

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
ROOM 126, MULTNOMAH BUILDING
510 SE HAWTHORNE BLVD, PORTLAND OR
JUNE 15, 2015 6:30-8:30 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

In attendance:

Subcommittee members

Andrew Holtz
Sara Grigsby
Martha Berndt
Jerry Grossnickle

Project Team

Rich Faith
Joanna Valencia
Susie Wright
Kevin Cook
Rithy Khut
Kate McQuillan
Jessica Berry

Public: Two other CAC members and four community members

Rich Faith welcomed everyone to the first meeting of this subcommittee. It will primarily be an orientation on what the Transportation System Plan (TSP) is and how it relates to the comprehensive plan update. There is not yet any policy language for them to review; that will come at the next meeting. He also informed the subcommittee that its title is being expanded to Transportation and Public Facilities because it will also be reviewing policy issues related to public facilities. Self introductions of all those in attendance were made.

II. Introduction to the Transportation System Plan (TSP)

Susie Wright with Kittelson and Associates, a transportation consultant firm, summarized what a TSP is, how it is used, and the types of information it contains. She also provided an overview of the process that will be used in preparing the plan. This will involve:

- Review of existing plans and policies
- Evaluate existing conditions
- Future baseline conditions
- Policy review
- Alternatives analysis
- Transportation policies, ordinances, and financially constrained projects
- TSP adoption

The TSP is the transportation component of the Comprehensive Plan. It will be a stand-alone document but will be cross referenced in the Comp Plan. Some jurisdictions incorporate their TSP as part of the Comp Plan document but we have decided it would be better to have it as a separate document.

Among the comments from the subcommittee and discussion points during this agenda item were these:

- Concern that as a separate document the TSP becomes its own silo from land use planning and gets forgotten.
- How will other policy issues not directly related to transportation, such as agri-tourism, be factored into the TSP. Does the TSP take into consideration traffic volumes and traffic patterns created by large traffic generators, such as agri-tourism events? On Sauvie Island, for example, these are regular occurrences during the summer and fall and need to be considered in future traffic demand models.

III. Existing and Future Conditions Report

Susie summarized the major points of the existing and future conditions memorandum included in the meeting packet. She also went over the different maps that are a part of the memo. This is some of the baseline information that will go into the TSP. These maps show existing conditions pertaining to many aspects of the transportation system. Some of the comments and questions about the maps were:

- The Roadway Pavement Conditions map is not intended to produce policies in terms of listing maintenance projects. This information is really a maintenance issue and not a transportation planning policy issue.
- How are functional road classifications determined? The County does it based on studies of traffic volumes, usage patterns, and other factors.
- What is the speed limit on local public roads that the county doesn't maintain, and can these speed limits be posted? The speed limit is 55 unless otherwise posted.
- Some parts of Skyline Road shouldn't be widened or add shoulders because of wildlife crossing and the adding difficulty this creates for wildlife.
- Some maps seem to contradict or conflict with others. For example, some roads have high crash rates but are also shown as bike friendly, such as Lusted Road and Gordon Creek Road.

IV. Key TSP Topics

Susie and Joanna Valencia highlighted the key topics that the project team is seeking guidance from the subcommittee and CAC in preparing the TSP. The three key topics are:

1. Prioritizing Safety Improvements - What should be considered in prioritizing safety improvements such as widening shoulders?
2. Existing Bicycle Master Plan Routes - Are they still valid?
3. Alternatives Analysis - Are there different ways to solve particular problem areas?

There was lively discussion about these topics and many comments and ideas expressed. The following are some of the considerations that should go into safety improvements.

- Look at crash data to determine road sections of greatest need.
- The West Hills has some significant wildlife corridors and safe road crossings for wildlife is very important. This is not only large animals, such as deer and elk, but smaller ones like frogs and turtles.
- Seasonal traffic generators like farm stand events, agri-tourism events, etc. create additional safety concerns that need to be evaluated.
- Bike traffic and bike routes.
- Widening roads can actually increase speeds and may lessen safety rather than improving it.
- Pull offs for vehicles and bicyclists should be provided along long uphill sections of road. This is extremely important and necessary in the West Hills. Pull outs can also be used by horse riders when riding along rural roads.
- Regular road shoulder sweeping is necessary for bicycle safety.
- Rumble strips can be effective in keeping drivers in their lanes but they can also be a problem for bicyclists. Center line rumble strips are OK, but fog line rumble strips are not.

