

**SUMMARY MINUTES
 ROGUE VALLEY MPO POLICY COMMITTEE
 SPECIAL MEETING: MAY 31, 2017**



The following attended:

Voting Members	Organization	Phone Number
Art Anderson	ODOT	774-6353
Bob Strosser	Jackson County	774-6119
Darby Stricker	Talent	535-1566
Jim Lewis	Jacksonville	899-7023
Michael Zarosinski, Vice Chair	Medford	772-1909
Mike Quilty, Chair	Central Point	664-7907
Rich Rosenthal	Ashland	941-1494
Robert Miller for Ruth Jenks	Eagle Point	826-4212 x105
Sarah Westover	Phoenix	972-0869
Tonia Moro	RVTD	973-2063
Staff	Organization	Phone Number
Karl Welzenbach	RVCOG	423-1360
Dan Moore	RVCOG	423-1361
Stephanie Thune	RVCOG	423-1368
Interested Parties	Organization	Phone Number
Al Densmore	JWA Public Affairs	
Alex Georgevitch	Medford	774-2114
John Vial	Jackson County	774-6238
John Watt	JWA Public Affairs	

Julie Brown	RVTD	
Kelly Madding	Medford	774-2009
Larry Martin	RVMPO PAC Central Point	664-3778
Mike Baker	ODOT	957-3658
Mike Kuntz	Jackson County	774-6228
Mike Montero	Montero & Associates	779-0771
Ray DiPasquale	Phoenix	535-2226

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Quilty called the meeting to order at 1:33 p.m.; roll was called to confirm a quorum.

Action Item:

2. Identify Project Priority to Submit for the Transportation Bill

Karl Welzenbach explained that, as part of the legislation related to the transportation bill being drafted, a fund is to be created through a new taxing instrument. The funds generated by this tax are intended to help eliminate critical areas of congestion throughout the state, with the first ten years of funding – understandably – going towards fixing the critical links in the Portland Metropolitan Area. Subsequently (and possibly concurrently, depending on the final bill) some of these funds would become available to other MPO areas.

One of the working groups contributing to this legislation developed a “list of projects” to act as placeholders for these funds; the list identifies the RVMPO’s project as the “MPO Medford Seismic Triage Pilot,” with a funding estimate of \$35 million.

In light of the above, today’s special meeting was convened to form a recommendation in response to the following recent inquiry received by Welzenbach from Senator Boquist:

“If the Seismic Triage project is funded wholly through the transportation bill itself and not with these new funds, what other project would the RVMPO want to include on the list in its place?”

Art Anderson pointed out that the name “MPO Medford Seismic Triage Pilot” was a misrepresentation, since there had never been any discussion or intent of partnership/co-funding the undertaking with the MPO. Welzenbach concurred, adding that the list contained several other oddities, including the fact that the project listed for Bend was not actually located in Bend. The list’s irregularities, however, likely stemmed from the legislators’ lack of deep familiarity with each region and its projects, and were determined not to be of a nature to prohibit today’s decision-making.

To generate discussion, Welzenbach provided a staff-generated list of short-term projects across the jurisdictions with the most viable candidates highlighted. The following constraints/inquiries to narrow and define the project field were suggested:

- *Al Densmore*: Focus on a regionally significant project related to congestion/freight mobility, since this proposed concept of potential state/MPO project partnerships came from the Congestion and Freight Mobility work group of the Joint Committee.
- *John Vial/Mike Montero*: Do not limit project selection based on the – as yet unconfirmed – potential 50% contribution of the MPO towards the project(s). “Shoot for the moon” is a better approach, with a focus on high quality, regionally significant projects.
- *Mike Baker*: Does the identified project need to involve a state partnership, or could it be done in conjunction with a city or county? *Welzenbach*: Answer unknown at this point.
- *Michael Zarosinski*: Is there a certain project cost ceiling to consider during selection? *Welzenbach*: None has been indicated; the project list generated by the legislators shows a range of \$10 million to \$303 million for non-metro MPO placeholder projects.

