

1.0 MEETING SUMMARY – PERSONAL TRAVEL ADVISORY COMMITTEE JUNE 3, 2009

1.1 Meeting Synopsis

A summary of the meeting is provided below from highlights of the power point presentation.

I. Introductions and Welcome – Linda Koenig, ODOT Long Range Plan Project Manager began the meeting and introduced Ginger McGovern, ODOT Planning & Research Engineer who welcomed everyone. After brief introductions from all in attendance, Ginger described the role of the Committee and the meeting purpose to be one of information sharing and the gathering of key input. It was stated that what the committee knows about transportation issues will be of great help in conducting the long range plan update. Ginger concluded by reviewing the agenda topics for the meeting.

II. Long Range Plan Process – Tom Ryden, Consultant Team Project Manager continued by describing the basic format the Plan will take, the Plan connection to current Federal regulations and SAFETEA-LU; the goal of the Plan; the project schedule; and the essential elements of the State transportation system to be covered by the Plan.

III. Types of Transportation – Modal Perspectives for People and Projects – Consultant Team members Becky Blatnica and Ira Hirschman provided an overview of the primary modes for personal travel and goods movement respectively. Key supply statistics and usage changes over the last 5 years were provided. It was particularly noted that highway usage has been declining recently and transit usage is increasing. Regarding goods movement, it was discussed that recent economic trends indicate a slow down in activity both statewide and nationally. It was noted that this will impact assumptions out to 2035, and must be carefully considered. Tom Ryden discussed the distribution of 2009 state level transportation expenditures by mode, and the fact that Oklahoma offers a wide variety of mode options with two thirds of the expenditures applied to roads and bridges.

IV. Summary of Interviews/Surveys – Tom Ryden and Becky Blatnica of the Consultant team reviewed the results of the Advisory Committee interviews. The review was in four parts :

1. System overview,
2. Transportation system objectives,
3. Funding and
4. Transportation system challenges.

Results were tallied by individual committee and combined where questions were asked of multiple committees. The results reflected 80 interviews completed in time for the meeting. From a **system overview** perspective, the interview comments received reflected both positive comments and room for improvement. Regarding **system objectives**, connectivity issues were noted and specific strategies to improve safety, air quality and energy were noted as those that seemed the most favorable. Preferences were given regarding possible new **funding** sources and specific priorities for use of those funds.

A number of **transportation system challenges** were summarized for person movement and goods movement based on individual comments obtained from each interview. Common themes regarding challenges included:

1. Insufficient capacity on highways and bridges,
2. Funding concerns and
3. Desire for more modal choices.

V. Transportation Issues and Concerns – Committee Members – Linda Koenig next posed two questions to the Committee:

1. What issues should the Plan address going forward for person/passenger movement in 2035?
2. What issues should the Plan address for goods movement in 2035?

(Section 1.2 contains a summary of the comments by topic area from the meeting)

VI. Policy Themes – Tom Ryden provided a summary of the emerging federal transportation policies that may impact the Long Range Plan. He reviewed topics under consideration as part of SAFETEA-LU re-authorization, as well as the potential for new federal legislation on climate change.

Ginger McGovern reviewed some policy themes that ODOT is suggesting be pursued as part of the Plan. Nine themes were discussed from which more specific actions will be defined as the Plan process evolves. These include: replacement of major structures such as bridges & interchanges; preserve the aging highway system; maximize efficiency of the existing system; maintain existing investments including major transportation corridors; improve transit and person transportation opportunities; emphasize safety of all modes; consider expanded options for goods movement; emphasize air quality and energy conservation; and explore new funding sources, concepts, and partners.

VII. Conclusions – Linda Koenig concluded the meeting by providing an overview of the themes from the discussion (also see section 1.2), and indicating that a summary of the meeting will be made available to the Committee members. She reminded everyone that they should visit the project website to follow the progress of the study and thanked everyone for their time and participation.

1.2 **Comment Summary**

For this portion of the meeting (agenda item V), Committee members were asked to offer their comments on two basic questions as noted below. The Committee was advised of the guideline that this was meant to be a brainstorming session with no ideas debated, and with everyone being allowed to have a voice in the discussion.

1. **What issues should the plan address going forward for person/passenger movement in 2035?**

The Committee members offered a number of comments on a variety of topics. .

Provide more personal transportation alternatives and options

- There will be continued reliance on automobiles over the next 25 years AND we should look at other modes
- Right now alternatives are not there, but options should be included in the next 25 years

- All modes need to be incorporated
- More travel options are key as the demand is there

Analyze and evaluate ideas and options

- Plan needs to be based on goals, focused on quantitative measures, and have measurable objectives

Design for a variety of user needs and preferences

- Incorporate 'Complete Streets Program' ideas – Design roads & streets that are people friendly; incorporate personal vehicle, public vehicle, and pedestrian use
- Need accessible pedestrian facilities and transit options

Recognize economic and financial issues

- Perform Cost-Benefit for all modes in the study
- Funding – provide a broader focus on all modes
- Consider increasing dedicated sources (e.g. gas tax) both at the state and local level
- Ideas have to be tied to funding for feasibility
- Allocation of funding should be re-evaluated. Look at funding a system that can be used by all
- Look at full cost of roadways/modes including operations and maintenance costs
- Increase user fees (example: vehicle registration fee to transit)
- Transit demand is not a problem but supply is. Comes back to funding – just need more
- More transportation options provide job and other economic opportunities

Address energy and the environment

- Energy conservation will occur with additional mode choice (transit, bicycling & walking)

Expand/be creative with the existing system

- Look for ways to expand Amtrak
- State-owned rail infrastructure is an asset. Look at this for person transportation opportunities and for ways to coordinate freight rail with passenger rail.

Provide information and education

- Increase awareness on existing transportation options (people need to know what is out there) in the short term
- More information across modes should be given (Example: Amtrak website information sharing with Greyhound)

Provide for the needs of the traveling public

- The aging population is a mobility issue
- Encourage Safe Routes to School. Needs to be thought through with compatible mode and land use ideas (example: schools next to highways)

2. What issues should the Plan address for Goods Movement in 2035?

Although the focus of the committee was on person travel, comments were offered on goods movement

- Less trucks on roads and more on rail
- More regional Intermodal centers - provide options for different types of freight transport to intersect and interact outside of urban areas
- More regional agreements & cooperation with other states for freight on rail
- Deepen port channels to increase tonnage shipped (more from trucks to ports) - Condition and maintenance of locks and dams is an issue
- Waterway system is under utilized