

# Coordination Protocol

## For the Albany Area MPO and the Cascades West ACT

### I. Value of Coordination

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ACTs are advisory bodies chartered by the Oregon Transportation Commission to address all aspects of transportation with primary focus on the state transportation system. ACTs consider regional and local transportation issues if they affect the state system.

MPOs are association of local governments designated by the governor to carryout Metropolitan Transportation Planning Process (23 & 49 USC). MPOs receive their mandates from the federal government and, along with states, are part of the federal system of transportation planning and project funding.

As such, MPOs and ACTs with overlapping geographic areas, such as the Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (AAMPO) and the Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation (CWACT) share responsibility for addressing regional and inter-jurisdictional transportation issues. While each has a different geographic focus, through coordination, the bodies can ensure that the mobility needs of the region's residents, visitors, and businesses are met in the most efficient and effective manner possible. In addition, whenever possible, speaking with a unified voice adds strength to the message and will maximize the resources available within the region to meet transportation needs.

### II. Coordination Requirements

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MPOs and ACTs are required to coordinate with other organizations. The MPO's coordination requirements are specified in the Code of Federal Regulations:

- *Before approving a long-range plan, each metropolitan planning organization shall provide citizens, affected public agencies, representatives of mass transportation authority employees, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services, private providers of transportation, representatives of users of public transit, and other interested parties with a reasonable opportunity to comment on the plan in a way the Secretary of Transportation considers appropriate. (49 CFR 5303(f)(4))*
- *There must be adequate opportunity for public official (including elected officials) and citizen involvement in the development of the transportation plan before it is approved by the MPO... (23 CFR 450.322(c))*

The State's Policy on Formation and Operation of Area Commissions on Transportation (ACTs) states:

- *While the ACTs provide valuable advice on project priorities and other policy issues, the MPO is responsible for carrying out the metropolitan planning process within urbanized areas in cooperation with the State and transit operators (23 CFR 450.312). MPOs develop a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) that approves all projects that are regionally significant or that include Federal funds, by year and by phase within the MPO planning areas. Before FHWA and FTA can approve Federal transportation funding for projects or activities within urbanized areas, they must be consistent with the MPO's regional transportation plan (RTP) and TIP ...*
- *The ACTs and MPOs should coordinate their efforts to assure a better decision making process which results in better coordination of projects. ...When ACT and MPO boundaries overlap, a higher level of clearly defined coordination is needed and it is important that ACT activities fully coordinate with the MPO planning process. The MPO and ACT should jointly agree on a process for maintaining consistency between ACT recommendations and the MPO Plan and TIP, where this occurs. An MPO representative shall be included as a voting member on the ACT if within the same geographic area as an ACT.*

The Intergovernmental Agreement that established the AAMPO encourages each MPO member to appoint one individual that will serve on both the MPO Policy Board and on the CWACT. This cross-membership facilitates communication and coordination between the two bodies.

### **III. Activity Protocols**

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There are five categories of activities where coordination between the AAMPO and CWACT will be needed:

- Prioritization of transportation improvement projects, (e.g. STIP project identification and prioritization)
- Provision of input to the State on transportation plans, programs and policies
- Development or amendment of MPO plans, strategies and studies
- Development or amendment of ACT plans, strategies, and studies
- Receipt of public input or comment

#### **A. Transportation project prioritization**

##### ***MPO project prioritization***

Based on federal requirements, the MPO is responsible for identifying and prioritizing transportation improvement projects within the MPO boundary. These priorities must be reflected in the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Prior to finalizing its TIP, the AAMPO will offer the CWACT the opportunity to provide input and comment on the draft list of project priorities. The AAMPO will consider the input received from the CWACT. If the AAMPO feels that additional consultation with the CWACT would



be beneficial prior to finalization of its priorities, it may request such consultation. The AAMPO will provide the CWACT with its final list of priorities. If the final priorities are not consistent with the input provided by the CWACT, the AAMPO will provide to the CWACT its rationale for the decisions reached.

