



OFFICIAL MINUTES OF THE TUALATIN CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION MEETING FOR AUGUST 14, 2023

Present: Council President Valerie Pratt, Councilor Bridget Brooks, Councilor Maria Reyes, Councilor Christen Sacco, Councilor Octavio Gonzalez

Absent: Mayor Frank Bubenik, Councilor Cyndy Hillier

Council President Pratt called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Metro Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Public Comment Period Discussion.

City Engineer Mike McCarthy presented information about the public comment period for the Metro Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). He gave a brief overview of the RTP, which is a twenty-year transportation vision for the entire Metro region. Engineer McCarthy emphasized the plan is required for federal funding and encompasses transportation projects and policies for the broader metropolitan area. He noted the deadline for submitting comments on the plan is August 25th. Engineer McCarthy discussed the planning context of the RTP in relation to state rules and their impact on county and city plans. He encouraged residents to visit Metro's website to review the plan and provide their feedback through the public comment process. He shared that the RTP's policy goals are based on the Metro 2040 growth concept and described some of the key projects within the plan. He noted some projects include the SW corridor light rail, improvements to bridges, the Hwy 99W corridor study, and the development of high capacity transit options.

Council President Pratt brought up the absence of the I-205 widening project from ODOT's project list even though it's listed in the RTP. Engineer McCarthy explained that the I-205 widening project was delayed on ODOT's list but assured that it will be addressed in the future.

Engineer McCarthy explained the basic philosophy of the RTP, which aims to avoid building new roadway capacity. He highlighted a key proposal within the plan that involves tolling and committing regional revenue to non-capacity projects.

Councilor Gonzalez inquired about the rationale behind prioritizing funding for alternative transportation methods over traditional roadways. Engineer McCarthy acknowledged the concern and suggested that this perspective could be included in the Council's comments on the plan. City Manager Lombos stated the city does not share the same philosophy as Metro regarding roadway capacity, she thinks it's important to share that with them.

Councilor Brooks pointed out Tualatin's road system is not built on a grid structure like Portland's downtown, making it difficult to offset traffic. She emphasized the importance of investing in the transportation system to prevent service interruptions, and expressed concerns about the potential economic divide that could result from prioritizing certain transportation methods over others.

Councilor Sacco shared concerns about promoting alternative transportation without ensuring its viability and how it could impact residents' quality of life based on their geographic location. She

stressed the need for a functional system before encouraging the use of alternate transportation methods.

Councilor Reyes expressed concerns with people and businesses moving away or considering other locations if traffic continues to get worse.

Councilor Brooks emphasized the need to address environmental concerns within the plan, ensuring that any transportation solutions are environmentally sustainable.

Councilor Gonzalez referred to the urban growth prosperity report and highlighted that Tualatin's favorable location could attract growth to the area. He emphasized the importance of considering this growth when planning transportation solutions.

Council President Pratt asked about the use of tolling revenue for mitigation projects. Engineer McCarthy admitted uncertainty about the allocation of tolling dollars for mitigation projects, as Metro's plans in this regard have not been clearly communicated.

Councilor Brooks stressed the importance of forward-thinking planning for alternate transportation methods. She suggested designing infrastructure in a way that accommodates future transportation options, such as preparing for bus lanes when the time comes to introduce those services.

Engineer McCarthy acknowledged a potential limitation in the plan regarding revisions, explaining that any changes made would need to demonstrate equivalent or greater reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, which could pose challenges to modification.

Councilor Pratt inquired about models that demonstrate whether tolling would truly reduce traffic or just defer it. Engineer McCarthy explained the models primarily indicate an improvement in the freeway system's performance. Councilor Pratt expressed her concern regarding potential traffic diversion from the freeway and its impacts on areas outside of the freeway.

Councilor Brooks questioned whether the plan addresses changing transportation modes. Engineer McCarthy clarified that Metro's focus is primarily on reducing home-based vehicle miles traveled and does not extensively address shifting transportation modes. Councilor Brooks expressed her desire to see guidelines addressing mode shift included in the plan.

Engineer McCarthy spoke another policy proposal in the plan, which involves including high capacity transit plans. He explained staff have raised concerns about the modeling used in the plan, as it focuses solely on home-based trips within the region and doesn't account for trips to and from areas outside of the region. He pointed out that a significant portion of traffic comes from surrounding cities, which is not adequately captured in the current modeling. Engineer McCarthy presented the regional mobility policy, which considers freeways to be acceptable as long as speeds remain above 35 mph for more than four hours each day. He expressed staff's concerns with this policy, as it might not acknowledge issues with I-5 through Tualatin and could potentially lead to increased traffic diversion onto city streets, resulting in higher crash rates.

Councilor Brooks inquired about the percentage difference in commercial vehicle traffic and raised concerns related to the safety implications associated with that type of transportation.

Engineer McCarthy then asked if the Council intended to submit a comment letter based on the discussion. The Council reached a consensus to write a letter addressing the concerns discussed during the meeting.

Councilor Reyes sought clarification on whether this plan's inclusion affects the allocation of funds. Engineer McCarthy explained that for a project to be eligible for federal funding, it needs to be included in the regional transportation plan.

Councilor Gonzalez inquired whether this was an appropriate time to request specific projects to be included. Engineer McCarthy responded that the addition of projects typically comes from the city and county transportation plans.

Councilor Brooks emphasized the importance of considering the city's climate action goals and expressed support for corridors that benefit Tualatin. She also voiced her concerns about the apparent disconnection between building and transportation goals within the Metro organization.

Council President Pratt asked about the process for submitting projects to the RTP, how projects were considered, and if tolling-related projects will need to be added. Engineer McCarthy explained projects were submitted based on the existing transportation plan, and new projects related to tolling will indeed need to be included.

Council President Pratt asked about concerns related to how revenue sharing would be addressed. Engineer McCarthy acknowledged revenue sharing is a legitimate concern that should be addressed in the discussion.

2. Council Meeting Agenda Review, Communications, and Roundtable.

Councilor Sacco stated she attended the Council Committee on Advisory Appointments meeting, she thanked all who interviewed for the committee.

Councilor Sacco stated she met with the NW Cannabis Company, whom would like to expand cannabis operating hours in the city to match that of surrounding cities. She proposed the Council discuss the possibility of extending these operating hours at a future meeting. The Council reached a consensus to include a discussion on cannabis operating hours on an upcoming agenda.

Councilor Reyes stated she attended the Council Committee on Advisory Appointments meeting and National Night Out.

Councilor Gonzalez stated he attended the Washington County Coordinating Committee meeting.

Councilor Brooks stated she attended the Arts Advisory Committee meeting and the Climate Action Planning meeting.

Council President Pratt stated she attended the C4 meeting, the C4 strategy meeting, and the R1TAC meeting.

Adjournment

Council President Pratt adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Sherilyn Lombos, City Manager

_____ / Nicole Morris, Recording Secretary

_____ / Frank Bubenik, Mayor