potter, City of Fossil Public Works

18. Brenda Snow Potter, Wheeler County Finance, LJDACT Administrative Assistant

19. Lisa Strader, ODOT ADA Program

20. Michael Duncan, ODOT Region 4

Meeting recorded and minutes prepared by Brenda Snow Potter, LJDACT Admin

1. 10:00 Call to Order, Introductions, Agenda Review Chair Thompson

- General Public Comments

2. 10:05 LJDACT Business Chair Thompson

- Review/Approve past Meeting Minutes (Action)

- Review/Update Membership (Action)

Motion to approve minutes made by Rod Runyon, second by Peter Mitchell. Vote passed unanimously.

Public acknowledgment of appointment of Matthew Klebes as the bike/pedestrian representative

Messages have been left for the City of Rufus on whether or not they want to appoint a representative.

3. 10:10 Oregon Transportation Funding Package/STIP Gary Farnsworth, ODOT

- 2018-21 STIP Implications Other ODOT Staff

- ACT/Modal Chair visit to OTC Workshop and

 the 2021-2024 STIP Update

for more information, see the OTC meeting video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J5tj83TJO88>

Gary F. provided an update.

In September the Commission approved a list of projects identified in the house bill. ODOT added additional projects because of the additional revenue. ODOT capital program is ready for approval in October. The 2021-2024 program cycle starts immediately afterward. All chairs are asked to come to the workshop at the Oregon Gardens, October 19th. Judge Thompson will be attending. Three primary questions have been presented. A handout was provided.

The legislature heard the message regarding maintain, preserve, and fix what we have, especially on roads/transportation systems with the highest rate of lethal accidents. Fix-it, enhancement and safety are primary. Commission is left with a mandate on how they look at the splitting of the funding. No more revenue to grow programs. Limited by the ability to partner on projects. Fall 2014 – the Commission asked the same question but with a qualifier. ODOT and cities and counties are responsive to emerging partnerships. This is still a concern. Immediate opportunity fund is an example of a positive way to partner (though funding is very limited), where the Commission holds aside funds specifically for immediate opportunities to invest in a partnership.

There will be opportunities to leverage enhancement funds against fix-it funds. Gary F.’s recommendation is to continue with this plan, yes looking for emphasis for more ways to leverage. He asked members to provide examples and what-ifs for Judge Thompson to take to the upcoming meeting.

Dave A. agreed with everything Gary F. said and he believes that fix-it and maintenance need to be the priority. He asked about how seismic upgrades projects fit into the program.

Gary F. stated that legislature acknowledges the need. It overlaps with bridges. It is still an unknown. There is speculation on using it to relieve bottlenecks.

Dave A. referred to the Governor’s task force and the message given to them to not take away maintenance funds to back seismic.

Pat C. stated that rock fall is part of the seismic work on 97.

Gary F. elaborated on the need to include seismic.

Pat C. added that Arlington received ADA funding. They are looking at the need to address pavement conditions in the triangle. This is in line with combining projects.

Perry T. mentioned Moro traffic issues and speeding through town. Because of the straight stretch of highway through town people do not slow down. He asked if there is funding, options, or ideas to address this without deterring business growth. Members from ODOT have attended the city council meetings.

Gary F. agreed that this is a safety issue and this falls into that program. How will the money be allocated and prioritized? Could rumble strips, striping, etc. help? Can Commission direct ODOT to use more flexibility to use the funding? Cities partnering with ODOT on solving the problem. Work with the communities. Gary F. gave another example being the road through Tumalo.

Per Perry T. a low cost fix would be a flashing yellow light in Moro?

Gary F. clarified that the Transportation Commission is looking at higher dollar fixes. These type of improvements can be addressed by maintenance and operational investments instead of the STIP.

Peter M. agreed with Gary F. on the immediate opportunity fund. There is some room in the inter-modal fund. Having dollars available is important and makes the system more efficient.