### ***ACT Project Prioritization***

The ACT is responsible for identifying and prioritizing transportation improvement projects of regional significance and for developing overall lists of transportation priorities for the three-county area. The CWACT will consider the project priorities established by the AAMPO when developing regional lists of projects. In formulating its regional lists, the CWACT shall not modify the AAMPO priorities for transportation improvements within the AAMPO boundary. (For example, if two of the AAMPO's priority projects are on the CWACT's regional priority list, the projects shall be listed in the priority order established by the AAMPO.) However, in the development of its regional list, the CWACT may request clarification or reconsideration of AAMPO priorities in cases where the CWACT feels the broader regional system may be better served by a modification of the AAMPO's priorities.

The CWACT will offer the AAMPO adequate opportunity to provide input and comment on draft lists of regional priorities. The CWACT will consider recommendations that are offered by the AAMPO. If the CWACT feels that consultation with the AAMPO would be beneficial prior to finalization of its recommended priorities, it may request such consultation. If the CWACT develops regional priorities that are not consistent with the recommendations of the AAMPO, the CWACT will provide to the AAMPO its rationale for the decisions reached.

If either the CWACT or the AAMPO foresees the potential for conflicting priorities between AAMPO priorities and the priorities of either the CWACT or other MPOs in the CWACT area, either body may call by majority vote the formation of a joint subcommittee of the two bodies for the purpose of recommending a resolution of the issue. The subcommittee shall consist of:

- The sitting chair of the MPO Policy Board(s)
- A member of each MPO involved, selected by the respective MPO
- The sitting chair of the CWACT
- A member of CWACT, selected by the ACT
- The Oregon Department of Transportation Area Manager or their designee

### **B. Input to State transportation plans, programs and policies**

Entities that constitute MPOs are also members of one of the Area Commissions on Transportation (CWACT or otherwise). Therefore, ACT input to the State regarding state plans, programs and policies is likely to reflect the perspective of the MPO. Input by the MPO, however, would not necessarily take into consideration the broader regional perspective of the ACTs. When time permits and the effort is warranted by the nature of

the input, the AAMPO should seek comment from the ACTs on its input on state plans, programs and policies prior to forwarding the input to ODOT or the OTC. As part of this effort, the AAMPO may seek comment from the CWACT Technical Advisory Committee, CWACT Executive Committee and/or CWACT itself, depending on time constraints and the substance of the input.

Wherever possible, the two bodies will seek to speak with one voice, recognizing that this strengthens the impact of the communications and recommendations.

#### **C. MPO plans, strategies and studies**

The MPO is required to consult with a variety of stakeholders in the development of its Regional Transportation Plan and related studies. The details for engaging stakeholders, as well as the general public, are contained in the MPO's Public Involvement Program.

#### **D. ACT plans, strategies and studies**

The CWACT has adopted goals that are guiding the development of an Area Strategy. As with the input on State plans, programs and policies, the cross-membership on the ACT and MPO Policy Board will facilitate the consideration of MPO-specific issues and concerns as the CWACT develops the Area Strategy and undertakes other planning activities. In the development of this Area Strategy or any additional strategies, plans and studies, the CWACT at its discretion may seek more formal input from the AAMPO.

#### **E. Public Comment**

Either the CWACT or the AAMPO may receive from members of the public comment on projects, plans, studies, policies, or transportation issues. Each party shall forward to the other input that would better be addressed or responded to by the other party. Each shall also forward to ODOT, the OTC or a local jurisdiction input or comment that is most appropriately addressed by those entities.

### **IV. MPO Liaison to ACT**

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An AAMPO staff member shall serve on the CWACT as an ex-officio member and shall serve as a member of the CWACT Technical Advisory Committee to ensure that information about federal requirements regarding the MPO's planning and programming responsibilities is available for consideration by the CWACT.

### **V. Term of Agreement and Periodic Review of Protocols**

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These protocols shall be effective upon affirmative action by both parties. If modifications are needed, a joint CWACT-AAMPO ad hoc committee shall develop proposed amendments for review and adoption by each body.

Adopted by Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation:

  
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Doug Hunt, Chair  
Cascades West Area Commission on Transportation

2-27-14  
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Date

Adopted by the Policy Board of the Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization:

  
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Floyd Collins, Chair  
Albany Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

2/11/14'  
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Date