

MINUTES

Region 2050 Advisory Policy Board
EWEB Training Center, 500 East 4th Avenue, Eugene

November 29, 2004
5:30 p.m.

- PRESENT:** Don Hampton, Chair (Lane County); Mike Watson (Coburg), Mike Fleck (Cottage Grove), David Kelly (Eugene), Dwight Coon, Vice Chair (Junction City), Warren Weathers, Ken Larsen, (Lowell), Marion Esty (Veneta), Neil Friedman (Westfir), Susan Ban (Lane Transit District), members; Carol Heinkel, Byron Vanderpool, George Kloeppel, Lane Council of Governments staff
- ABSENT:** Judy Volta (Coburg), Matt Bjorn (Cottage Grove), Michael Dubick, Ron Hanson (Creswell), Jim Torrey (Eugene), Barry Schweigert (Junction City); Peter Sorenson (Lane County), Sue Bond, Glenn Fortune (Oakridge), Christine Lundberg (Springfield), Fred Miller (Veneta), Erik Andersson, Gabrielle Schiffer (Governor's Economic Revitalization Team)
- GUESTS:** Maureen Weathers (Lowell School Board), Mark Metzger, George Walker (City of Springfield), Deirdre Malarkey (Environmental Quality Commission), Michael Mattick (Oregon Water Resources Department), Rob Castleberry, Carlos Barrera (Goshen Area Neighbors), Barbara Newman, Janet Calvert, Eleanor Mulder (League of Women Voters), Mike Wolf, Bill Mason (Department of Environmental Quality), Stephanie Schulz (Lane County Planning), Lisa Gardner (Lane Transit District), Deborrah Brewer (EWEB), Howard Schesser (City of Cottage Grove).

1. Welcome and Introductions

Mr. Hampton convened the meeting at 5:35 p.m. He invited members to share their thoughts and concerns about the Region 2050 process following comments from the public.

Those present introduced themselves.

2. September 29, 2004, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Weathers, referring to page 3 of the minutes, asked that his comments regarding larger and smaller lots in the Lowell area be clarified by defining the lot sizes he was referring to by revising the last sentence in the paragraph to read, "He said ~~smaller~~ *one- to two-acre lots, not 40-acre or larger lots*, would increase supply and thus lower prices so families could afford to live there."

Mr. Fleck, seconded by Mr. Coon, moved to approve the minutes of the September 29, 2004, meeting as amended. The motion passed unanimously.

3. Public Comment

Maureen Weathers, 29. South Alder Street, Lowell, Chair of the Lowell School Board, remarked that the evaluations of scenarios completed to date all rated the Rural Growth scenario as low, meaning it had a negative impact, and implied that there was no redeeming value in that scenario. She expressed concern that those negative evaluations would preclude elements of the Rural Growth scenario from being included in the final blended preferred scenario.

Ms. Weathers used a map to illustrate the large geographic size of the Lowell School District and sparse population centers. She said that Lowell would not support the Rural Growth scenario as currently presented. She asked the board to consider for the preferred scenario a modest amount of development through limited division of 80 acre lots into 5 acre parcels would balance agricultural, natural resource, and environmental interests with a level of development that would help maintain the lifestyle, support the schools and stimulate the economy of rural communities.

4. Process Check-in

Mr. Hampton asked board members to share, from the perspective of their communities, whether there was support for the Region 2050 project and identify any significant concerns.

Mr. Friedman commented that Westfir was somewhat isolated on the fringe of the region and there was little interest in the community as no impact was perceived. He attended the Region 2050 meetings because he saw the preferred scenario as an historic document and he was interested in participating in the process.

Ms. Ban said that Lane Transit District (LTD) felt it was very important to have a sense of how the region would develop and the likely growth patterns that would emerge so the board could make good policy decisions regarding the larger infrastructure and connectivity issues and make the best use of limited resources.

Ms. Esty remarked that Veneta was rapidly filling up land within the city and many in the community were questioning what would happen with growth in other areas such as Elmira and Crow. She said that planning for the future was well received and there was a high level of interest. She appreciated Ms. Weathers' comments and urged communities to continue to plan for the future.

Mr. Watson stated that Coburg was very supportive of the Region 2050 project and was currently undergoing periodic review, which put the city somewhat ahead of the planning process. He said concerns centered on the question of whether change in one area of the County would establish a precedent and affect other areas. He used the example of one- and two-acre lots in the Lowell area causing a similar development pattern in the Coburg Hills. He said Coburg was interested in a blended scenario that did not permit sprawl to occur throughout the region. He said other concerns related to maintaining green space between communities, maintaining the identity of small communities, and the drain on resources that sprawl could create.

