

Minutes of the
Oahu Metropolitan Planning Organization

POLICY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, December 27, 2011, 2:30 p.m.
Hawaii State Capitol, Conference Room 309
415 South Beretania Street, Honolulu, Hawaii

Members Present:

Councilmember Breene Harimoto, Vice Chair		Senator Will Espero
Councilmember Tom Berg		Senator Carol Fukunaga
Councilmember Stanley Chang		DOT Director Glenn Okimoto
Councilmember Nestor Garcia		DTS Director Wayne Yoshioka
Representative Karen Awana		

Member(s) Absent: Representative Marilyn Lee (Chair), Councilmember Romy Cachola, Representative Joseph Souki, and Senator J. Kalani English

Guests Present:

Dennis Galolo (CM Cachola)		Polly Grace
Michael Golojuch (CAC, NB #34)		Bob Smith
Li Cobian (AAC)		

OahuMPO Staff Present: Brian Gibson, Randolph Sykes, Pamela Toyooka

The meeting was called to order at 2:33 p.m. by Vice Chair Breene Harimoto. A quorum was present.

I. MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 6, 2011 & SEPTEMBER 21, 2011 MEETINGS

Senator Carol Fukunaga moved and Representative Karen Awana seconded that the minutes of the September 6, 2011 and September 21, 2011 meetings be approved as circulated. The motion was unanimously carried.

II. CONSIDER REVISION #2 TO FY 2012 OWP

Handout(s): Draft Revision #2 to FY 2012 OWP

OahuMPO Director Brian Gibson gave a presentation on the Draft Revision #2 to FY 2012 Overall Work Program (OWP), including the proposed changes, the intergovernmental review and public review comments received, and the Technical Advisory Committee's and Citizen Advisory Committee's (CAC) recommended approvals. The proposed changes to the FY 2012 OWP Draft Revision #2 include the reallocation of OahuMPO staff time, following the deletion of work element (WE) WE 205.03-12 Neighborhood Mobility Review from the draft FY 2012 OWP and the unsuccessful application for the Housing and Urban Development sustainability

grant; the deletion of the WE 203.01-12 Waianae Coast Access Alternatives Study; and the change in scope and budget of WE 203.79-10 Honolulu Urban Core Parking Master Plan. Director Gibson explained that, following approval of the FY 2012 OWP, Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT) informed OahuMPO that it would not be releasing the State funding to do WE 203.01-12. So, without the local match, federal funds cannot be expended, and the project can't go forward.

Testimony

Bob Smith, Polly Grace, and Li Cobian testified against the deletion of the WE 203.01-12.

In response to Senator Fukunaga, Director Gibson stated that the federal portion that was earmarked for the WE 203.01-12 is currently unobligated, so it will remain unobligated; there are almost \$3 million in unobligated funds for the OWP right now. Senator Fukunaga asked, in terms of unobligated dollars, what the net affect would be if this project is deleted; are there other projects that are being contemplated? Director Gibson responded that there were none for this fiscal year. For FY 2013, OahuMPO is working with the City Department of Facilities Maintenance to find a project to develop a pavement management system; the past unobligated federal dollars would be used for this project.

Representative Awana asked if there is any way OahuMPO can assist in helping this project move forward. Director Gibson responded that, without a local match, the federal funds cannot be spent.

In response to Representative Awana, Director Gibson stated that the funds from House Bill 200 were allocated by the State Legislature to the Hawaii Department of Transportation (HDOT), and confirmed that it is up to HDOT to release those funds.

In response to Representative Awana, HDOT Director Glenn Okimoto stated that there were several studies done and several alignments that have already been studied. So, it doesn't make sense to duplicate the effort and do another study that has already been done. He added that the City has an emergency access route. Representative Awana stated that the Waianae emergency access route does not take into account exiting out of the coast. Also, the emergency access routes have not been operable during times of emergency. She emphasized the importance of this route, as it is a health and safety issues for this community.

Department of Transportation Services (DTS) Director Wayne Yoshioka moved and Councilmember Nestor Garcia seconded that Revision #2 to the FY 2012 OWP be approved.

Representative Awana moved and Councilmember Tom Berg seconded that draft Revision #2 to the FY 2012 OWP be amended to retain item #2, WE 203.01-12.

In response to Councilmember Berg, Director Gibson stated that this project deals with the planning process, rather than the project programming process, where the project is on the illustrative list. The second access road, as it has already been studied, is enormously expensive,

so it is fiscally infeasible. The new project was placed in the OWP in order to study other alternatives which may be more fiscally feasible.

Councilmember Berg stated that the Obama administration has an interest-free bond structure to assist municipalities with improving shoulder lanes easements, medials, and right-of-way setback. He asked if these funds would be of value in getting the project off the illustrative list.

