

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING  
ROOM 126, MULTNOMAH BUILDING  
501 SE HAWTHORNE BLVD, PORTLAND OR  
JULY 13, 2015 6:30-8:30 PM

## MEETING SUMMARY

### I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

In attendance:

Subcommittee members

Andrew Holtz  
Sara Grigsby  
Martha Berndt

Project Team

Rich Faith  
Joanna Valencia  
Susie Wright  
Matt Hastie  
Rithy Khut  
Kate McQuillan  
Jessica Berry

Absent:

Jerry Grossnickle

Public in attendance: Carol Chesarek and Greg Olson

Rich Faith welcomed everyone to the second meeting of this subcommittee. It will primarily be a review of policy language that staff has drafted based on comments from the last subcommittee meeting on major transportation and public facility policy issues that have emerged so far.

A subcommittee member wanted to know if the headers in the memorandum are the same headers or labels for policy issues that will appear in the Transportation System Plan (TSP). Susie Wright replied that she wasn't sure yet. That will be determined later as the document begins to take shape and its organization is better known.

### II. Bicycle Infrastructure Policies

Joanna Valencia provided a brief introduction to the draft policies related to bicycle infrastructure. These policies, and others in her memorandum, are mainly taken from the proposed Sauvie Island/Multnomah Channel Rural Area Plan (SIMC RAP) with minor changes as needed to make the policy applicable countywide. There were many questions about specific wording in the policies and lengthy discussion about ideas and concepts to revise the draft policies. Among the comments from the subcommittee and discussion points were these:

- Add the word “explore” in front of the word “funding” in the first policy.

- Equestrian use is a mode of travel and should also be listed along with vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians. Substitute reference to specific forms of travel by simply saying “all modes of travel”. That captures everything.
- What does “services” refer to in the third bullet under the second policy? Substitute the word “facilities” for services.
- What was intended by the second bullet under the second policy? It’s unclear and should be revised to clarify the meaning.
- The third policy should also say “improve safety” along with “reduce conflict and minimize impacts”.
- Equestrian riders on roads has been an issue in Clackamas County because horses are treated as a mode of transportation, it obligates the County to accommodate them on the road and to make improvements for that purpose.
- The subcommittee was reminded that these are not the only transportation policies; there are many existing policies that are being updated and will be given to them as well. These tonight are only the ones responding to major concerns expressed at the open houses last fall.
- Wildlife is important and is being addressed in other areas; staff should determine whether wildlife safety concerns also need to be included in transportation policies.

Public Comment: Joanna referred to the requested policy revisions that were submitted by Carol Chesarek. Copies her revisions were provided to the subcommittee.

- There should be a general policy that supports rails to trails conversion in reference to the abandoned Burlington Northern right-of-way across the West Hills.

### **III. Policies on Improving Traffic Flow**

Joanna reiterated that most of these policies are taken from the SIMC RAP. Only the second policy is not. Some of the comments and questions about these policies were:

- Are logging trucks considered freight traffic? Does the policy on freight mobility also apply to logging trucks?
- Rather than say “Promote effective use ....” in the first policy, it should say “Add effective use...”
- Strike the words “Support projects that” in the second policy and begin with “Address regional freight mobility...”
- Strike the words “caused by seasonal and special event increasing traffic” at the end of the third policy.
- Include reference to public transportation as another alternative to “single-occupancy” vehicle (SOV) use in the fourth policy.
- The language in the fourth policy about not encouraging recreational bicycle activity generated much debate. Ultimately it was agreed that this idea should be taken out of the policy and rewritten as a strategy under the policy. The fourth policy needs to

be rewritten overall and be more generalized about supporting alternatives to SOV use. The policy should be written to be applicable countywide and strategies added that can be specific to different rural areas that need a special treatment.

- Joanna said she liked that approach. Policy #2 can also be structured that way. Comments that Carol Chesarek submitted by email earlier in the day and that have been provided to the subcommittee this evening could also be considered and incorporated in this manner.
- Carol clarified that the requested revisions she submitted were reviewed and discussed by the West Hills CAC member on this subcommittee along with other West Hills CAC members. For various reasons, none of them could be at this meeting. So the suggested changes to the different policies being discussed here are not one person's but reflect the ideas of several West Hills CAC members.

