

TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Minutes of Meeting held June 10, 2004

Commissioner Michael Cragun called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. in the Wasatch Front Regional Council Conference Room.

Attendance

Michael Cragun, Chairman	Commissioner, Davis County
Michael Jensen	Councilman, Salt Lake County
Joe Johnson	Mayor, Bountiful
Darrell Smith	Mayor, Draper
J. Lynn Crane	Mayor, Herriman
Jerry Stevenson	Mayor, Layton
Larry Ellertson	Mayor, Lindon
Wes Losser	Mayor, South Salt Lake
Fred Panucci	Mayor, Syracuse
Bryan Holladay	Mayor, West Jordan
Dennis Nordfelt	Mayor, West Valley City
Robert A. Hunter	UTA Board of Trustees
Ken Warnick	Utah Transportation Commission
Jan Wells	Utah Transportation Commission
Blaine Gehring	Bluffdale
Pat Casaday	Sandy
John Hiskey	Sandy
Bill Baranowski	West Jordan
Dave Murphy	West Jordan
Wendell Rigby	West Jordan
Roger Borgenicht	Future Moves
Rick McKeague	Division of Air Quality
Max Ditlevsen	Utah Department of Transportation
Mick Crandall	Utah Transit Authority
Steve Meyer	Utah Transit Authority
Chuck Chappell	WFRC
Doug Hattery	WFRC
Sam Klemm	WFRC
George Ramjoue	WFRC
Paula Lee Roberts	WFRC
Ben Wuthrich	WFRC
Renaë Bodily, Secretary	WFRC

Minutes

ACTION: Mayor J. Lynn Crane moved that the minutes of the April 8, 2004, Trans Com meeting be approved as written. Commissioner Jan Wells seconded the motion, and the voting was unanimous.

Opportunity for Public Comment

There were no responses to Commissioner Cragun's request for public comments.

Recommendation for WFRC representative to the Utah Valley Regional Planning Committee

Commissioner Cragun said that in order to keep joint coordination between the Wasatch Front Regional Council (WFRC) and the Mountainland Association of Governments (MAG), Mayor Larry Ellertson from Lindon City serves as MAG's representative for Trans Com while Pat Casaday from Sandy City serves as Trans Com's representative for MAG's Utah Valley Regional Planning Committee. Mr. Casaday will be leaving in the next few weeks and needs to be replaced.

The WFRC staff suggests that Trans Com and the Regional Council consider appointing Mayor Darrell Smith from Draper City to take Pat Casaday's place on MAG's Regional Planning Committee. Commissioner Cragun said that Mayor Smith has agreed to serve in this capacity.

ACTION: Commissioner Ken Warnick moved that Trans Com recommend to the Regional Council that Mayor Darrell Smith be appointed as the Trans Com and Regional Council representative on MAG's Utah Valley Regional Planning Committee. Robert Hunter seconded the motion, and the voting was unanimous.

Transportation Improvement Program

a. Approval of Amendment to 2004-2008 Transportation Improvement Program for Public Review

Ben Wuthrich, WFRC, said that the WFRC has received a request from the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) to amend the 2004-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to make it consistent with UDOT's proposed 2005-2009 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). He said that the WFRC will not be able to adopt a new TIP this year because of air quality conformity issues.

Mr. Wuthrich distributed a three-page list of the projects to amend into the TIP (see attachment #1). Listed on the first page are projects UDOT wishes to program in FY 2007 that need to receive preliminary engineering funds in FY 2006. For the most part, these projects have been in "Concept Development" and UDOT would like to bring them into FY 2007 and begin the preliminary work. By placing a token amount of \$25,000 in FY 2006, UDOT will be able to begin work without additional delay on these projects. Although the TIP could be amended with these qualifying exempt projects, the TIP must remain financially constrained; thus, it restricts the option of moving all the 2007 projects into the funded year of 2006 (the latest funded year in the 2004-2008 TIP).

