

**Summary Minutes
Rogue Valley MPO Technical Advisory Committee
June 9, 2021**



The following attended:

Voting Members	Organization	Phone Number
Karl Johnson	Ashland PW	488-5587
Stephanie Holtey	Central Point PL	
Mike Upston	Eagle Point PL	826-4212
Matt Brinkley	Medford PL	774-2381
Alex Georgevitch, Chair	Medford PW	774-2114
Eric Swanson	Phoenix PL	580-7900
Charles Bennett	Jackson County PL	774-6115
Mike Kuntz	Jackson County R&P	774-6228
Justin Shoemaker	ODOT	774-6376
Ian Horlacher	ODOT	774-6399
Paige West	RVTD PL	608-2429
Josh LeBombard	DLCD (Quorum)	414-7932
Staff	Organization	Phone Number
Karl Welzenbach	RVCOG	423-1360
Ryan MacLaren	RVCOG	423-1338
Kelsey Sharp	RVCOG	423-1375
Interested Parties	Organization	Phone Number
Mike Baker	ODOT	
Tonia Moro	RVTD	
Michael Montero	PAC	

1. Call to Order / Introductions / Review Agenda 00:00–02:09

1:32 p.m. | *Quorum*: Ashland, Central Point, Eagle Point, Phoenix, Medford, Jackson County, ODOT, RVTD.

2. Review / Approve Minutes 02:09–03:30

02:31 | *Mike Kuntz moved to approve the May 12, 2021 RVMPO TAC Meeting Minutes as presented. Seconded by Mike Upston.*

No further discussion.

Motion carried unanimously by voice vote.

Presentations

3. 24-27 STIP Highway Program 03:30 – 15:51

13:25 | *Question from Karl Welzenbach: When ODOT makes the lists, do they have cost estimate as well?*

Yes, some have been scoped and have estimates from that, and some have planning level estimates.

14:04 | *Question from Karl Welzenbach: Once the scoping is finished and cost estimates are complete, what percentage still show cost overruns or delays? Or is there an estimate of all the projects in district 3 of ODOT have cost overruns?*

This information can be found but is not readily available right now. That would depend on the complexity of the projects. The cost of oil had increased which has raised the cost of projects. Things like this can increase project costs outside of ODOT's control.

Action Items

4. Amendments to the 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 15:51 – 22:10

21:00 | *Ian Horlacher moved to recommend approval of the amendments to 2021-2024 TIP. Seconded by Justin Shoemaker.*

No further discussion.

Motion passed unanimously by voice vote.

Discussion Items

5. Improvements to Project Selection Process 22:10 – 01:29:24

There is a need for an improvement in the way projects are selected and how cost estimates are created. It is understood that there are some problems outside of control (price of oil, building materials, etc.) that will change the estimates. However, for many projects this was not the case. The goal of this discussion is to come up with a better method to estimate costs or come up with a

recommendation for a policy that may mitigate some of the less-than accurate estimates. There are a few recommendations for how this can be done: 1. RVMPO works with ODOT and uses their pricing lists. 2. A policy recommendation to the Policy Committee of “Should the MPO approve the project, any cost over is the responsibility of the jurisdiction.”

25:25 | Mike Kuntz: *A big concern is if this policy is passed, then the smaller agencies will not get a chance to use project funds because they cannot afford it. I think there is room to craft a policy close to this and to be better with beginning estimates. Also, there is some disagreement with the beginning estimates being very low. Often, there is an under-estimation of various engineering, permitting, or right-of-way costs. There will be delays in the project process that are out of the jurisdictions control. Perhaps a crafting of a policy about future funding would be appropriate, but not as “harsh” as proposed.*

28:19 | Karl Welzenbach: *Another restriction this MPO is facing is, other than Medford, there is no agency that is certified in design. This means ODOT must do much of the work. Another approach could be to work with ODOT and see how many projects they can reasonably take on and work from there.*

29:01 | Alex Georgevitch: *It is ODOT’s responsibility to manage the Federal Funds they receive. If the MPO has enough funds to build more projects than ODOT can take on, the MPO should not have to hold back and not use the funds. We should not focus on bigger projects that use more funding just to cut down the number of projects because that will be a detriment to the smaller jurisdictions that need the smaller projects.*

There was a brief discussion before the meeting on if the cost goes over the cost estimate than the jurisdiction is responsible for the extra. One concern with this is some jurisdictions do not have complete control over the design process. I am for the jurisdictions being some-what responsible for overrun costs. There have been discussions in the past with concerns of projects running over and the jurisdiction being told if they move forward, they will be responsible for it. However, it does not seem that has been enforced.

