

TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION MINUTES



MEDFORD
OREGON

January 27, 2021

12:30pm

Virtual Meeting via Zoom, Medford, OR

Call to Order: 12:39pm

10. Roll Call

Members Present:

Al Densmore, Chair
Kim Parducci
Peggy Penland
Jared Pulver
Suzanne Schroeder
Paige West

Members Absent:

Dennie Conrad, Vice Chair, Excused
Mickey Harvey, Excused

Guests Present:

None

Staff Present:

Karl MacNair, Public Works
Kelly Madding, Deputy City Manager
Liz Connor, Planning
Debra Royal, Public Works

Council Liaison Present:

Sarah Spansail, Councilmember

20. Citizen Communications

None.

30. Approval of Minutes from December 9, 2020

Commissioner Parducci requested a minor correction be made to her remarks regarding the Highway 140 & Foothill Road roundabout. Without objection to Commissioner Parducci's request, the minutes were unanimously approved.

40. Action Items

None.

50. Discussion Items

50.1 Federal Transportation Efforts

Ms. Madding provided background and an update on the City's federal lobbying efforts.

The City employs the lobbying firm of CFM. CFM has been very successful for the City as it has benefited from their employees' past experience of working on Capitol Hill as congressional staffers. In addition to CFM, City staff have good relationships with Oregon's congressional delegation and staffs. Ms. Madding has traveled to DC, presenting the MEGA Corridor project directly to law makers and USDOT. The City was awarded a BUILD Grant in November of 2019.

Regarding transportation issues, CFM does a more than lobbying and advocacy. They are involved with grant identification and grant writing, specifically they were instrumental in the City obtaining the BUILD Grant.

Ms. Madding discussed some of the nuances of transportation funding. Specifically, regarding the BUILD Grant, Congress provided a one-year extension of the September 2021 deadline for design completion of the MEGA Corridor. However, because of a delay in acknowledgement from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Public Works must still work within the September 2021 deadline timeframe.

The City will more than likely not engage in more lobbying or grant writing until the BUILD Grant project funds are obligated. According to CFM, the City will not qualify for other grants with the BUILD funds still not obligated.

Chair Densmore offered that the reauthorization for the entire national highway system was deferred a year to September 2021 and typically that reauthorization process, broadly, gives the City an opportunity to have input with how the system may change. Given the fact that the changes in the makeup in the US Senate and the fact that Chairman DeFazio will write the bill that will guide the nation for the next several years, it seemed like this would be an opportune time for the Commission to work with the City Council and see if as they are crafting that overall reauthorization of the system, what input would we have, what things could we suggest as to what Medford is going to do in the future...what things are being discussed and how would it affect us? Granted that's not

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project oriented but if we were to advocate for certain programmatic changes that may help us as we find resources coming up to do for example the priority projects that the Commission has advocated that the Council work on.

Ms. Madding agreed with the Chair and believes that trying to influence legislation at a programmatic level is completely appropriate and if the Transportation Commission wants to work on that, we can transmit that information to Council. However the Commissioners think that would best be conveyed we can facilitate that happening.

Chair Densmore offered that it would be helpful if Congressman DeFazio would designate a person from his staff who would communicate guidance on where it might be an appropriate place for us to weigh in.

Ms. Madding said she and Mr. MacNair and Mr. Georgevitch should discuss reaching out to Congressman DeFazio and building a relationship with his staff.

Chairman Densmore stressed this is an opportunity the City should take advantage of now as this topic is only addressed every five-six years in Congress and we have members of our congressional delegation who are in positions of influence in the House and Senate with Senator Ron Wyden being the chair of the Senate Finance Committee.

Ms. Madding offered that City Manager Brian Sjothun meets monthly with the city managers of the seven largest cities outside of the Portland area and that this is something that he can speak to that group about as the more we partner the more power we will have.

Councilmember Spansail asked for clarification regarding the deadline extension on the BUILD Grant.

Ms. Madding explained that the City cannot apply for or receive any federal highway grant funds until we have the MEGA Corridor project obligated. To say the timeline the City was given is aggressive is putting it mildly. The only reason we can meet the timeline of this grant is because ODOT has stepped in as a partner. Without them we could not have met the deadline. We have staff working overtime. It will be a credit to our staff and ODOT's staff when they pull this off. We are still pedal to the metal because we don't know if FHWA agrees we got an extension. So we are moving ahead like we don't have an extension. We may in fact get done a little earlier, but that is one of the downsides of us being in that design phase before we actually obligate the money.

Mr. MacNair added that it doesn't prevent us from apply for federal funding that is managed through the state, which are a lot of the grants we apply for.

Chair Densmore recalled past stimulus bills earmarked for shovel-ready projects, and that this was how the bridge over Barnett Road was built. COVID might be addressed by a stimulus bill. Communicating with the congressional delegation as to whether or not there will be some ability to have projects funded has me thinking about the priority projects that the Commission just put in the Six-Year Plan. Whether or not some of those are part way through design is something that we also need to be communicating.

Ms. Madding agreed and plans to speak with Mr. MacNair, Mr. Georgevitch, and Mr. Crebbin to develop ideas as to what we can do to best position ourselves to be competitive if there is anything in a COVID stimulus bill that is related to transportation construction.

50.2 ARTS Grant Applications

Mr. MacNair provided an update on the All Roads Traffic Safety Grant (ARTS) applications submitted in December. These grants have a 7.78 percent match requirement.