Mr. Wuthrich said that listed on the second page are new projects to be added to the TIP. Listed on the third page are projects on the current TIP requiring a change in the funding

schedule. The Centennial Highway funding amounts and schedule for these projects represent the “cash flow” as directed by the 2004 Legislature.

Mr. Wuthrich continued to say that federal regulations require that the TIP be approved by local elected officials serving on the Regional Council, be financially constrained, and be found to conform with state air quality plans. Because these projects are qualifying projects, exempt from air quality conformity requirements, additional conformity analysis does not need to be completed for these projects. Also, the public needs to be given an opportunity to review and comment on the TIP. The public comment period will be advertised in the Deseret Morning News, the Salt Lake Tribune, and the Standard Examiner.

In response to a question from Mayor Panucci, Mr. Wuthrich said that no projects have been removed from the TIP.

ACTION: Councilman Michael Jensen moved that Trans Com recommend to the Regional Council that the TIP amendment be made available for public review which will allow the amended 2004-2008 TIP to be approved by the Regional Council in August. Mayor Joe Johnson seconded the motion and the voting was unanimous.

b. West Jordan’s request for additional Surface Transportation Program funds for the 7800 South project

Commissioner Cragun said that West Jordan City submitted a request for an additional \$678,323 in Urban Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds for eight change orders on the project located on 7800 South from 1850 West to 2700 West. Commissioner Cragun said that he would prefer that consideration for this request be delayed. The Salt Lake Technical Committee and UDOT are still trying to identify if there is any surplus funding which could be assigned to this project. Since the TIP has to be financially constrained, Commissioner Cragun asked that West Jordan’s request be delayed until Trans Com’s August 12 meeting to see if any funds have been identified at that time.

Mayor Joe Johnson asked if the delay would affect the project in any way. Commissioner Cragun responded that the project is underway and would not be affected.

Mayor Lynn Crane felt that a few years ago the policy of addressing change orders was changed to limit the amount of funds approved. Commissioner Cragun responded that the old policy said that projects could receive funding up to ten percent of the original cost estimate of the project without additional approval of Trans Com and the Regional Council. The policy established a couple of years ago still allows sponsors to request additional funds, but requires that all requests be approved by Trans Com and the Regional Council.

It was agreed to delay discussing West Jordan’s request until Trans Com’s August 12 meeting.

Transportation Improvement Program priority setting process

Doug Hattery, WFRC, said that WFRC's Executive Director has asked the staff to develop a more objective process for the WFRC to use in evaluating projects that use federal funds such as Surface Transportation Program funds and Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality funds. Also, the Legislature's Transportation Planning Task Force wants UDOT to have a priority process where they effectively evaluate and select projects throughout the state for funding. Mr. Hattery said the UDOT staff has been leading the effort, working closely with WFRC and MAG, to decide what type of process should be used to evaluate major statewide projects. UDOT and WFRC want to make sure that the local entities understand and have as much information as possible about the selection process. Also related to this effort, UDOT and the Transportation Commission are putting together a policy on how they consider local matching funds when setting priorities for state highway projects.

Paula Lee Roberts, WFRC, presented a PowerPoint presentation on the work the WFRC staff is doing to revise the priority setting process for STP and CMAQ projects. She stated that the WFRC staff is in the process of refining the current project evaluation/ranking process. Increased demand for limited funding, inquiries of why projects are selected over another, and a request of WFRC's Executive Director are reasons why this process is being revised.

Ms. Roberts reviewed the seven criteria established by TEA-21 that Congress wants addressed in the planning process. These include accessibility and mobility, economic development, efficiency, connectivity, safety, and system preservation. WFRC's current project criteria were reviewed along with new criteria that are being considered. It was also made clear that WFRC's overall vision was to be objective in the process, continue improving the process, and customize needs according to our area.