Director Yoshioka explained that the illustrative list of projects is in the Oahu Regional Transportation Plan (ORTP), which is the long-range transportation planning document. Deleting the project from the OWP would not affect the illustrative list in the ORTP; the Waianae Second Access project would remain on the illustrative list for the ORTP. The issue is not that it's stuck in the planning phase, since it has already been studied fairly extensively. There are already plenty of plans from which to choose an alignment or choose an option. So, another study would not necessarily advance the project further. The project in the OWP is another planning study. The issue is really the implementation phase, finding the money to implement a second access project. Director Yoshioka noted that the bonds Councilmember Berg referred to are not interest-free to those who are borrowing the money, in this case, the State. It will be tax-exempt to the people who hold the bonds. However, the State would still need to pay the interest on the money, as well as pay back the money.

Director Okimoto stated that the cost to build a second access route would exceed \$1 billion. HDOT would like to use the money that was supposed to be used for the study on some sort of improvement along the Waianae Coast – such as flood control along the Farrington Highway corridor or improvements to the intersections. He noted that he was born and raised in Waianae; still has relatives that live there. If a second access route was possible, HDOT would do it; but, realistically, there is no money right now.

Representative Awana noted that, on page 21 (of the draft Revision #2 to the FY 2012 OWP), under D, it reads: *“This planning study is not intended to repeat the work previously completed, but rather to compliment (sic) it and build upon the findings as the search for a cost effective solution to the issues on the Waianae coast continues.”* She also noted that she was raised in Waianae. Other areas have multiple ingresses/egresses, while the people on the Waianae Coast have just one. It's no longer a want for the people on the Coast; it's become a necessity.

In response to Chair Harimoto, CAC Chair Michael Golojuch stated that, in the past there have been spirited discussions regarding a second access route, since the CAC realizes that Waianae needs something. However, once the CAC was told that there was no local match and, therefore, the federal funds cannot be spent, the recommended approval of Revision #2 passed without any debate.

Councilmember Berg mentioned that there is now a new boring technique to build an underwater or underground tunnel. This study would look at new techniques.

Councilmember Garcia asked Director Okimoto for an assurance that a project for the Waianae Coast will be reflected in the HDOT supplemental budget request to the Legislature. Director Okimoto responded that there is no specific project going into the supplemental budget request right now. There are funds available, that are part of the whole package, to make improvements to the Farrington Highway corridor. Once a project is identified, HDOT will go out and implement it.

Senator Will Espero mentioned that, in Senator Maile Shimabukuro's testimony, she stated that the "Navy, which closed the Kolekole Pass a year ago as unsafe for vehicular travel, is on record as wanting to return the road to the state within ten years. In August Senator Daniel Inouye announced that Hawaii will receive a \$2.5 million federal grant from the U.S. DOT to repair and reopen the pass as an emergency evacuation route." Director Okimoto responded that this is an accurate statement. However, the cost to refurbish the road would be \$22-\$25 million. Senator Espero stated that if it can be done for \$25-\$30 million, which is nowhere near \$1 billion, then that is a worthy goal that the State should pursue.

Councilmember Berg noted that it is \$80-\$120 million for rock mitigation to provide for a thoroughfare for Kolekole Pass. The \$2.5 million will be used for a temporary bridge. The Navy would give up its jurisdiction on the Waianae Coast side; however, the Army owns the other side of the jurisdiction. Once you get over to the other side, the Army would retain such jurisdiction.

Representative Awana noted that the 2011 Legislature allocated \$8 million for flood control issues along Farrington Highway.

A vote was taken on the amendment to retain item #2 (WE 203.01-12) in the draft Revision #2 to the FY 2012 OWP. The motion was carried with seven members voting for the motion and two members voting against the motion.

A vote was taken to approve Revision #2 to the FY 2012 OWP. The motion was unanimously carried.

Senator Fukunaga asked that the project be used to study the feasibility of using Kolekole Pass Road as an alternative mean of access to and from the Leeward Coast.

Director Yoshioka asked what happens to the work element now that it's back in, but there's no local match. Director Gibson responded the federal funds allocated to the project remain allocated to that project. If a local match is found, then the funds are ready to be used for this project.

III. ORTP 2035 SCENARIO ANALYSIS

Director Gibson made a presentation on the ORTP 2035 scenario analysis. As part of the project, the consultant looked at various scenarios. The three scenarios being presented are not included

as part of the summary ORTP 2035 document – level of service D, managed lanes, and cordon pricing.

With regard to cordon pricing, Director Yoshioka stated that the City does have tolling authority; the State does not. However, the City does not have the desire to toll at this time. Director Yoshioka noted that many of Honolulu's major streets, such as King Street and Beretania Street, are used by traffic that is not destined for Downtown; they're passing through Downtown en route to other places. So, the placing of a cordon toll on entry to Downtown would either force people to take other routes or to pay a toll. That either causes congestion on other roadways or causes people who aren't really destined for Downtown to pay a toll. DTS recommended to Council, and Council concurred, that cordon pricing is premature at this time, especially without a solid alternative mode such as rail in place.

IV. CAC HIGHLIGHTS

CAC Chair Golojuch summarized the last CAC meeting.

V. OTHER BUSINESS (ANNOUNCEMENTS ONLY)

Director Gibson noted that OahuMPO is in the middle of the Household Interview Travel Survey. Letters are being sent out to the public to ask for their participation in the survey, especially those who only have cell phones.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.