

## **Joint Interim Committee on Transportation**

### **Meeting Summary – Portland metro area site tour, stakeholder roundtable**

**Tuesday, June 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Members Present: Sen. Gorsek, Co-Chair, Sen. Boquist, Co-Vice-Chair, Sen. Frederick, Sen. Woods; Rep. McLain, Co-Chair; Rep. Boshart Davis, Co-Vice-Chair, Rep. Pham**

**Visiting Legislators Present: Sen. Taylor; Rep. Nelson, Rep. Nosse, Rep. McIntire, Rep. Sanchez, Rep. Tran, Rep. Walters**

**Members Excused: Sen. Findley; Rep. Evans, Rep. Nathanson, Rep. Mannix, Rep. Reschke**

#### **Portland Site Tour**

The Committee assembled at Portland Community College (PCC) Cascade Campus and boarded a TriMet bus for a tour of several transportation facilities in east and central Portland. Members were welcomed by Miles Pengilly, TriMet, who noted that the bus for the tour is an electric bus purchased using moneys from the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) created by House Bill 2017 (2017) and is one of 24 electric buses slated for purchase by TriMet. Kris Strickler, ODOT Director, explained the agency’s emphasis on funding needs for operations and maintenance at the state and local level, compounded by eroding efficacy of fuel taxes, inflation, and tight labor markets.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included an emphasis on the challenge of keeping aging infrastructure in good or fair condition.

#### ***Multnomah County Bridge Shop***

The first tour stop was at the Multnomah County Bridge Shop, where Margi Bradway and Multnomah County Commission Chair Jessica Vega Pederson provided an overview of the county’s responsibility for maintenance and repair of Portland’s six bridges over the Willamette River. All six bridges are 100 years old or close to it, and are serviced by a crew of 12 in the shop, meaning all of the workers need skills of welders, carpenters, masons, and so on. The age of the bridges also requires creative problem solving due to lack of available replacement parts. The county’s annual budget for bridge repair is \$14 million, while the estimated annual need is \$42 million. Specific details were provided for the 112-year-old Broadway Bridge and the 97-year-old Burnside Bridge, the latter of which is currently in planning for seismic replacement.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: the process for ordering specialized replacement parts for the bridges; and whether the maintenance facility itself is seismically sound.

#### ***Portland Pavement***

The bus traveled through downtown Portland while Millicent Williams, Director of the Portland Bureau of Transportation, explained the city’s needs for additional funding to address “the basics” – potholes, signals, crosswalks, weather maintenance, etc. One intersection was highlighted at Broadway and Jackson, where the pavement at all four corners of the intersection

is rated as “poor” condition, meaning that it will require full reconstruction. She indicated that such situations are often the result of maintenance that is deferred too long due to lack of capacity and funding. Overall, about half of the city’s roads have areas in poor or very poor condition. Ms. Williams also noted that there have been over 10,000 abandoned vehicles picked up in the last year, including 400 recreational vehicles, all of which have a cost to the city.

Rian Windsheimer, ODOT’s Region 1 Director, discussed the restrictions on different sources of funding and how they make it more difficult to prioritize system needs at the state and local level. He noted short-term funding provided already, through the Governor’s livability request and investments made during the 2024 session. The cost of graffiti removal and sign replacement were cited, as were strategies that ODOT and other transportation agencies are using to mitigate and prevent graffiti, such as specialized coating and artificial ivy; he also noted that ODOT outsources the task where possible, but that in some areas specialized personnel are required.

Committee comments and questions for this portion of the tour included: a comment that graffiti and trash is a ‘quality of life’ problem that gives the impression of lack of control and affects perceptions of the city; and question of why potholes seem to be worse now than at any time in the past.

#### *Downtown DMV*

The Committee debarked at the downtown Portland DMV office and was met by Amy Joyce, ODOT’s DMV Administrator. It was noted that, while it was a light business day, this DMV location receives a large volume of visitors, including the number of persons who speak languages other than English. Staffing levels and challenges were emphasized, specifically the complexity of the various services and forms used, which also contributes to customer confusion and conflict escalation. Ms. Joyce indicated that there are over 100 customers who have been trespassed from the facility due to aggressive behavior.

Committee comments and questions for this portion of the tour included: causes for retention issues for DMV employees; whether remote work for DMV employees are an option; and whether the complexity of operations and processes is similarly complex at most DMV locations.