Mr. Fleck said there was a concern among a few of the Cottage Grove city councilors about the length of time and cost of the Region 2050 project. He said that the questions posed by Lane County Commissioner Anna Morrison were reflective of those concerns and the responses from staff were very informative about the direction of the project. Another concern was with binding future councils to implementing a preferred

scenario that those councils might not agree with. He felt that Cottage Grove should be at the table for regional planning activities. He said another “red flag” was the subject of implementation incentives and disincentives. He was interested in the expectations of other participating cities.

Mr. Coon related that Junction City had more jobs than residents and wants to maintain that status through the planning process. He said the city wished to dictate its future growth and not have growth dictated to it by the State and that as long as the State does not dictate to the City, Junction City is supportive of Region 2050 as it is an advantage to see what the future will hold.

Mr. Kelly said the Eugene City Council was supportive of Region 2050, although there was some concern over the length of time involved. He said two councilors were concerned that the project would be used as a blanket under which to hide a mandate for more growth than was desired as all three scenarios assumed the same population growth. He said there was a strong realization on the council of the need to coordinate among the various cities. He agreed with Mr. Fleck that the answers to Commissioner Morrison’s questions were very helpful and reassured him that councils often bind future councils and in fact that is what they do when they adopt comprehensive plans, and, in Region 2050, councils will only bind future councils to that which each local jurisdiction agrees to, for example, Eugene would be bound only by what Eugene agreed to.

Mr. Weathers expressed apprehension about the project but acknowledged the value in jurisdictions talking to each other. He said that Lowell was concerned that the ability of a jurisdiction to say “no” was being lost in Region 2050. He expressed frustration with participating in the project as a defensive measure; the evaluations of scenarios were counter to Lowell’s vision of the future and the results were now published on the Region 2050 website and would soon be included in public outreach activities. He recognized that Lowell’s population was very small and a majority of the region’s population resided in Eugene and had a different perspective and values related to land use planning. He saw his charge as protecting the interests of his community, which might have a different viewpoint than the rest of the region. He was also concerned that outreach using the current evaluations was prejudicial to Lowell’s economic development efforts.

Mr. Hampton said he had the unique opportunity to see the project from both a rural and metropolitan perspective. He said his initial concern was that a 50-year planning horizon was too long, although it was acceptable since the project is looking at trends and growth patterns. He shared some of the concerns of small cities that the project could be a metropolitan plan and interests of small communities could be secondary but only if they do not participate, which was why he continued to encourage those communities to participate and express their points of view. He reminded members that the final document would have to be approved by all jurisdictions and each one had the same vote, regardless of population. He encouraged small communities to develop their visions and see how they fit into the regional plan.

Carol Heinkel, LCOG Project Manager, encouraged members to provide detailed comments on the information posted on the Region 2050 website.

Mr. Hampton noted that the composition of the board would change somewhat in January 2005 and asked members if they wished to set aside time at a future meeting to review the history and status of the Region 2050 project. Members offered the following suggestions:

- Provide individual orientations for new members
- A refresher on Region 2050 could be useful for all members

- If agreed to by members, post Commissioner Morrison’s questions and the responses on the website along with the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document distributed by staff
- Members need a better understanding of the different perspectives jurisdictions might have on the issue of incentives and disincentives; a brainstorming session later in the process could provide the best suggestions from participants
- Occasionally set aside 30 minutes on an agenda to review

Mr. Hampton commented that small communities benefited from participating in the Region 2050 process because they typically lacked the staffing resources to do that level of planning.

Ms. Esty said that Region 2050 also stimulated local staff to coordinate their efforts with other communities and see regional connections. She said that more time was needed to resolve process differences so that members could take something useful back to their communities.

Mr. Hampton asked members to let Ms. Heinkel know if there would be new representatives to the board from their communities.

5. Overview of Water, Wastewater, and Transportation Evaluation Methods

Ms. Heinkel commented that the purpose of the evaluations was to inform the development of a preferred scenario. She said that the evaluations had aspects in terms of process and expected outcomes in common and each had unique aspects. She said there were two basic evaluation questions:

1. What are the estimated relative impacts of the three alternative scenarios on the capacity of water and wastewater facilities and transportation systems in the region, and
2. What are the estimated relative impacts of the three alternative scenarios on the cost to provide water and wastewater facilities and transportation systems?

