

**Bi-State Coordination Committee
Meeting Minutes
March 19, 2015**

1. Welcome and Introductions

The Bi-State Coordination Committee meeting was called to order by Chair Jack Burkman at 9:31 a.m. at the Metro Regional Center at 600 NE Grand Ave., Portland, OR 97232. All attendees introduced themselves and noted which jurisdiction or organization they represented.

Committee Members

Nancy Baker, Port of Vancouver
Jack Burkman, City of Vancouver Council, Chair
Shirley Craddick, Metro Council
Bart Gernhart, WSDOT
Jeff Hamm, C-TRAN Executive Director
Alan Lehto, TriMet
Jeanne Stewart, Clark County Commissioner
Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region One Manager

Staff and Interested Guests

Katy Brooks, Port of Vancouver
Kelly Brooks, ODOT
Andy Cotugno, Metro
Mark Harrington, Regional Transportation Council
Bob Hart, Regional Transportation Council
Chris Myers, Metro
Matt Ransom, Regional Transportation Council
Karen Schilling, Multnomah County
Steve Tubbs, Citizen

2. Review of Minutes for December 9, 2014 Meeting

Jeff Hamm moved for approval of the December 9, 2014 meeting minutes and the motion was seconded by Councilor Jeanne Stewart. With all in favor, the motion passed.

3. I-205 Access and Operations Study

Chair Burkman introduced Bob Hart of the Regional Transportation Council (RTC). Bob Hart gave a brief overview of the I-205 Access and Operations Study. Mr. Hart explained that the 2011 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) included recommendations from the I-205 Access Point Decision Report (ADRP) which called for major capital investments in the I-205 corridor. Recommended improvements included interchange and ramp modifications, new access in the corridor, and arterial capacity improvements. While two recommended projects from the ADRP have been completed, the Mill Plain Exit/112th Connector and the 18th St. Interchange project, the 2011 RTP still calls for \$540 million worth of improvements. Mr. Hart noted that these needs were a driving point of the study. Mr. Hart also noted that the study was initiated with the recognition that although there is a high growth forecast for the corridor, there is also limited revenue available for capital projects. Because of this, the study was undertaken in order to identify a set of optimal and/or most critical highway projects.

Mr. Hart explained that the group first reviewed the full corridor project list from the 2011 RTP and then moved forward with identifying a core project list in preparation of the 2014 RTP update. Staff refined the recommendations, adopted by the board in November 2014, to include three main components: improved roadways, operational policies, and transit operations.

Adopted 2035 core projects to improve roadways included widening I-205 (from SR-500 to Padden); widening SR-14 (from I-205 to 164th Ave.); adding auxiliary lanes between Mill Plain Blvd. and SR-500; improving the Padden Interchange with a 72nd Ave. slip ramp; and creating a I-205 Park and Ride at 18th St.

Mr. Hart noted that in developing low-cost operational improvements to manage or improve vehicle flow on I-205, RTC worked closely with WSDOT staff and other local agencies to analyze a wide range of operational strategies. Following these conversations, staff developed recommendations including creating a number of new ramp meters and narrowing I-205 southbound at SR-500 to convert the SR-500 southbound ramp from a merge lane to an add lane in order to improve freeway access and traffic flow.

Mr. Hart added that the RTC board also adopted recommendations to provide guidance in the consideration of low-cost improvements for operating regional freeways more efficiently and optimizing traffic flow. These recommendations included specific operational policies, analysis factors to consider for potential operational strategies, and policies to follow when implementing ramp meters.

Mr. Hart then gave an overview of the 2008 Clark County High Capacity Transit Study, noting recommendations such as all day and more frequent service along the corridor, free flyer stops and a potential Bus on Shoulder (BOS) system that would operate during times of heavy congestion. Mr. Hart explained that phase two of the I-205 study included a screening assessment of the BOS recommendation to determine whether conditions in the corridor would warrant further investigation into the viability and feasibility of BOS operations on I-205. Mr. Hart noted that the screening assessment found that BOS offers the opportunity for improved transit reliability, travel time savings, and expanded commuter ridership, and because of these factors, should be studied further to determine the viability of a future I-205 BOS system.

Member discussion included:

Mr. Hart opened the topic for discussion by asking for input regarding how the Regional Transportation Council and the Metro Regional Transportation Plan might align to create a regional transit strategy for I-205 and what organizations should participate in this effort.

Rian Winsheimer called attention to threshold limitations on some of the I-205 ramps in terms of BOS viability. Mr. Hart agreed that while most shoulders are 12 feet wide in Oregon, in Washington, shoulder size and depth are an issue. He noted that RTC had contacted engineers to investigate possible ways of accommodating these ramps for a BOS system. He added that ODOT staff was interested in continuing to frame these issues.