Perhaps a policy could include any left over or unallocated funds could go to projects that have come up short in ways that are out of the jurisdictions control.

34:40 | Mike Baker: *The local agency bridge committee uses a very full scoping process that is more in-depth. This process adds around a year, if we were to use something similar it may add four to six months. The time may be worth the more accurate cost estimates.*

36:43 | Karl Welzenbach: *In other MPO’s, there is a pre-scoping arrangement. Jurisdictions did not apply for projects, they applied for an analysis of the project. There are STBG funds set aside with three engineering firms that come up with a cost estimate after analyzing the whole project.*

38:40 | Justin Shoemaker: *The bridge committee in Region 1 would use consultants instead of regional staff. The bridge program uses an equation to get the 150% list. This would be difficult for this MPO.*

41:48 | Alex Georgevitch: *A concern is still that there is only one company certified to scope. It does not seem fair to have the same company to scope and do the work.*

ODOT is re-soliciting contracts. There are currently two companies that have potential to be certified.

45:14 | Alex Georgevitch: *The options presented so far: 1. Suggest to the Policy Committee a policy that any overrun costs are the responsibility of the jurisdiction. 2. Work with ODOT to identify how many projects they can undertake for the MPO.*

51:12 | Karl Welzenbach: *This will exclude Transit for RVTD. It is assumed if they need something like a bus, they will know how much that will cost.*

52:48 | Paige West: *There is the possibility that if we hire out to do estimations there will still be overruns. This does not seem to fix the problem.*

It may not fix the problem, but it may reduce the number of times it arises and the amount of the overrun.

55:44 | Alex Georgevitch: *There will always be a situation where costs will overrun. The discussion of “If we spend the money on scoping and there is still overrun, who is responsible of it” needs to be expanded on.*

One possibility could be if it scoped, and the MPO has agreed to fund the project, the MPO will provide the funds. After that project is funded the MPO will go forward with other projects.

59:37 | Charles Bennet: *One more option could be improving the way each jurisdiction does their scoping, instead of setting aside money for consultants when they only have the information we give them and can only be so accurate.*

01:00:29 | Justin Shoemaker: *In the past, the biggest pieces that have been off are PE and Right-of-Way by large amounts. Construction has been fairly accurate. Jurisdictions are not estimating high enough for the paperwork for the federal.*

01:07:25 | Paige West: *If one part of the project is under funded, is it possible to borrow money from other phases?*

Technically no. Sometimes you can justify with a new estimate for why one part of the project was over funded and why it should be moved. This would require a full amendment of the STIP/TIP.

01:13:45 | Karl Welzenbach: *A memo will be sent out with summaries of the discussion held today with pros and cons of each suggestion.*

01:19:10 | Justin Shoemaker: *The IGA’s say that any overrun costs are the responsibility of the local agency.*

The MPO could also consider adding a “Scoping phase.” Select a project and put funds towards scoping and get a more accurate estimate.

01:24:48 | Paige West: *The option to fund a project until it is finished has a concern with the scoring we use for the projects. There is a cost-based metric used that would potentially not be used. Also, if there are several projects in the planning phase, then one or two projects get funded for the construction phase will have to be started over. There should be consideration with how many projects can be in the planning phase and how we can keep projects moving.*

6. Public Comment 01:29:24 – 01:29:52

No Comments.

Regular Updates

7. MPO Planning Update 01:29:52 – 01:31:28

Provided by Karl Welzenbach regarding the ODOT and FHWA Covid funding.

8. Other Business / Local Business 01:31:28–01:34:59

Updates provided by Jackson County, RVTD and Medford.

9. Adjournment

3:08 p.m.

Scheduled Meetings

RVMPO TAC | July 14, 2021 | 1:30 p.m.

RVMPO Policy Committee | June 22, 2021 | 2:00 p.m.

RVMPO PAC | June 15, 2021 | 5:30 p.m.