#### *Return Trip: Rose Quarter, Safety and Transit Projects*

Director Strickler provided a brief update on the Interstate 5 Rose Quarter Project, which was included in House Bill 2017 and recently received \$450 million in federal funds. Director Williams noted that the project is one of importance at the local, regional, and national level, as it is currently the only portion of Interstate 5 that is two lanes in each direction in a metro area between Canada and Mexico, making it one of the worst bottlenecks on the entire interstate system.

The bus made a brief stop at North Lombard, where Administrator Windsheimer offered an overview of a recent safety project completed there. That segment, which is part of the U.S. Highway 30 bypass, has one of Portland’s highest crash rates, due in part to poor pavement levels and inadequate bicycle and pedestrian facilities. A grant from the Great Streets program will help address many of these safety concerns.

Mr. Pengilly provided an overview of planned light rail extension through north Portland and across the replacement Interstate 5 Bridge into Washington. He noted that responsibility of funding for operations and maintenance of the extended light rail line is still an open question. He also spoke to the benefits of the STIF funding from House Bill 2017 and expressed interest in expanding the STIF in an upcoming session. He also touched on projects related to transit oriented development and bus rapid transit extending onto 82<sup>nd</sup> Avenue.

Stakeholder Roundtable with Members of Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation, Jurisdictional Leaders, Business Representative, and Topic Area Experts

Committee members were joined by a number of participants and observers for a roundtable discussion of goals, possible funding strategies, and challenges moving forward. Welcoming remarks were provided by ODOT Director Kris Strickler; Oregon Transportation Commission Chair Julie Brown and Vice-Chair Lee Beyer; Metro Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez; and Commissioner Paul Savas, Chair of the Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation.

Other participants at the table included: Tina Adams, Casso Consulting; Doug Allen, Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates; Ajanet Banuelos Bolanos, LIUNA 737; Kelly Brooks, Office of the Governor; Dee Burch, Associated General Contractors; Robert Camarillo, Building Trades; Megan Desalvo, Oregon Chamber of Commerce; Marie Dodds, AAA Oregon/Idaho; Alberto Gallegos, SEIU 503; Jana Jarvis, Oregon Trucking Associations; Zachary Lauritzen, Oregon Walks; Christine Lewis, Metro Councilor; Don Loving, Amalgamated Transit Union; John MacArthur, TREC/PSU; Sharla Moffett, Oregon Business & Industry; Indi Namkoong, 1000 Friends of Oregon; Thomas Ngo, The Street Trust; Melvin Norman, Western States Carpenters; Evan Oneto, Oregon Trucking Associations; Dave Robertson, Port of Portland; Rebecca Sanders, Safe Street Research & Consulting; Jeanette Shaw, Forth; Lori Stegmann, Portland City Commissioner; Jacqui Trieger, Oregon Environmental Council; J.C. Vannatta, TriMet; Pia Welch, FedEx; and Millicent Williams, Portland Bureau of Transportation.

In addition to participants, others present at the roundtable included: AmyBeth Adams, staff for Rep. Nelson; Kristen Adams, Associated General Contractors; Don Baack, SW Trails; Lindsay Baker, ODOT; Emerald Bogue, Port of Portland; Derek Bradley, City of Portland; Patrick Brennan, Legislative Policy & Research Office; Lisa Caballero, Bike Portland; Sierra Canfield, Senate Democratic Office; Shoshana Cohen, Portland Bureau of Transportation; Phil Donovan, Clackamas County; Dru Draper, staff for Rep. Boshart Davis; Carlos Fuentes, The Oregonian; Taylor Griggs, Portland Mercury; Tom Gustafson, GeoToll, Inc.; Sarah Iannarone, The Street Trust; Jenna Jones, Metro; Annaelise Kohler, Metro; Mac Lynde, ODOT; Jonathan Maus, Bike Portland; Tom Markgraf, TriMet; Jim McCauley, League of Oregon Cities; Carmen Merlo, Port of Portland; Liz Nichols, Cement Masons Local 555; Tom Powers, Multnomah County; Beverly Schoonover, Legislative Policy & Research Office; Martin Slapikas, Hayden Island Neighborhood Network (HINOON); Chuck Slothower, Daily Journal of Commerce; Taylor Steenblock, Multnomah County; Joe Stenger, Mobilizing Climate Action Together (MCAT); Hayley Watson, Oregon State Building Trades; and Trent Wilson, Clackamas County.

*Topics of Discussion*

- Stakeholders were invited to share their single biggest issue related to a transportation package;
- Stakeholders were asked for suggestions for possible options for funding transportation in Oregon;
- Stakeholders were asked for their list of challenges Oregon faces in adequately funding transportation.