V. Background Report on Transportation Issues Priority

Rich referred to the background report on preliminary transportation and public facility policy issues from the last CAC meeting. There was no time at that meeting to discuss those policy issues, but the committee voted to prioritize them anyway. The results of that vote are reflected in the revised background report in tonight's meeting packet. Rich stated that he would like some discussion on these policy matters in order to give staff some guidance drafting policy statements. Discussion so far at this meeting has already touched on some of the policy topics and will be considered in drafting policies, but some topics still lack any kind of direction. Rich was particularly interested in the comments to the questions posed as part of the policy explanation. The following are some of the major comments related to these policy issues:

Bicycle Infrastructure

- Reemphasized the need for pull outs and possibly passing lanes on straight uphill stretches of road.
- High speeds contribute to conflicts and crashes between vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians. Need to figure out ways to slow vehicles down.
- Strategically placed flashing speed signs are helpful in alerting drivers to how fast they are going and to slow down.
- Signs that depict other users of the road, such as bicyclists, horses and pedestrians, is an educational tool to remind drivers that they are sharing the road with others
- Sharrows (signs painted on the pavement) that identify the road as also being a bicycle lane might help.

- There are all kinds of treatments being used in other parts of the world where bicycle use is more common. The County should explore innovative treatment being used elsewhere and experiment with them as a pilot program to see how they work.
- There should be a policy about encouraging exploration of innovative measures to reduce conflicts and increase bicycle/vehicle safety.

Improve Traffic Flow on Westside Roads

- Traffic flow is also a problem in the East County area on major roads accessing prime destinations in the Columbia Gorge during peak tourist and recreation seasons.
- Commuters from Clark County to major high tech center in Washington County, such as Intel, that use West Hills Roads are a big problem and cause much of the congestion. Is there any way to discourage non-local commuter trips on local roads through the West Hills.
- There needs to be some bus service in the West Hills – Cornelius Pass Road and Cornell Road are good candidates.
- Springville Road and Germantown Road are both identified as collectors but they are very different roads. The functional classification of the roads through the West Hills needs to be revisited and adjusted.
- When are improvements to the Cornelius Pass –Skyline Blvd. intersection going to be made? What’s the status of that improvement project?
- This issue is not really about improving traffic flow, but it’s more about reducing traffic pressure.

Address Increasing Traffic and Safety Issues Without Widening/Building More Roads

This topic was well covered during earlier discussion of the Key TSP topics, so the group skipped over this policy issue. One comment, however, was that the purpose behind this policy issue is to protect the rural character, so the topic should be rephrased to reflect that.

Better Road Maintenance

Everyone agreed that this is important but that coming up with funding sources is always problematic. No particular funding source was favored or proposed, but there was agreement that there ought to be a general policy statement about considering additional funding sources for better road maintenance.

Public Facilities Related Policy Issue

A public rest stop or park in Springdale, Corbett or elsewhere along Historic Columbia River Highway.

- There are quite a number of vacant or open parcels along Columbia Highway. The County should examine these to see which one might be the best candidate for a rest stop and then either the County purchase it or partner with another agency to purchase it.

- There is also a need for rest stops along the most heavily used bike routes in the West Hills. This could be located where a pull out desirable to take care of both needs.

Due to little time remaining in the meeting, the committee decided for forego discussion on the second public facility policy issue relating to sewage disposal requirements for rural development. This topic will be carried over to the next meeting.

VI. Public Comment

The following points were raised by members of the public in attendance.

