

Road User Fee Task Force
March 18, 2024
Meeting Minutes

DRAFT

Task Force members in attendance: Chair Commissioner Lee Beyer, Vice Chair Rep. John Lively, Commissioner Jeff Baker, Rep. Rick Lewis, Councilor Steve Uffelman, Commissioner Dan Dorran, Marie Dodds, Keith Wilson

Task Force members not in attendance: Jeff Allen, Bruce Zimmerman

ODOT staff in attendance: Dave Adams, Peter Alotta, Maureen Bock, Travis Brouwer, Micayla Callahan, Jenny Cherrytree, Sata Donaca, Kait Fredrickson, David Nemchik, Tracy Olander, Andre Orso, Kimberley Patton, Daniel Porter, Amy Ramsdell, Randal Thomas, Brian Zelinka

Members of the public in attendance: Patrick Brennan, Nick Downen, Joseph Gardner, Lynda Gardner, Dan Jarman, Commissioner Pat Malone, Devon Morales, Rep. Khanh Pham, Greg Remensperger, Brian Worley

Vice Chair Lively convened the meeting at 10:05 a.m.

Meeting Minutes

Commissioner Baker requested that the January 2024 minutes be amended to reflect his recommendation that video recordings of RUFTF meetings be made available in an online archive. Commissioner Dorran requested that the January 2024 minutes be amended to reflect discussion related to the need for additional meetings and outreach.

Commissioner Dorran moved to approve the minutes as amended; Marie seconded the motion. The January 2024 minutes were unanimously approved as amended.

Public Comment

No public comments were received ahead of the meeting.

Vision Statement

Scott stated that, based on the January conversation, ODOT wanted to provide a more explicit vision for RUFTF expectations and goals in 2024, given that the task force would be taking a more comprehensive approach to examining transportation revenue mechanisms than in recent years. He directed attendees to review the statement provided in the meeting materials.

Commissioner Baker noted that congestion pricing was an important component of the tolling program that has been put on hold; he asked whether it should be included in the objectives. Scott replied that congestion pricing is a concept meant to be encapsulated within the bullet related to the efficient use and operation of the transportation system. Commissioner Baker noted that several local governments across Oregon implement a local option gas tax and asked

whether the objectives should include flexibility for local jurisdictions to build upon alternative revenue options that RUFTF identifies. Travis Brouwer, Assistant Director for Revenue, Finance and Compliance, noted that ODOT has explored road usage charging within the context of local government revenue options and that the topic could be added to the work plan. Councilor Uffelman emphasized from his perspective as a local government official that RUFTF should not limit what local communities are able to do in terms of taxation and revenue generation.

Commissioner Dorran sought to confirm that RUFTF was moving away from the idea of developing a legislative concept in favor of developing recommendations to the legislature ahead of the 2025 legislative session; Scott replied that that was correct. Commissioner Dorran asked for Vice Chair Lively's perspective as a legislator; Vice Chair Lively confirmed his understanding, as well.

Marie inquired as to whether policy options such as incentives and rebates for highly efficient vehicles were within the scope of RUFTF's work; Scott replied that RUFTF will want to be cognizant of such options but that the task force's focus is on revenue. Representative Lewis stated his concern with rebates and tax credits being impermanent policies and suggested that RUFTF should concentrate on long-term revenue strategy and planning for transportation infrastructure.

2024 Work Plan

Based on discussion during the January meeting, Scott modified the work plan to include an additional meeting in April that would feature road usage charging, technology considerations such as the connected vehicle ecosystem, and additional review of how other states are approaching similar challenges. Vice Chair Lively stated that the topics themselves were appropriate but expressed concern about a lack of time to work through the issues.

Commissioners Baker and Dorran agreed and expressed the opinion that holding remote meetings via Microsoft Teams limited the task force's ability to brainstorm and reach consensus. They both expressed a desire to have a full-day, in-person meeting; other task force members agreed that it would be a good idea. Chair Beyer directed Scott to plan for a 5-6 hour meeting in Salem in April.

State Transportation System Needs

Travis Brouwer provided task force members with a presentation on transportation system needs from the state perspective, acknowledging that there are also significant needs at the local level but that ODOT was not the appropriate entity to speak in detail on those local needs. The presentation covered topics including structural funding challenges; future system needs; maintenance and operations; and estimated annual funding gaps.

Rep. Lewis inquired as to what was missing from HB 2017 that led to the current funding gaps. Chair Beyer and Vice Chair Lively both noted that HB 2017 included significant funding for specific projects but that there wasn't enough support in the legislature at the time to raise taxes to fund operations. Vice Chair Lively asked Travis about the risks of underfunding the system in a 2025 legislative package; Travis replied that it likely is not feasible to address the entirety of system needs in the immediate term but that ODOT anticipates holding a dialogue with the

legislature to prioritize categories, with a likely focus on operations and maintenance. Commissioner Dorran recommended revisiting options discussed during the development of HB 2017 that were ultimately left out, such as identifying opportunities for privatization.

Cost Responsibility

Daniel Porter, Chief Economist for ODOT, presented on cost responsibility across the heavy- and light-duty vehicle classes as well as within the light-duty motive power classes. For both studies, he reviewed methodology, findings, and the resulting recommendations. Vice Chair Lively responded that the Section 75 study reinforced the notion that registration fees are not an accurate measure of how many miles people drive and that a road usage charge is a viable alternative. Rep. Lewis expressed support for the idea of placing a surcharge on public EV charging stations. Commissioner Baker noted that road usage charging has benefits in terms of equity. Keith recommended a balanced approach between registration fees and road usage charging to keep the upfront costs of EVs low enough to not dissuade purchasers.

Future Meeting Date and Next Steps

In response to Commissioner Baker's comments concerning the availability of meeting recordings, Scott stated that he would add instructions on the RUFTF website for members of the public to request the videos.

Scott noted that he would amend the January minutes and begin coordination of an in-person meeting in Salem in April.

The meeting adjourned at 11:45 a.m.