Gary F. referenced Connect Oregon and improvements for industrial areas.

Denny R. asked about the effects of added traffic on the roads from the Eagle Creek.

Gary F. said this would be addressed later in the agenda.

Denny R. mentioned a narrow concrete bridge in town. They are concerned with it but cannot see funds to replace it.

Gary F. believes it fits to some degree with bridges and seismic.

Denny R. has not heard of earthquake issues in Maupin. There is an increased capability to detect activity but Maupin does not see this as an issue.

Gary F. explained that the seismic issues are directed to the predicted Cascadia event. The priority is to secure the east side of the mountains for priority routes.

Dave A. explained that The Dalles just updated their transportation plan. There is a glaring issue with the intersection of Freemont and 197 and the safety challenges. Looking for lower cost, shorter term improvements but have been unable to come up with a feasible option.

 Carol M. asked about bridges and seismic issues in Oregon.

 Gary F. explained that there are thousands of bridges in Oregon and hundreds have been retrofitted.

Dave A. asked about other areas and their needs.

Gary F. stated that it is consistent throughout the three commissions.

Kathryn G. asked for estimates on funding breakdowns.

Gary F. stated that the last one was about 90% fix-it and 10% enhance. Will send project timelines to Brenda S.P. to be passed along.

10:50 am Gary F. left the meeting.

4. 10:50 Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) Matt Fletcher, FHWA-WFL

 - Project Updates and Coordination Other Federal Partners

 - Upcoming call for Applications Gary Farnsworth/All

Matt Fletcher provided handouts to the group (available at [www.ljdact.com](http://www.ljdact.com))

Thanked the members for inviting him to the meeting. He is replacing George Fakaris and Neil Christenson. Matt F. handles all FLAP related matters. $36 million per year for use in Oregon. Joint applications – contact Matt F. if you do not know who your area partner is. Next call for projects was discussed– refer to handout of dates for 2018. FLAP projects require a match - 10% local fund contribution. One proposed change in the program is to open up a safety only plan. FLAP has not used this much in the past. Very specific categories for the safety only plan are on the handout.

Rod R. asked if the Moro traffic issues on 97 would be considered.

Matt F. would have to look into that. Typically the FLAP funds public roads that lead into federal lands. There is another program called Federal Lands Transportation Program (FLTP). FLTP funds can be used for local sharing match for a FLAP program. FLTP is a semi competitive program. Forest Service receives a bulk of the funds. Amy Thomas is a good rep. No information on specific projects at this time but can meet outside of the meeting.

Dave A. asked about the $36 million per year.

Matt F. stated that funds are for the entire state of Oregon.

Peter M. mentioned the Cottonwood Canyon State Park. The 206 crosses the John Day River. The Haycreek access road to BLM land is eroding away. He asked if this project would qualify.

Matt F. explained that he would need to find out who the maintaining agency is to define eligibility. This will determine whether it qualifies.

Gary T. stated that the funds have been granted for Lower Rock Creek. It was moved because of environmental impact. Starvation Lane is also a local project that will start soon.

Matt F. listed several projects that he has yet to work on. He will talk to anyone with questions after the meeting.

Art S. offered details about when he was working specifically with George F. about eligibility regarding three designated forest access roads. There is another route that he feels is more important but is not an official designated road and asked if there is a chance in the future to have it added.

Matt F. explained that the program does not require the routes have to be a forest highway. He provided the definition of eligible route – A federal lands access transportation facility (also available on the handout). It is the applicants’ responsibility to prove the importance of the access road. It must be signed off on by the FLMA.

Dave A. added additional information regarding this access road.

Matt F. the key is proving it benefits transit, jobs, etc. Tribes are also allowed to propose projects. The Tribal program has more money available than any other.

Pat C. asked about the application date.

Matt F. explained that the proposed date is March – April. They are also calling for projects in Washington with same deadline. Looking at 2020-2023 projects over $1 million. It can be used to support planning and research studies.