- Historic Columbia River Highway should be shown as a bicycle route on Map 15B.
- Particular concerns about Thompson Road east of Skyline. Because of the steepness of this road segment and the huge retaining walls that have been built along the slide prone section, Thompson Road has many problems. One suggested solution is to designate it as a one-way road for uphill traffic only. This would cause some inconvenience, for those used to traveling west on Thompson, but the amount of additional time to reroute around this section of road is only a few minutes.
- Additional support expressed for the earlier ideas about reducing speeds, educating drivers about road sharing, and implementing strategies to discourage cut through traffic by commuters to Intel and other points in Washington County.
- Would like to see a policy about tolling or metering all of the roads in the West Hills.
- The West Hills Rural Area Plan includes a half page discussion about Cornelius Pass Road and a suggestion on how to solve bicycle-truck traffic conflicts. We don't want that idea to get lost in the new TSP.
- Bike passing lanes is a good idea that should be explored.
- The roads should be striped with double yellow lines where passing is dangerous and should not be allowed.
- If the county gas tax is increased, the money should be tied to road improvements that benefit both vehicles and bicyclists.
- An email with comments from an attendee that was submitted after the meeting is attached to the end of this meeting summary.

The subcommittee was reminded that their next meeting is scheduled for Monday, July 13 at the same time.

VII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:33 pm.

Our first Transportation subcommittee meeting on 6/15/15 covered an immense amount of material and complex issues. Some points need emphasis and there are some issues that were not addressed in the meeting.

The TSP & Comp Plan should emphasize safety and the rural character of the areas covered. As mentioned by several committee members in the meeting, a significant portion of the traffic growth in the West Hills in particular is made up of commuter trips that neither originate nor end within the rural areas. County policy should hold firm on the collector and local classifications of many of the roads in the rural areas, and not allow them to become de facto regional arterials. In keeping with county and regional planning, the design and management of these collectors and local roads should serve the local areas, while commuter traffic should be directed to the highways and major arterials.

Although there are limits on what the county can do, we can at least emphasize policies that make it clear that when considering how to balance the interests of a Bethany resident wanting to drive to work in NW Portland against the interests (especially safety) of someone who wants to bike or walk through the West Hills, well, the commuter has to take a back seat. Collector should really mean COLLECTOR. Staff should review the work of the [Cornell Road Sustainability Coalition \(CRSC\)](http://www.nwnw.org/projects/crsc/) (<http://www.nwnw.org/projects/crsc/>) for evidence and proposals relevant not only to the segment of Cornell under county jurisdiction, but to inform consideration of problems and solutions for similar over-stressed roads throughout the county's rural areas.

Among the specific topics addressed during Monday's meeting:

- It looks like the idea of 'passing zones' is a popular strategy for addressing conflicts between drivers and slower road users, including bicycles and perhaps farm equipment. In a larger sense, there appears to be broad agreement that county policies should encourage site-specific measures, rather than attempts to impose a single cross-section along many miles of road. For instance, while current county documents call for bicycle lanes along most of the length of NW Skyline Blvd., it would be both more efficient and less disruptive to create passing zones at spots with good sight distance and relatively level land (that would not need retaining walls for a bit of widening).
- Rumble strips on road edges should not be used because of the hazard and difficulty they create for people on bicycles
- Widening roads is generally opposed by committee members and others, so widening should not be adopted as a general measure to address single-vehicle loss of control crashes. Indeed, since road widening generally encourages higher speeds, it seems counterproductive.
- Policy should support (at least piloting) 'advisory' bike lanes and centerline removal to encourage drivers to go more slowly and cautiously. While this sort of road cross-section is unfamiliar and would have to be accompanied by educational outreach, the research is clear that removing centerlines slows traffic, and so it promises to mitigate the most common cause of crashes on rural county roads. Staff should provide the full committee with research summaries showing the effect of removing centerlines.
- Rest stops should be encouraged throughout rural areas to support walking and cycling, and reduce nuisances to residents
- Maintenance of bike lanes and walkable shoulders, as well as the vehicle lanes, is an integral part of improving the function of the transportation system in rural areas. County policy should make clear that adequate support of maintenance is essential to proper functioning of our roads.

Wildlife habitat and corridors were mentioned often in the subcommittee discussion. Here again, the greatest threat is posed by high speed and high volume motor vehicle traffic. Policies that calm traffic will benefit wildlife. The same policies will benefit people walking or bicycling or driving by reducing the risk of serious crashes. In addition, county policy should encourage the restoration of the many gullies and ravines that road-building obliterated in the last century. Open culverts like the one installed at Stephens Creek as part of the Sellwood Bridge project have shown they almost immediately improve the movement of wildlife and reinvigorate streams that were dead flows of water in old-style metal tube culverts. Smaller under-crossings like those proposed as part of the eventual construction of the Westside Trail along Springville Road can also help frogs, rodents and other smaller creatures resume the movement patterns that existed before roads blocked their way.