Mr. Hamm commented that the Pace Suburban Bus Service in Chicago recently opened 23 discontinuous BOS areas, leading to a large increase in ridership. He added that there was also great potential for a BOS system on I-5.

Councilor Shirley Craddick mentioned seeing an efficient BOS system in Minneapolis as well. She noted that the city also has a high-occupancy toll (HOT) lane in some areas, and expressed interest in exploring congestion pricing further. Committee members briefly discussed HOT lane viability and spoke to having a more in-depth discussion on the topic in the future.

Members discussed a bi-state role in implementing a BOS system on I-205. Alan Lehto noted that TriMet would appreciate being involved in studying the system, both for its benefits of C-TRAN access to the region as well as its relation to overall Regional Transportation Plan goals.

Chair Burkman asked about the recommended boundaries for a study of the BOS system. Bob Hart responded that RTC staff focused on the area from 18th St. down to I-84. Alan Lehto mentioned that he'd like to keep the possibility of applying the system to other parts of I-205 in mind while still concentrating on that area. Bart Gernhart pointed out that studying a HOT lane and a BOS system would need to be separate discussions.

Chair Burkman spoke to the need for capital investment in Washington to make a BOS system work. He added that an investment would need legislative action.

Matt Ransom explained that RTC staff had broken the work effort into two phases. First there would be a detail-oriented, operations and traffic analysis looking at existing structures, followed by a second phase of study that would focus on a region-wide policy review. He noted that staff would like to bring in experts to discuss operations and experiences before moving forward with strategy implementation and engineering. Mr. Ransom estimated that phase one could be executed within a year or so, in order to reach a decision about whether or not to move forward with a BOS system.

Councilor Stewart asked about the details of implementing the phases of discussion, and stressed the need for an in-depth evaluation of the BOS system as the most functional and sustainable alternative in terms of safety considerations and other important aspects before moving forward with development.

Rian Windsheimer added that ODOT staff is doing a lot of work with the Active Traffic Management (ATM) study that might contribute to questions raised at the meeting, including looking at traffic volumes and hard shoulders for vehicles and buses. He noted that their data might be used as a starting point for BOS research.

Mr. Ransom noted that RTC would like a multi-agency scoping team. He added that it would be helpful to develop the scope for phase one of the review and that the two phases would lead the way to a decision about the corridor and its limits.

Bart Gernhart emphasized that the phases discussed at the meeting focused on the most preliminary stages of a possible BOS project and that the focus would be compiling very rudimentary data to move closer to a decision on whether or not to pursue a more in-depth evaluation of a BOS system as an option.

4. 2008 Clark County Transportation Corridor Visioning Study – Retrospective Review

Matt Ransom introduced the topic by giving a brief overview of the Transportation Corridor Visioning Study. Mr. Ransom noted that the study was conducted between 2006 and 2008 in an effort to identify and assess the potential long-term need for new regional transportation corridors in Clark County to connect growing urban centers. He noted that the study has been used recently as a reference to evaluate the need for new bridges, such as the proposed East County Bridge, and that there was a larger discussion concerning a possible need for more corridors in Clark County and whether or not there was a possibility for extension across the Columbia River.

Mr. Ransom then introduced Mark Harrington, RTC Transportation Planner. Mr. Harrington provided background on the study, noting that it originated with a suggestion made by Battle Ground Mayor John Idsinga to explore the future need for a corridor between the rapidly-growing communities of Battle Ground and Camas. With an understanding that these projects often take decades, RTC staff moved forward with a long-range study, using a Clark County population of one million as a foundation for considering future transportation needs. Mr. Harrington stressed that the study was viewed as only the first high-level phase of a multi-year effort to establish a 50-year

transportation vision for Clark County.

Mr. Harrington noted that the study included key assumptions about future land use, which were influenced by estimated population and job figures. Mr. Harrington explained that the study looks at accommodating more than twice of Clark County's current population and employment and how such changes might affect the county's needs.

Mr. Harrington then went over some key assumptions the study made in looking at future land use and transportation conditions. He noted that RTC staff used current local comprehensive and density plans to evaluate future growth as well as RTC's and Metro's 2030 RTP networks and transit levels to evaluate future transportation conditions.

Mr. Harrington explained that following analysis of future needs, RTC staff identified demand for three new corridors: two north-south corridors (on the west- and east-sides of the county) and one east-west corridor on the north side. Mr. Harrington noted that there is high demand for sub-regional links as well. He also acknowledged that each of the corridors would have significant effects on the local built and natural environment and that detailed analysis of these effects would need to be further evaluated.