Dave A. asked how long to complete the project once money is awarded.

Per Matt F. there is not a set timeline for completion. The program is primarily for the system. It is not a grant fund.

Pat C. asked about maintenance criteria and if it would include hazard tree removal.

Matt F. has not seen that come up. Maintenance is usually for chip seal.

David Amiton is the ODOT region 4 liaison for FLAP. He is the most keen on the program for the region.

Pat C. stated that David A. has told him about three projects that have had proposals submitted. ODOT is helping prepare those.

Matt F. explained that the proposal sheets will be updated. There is talk of removing the physical signature and allowing digital signatures. The assessment project scoring criteria may also be changing.

Rod R. asked Pat C. about hazard tree removal.

5. 11:20 Incidents/Events/Operations Planning Pat Cimmiyotti, ODOT

 - Eclipse & Fire-Closure Briefings

 - Updates on other Operations Collaboration/Plans

Pretty exciting events over the last few months. Handout was provided. Preplanning and partnerships provided big benefits during these events. ODOT planned for about 6 months. There was successful movement of traffic through the systems. The ITS project that was proposed a few years ago allowed for the purchase of 10 message boards. These were moved to decision point locations. Used them during the eclipse and the Eagle Point fire. They will be upgrading the Rufus board. Placed an overhead message board at Hood River and cameras at Shaniko and Criterion to monitor traffic during events. Trip check upgraded to show movement of traffic using color codes. This lets people look at their routes and make changes if needed.

Detour planning working group plans were used effectively. The fire jumped over to Washington. They rerouted trucks to relieve traffic issues in Washington. The detour lasted longer than anticipated but the freeway needed to be safe for travel.

Peter M. asked for details on the highway closures. Businesses were impacted by the complete closure of the highway. He asked why two way traffic was not moved to one side of the freeway.

Pat C. explained the levels of authority in this type of fire. There were issues with wind direction. There were level 3 evacuations on both sides of the highway. ODOT was ready to open Cascade Locks but due to the Sheriff’s level 3 evacuation traffic could not be allowed through the area. Two way traffic on one side of the freeway requires complicated logistics of getting people on and off of the freeway, striping, etc. would have extended the closures. Eastbound was challenging because of the significant hazards around the tunnel – rockfall and trees. There was a new issue on Big Shale Rock Mountain. One tree came down and went through the retaining wall and into traffic. This was a direct hazard and it took a week to correct. The cooperation between all agencies during this incident was vital.

Peter M. stated that he understood this during the active fire. He referred to the recent accident on I84. The closure during and after the fires adversely affected businesses.

Pat C. stated that ODOT understood the need to get roads open as soon as possible.

Dave A. asked about overhead aerial work with helicopters dropping/dipping over active highways.

Pat C. explained that ODOT has the authority to keep roadways open during these types of activities.

Perry T. commended the work that was done during this incident.

Pat C. explained that the detour plan was instituted in less than an hour. One goal was to minimize traffic in Hood River and The Dalles. They are still working on the details for all effected areas. Taking trucks off the freeway allowed traffic to flow freely.

Perry T. mentioned that keeping trucks off of Hwy 14 was a big help.

Pat C. added that communicating with WashDot was helpful.

Dave A. asked about future plans if fire does not jump to Washington.

Per Pat C. they will continue working on it. As part of the eclipse event, volumes and travel times were provided on the handout. No particular problems coming in for the event but there were backups on leaving. Changed the signal remotely at Biggs. There were approximately 100,000 people in Madras. Looking forward to meeting with partners in Wasco County to address issues and keeping traffic out of The Dalles.

Rod R. appreciated the phone call last week. The road where the tree came down – the road could have been open when the tree came down. Social media was incorrect on where to go and which roads to take. He addressed those issues by directing people to Google ODOT. This information was updated but out of order, Facebook updates were out of order. Old updates should be deleted so that the most current one is at the top.