Two projects were identified; commentary regarding the regional significance of each was as follows:

SOUTH STAGE OVERCROSSING | Sarah Westover (*Phoenix*), Michael Zarosinski (*Medford*)

- Highly significant in terms of multi-jurisdictional traffic impacts; affects Phoenix, Medford and the county.
- Meets need of potential alternative east/west freight corridor in the event of seismic damage to the viaduct and/or I-5.
- Affects urban growth boundary movements of Medford and Phoenix.

MCANDREWS TO DELTA WATERS ON FOOTHILL ROAD | Bob Strosser (*Jackson County*)

- This part of the east side bypass is unsafe and concern over crash counts has been present for years.
- Serves as a regional north/south corridor.
- Would keep freight out of downtowns if I-5 is inaccessible, serves as detour from I-5 in times of emergency, and removes trips from I-5 and Highway 99.
- Both Jackson County and Medford have identified the project as a high priority.
- This (potential) new funding may be the best chance at addressing the power station issue linked to this project.

The two projects were then merged into one “seismic resiliency corridor” project with a ballpark funding figure of \$80 million. It was agreed that segment prioritization could wait until funding actually materialized. The committee also indicated support of funding for ODOT’s I-5 climbing lanes; although they fall outside the MPO boundary, they enhance Southern Oregon’s economy by improving the ability of manufacturers and freight haulers to move goods through the region.

Michael Zarosinski moved to have the RVMPO Policy Committee recommend the following projects to the legislature for the transportation bill currently under construction: (*Priority*) The South Stage Overcrossing/N. Phoenix Road/Foothill Road Alternative Freight and Seismic Resiliency Corridor; (*Secondary*) I-5 climbing lanes. Jim Lewis seconded.

Darby Stricker commented that design and prioritization details would be helpful over time to share with the various jurisdictions. Zarosinski concurred, especially in light of the fact that some sections of the identified projects are already funded, whereas others are not.

The motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Discussion Item:

(Not on Agenda): CMAQ Update

While all MPOs are facing cuts in CMAQ funds, the two smallest MPOs (RVMPO and MRMPO) are facing the biggest ones, while Portland's will be smallest. The range scenarios are as follows:

MPO	Worst % Cut	Best % Cut	Potential Funding Increase
RVMPO	75%	31%	n/a
MRMPO	88%	18%	n/a
Portland	19%	n/a	11%

The feds are remaining silent regarding the interpretation of the CMAQ regulations, which seem to state that, while Portland would remain eligible to receive CMAQ funds even after reaching attainment effective October 1, 2017, the funds could not be spent.

Julie Brown noted that, because population is a factor in the formula design, all the MPOs face deeper cuts than Portland. The one bright spot as the work group negotiations struggle on seems to be that, in the end, Portland cannot capture the consensus vote: they have only two voting members, while the other four MPOs have three each.

In the event that a more equitable distribution method – and very solid recommendation to the OTC – cannot be decided upon at the upcoming June 2 work group meeting, the following recommendations regarding potential next steps were offered:

- *Tonia Moro*: Refuse to sign an agreement, or abstain from voting.
 - *Comments*: While such actions would formalize the MPO's disagreement with the distribution formula, it would not likely effect any change in the outcome. Ultimately, the state can choose to allocate the funds as they wish, retaining 100% of them, or distributing them among the MPOs.
- *Karl Welzenbach*: Lobby OTC's Paula Brown and/or ask Congressman Walden to write a letter requesting the feds to render an interpretation of the regulations. This approach could backfire, however; the feds could interpret in favor of Portland.
- *Art Anderson*: Begin considering how this deep funding cut could best be leveraged in the MPO's favor down the road.

Regular Updates:

3. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Scheduled Meetings:

RVMPO TAC | Wednesday, June 14 @ 1:30 pm

RVMPO Policy | Tuesday, June 27 @ 2:00 pm

RVMPO PAC | Tuesday, July 18 @ 5:30 pm