Speaking of Springville Road, the county should adopt policies that will make this road function more like Old Germantown Road; that is, a comfortable route for local residents, people walking or bicycling (and, with lower motor vehicle speeds and volumes, friendlier to wildlife). A comment was made that mitigating traffic on Springville can't be done because of the demand emanating from development of the Bethany area. However, there are no destinations along or near Springville that attract drivers from outside the local area. If commuters or others are using Springville, it is likely merely an attempt to bypass traffic congestion on other through-routes, such as Germantown. That use is inappropriate for this collector. County policy should emphasize safety and the rural character of the area by calming traffic and encouraging through-traffic to use other routes.

The interests of pedestrians were missing from the discussion at Monday's meeting... and almost entirely missing from background documents. The county should adopt policies that provide safe and comfortable connectivity for people walking along rural roads. That does not mean conventional sidewalks, which would be out of character with the area, and would also create storm water management problems and present additional unfriendly spaces for wildlife. Instead, the county should have policies that promote permeable and other walkable shoulders that fit the surroundings. Either the TSP or the Comp Plan should specifically address the need for networks of off-road trails and multiuse paths. The plan for the Westside Trail that was adopted by the county could serve as a model for the types of facilities that residents desire.

Earlier this month, the Multnomah County Bicycle and Pedestrian Citizens Advisory Committee discussed some of the issues before the Comp Plan Transportation Committee. The meeting minutes contain a full summary of the discussion. Just to call out a few key points, BPCAC members...

- Called for context-specific measures to address safety of people walking or bicycling on rural roads, including 'passing zones'
- Urged development of parallel off-road trails and multiuse paths, in coordination with local and regional partners
- Asked for more wayfinding signs
- Recommended reevaluating road classifications with consideration of the safety of people walking or bicycling
- Cautioned that efforts to "improve" traffic flow should not encourage higher speeds or volumes.

Monday's meeting was a good start for a process that will lead to better policies and better transportation infrastructure, as long as we continuously test each proposal and action for its impact on safety and the rural character in these special parts of Multnomah County.

Random notes from meeting submitted by Greg Olson:

Rumble strips on Skyline Blvd. If Skyline was in California it would have rumble strips in the center double yellow lines. There probably would be a double yellow for the entire length of Skyline. The center rumble strips should not affect cyclists, they need to stay right. I find an advantage to them as I can hear a passing car as they move to the left. California has a 3 foot passing rule which most drivers obey, even though I believe it is kind of a suggestion legally. They are still working out the details. Fog line rumble strips on Skyline or Cornelius Pass would be a major concern to cyclists.

I understand that residents have concerns about “others” using “their” roads. We have that occurring in urban as well as rural areas. In Gresham there are concerns over the Buss Rapid Transit ruining the neighborhood. The reality is that all roads are open to the public and if commuters find a better route they will take it. I think our best option is to work on education and creativity as was discussed in the meeting. There would be strong opposition from Washington County business interests if they were prohibited from using Multnomah County roads. It would appear as anti business. Washington County has been building arterials that cause pressure on Multnomah County collectors and minor arterials. We have discussed this in the MCBPAC over the years. It would appear that this update will be a time to decide how to identify if roads will be left as status quo, wider arterials will be built (great cost), or innovative ways of minimizing congestion will occur.

A freight plan should be part of the updated TSP. The Corbett area lobbied against a gravel pit in the area due to the overwhelming truck traffic that would occur. I believe the county agreed and the pit was not developed. A thorough description of road uses and zoning intents would be helpful for all parties.

If the process evolves into a type of park and ride, Tri Met should be involved to discuss potential bus corridors between Washington and Multnomah counties along with the City of Portland.

Wildlife corridors should already be identified. Metro should have those on a map. There are many treatments that can be applied to help identify the corridors, without prohibiting vehicles and cyclists.

There is not much talk yet about pedestrian usage.

Map 15A

I am not sure what the bikeways plan and project segments mean. Not all of the “helpful connections” are shown. They all should be part of the bikeway plan. The outdated county bike

map shows more connections than 15A and an updated map would show more connections and recognize connections between jurisdictions.