Carol M. asked how far the active fire went. She commented on the fir trees next to the highway turning brown.

Pat. C. stated that the fire went all of the way to Corbet – halfway between Corbet and Cascade Locks. There are concerns about the amount of vegetation destroyed and possible slides.

Pat C. added that Hood River County can submit for funding because of the Governor’s emergency declaration.

Per Rod R. there is a list that has been distributed to businesses in The Dalles and Wasco County.

6. 11:20 Project Updates / Roundtable Chair Thompson/

 Brad DeHart, ODOT/All

Pat C. provided a handout with current projects and project development. Maintenance will be working on Rowena loop. Highway will be closed for a short time.

The seismic retrofit of Spanish Hollow Creek will be done in stages. Bridge will be down to one lane. If routes are not clearly marked, trucks will go wherever they want. ODOT will be looking for alternatives for maintaining the roads during the winter.

Carol M. asked about traffic through Wasco and Rufus.

Pat C. explained that there is a length limit.

7. 11:30 ODOT ADA Plan Lisa Strader, ODOT

Provided handouts. Lisa S. is the department’s first ADA program manager. She was brought on due to the lawsuit on alleged non-compliant curb ramps. There is an active settlement agreement. Transportation partners operate along highway systems, do projects and have local roads over state highway system.

Lisa S. ran through the pages of the handout.

ODOT had a definition of what did and did not need to be addressed. In 2013 it was decided ODOT was not in compliance with Federal Law. An internal memo was used to instigate the lawsuit. The data needs to be reviewed and written into plain speak. There is a schedule for completion of each stage of the compliance process. This is a 15 year settlement agreement. Annual reports are required as is outreach and communication with transportation organizations who represent peoples with disabilities. Every curb ramp needs to be inventoried. This requires taking measurements of each ramp. Each trigger requires the ramp to be rebuilt. They will also address pedestrian signals that are not ADA accessible. Projects are not consistent with how work areas are clearly rerouted for ADA access. ODOT standards have been adopted. When partnering with ODOT, these standards must be met. Standardized drawings no longer work. Each corner must be designed specific to the location. Maintenance and operation bulletins have been rewritten. Challenges being faced are local roads meeting up with state roads and inconsistent ramp styles. Design exceptions are being thoroughly documented.

Perry T. asked about lights at crosswalks. Main crosswalk on a highway. Is this a compliance issue that ODOT can address?

Lisa S. does not require lights at crosswalks. Work will be done with regional and local agencies.

Gary T. where is the money going to come out of?

Per Lisa S. no additional funding has been appointed. It is a Circuit Court mandated maintenance issue.

Gary T. stated that this will effect counties and cities to become ADA compliant.

Short discussion followed regarding designing and costs.

Kathryn G. stated that the crews were in Condon last week doing measurements.

Lisa S. explained that the plaintiffs require the information being collected.

Per Pat C. it must be determined who is responsible for what part of the road/sidewalks/ramps/etc. If combining with ODOT, discuss compliance early. Do not assume newer ramps are in compliance.

Denny R. stated that the curbs in Maupin are fairly new – 2009.

Per Pat C., with the new measuring process, these may not be in compliance any more.

Kathryn G. wants the criteria for their engineers.

Lisa S. will send out information.

Pat C. referenced a past partnership and a jurisdictional line. ODOT requirements are to be followed when partnering with local jurisdictions.

Lisa S. explained that the annual reports are due to prove compliance issues are being addressed

Pat C. wants the exceptions sent out to everyone.

Matt F. asked who the plaintiffs were.

Lisa S. provided this information.

Per Matt F. this has been going on for several years with these agencies.

Discussion continued regarding jurisdictions and agreements.

8. Next Meeting? / Adjourned at 11:55 Chair Thompson

Next Meeting will be January 8th, 2018

Public comment: Perry T. is attending today as a citizen not as a public official.