Ms. Roberts said that some additional criteria WFRC is considering will deal with system efficiency, mobility, Transportation Demand Management (TDM), Transportation System Management (TSM), access management, and land use. The staff is looking at how to include the economic benefit of projects in the process, including increased development and cost effectiveness. She pointed out that projects should benefit the region as a whole and not favor one city. Data analysis will include analyzing traffic volumes and more of an emphasis will be placed on safety, environmental impacts, and system preservation which will focus on maintaining the existing system and improving the existing network.

Ms. Roberts continued to say that research was conducted on what other agencies and state Department of Transportation offices across the country were doing in terms of project selection criteria and ranking process. It was discovered that WFRC is right in line with other agencies and in some cases well advanced than others. It was noted that most organizations use a method of quantifying each factor; however, that doesn't mean that WFRC will do the same.

In response to a question from Mayor Panucci regarding other MPOs' selection processes, Mr. Hattery said it appeared that some other states give extra points to projects if local or private sources were willing to contribute additional funds. Max Ditlevsen, UDOT, said that a plan in Ohio would weigh projects differently if interchanges would bring access for retail development, especially in distressed areas.

Ms. Roberts affirmed that the WFRC's intentions are to receive comments/recommendations from the technical committees, Trans Com and the Regional Council. She said the staff hopes to have a recommendation for a revised priority setting process considering all the different factors by this fall. The technical committees, Trans Com, and the Regional Council will be asked to endorse a new process at that time. She asked Trans Com members for their opinions if these are the right areas to be evaluated, or if they have any suggestions to please let the WFRC staff know.

Commissioner Jan Wells said that in regards to the recently passed Senate Bill 11, UDOT is currently in the process of gathering information from the counties, cities, and other groups to find what guidelines they would like considered in the priority setting process. Senate Bill 11 requires the State Transportation Commission to establish guidelines concerning how they will consider local and private contributions to state highway projects in setting priorities. She says it is very helpful for everyone to exchange ideas; however, she would like everyone to remain committed to the process. She does not want to get to a point where projects that have been worked on long and hard are replaced by projects where sponsors had more money.

In response to a question from Commissioner McConkie, Mr. Ditlevsen said that UDOT sent out 270 surveys asking cities and counties for their input on Senate Bill 11. Approximately 50 have been received so far. The surveys were due on June 12, and UDOT has started summarizing the surveys received. He said there is not a specific time frame, but the summarized information will be distributed when completed so everyone can see what the surveys said. Mr. Ditlevsen said the overriding concern in the surveys is that those who have additional resources will be able to get first in line which is something everyone should be cautious about.

In response to a question from Mayor Smith regarding past methods of prioritizing projects, Mr. Hattery responded that, in the past, it has been difficult to give points for different criteria on various types of projects; however, a matrix of information on each project was provided to the technical committees and Trans Com so they could evaluate the projects.

Mayor Panucci asked what the process will be for implementing Senate Bill 11? Mr. Ditlevsen responded that UDOT will report back to a yet to be identified legislative committee. UDOT, working along with the Transportation Commission, will draft some guidance and give that information to the Legislature, sometime this fall. Mr. Ditlevsen continued to say that there will be open meetings where local government officials and the public will have the opportunity to give their input to the process. He said to please let him know of any suggestions that anyone has.

Commissioner McConkie said that the commissioners meet in July and he will put on the agenda a discussion of the TIP prioritizing process to encourage everyone to give their input.

Commissioner Wells said that, at some time or another, there will be projects that do not fit the criteria the right way. She hopes that everyone will remember that and keep a little flexibility. Commissioner Warnick said that the Transportation Commission considers projects throughout the entire state of Utah. Smaller communities will expect the same right of consideration and improvement as larger communities.

Mayor Smith asked if all MPOs throughout the state were looking at their prioritizing process. Commissioner Cragun responded that only our area is trying to re-analyze their policy level direction. Mr. Hattery added that WFRC is working with UDOT and MAG on developing a process to objectively evaluate major statewide projects.