Ms. Heinkel said the objective was to estimate magnitude of costs relative to the scenarios, rather than develop actual costs. The evaluation criteria for each facility category were developed from the Regional Goals and Objectives for that category and where possible, “robust strategies” that would work under any scenario, will be identified for each facility category. She noted that Systems Development Charges (SDCs) and capital improvement programs (CIPs) were developed on a 20-year timeframe and Urban Reserves were on a 50-year timeframe; one of the benefits of the Region 2050 projects was the ability to develop local CIPs that were responsive to future growth patterns in the region.

6. Water Supply and Facilities: Alternative Regional Growth Scenarios Evaluation

Deborrah Brewer, Eugene Water & Electric Board (EWEB), and Michael Mattick, Department of Water Resources (DWR), presented the preliminary findings and issues related to sources of supply, availability of sources, and water quality. She said the region was fortunate to have a large amount of surface water and usable groundwater. She said the hydrology of groundwater was connected to surface water and use of one affected the other. She listed the sources of supply as surface water, groundwater, transfer of existing water rights, and domestic wells.

Mr. Mattick discussed the legal availability of surface water. He said generally any agency required a water right from DWR to appropriate water for a beneficial use. He said that a well for domestic purposes using up to 15,000 gallon per day of groundwater is exempt. He said that wells used for irrigation of more than one-half acre required a permit, as did any use of surface water. He described the process for determining whether a permit would be granted and types of uses permitted. He indicated the McKenzie River was the only non-restricted stream in the region from which water could be made available without impacting other uses. With respect to water rights, he said once a certificate was issued it was good forever as long as the water right was used periodically. He said that the water right stayed with the land. He said a land owner who no longer needed a water right could sell that right as long as the new use got water from the same source and did not adversely impact existing water rights.

Ms. Brewer stated that some communities had surface water rights, but most used groundwater. She said that EWEB was interested in the Region 2050 project because it would help predict where growth would happen and what water rights would be required. She said the assessment methodology would measure the capacity to serve, including water availability, existing service capacity, future service capacity, and cost of future service. A panel of experts would evaluate the preliminary draft assessment.

Mr. Weathers suggested that a consulting hydrologist be included on the panel to represent the interests of residents outside the UGB who used wells.

Ms. Brewer reviewed the draft assessment assumptions for municipal, water district, and private water companies and those for small community water systems or individuals. She said the assessment goal was to develop a regional strategy to facilitate the efficient provisions of infrastructure and community service in the southern Willamette Valley in conformance with the desires of each utility and district. She listed the assessment criteria objectives:

- Work collaboratively to ensure the availability of a full range of infrastructure and services to meet the needs of all residents in the region.
- Identify innovative strategies and partnerships to finance existing and future facility expansions and improvements.
- Develop a regional strategy to place less demand on infrastructure through enhanced conservation policies and practices.

Ms. Brewer briefly reviewed the water supply and facility assessment growth scenario rating matrix and the water supply questionnaire to be used.

Mr. Weathers expressed concern that the assessment would conclude that people should not live in rural areas because they could not connect with a municipal water system and the cost of wells was too high.

Mr. Kelly observed that some matrices lent themselves to a straightforward high, medium, low rating and some factors, such as cost, were more complicated. He suggested the addition of explanatory footnotes to matrices and flagging infrastructure issues.

In response to a question from Mr. Weathers, Bill Mason of the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) explained that “water quality limited” meant that the Coast Fork, Middle Fork, and Main Stem of the Willamette River were impacted for temperature and mercury and there were implications for drinking, irrigation, recreation, and wildlife. Ms. Heinkel said that more detailed information could be provided on the climatology affect on water availability, along with the credentials of scientists quoted in the document

Region 2050 Alternative Growth Scenario Evaluation: Water Supply and Facilities, Draft November 22, 2004.

Mr. Mattick defined the term “stored water” as reservoirs authorized by Congress for flood control, hydro-electric, and irrigation. He said the reservoirs were managed by either the Bureau of Reclamation or the Army Corps of Engineers, depending on the use. He said that other uses, such as municipal water supply, would have to be authorized by Congress.