Staff will revise the policies based on this conversation and come back with new language at the next subcommittee meeting.

#### **IV. Policies on Improved Traffic Safety**

Joanna explained that these policies are all based on ones in the proposed SIMC RAP and modified as needed to be applicable countywide. Major comments on these policies were:

- There should be something about traffic calming. Add a strategy about using traffic calming measures.
- The header for this policy issues does not reflect what was discussed and agreed upon at the last meeting. The issue is about retaining rural character and protecting wildlife. That is what's behind the notion of addressing increasing traffic and safety issues without widening existing roads or building new ones. That should be captured in the title for this policy issue.
- Some of the added policies coming from the West Hills delegation in their requested revisions can be included as strategies under the draft policies in the memorandum rather than as new policies.

Staff will revise the policies based on this conversation and come back with new language at the next subcommittee meeting.

#### **V. Policies on Better Road Maintenance**

Joanna pointed out that there is only one policy under this topic and it is new. Major comments on this policy were:

- The policy should be about exploring innovative funding sources, not just about supplemental funding sources.

- There needs to be an overarching policy about the importance of road maintenance. Something that commits the County to providing needed funding. It would be a visionary statement about the importance of maintaining our roads.
- Some of the requested revisions from the West Hills delegation intended to address safety for wildlife passage might be more appropriate under environmental quality policies. That will have to be sorted out.

Joanna stated that there will be at least two more policies on road maintenance as a result of this discussion.

## **VI. Policies on Rest Stops**

Major comments on this topic were:

- Rest stops are a countywide issue, not only Sauvie Island or Historic Columbia River Highway.
- Should there be a strategy about coordinating with other agencies on location and placement of rest stops?
- Waste disposal also needs to be addressed in the policy. If bicyclists are stopping to rest they also need restrooms to use.
- Restrooms are costly to build and maintain. Porta-potties are a cheaper, low maintenance alternative to restrooms.
- There should be a strategy about wayfinding in conjunction with rest stops.

Joanna summarized the discussion and once again stated that staff will take the comments given here to redraft policies that the subcommittee will review at the next meeting. Before leaving this topic Rich asked Carol Chesarek if she would like to say anything else concerning the suggested revisions from the West Hills delegation.

Additional comments were:

- It's been difficult determining which of the suggested changes will be incorporated and which will not. There has been no clear agreement on the language for the policies and strategies discussed tonight.
- Rich said that is true, so we will have to see what the revised policy language is that staff brings back to the next meeting and then everyone can comment on it at that time.
- Equestrian use should be a separate policy and should make it clear that we are not trying to promote a countywide equestrian trail system.
- Regarding the group's suggested new policy under better road maintenance, all of the recommended implementation points except (f) relate to roads. These don't belong under environmental quality (air, land, water and wildlife) policies. These should not be shuffled off to another policy category because they are really road related.

## **VII. Sewage Disposal Requirements for Rural Developments**

Rich introduced the topic by stating that this policy issue was up for discussion at the last meeting but the subcommittee was unable to get to it so it has been carried forward to this meeting. He briefly recapped the background on this issue.

A subcommittee member told of a recent conversion she had with someone with expertise on sewage disposal. There are many new methods of dealing with human waste disposal – i.e. composting toilets, waste-to-fertilizer, solar drying toilets. Rather than put it into the ground as with traditional septic systems, collection of human sewage either in raw or processed form will likely be more common. New industries surrounding the collection and processing of sewage will likely be opening up in the future. Because of that the County needs to allow innovative solutions to sewage disposal.

Other comments:

- Strategies might be more encompassing to allow anything that does not adversely impact the environment – air, land, water, wildlife.
- Civic uses, such as schools, churches, etc. should be given some leniency so they can use holding tanks or other methods of sewage disposal.

## **VIII. Public Comment**

Greg Olson expressed unhappiness with the maps that were handed out at the last meeting. For example, the map 15A showing bicycle facilities does not have the best information available and is wrong in some instances. Multnomah County's bicycle routes are not lining up with other adjacent counties. He also would like details when certain roads are mentioned as being unsafe for bicycles. Based on what? Is there accident information that supports these statements. Give me facts, not opinions.