On the surface this looks like a step back for the cycling community.

Map 15B

The map size needs adjustment to show more detail from Troutdale Road to Palmer Mill Road. The Greater Gresham Chamber of Commerce, the West Columbia Gorge Chamber of Commerce, ODOT, and State Parks have been planning a number of projects east of the Sandy River that eventually will extend to The Dalles involving bike tourism, especially along Historic Highway US 30. Map 15B does not appear to supplement any of it. The map needs to show US30 as the connecting link for the entire area.

Again, the map is deficient in showing all the projects and there are more collectors to add to the revised county bike. Woodard Road is a nightmare to ride between Nielson and US 30 at the Sandy River. The locals use it as a freeway between Springdale and Troutdale. Hurlburt Road is very similar.

Another consideration is doing something with Chase Road to make it a Safe Route to Barlow High School. I have had comments from the Kelly Creek Neighborhood Association to have a safe route to Barlow. The existing Barlow Trail that goes through the area might also be an option.

An **important** add is showing Troutdale Road from the Gresham city limits to Troutdale city limits as a multi use path. The East Metro Connections Plan has it as an important connection between the Springwater Corridor and the Marine Drive loop and will be the extension of the 40 mile loop. Troutdale is planning a bike hub at the east end of the city that would enhance that connection.

General Comments

ODOT is considering wayfinding on US 30 in east county. The TSP should consider a method to include wayfinding in all rural areas. Scenic routes on the east and west exist that would direct cyclists to quieter areas.

The typical drawings in the TSP need to show a sample of a Multi Use Path and separated bike/ped facilities to allow future options. As it stands they would not happen if not included.



Fwd: Meeting 6/15/2015 6:30 to 8:30

1 message

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **sandy baker** <sjhb1503@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jun 16, 2015 at 3:09 PM
Subject: Fwd: Meeting 6/15/2015 6:30 to 8:30
To: Rich FAITH <rich.faiht@multco.us>
Cc: Kevin Cook <kevin.c.cook@multco.us>

I'm sorry for bugging again, but I am requesting that this email be put in the public records under the comprehensive plan process. Hopefully this will be my last email to you today. Thank you...Sandy

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **sandy baker** <sjhb1503@gmail.com>
Date: Tue, Jun 16, 2015 at 1:59 PM
Subject: Meeting 6/15/2015 6:30 to 8:30
To: Rich FAITH <rich.faiht@multco.us>
Cc: Kevin Cook <kevin.c.cook@multco.us>, Steve Barker <sbarkerdog@gmail.com>, Steve Baker <stevebaker231@gmail.com>

Hey Rich,

We attended the meeting last night regarding TSP. We have some concerns as to the focus and considerations by the CAC members representing the West Hills rural Area.

Sitting in the back row and listening to committee members, and then the public comment, we were struck by the absence of a few things.

-The lack of consideration for farmers, such as Ag vehicles, the limitations suggested by the West Hills CAC regarding Agri-tourism policy, which might bring traffic or change to their immediate area. Safety issues were primarily for wildlife and then bicyclist's.

-During the discussion of roads, commuters were mentioned, but in ways to discourage their use of the roads. There was mention of commuters using Germantown Road coming from Clark County. And the theme or discussion was to encourage barriers to these citizens and their use of roads rather than plan for the inevitable...future North Bethany Development. Commuters are people getting from one point to another on public roads.

-Also, related especially to Kaiser and Germantown Rd, there was no mention of the new school the Beaverton SD is going to build, almost directly across from Multnomah co line on Kaiser. And this is coupled with the Bethany/North Bethany in general. There will be potential for heavy use of commuters and this aspect was left out. (Note: Kaiser road shown on page 7A is classified as a local road, which surprises me.) Kaiser road in Washington Co will soon be a 3 lane road to accommodate their growth in North Bethany. Are we going to propose a road block on the county line?

With only these three instances we were struck by whether this CAC and this process adequately represents a true cross section of affected citizens. Their focus is on the impact to their Forest Park neighborhood...the mantra...*not*

in my back yard. It was stark, it was striking in the absence of farmers, commuters, and many land owners in this area.

Sincerely,

Sandy and Steve Baker

--

Rich Faith, AICP

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