7. Wastewater Facilities and Services: Alternative Regional Growth Scenarios Evaluation

George Walker, City of Springfield, referred to the *Wastewater Facilities Questionnaire* included in the agenda packet and said that responses were being collected and results compiled. He said that sewage disposal under the three growth scenarios could be achieved by the following system types:

- Individual onsite sewage disposal systems (decentralized onsite)
- Cluster – decentralized cluster systems
- Centralized municipal sewage treatment plan

Mr. Walker reviewed the assumptions listed in the document *Region 2050 Alternative Growth Scenario Evaluation: Wastewater Facilities and Services*, which would apply to all wastewater evaluations and noted that others could arise during the evaluations. He said that municipal system capacity was purchased and costs involved four elements: treatment, transport lines, collection, and site development for whatever facility was used to transport wastewater to the collection system. He said that development density was a major factor in the collection system costs and municipal systems were typically based on density of 40 units per acre or more. He said the population density projected in rural areas under the compact growth scenario would have a much higher cost for municipal systems.

Mr. Weathers said that it was not appropriate for the criteria used to evaluate municipal systems to be used for systems outside of the UGB. Mr. Walker agreed and said that other criteria would be used for onsite and cluster systems.

Mr. Weathers asked if DEQ considered composting and incineration as acceptable forms of sewage disposal. Deirdre Malarkey, Environmental Quality Commission, replied that the commission would be considering alternative sewage disposal systems at its meeting the following week.

Mike Wolf, DEQ, discussed the methodology for evaluating wastewater systems in the rural growth scenario. He said the proposed approach consisted of the following components:

- Elaborate on “Environmental Resource Protection” document conclusions
- Choose tool used in other jurisdictions to evaluate and estimate the impact of septic systems on groundwater quality in rural areas
- Apply the tool to several representative sites in the Region 2050 area
- Illustrate the different resource constraints at each of the sites
- Write short companion document summarizing the results

Bill Mason, DEQ, stated that predicting groundwater impact was very site specific and depended on a number of factors, including:

- Aquifer type
- Permeability
- Gradient
- Recharge, including rainfall and irrigation
- Contaminant sources and concentrations
- Housing unit density
- Potential risks

Continuing, Mr. Mason said the advantages of a screening-level approach were illustration of the relative impacts of septic densities and nitrate could be used to predict the behavior of other contaminants. He said the approach could also be used to generically prioritize areas needing higher levels of wastewater treatment to prevent groundwater impacts. He said the evaluation would look at standard septic systems and predict the impact of different densities in certain geological settings and use that information. He said that septic systems were designed to dispose wastewater in the subsurface and failure meant surfacing wastewater. He indicated that standard septic systems were not designed to completely treat wastewater for all contaminants and there were many types of on-site system, some with advanced treatment. He said that generally greater standard on-site system density equaled more groundwater contamination, but the impact might not be significant.

Mr. Weathers said it was hard to reconcile the evaluation matrix, which rated the rural growth scenario low in all water quality categories, with the fact that the impact of on-site systems might not be significant. He said it appeared that the assumptions were biased against rural growth and was concerned that the evaluations were being made available to the public. Mr. Mason replied that the matrix simplified the evaluation results and did not tell the entire story; staff could provide a companion document that would fill in the details. Ms. Heinkel offered that the Policy Board could decide not to use the matrices in the outreach materials.

Mr. Mason asked the board if the proposed approach would be useful.

In response to a question from Mr. Kelly, Mr. Mason said the approach would not evaluate other types of systems, such as neighborhood systems. Mr. Kelly asked that the report highlight which approaches were not analyzed.

Mr. Watson asked if the approach could look at systems generally by community or area within the region. Mr. Mason replied that the analysis would look at collections of systems as a unit, giving Coburg and the South Eugene Hills as examples of units.

Mr. Hampton suggested that the analysis focus on areas where growth was likely to happen such as Pleasant Hill, Goshen, and Alvadore. Mr. Mason indicated that the board could identify the sites to be evaluated.

Mr. Weathers remarked that septic systems were not useful if growth was dense and asked that the analysis evaluate sites outside of the UGB under the rural growth scenario. Mr. Mason said that the analysis could look at 2-, 5-, and 10-acre parcel growth and various treatment system types. He clarified that the areas the board wanted to examine included the Coburg/Junction City area, the three “growth centers,” and the Lowell area. He said that the board would have the evaluation results before they were included in public outreach materials.

Ms. Heinkel introduced Deirdre Malarkey, Environmental Quality Commissioner, to present a report on the La Pine Demonstration Project. She noted that the presentation was not intended to suggest that what happened in La Pine would happen in Lane County; the purpose was to help the board understand from the experience of the La Pine project the benefits of regional collaboration and addressing problems in a proactive instead of reactive way.

