



**REGIONAL SOLUTIONS OFFICE
GOVERNOR KATE BROWN**

**Regional Solutions Advisory Committee: Mid-Valley
Meeting Minutes - DRAFT**

Friday, October 2, 2015

8:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Woodburn City Hall - Council Chamber

270 Montgomery St.

Woodburn, OR 97971

Regional Solutions Advisory Committee members present: *Senator Jackie Winters, Mayor Kathryn Figley, Chad Freeman, Peter Fernandez for Kacey Duncan, Commissioner Craig Pope, Commissioner Kevin Cameron, Mayor John McArdle, Jody Christensen and Andrew Bone for Julie Huckestein. **Not in attendance:** Chane Griggs, Commissioner Allen Springer and Toby McClary*

Welcome, Logistics and Introductions

The Regional Solutions Advisory Committee (RAC) started the meeting with a moment of silence for the recent events in Roseburg, Oregon. After the reflective moment, the RAC introduced themselves. The additional meeting participants introduced themselves, including the Regional Solutions Team (RS Team), Representative Betty Komp and members of the public. The RAC introduced James LaBar, Coordinator, and briefly mentioned his background and experience prior to Regional Solutions as well as the activities he has undertaken thus far with the committee.

Mr. LaBar thanked everyone for their attendance, especially due to the unusual traffic on I-5 and reviewed the logistics and agenda for the meeting. He also thanked Woodburn and Mayor Figley for hosting the meeting.

Regional Solutions Update – Project Funding and Future Objectives

Annette Liebe, Regional Solutions Director, and Mr. LaBar gave an overview presentation of Regional Solutions and a legislative funding update (18% delta between requested and awarded amount) regarding the projects that were put forth by the Mid-Valley RAC. A few RAC members asked questions about the Regional Solutions program, including co-location for teams, the legislature's role with projects and overlapping/different jurisdictions as it relates to Regional Solutions regions and other districts. The discussion then moved to accessing 2015 project funding and a couple of RAC members expressed concerns about being reimbursed for a planned amount of capital expenses and dealing with the uncertainty of the bond sale in 2017. The RAC asked Chuck Lee to briefly talk about the Career and Technical Education Center (CTEC)

request and how it would deal with the uncertainty of the bond market as well as a possible funding delta. Mr. Lee expressed confidence in the bond market and stated that if there were less funding available, it would unfortunately necessitate more revenue raising efforts. He also briefly mentioned how his updated request for funds would be used for equipment and CTEC's open house on October 9, 2015. The RAC then had a robust conversation about the 18% delta between the project funding amounts requested and awarded. During the conversation, RAC members expressed strong support for the CTEC project because of the workforce needs in the region. RAC members also inquired about CTEC's original request for funds, amount requested to legislature and awarded amount. The RAC requested Mr. LaBar to gather an update on each of the projects to help them decide how to apply the 18% delta then set up a conference call to make the decision prior to the December 4, 2015 meeting.

- **Action item:** *Mr. LaBar will follow up with pertinent entities and put together project updates to inform the RAC so they can best resolve the delta between the RS funds requested (\$2 million) and awarded (\$1.64 million) for the region's three projects.*
Timeline: *Prior to December 4, 2015, there will be a conference call for RAC to discuss project updates, ask follow-up questions of each of the projects and make a decision about funding.*

Project Update: Willamette Valley Railroad – Jae Pudewell/Commissioner Cameron

Jae Pudewell, Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) RS Team member, and Commissioner Kevin Cameron gave an overview presentation about the Willamette Valley Railroad, which is a short-line railroad that is approximately 30 miles long and runs between Woodburn and Stayton. Mr. Pudewell discussed the current status of the operator along the line and the challenges associated with the infrastructure, including washouts in the southern half (the portion from Silverton to Stayton has not been operation for eight years), past Connect Oregon funds, a bridge with lead paint, an oblique crossing in Aumsville and Class 1 railroad relationship issues. Commissioner Cameron discussed the efforts of the Cascade Community Railroad and the businesses along the line being possibly interested in using the railroad to transport their goods. RAC members discussed recent efforts to find resources for a feasibility study along the line to identify how much traffic would be needed to make the short-line more viable. Mr. LaBar mentioned how Business Oregon hired a consultant to put together notes from the statewide Terminal 6/transportation discussions that hopefully will identify next steps and help clarify the scope of issues and possible solutions in the Mid-Valley. The RAC then had a more macro conversation about additional short-line railroads in the Mid-Valley, past and future studies and short-line railroads economic relevance as it relates to agricultural products being exported.