Another problem is that in some jurisdictions when fog lines are painted on the roadway, vehicles can be ticketed for driving outside the fog line. The same is true for bicycles because they are supposed to stay within the driving lanes established by the fog lines. This is a potential problem of bicyclists if you desire them to stay way to right for the benefit of more vehicles.

## **IX. Adjourn**

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:40 pm.**

The next subcommittee meeting will be on August 24. Refined policies from tonight's discussion will be on the agenda. The alternatives analysis for the TSP will also be on the agenda for review and discussion.

## Response to July 7, 2015 Memorandum

### A. Bicycle Infrastructure

Figure 11A and 11B show traffic counts beginning at < 1500 vehicles per day. This doesn't show what the actual counts are, I believe some collector roads are substantially under that figure. Skyline, if it does carry the maximum of 1500 per day is still a low volume street.

The counts available from the 1990's East of the Sandy Plan for Gordon Creek road were 800 per day. With the development in Sandy that figure might have increased but is still probably a low traffic collector. If we had more accurate counts it would help in determining the facilities on each collector.

Figure 11A (June 8,2015), shows < 1500 vehicles per day . Rocky Point shows 3001 to 5000 vehicles per day. Where are all the vehicles going? Rocky Point has more vehicles but I don't recall that many. Once I hit the gravel at the Washington County line, I see very few cars.

I cycle on roads all over America that are similar to all the Multnomah County Rural Roads. There are many more vehicles and cyclists and all are "safe." One in particular is Skyline from south of San Francisco to Santa Cruz. It follows the ridge line with long steep drops to the bay on the east and the ocean on the west. There are farms along the way especially at the south end with twisting winding roads. The northern end has some small communities especially at Alice's Restaurant which is packed with vehicles. There are probably over 100 parked vehicles in the business area. In between is mostly public land. The traffic, both vehicle and bicycle, is more intense than our Skyline. Take a time lapse online video tour, there are several online.

All roads in rural Multnomah County are safe to cycle. What is happening is that non cyclists and parties who object to cycling are making determinations and defining what is a "safe" road. It would be better for the county to consult with actual cyclists to determine what is safe. It is apparent that cyclists feel safe on the roadways or they wouldn't be there.

The roads have enough sight lines for motorists to see a cyclist with plenty of time to adjust their speed. Some of the curves are marked with speed signs at curves. Some don't. There doesn't seem to be any rational as to why. The structure of the road seems to control vehicle speed. For instance Knieriem Road has no curve signage and would not be practical to take the curves at 55.

With regard to the minimum 3 foot paved width in areas, the Federal Highway Association has stated:

"Since bicyclists usually tend to ride a distance of 0.8 meters to 1.1 meters (2.5 feet to 3.5 feet) from the curb face, it is very important that the pavement surface in this zone be smooth and free of structures."

Regarding the fog line:

#### **How Well do You Know Your Oregon Bike Lane Laws?**

Posted on August 20, 2012 by Sean DuBois

Question 6. You're riding your bike on an unfamiliar highway, but there's a four-inch wide line at the side of the road, also known as a fog line. Does that same line also indicate the presence of a bike lane?

- Answer. No, that's not a bike lane. Throughout the state of Oregon, bike lanes are designated by official signs, and are marked with white lines that are eight inches wide. ORS 801.155

Mayor law llc.states:

Case Example 3: This disputed liability Oregon car collision case occurred when a pickup truck driver hit the client who was riding his bicycle in Clackamas, Oregon. The client sustained personal injuries including a broken leg, a broken nose and a closed head injury. The defendant claimed the client was at fault for riding his bicycle in the roadway to the left of the fog line. The case was settled out of court for \$159,000 for the full policy limit of the driver's liability insurance, as well as additional money from the client's motor vehicle insurance policy.

There are many opinions concerning fog line law across the country. In Oregon cyclists are required to ride as far right as practicable. The decision is left to cyclists to make that determination, adding three feet does not make it safe. The problem is that drivers cannot determine the safety of the roadway and the policy should not require cyclists to ride in unsafe shoulders.