ARTS is a data drive process so there were several revisions of the project list along the way to be sure we have competitive projects that would score well against the criteria. Criteria is based on crash history and a formula to determine the benefit/cost ratio. The higher the benefit/cost ratio the more competitive the project. The projects submitted included: Restriping Lear Way between Delta Waters and Commerce Dr, behind the old Costco building; two groups of signal upgrades totaling 38 signals; a mini roundabout at Jackson and Columbus; street lighting on W Main; and a signal at Kings Highway and Garfield. There is also a bike and pedestrian ARTS grant that is judged differently. This project has two parts: a study to identify locations for rapid flashing beacons along Riverside and Central Avenues and the installation of the beacons and some sidewalk infill.

Oregon Community Paths (OCP) grants applications will be submitted January 31 and will include: a project refinement grant between Murphy Road and N Phoenix Road to solidify the alinement of the path; and reconstructing the path between Murphy Road and Black Oak Drive.

We will find out the outcome of these grant applications sometime in the spring of 2021.

Commissioner Parducci inquired as to the transition of the mini roundabout; is Columbus going to become a single lane in each direction and a center lane? Mr. MacNair affirmed the question adding it will transition at this intersection in the near term, so it will be three lanes south of the intersection, one lane southbound will become a Left Turn Only lane, and there will be a thru lane coming from McAndrews, and it will open up to the two lanes northbound north of Jackson with the project that is happening this summer.

Councilmember Spansail asked about crash history. Does that include incidents of auto vs pedestrians? Mr. MacNair affirmed the question adding that anything reported to the state data base is included.

Commissioner West asked about protected pedestrian crossings along Lear Way. Mr. MacNair offered that this issue should be discussed Project Development, but that is wasn't part of the grant request, so there is no money in the grant for items like a rapid flashing beacon. If there are areas that RVDT is aware of, near bus stops in particular, we should look at that. The City did coordinate with RVTD on how bus stop locations would be impacted by the new striping prior to submitting the grant application.

Commissioner West was very appreciative that Mr. MacNair reached out and offered that not all cities do that. RVTD may be willing to partner with funding if financial issues are involved.

Commissioner West asked if the projects were prioritized when submitting applications. Mr. MacNair said that the ARTS grants were not as that question would be determined by the scoring process. A priority question is asked on the OCP application. The refinement project was prioritized because that was a Tier One project in the TSP and will help with finding future grant funding for that project.

Commissioner Parducci referenced the Commission's past discussions regarding improvements on Table Rock Road and Delta Waters Road asking if those projects did not have a high enough benefits-cost ratio to be included in the grant application. Mr. MacNair affirmed that the benefit/cost ratio was too low to be included by the rules of the grant and they had too high a price tag to be considered for these grants.

50.3 BPAC and Traffic Committee Interviews Update

Mr. MacNair informed the Commissioners that interviews were held for these two committees and ultimately everyone was recommended and approved by Council. All vacancies on BPAC are now filled and the Parking Committee still has two vacancies. The new members will be seated in February.

Another Council action of note is that Ms. Parducci was reappointed to continue serving on the Transportation Commission.

60. Planning and Public Works Department Update

Mr. MacNair shared that the LED project is underway. All lights owned by Pacific Power are complete and the contractor is moving on to the City lights. They have also been working in the parks and are near completion of the parks and city owned parking lots.

The Springbrook project is underway - Cedar Links to Pheasant Lane. A developer has built the connection north of Owen Dr. That isn't open to the public yet, but by September 2021, Springbrook will be continuous to Coker Butte Road.

The Foothill project is still being worked on.

We are gearing up for the City's annual pavement maintenance season that will include ADA ramp construction in advance of paving and other maintenance work. There will be striping changes related to some of those projects.

The Columbus restriping will be done in conjunction with an overlay project. This is the largest section of road that will be overlaid this summer. Stevens Street and areas on Biddle are also being overlaid this summer.

Public Works Director Cory Crebbin announced his retirement. He will be retiring in March, however, he may come back post-retirement to undertake some temporary work.

Ms. Conner relayed that the Regional Active Transportation Plan is obtaining final comments soon with the Policy Committee set to adopt and finalize the Plan on April 27, 2021. Chris Olivier, Planning's GIS coordinator, has been working on mapping all the Transportation Facilities that Council decides to put on the Medford Land Information Map. The Rogue Valley MPO Technical Advisory Committee and additional committees will meet in March to review the Rogue Valley Active Transportation Plan.

70. Comments from Commissioners and Other Committees

Commissioner Penland offered that the Traffic Committee will be meeting tomorrow and for the second month in a row, will be discussing safety issues at the corner of 8th and Elm. The residents have installed boulders to keep people from hitting their house when they miss the corner.

Commissioner Schroeder offered that the BPAC will be meeting next month, and that the interviews went well and the Committee is excited to get started.

80. Agenda Build

ODOT will present an introductory presentation on the North Medford Interchange Management Plan (IMPA) that ODOT has been working on. The IAMP studies a future interchange configuration which connects I-5 more directly to the Rogue Valley Expressway.

Chair Densmore asked Mr. MacNair for an update on ODOT's view and the status of the viaduct project. Mr. MacNair said he would arrange an update from Gary Leaming. Chair Densmore

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mentioned the connection with infrastructure and federal funding opportunities that may rise in ODOT's priority list.

Commissioner Parducci suggested checking on the Exit 27 study. ODOT is planning on doing additional follow up for the South Medford interchange. Even if they don't have results yet, it would be nice to know what they are looking at and what they are seeing. It ties into a lot of our projects.

Chair Densmore expressed his and the Commission's great appreciation for all of Mr. Crebbin's work and commitment to the City during his time 22-year tenure.

90. Next Meeting – February 24, 2021

100. Adjournment: 1:36pm

Respectfully submitted,

Debra Royal
Public Works, Engineering