- **Action item:** *Mr. LaBar will follow up with ODOT, thru Jae Pudewell, about the status of short-line railroad studies while continuing efforts and dialog with Cascade Community Railroad through Mayor Figley and Commissioner Cameron.*
Timeline: *Next RAC meeting in December*

Possible Future Opportunity: Ecotrust’s Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis

Amanda Osborne, VP, Ecotrust Food & Farms, gave a presentation about Ecotrust’s recent Oregon Food Infrastructure Gap Analysis (see conclusions and access the report at www.food-hub.org/intrepid). The study focused on regional food systems and suggested opportunities for infrastructure investments to better support midsize Oregon agriculture targeting domestic distribution. Ecotrust refers to this segment as the Ag of the Middle (AOTM), and explained how they often struggle to access processing and distribution infrastructure optimized for production agriculture. The owner of Bowery Bagels, who uses all regionally grown flour, put it, “I can make more bagels, but I can’t deliver anymore.” One of the key findings from Ecotrust’s report was the need for product aggregation (potentially sited in key geographic nodes across state, including the Mid-Valley) to feed into the Redd, a new urban development designed to increase market access by rural producers to large-scale urban food buyers, including those who are members of the NW Food Buyers’ Alliance. A couple of the key questions from the presentation for Ecotrust, the RAC and RS Team to consider are: “Are there potential opportunities for the region based upon Ecotrust’s analysis?” and “How can the state support a statewide network of regional aggregation hubs?” The RAC expressed interest in the study’s participants and findings regarding the importance of the commodity end of the spectrum. Ms. Osborne responded that the commodity producers are integral to the food system and economy and that the conversation is not an “either/or”, but an “and”.

- **Action item:** *Mr. LaBar will follow up with Ecotrust on partnership ideas and sets of data for Mid-Valley for RS Team and interested RAC members.*
Timeline: *Next RAC meeting in December*

Project update: Woodburn UGB Process – Angela Lazarean/Mayor Figley

Mayor Figley gave an overview of the history of the process (14-15 years) and the changes made to the lands being added to the UGB. She mentioned the mediation process is going well and that this is one of the first urban reserves outside of the Metro region. Angela Lazarean, Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) RS Team member, spoke to the committee on the agency’s process of moving mediation forward to implementation that will ultimately come before DLCD’s commission for final acknowledgment. Ms. Lazarean’s department is part of the framework implementation group which is supporting the city with technical assistance and reviewing their draft findings/data so that it’s in compliance with the land use goals, administrative rules and statutes. DLCD believes that this land use decision was successful in mediation because both parties agreed to lay their differences aside and commit to finding a solution. Ms. Lazarean stated that the goal is to have the implementation findings adopted by both the City/County before the end of this year.

Ms. Lazarean also reminded the RAC that the new UGB streamlining rules take effect January 1, 2016, which are intended to relieve cities from the threat of appeals and provide an efficient, timely, cost-effective UGB expansion process moving forward.

RAC members inquired if there were lessons learned for other cities approaching the UGB process. The RAC also commented that Regional Solutions was useful in the process because it enabled a space for a “meeting of the minds.”

- **Action item:** *Mr. LaBar will inquire with DLCD, thru RS Team member, if a lessons learned document could be put together when Woodburn UGB process is concluded.*
- **Timeline:** *Completion of Woodburn UGB process*

Project update: COG’s Economic Development District Strategies – Renata Wakeley/Mayor McArdle

Renata Wakeley, Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments (MWVCOG) Community Development Director, and Mayor John McArdle gave a brief overview of several pertinent updates relating to recent Economic Development District (EDD) efforts, including: AGORA, Make It In the Willamette Valley, and the Pacific NW Manufacturing Partnership. Ms. Wakeley also stated that the MWVCOG will be updating the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy and completing project solicitations from all jurisdictions in the region. She stated that MWVCOG’s Partnership Board was slated to approve the project solicitation format next week.

Project update: Marion-Polk Food Share – Rick Gaupo

Rick Gaupo, Marion-Polk Food Share President & CEO, gave a quinoa project update, which focused on where their efforts are currently and how they have used the Regional Solutions’s catalytic funding, including a cold storage unit and a field truck and trailer. He also laid out a possible vision for the quinoa project by stating, “What if a majority of grass seed fields in the Willamette Valley became fields of quinoa?” Mr. Gaupo stated they are in their third year of a five year commitment for their work. They are working with NORPAC to see if it can be grown for seed for a better and additional return on investment.

Public Comment:

Peggy Lynch, League of Women Voters, commented briefly on how much she appreciated the topics and discussions. She also talked about the importance of preserving railroad infrastructure in the state as well as the work of Early Learning Hubs.

Next Meeting: December 4, 2015; Location is TBD