The Federal Highway Administration comments on cycling states:

"Since bicyclists usually tend to ride a distance of 0.8 meters to 1.1 meters (2.5 feet to 3.5 feet) from the curb face, it is very important that the pavement surface in this zone be smooth and free of structures. Drain inlets and manholes that extend into this area cause bicyclists to swerve, having the effect of reducing usable width of the lane."

That is accurate with the way most cyclists ride. Currently in the county there are paved portions of the roadway shoulders that range from 6 inches to 36 inches. As I ride these I have noticed that debris from leaves, branches, moss, gravel, glass, and animals accumulate either scattered or in piles. It is hard to dodge in and out of these and still hold a consistent line. It could be classified as unsafe cycling to not hold a consistent line. Without a maintenance plan it would require cyclists to be back on the road, as they will hold a consistent line as opposed to dodging in and out.

The 1992 East of the Sandy Transportation Plan states:

"County maintained rural bike routes should be accommodated by paving of road shoulders to a width of at least 4 feet and preferably 6 feet. Not all designated bike routes East of the Sandy River have such shoulders, the lack of which increases hazards for non-motorized travelers. As re-paving occurs on County maintained roads designated as bicycle routes, the County widens and paves shoulders to allow for safe bicycle usage."

This caused confusion with residents as all the roads have been repaved and no facilities appeared. During a MCPBAC meeting with county engineers it was determined that the county

definition of repaving is actually rebuilding the road. It is a lesson that all should understand what each other is talking about.

## B. Improve Traffic Flow on Westside Roads

The statement is too general regarding the number of cyclists and vehicles currently using the road and the future increase in usage. I am not sure how many vehicles the road was designed for. I do know that rural roads across the country carry far more traffic than will appear on Skyline.

Currently it appears that the only thing preventing Skyline from being a freeway are the cyclists. As long as the rural limit of 55 is maintained it will be that way. Skyline in Portland is 40 mph. It might be good to extend that limit north on Skyline through the spacing between housing and farms is closer. There is a downhill speed limit of 35 mph just north of Cornelius Pass.

I cycled Skyline out and back from Sylvan to Rocky Point on July 27, 2015. As expected the heaviest traffic is from Sylvan to Burnside. There is not quite as much from Burnside to Cornell. The rest of the route traffic gets lighter, to very few between Logie and Rocky Point. The majority of vehicles were able to pass at whatever speed they had established before arriving at my location. The next group who were more cautious were able to pass between 5-7 seconds. There were several vehicles that slowed well before approaching and took 12-16 seconds to pass. This time was consistent with vehicles were trying to pass when there were vehicles approaching from the opposite direction. There were several vehicles able to pass without slowing when vehicles were approaching from the opposite direction including the Multnomah County Sherriff who passed me twice between Logie and Mile Post 19.

There are also people who walk or take their dogs for walks on Skyline, who have no place to occupy.

I took a quick 5 minute survey of vehicles at the corner of Skyline and Germantown. 80% of the vehicles didn't come close to stopping. Sometime when four vehicles arrived at the same time they all rolled through one after the other.

It looks like there is freight route designated on McNamee. It is currently signed for no trucks. With the narrow railroad bridge it seems like a bad truck route. Also the question was asked how do you keep trucks off "no truck" roads? The urban area residents call the freight company and report a problem and the driver usually gets in trouble.

Until the zoning committee is done, it would appear hard to estimate how many vehicles will be added. If no building is allowed on small acreage collectors might not increase beyond the designed capacity.

The discussions on Skyline seems to include areas of Portland which we are trying to solve, which may not be fruitful.

Delete the section of not encouraging recreational cycling before it has to be explained to the county commission, the business community, the health community, and the cycling community. All cycling is recreational and appears in many forms and types. The only type that isn't recreational is racing, which has its' own rules and requirements.

#### C. Maintenance

Have the county work with the legislature to add a fee to studded tires.

#### D. General

For safety the county could work with bike groups and legislators to pass a three foot passing rule. California passed one last year without all the details worked out. The drivers know of the law and are respectful of it. It is law and can be enacted in Oregon, or Multnomah County could set the pace and pass their own.