Report on the Commuter Rail Environmental Study

Steve Meyer, Commuter Rail Project Manager at UTA, said that open houses to educate the public on commuter rail have recently been held in Ogden, Clearfield, Farmington, and Salt Lake City. Approximately 250 people attended the four meetings and 103 comments were received. Currently, the draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is in the public comment period which will end on June 15. Mr. Meyer asked anyone who had comments on commuter rail to please turn them in as soon as possible by phone at 801-287-2538 or online at www.rideuta.com.

Regarding the engineering side of commuter rail, Mr. Meyer said that preliminary designs are completed and have been submitted to cities and counties. So far, three comments have been received and will be incorporated into the next round of design. Next month, UTA will be meeting with cities and counties to give them more detail on the station designs. The contractor is working closely with the engineering staff to refine cost estimates. Escalating fuel and steel costs have increased the cost of construction significantly. UTA continues to coordinate with Davis County, Centerville, and UDOT on drainage issues in the Centerville area.

Regarding the funding side of commuter rail, Mr. Meyer said that it is still unclear what funding will be available for the project since Congress has not yet passed a new transportation re-authorization bill. Because of this, there is uncertainty regarding what work can move forward next year.

Mr. Meyer said UTA continues to work with the Federal Transit Authority (FTA) on approval for the commuter rail project with a "new starts document" which will be submitted in August. Also, UTA has been working closely with the WFRC staff to obtain FTA concurrence on regional ridership models.

Regarding the commuter rail right-of way, Mr. Meyer said that communities will soon be receiving letters from UTA identifying specific property for potential acquisition and requesting property owner's participation in the appraisal process. Commissioner Warnick asked how many property owners will be involved? Mr. Meyer responded that there could be 30-40 around the stations and up to another 120-150 with easements. In response to the question of how many property owner's could possibly be contentious, Mr. Meyer said the appraisal meetings so far have gone very well with no contentious issues.

Mr. Meyer said UTA will continue to respond to all comments, rewrite the update to current design, get approval from regulatory agencies, complete definition of impact mitigation, refine the project scope and cost, start vehicle procurement work this fall, and do some drainage work and utility relocation. All of these items will be incorporated in the complete design with an updated design package sent to communities in August.

Report on the West Valley and Mid-Jordan light rail environmental studies

Mick Crandall, UTA, updated Trans Com members on the status of the West Valley and Mid-Jordan light rail projects. The first draft Environmental Impact Statements (EIS) of both projects have been prepared and reviewed by the FTA. UTA is now reviewing FTA's comments and it is hoped that the two draft EISs will be finalized and back to FTA for signature by the end of July.

Mr. Crandall said both of these light rail projects will come off of the existing TRAX line. The West Valley project will branch off at about 2100 South and will be almost an entirely new right-of-way ending at the West Valley City Hall on 2700 West. The Mid-Jordan line will branch off of the TRAX line at about 6200 South. Most of that proposed line is in existing right-of-way so the alignment has been a little easier to identify. Mr. Crandall continued to say that, as has been reported in the newspaper, the Mid-Jordan cities, UTA, and Kennecott have entered into an agreement that would help with funding for the next stage of the Mid-Jordan project. These two projects are a few months behind the commuter rail project but are following the same path.

In response to a question from Mayor Panucci, Mr. Crandall said the time frame to begin construction will depend on federal and local funding. Since it is difficult to get significant federal funding for more than one project at a time, the two light rail projects will follow the commuter rail project. If all goes well, the commuter rail project would be funded and in operation by 2008, then funding could begin for one of the light rail projects, followed by the other project. Mr. Crandall continued to say that it takes about three to four years for each project to be completed. If there was additional local funding, these two light rail projects could move along faster.

Other

Commissioner Cragun asked everyone to stand and applaud Pat Casaday for all the work he has done for Trans Com and wish him well. He will be living in Argentina for the next three years. Mr. Casaday said he has enjoyed being able to associate with such honorable people and appreciated being part of Trans Com.

Next meeting date: August 12, 2004

The meeting adjourned at 3:00 p.m.