Mr. Harrington then went over some key takeaways from the study, noting that the study generated more questions than answers. Some takeaways included: while cross-river trips on the west would be predominantly regional in nature, on the east they would be mostly sub-regional; both would provide minor relief to I-205 and the Westside corridor would also provide minor relief to I-5; and both would increase cross-river travel.

Next Mr. Harrington explained the study's recommended next steps. He noted that the conclusion of the study was that there was a need for further refinement of the region's long-term land use vision. He added that without a solid vision of land use plans, it was difficult to develop a long-term transportation plan. Mr. Harrington also stated that these corridors would require a finer level of detail to move forward as well as a review of potential impacts of the candidate corridors and in-depth public outreach and participation.

Mr. Harrington then went over steps that have been taken to begin work on a more in-depth long-range look in Clark County, but noted that many of the discussions surrounding the study were put on hold following the recession.

Mr. Harrington reminded the committee that the study was exploratory and informational. He stressed that future land use visions and plans would be key to defining future transportation infrastructure needs, but that regional scenario visioning could be used to develop a fifty year vision that could inform comprehensive planning activities in the future.

Member discussion included:

Chair Burkman gave an overview of projects being undertaken at Washington State University that might help evaluate some of the assumptions listed about density and land use, such as the nascent Initiative for Public Deliberation. Chair Burkman also pointed out two potential Columbia River bridges currently being discussed among some lawmakers.

Members discussed bridge possibilities. Chair Burkman stressed that the ideas were still very theoretical and no plan had been developed. He emphasized that the value of the Bi-State Coordination Committee is making sure that everyone is at the same level of understanding.

Mr. Ransom noted that the study included a host of assumptions and that there were still large issues that needed to be understood. He explained that there is an intersection of joint interests

moving forward with possible Columbia River bridges and added that he hoped to include other agencies in the process moving forward.

Members discussed the informational nature of the study, as well as its implications for future bridges projects. Members discussed authority of Columbia River bridge development for guidance on the development of a bi-state transportation system. Mr. Ransom explained that in Oregon, Metro is the designated organization for both regional land use and transportation planning, while under Washington law, the county serves as the organizing entity for land use plans.

Councilor Stewart noted that experience and expertise are needed to move forward with long-term plans. Members discussed the possibility of councilor interest in potential bridge development. Mr. Ransom added that there may be an attempt to organize constituencies around these findings in order to look beyond the current 20-year framework and address longer-term transportation infrastructure questions.

5. Columbia River Bridges – Issues / News Updates

Chair Burkman introduced Matt Ransom to provide an overview of Columbia River bridge issues and updates. Mr. Ransom shared a table that demonstrated bridge traffic volume trends from 2000 to 2014 and noted that there were significant increases in I-5 and I-205 bridge volume over the past two years. He noted that traffic volumes on both bridges dropped during the recession but are now back to all time highs. Mr. Ransom added that these numbers were intended to help facilitate Bi-State Coordination Committee meetings in the future, particularly pertaining to future decisions regarding new bridge development or existing bridge upgrades.

Members of the committee discussed the trends in bridge volume growth and potential ramifications. Bart Gernhart noted that the increases led to more congestion, which led to more traffic accidents and greenhouse gas emissions. Chair Burkman added that drivers are also planning for increased travel time as growing portions of the bridge system are becoming more easily congested.

Chair Burkman noted that the Bi-State Coordination Committee provided an opportunity to begin a conversation about how to manage the increasing I-5 and I-205 bridge loads. Rian Windsheimer explained that ODOT was currently looking at these and other bridge issues with an understanding that the I-5 and I-205 bridges will continue to be used throughout the near future. He noted that ODOT was working with WSDOT to find ways to alleviate congestion levels and to think about long-term repairs, including seismic retrofits, to keep existing structures in operation.

Jeff Hamm acknowledged the vital role of legislative support in issues of this nature and noted that he hoped for a facilitated focus group to work more closely on these issues. He described a facilitated service to address issues that are at an impasse provided by the William D. Ruckelshaus Center cosponsored by the University of Washington and Washington State University (<http://ruckelshauscenter.wsu.edu>). He stressed the importance of forming a regional support base before asking for state or federal legislative support. Andy Cotugno added that significant funds will also be needed to begin development of the work needed. He agreed with Mr. Hamm about the need for high level, bi-state political agreement to take on the issue.

6. Bi-State Breakfast Series – Potential Sponsorship

Chair Burkman postponed this agenda item due to time constraints.

7. Future Meeting Agenda Planning

Chair Burkman postponed this agenda item due to time constraints, noting that the committee meets quarterly.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.