Ms. Malarkey observed that the soil conditions in La Pine were very different from those in the Lowell area and the alternative on-site systems used in La Pine would not be appropriate for Lowell; however, the La Pine experience would help inform the board on what treatment systems were available and acceptable to DEQ.

Ms. Malarkey used a map to illustrate the history of “sagebrush development” in La Pine with the creation of 15,000 half-acre lots in the 1960s without regard to the suitability of the land for residential development. She said the Region 2050 project provided the opportunity to plan in advance and avoid the type of disaster that occurred in La Pine when people tried to build on their property. She said the purpose of the La Pine project was to protect the La Pine subbasin aquifer’s water quality, which was at risk of nitrate contamination from on-site sewage treatment system discharge to groundwater. She said that La Pine was the largest unincorporated area in Oregon and the regional problem-solving project was under the auspices of Deschutes County, working in partnership with DEQ and the U.S. Geological Survey.

According to Ms. Malarkey, the project was in its tenth year and included a study of on-site sewage systems. A laboratory analysis was done on the efficacy of each of the septic systems and final reports would be completed in June 2005. She listed a number of other regional benefits of the project such as road improvements, wildfire suppression and prevention, improved emergency vehicle access, wildlife habitat preservation, and economic development opportunities. She said that transferable development rights were used in the project and reminded the board of a similar approach used in Eugene to preserve the West Eugene Wetlands. She said that legislation was enacted to allow any jurisdiction to use transferable development credits to allow protection of an environmentally sensitive area and enable development somewhere else.

Ms. Malarkey concluded that among the many lessons learned in the La Pine project was the importance of building trust in the community, involving local elected officials, and assuring the diversity of stakeholders.

8. Transportation Facilities and Services: Alternative Regional Growth Scenarios Evaluation

This item was deferred to the December 2004 meeting.

9. Project Updates

Ms. Heinkel said that staff was not recommending any changes in the work program and would schedule a meeting in January 2005 for a process check-in with the board and discussion of future direction for the project. She said the project was completely funded with state and federal grants until completion, targeted for June 2006, with implementation in 2007. She said that staff would continue with resource development work.

Ms. Heinkel said staff was struggling with the economic evaluation and the Regional Technical Advisory Committee (RTAC) had recommended asking *The Register-Guard's* economic forecasters to conduct the evaluation of the three growth scenarios. She said there had been some discussion of televising the event.

Mr. Weathers expressed concern with the board's loss of control if the evaluation was televised.

Mr. Kelly said he supported the idea of asking the economic forecasters for assistance. He suggested that the results be presented to the public in the form of an executive summary instead of a lengthy document and the high-medium-low rating system be eliminated in favor of a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of each scenario.

Mr. Weathers provided staff with a document and asked that it be distributed to members.

Ms. Heinkel reported that an intern was still working on the education evaluation and she hoped to obtain the services of another volunteer intern. She asked for feedback from the board on the "Process Check-in" and "Frequently Asked Questions" (FAQ) documents.

FAQ comments:

- Add a bulleted item under benefits of the project that described the opportunity presented by Region 2050 to explicitly address the interdependency of rural and urban communities and increase awareness of inter-jurisdictional issues.
- The FAQ was somewhat too generic; should also address issues such as incentives and disincentives.
- Add a bulleted item under benefits of the project that addressed rural development potential.
- Provide a link on the website to other documents with more details.

Process Check-in comments:

- Clarify which language is a direct quote from Oregon Revised Statutes
- The agreement among local participants and state entities would include provisions for terminating and amending the agreement, as well as withdrawal of a jurisdiction from participation.

In response to comments from several members, Ms. Heinkel said that the board had not yet discussed incentives and disincentives; that those are not a requirement but rather an option that is allowed under the law for the local governments to use; that they fall under actions and the process has not yet reached that stage. She asked the board how they wanted to proceed with making final changes to the two documents and asked if they were willing to provide a quick review and comment in order to get the final documents to Cottage Grove officials to inform their discussions about the Region 2050 process. It was agreed that the revised versions, with changes highlighted, would be emailed to members with a quick turn-around requested and that once the board agrees with the final wording of the documents, they would be posted on the Region 2050 website.

10. Future Meeting Dates/Adjourn

The group agreed to try to meet in December in order to review the transportation evaluation methodology.

Mr. Hampton adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

(Recorded by Lynn Taylor)

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