



Columbia County Transportation System Plan Update

Transportation Road Advisory Committee (TRAC) Meeting #3

Summary

MEETING DATE: October 8, 2015

MEETING TIME: 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

MEETING LOCATION: Columbia County Road Department, 1054 Oregon Street, St. Helens.

MEETING PURPOSE: The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the recommendations from Draft Technical Memoranda #10 and #11, involving transportation funding options and standards through which the County can manage the transportation system so that facilities serve their intended function. We also began the discussion about Transportation Solutions, which is the next task we will be undertaking.

TOPICS

I. Intro

Project staff and TRAC members in attendance introduced themselves. The following were in attendance:

- Dave Hill- Columbia County Road Dept.
- Lonny Welter- Columbia County Road Dept.
- Tristan Wood- Columbia County Road Dept.
- Julie Wheeler- Columbia County Road Dept.
- John Bosket- DKS Associates
- Kevin Chewuk- DKS Associates
- Nita Greene- TRAC Member/ Citizen
- Rosemary Lohrke- TRAC Member/ Citizen
- Troy Tindall- TRAC Member/ Blue Line
- Bernie Blunk- TRAC Member/ Mid-Columbia Bus Company/ Rainier School District

John Bosket provided an overview of the agenda and project schedule. Last time the TRAC met we discussed the drafts of Technical Memorandum #6: Existing Conditions, Technical Memorandum #7: Future Traffic Forecast and Technical Memorandum #8: Future Transportation Conditions and Needs.

Since then, we've been working on and provided the TRAC with the Draft versions of Technical Memoranda #10 and #11, involving transportation funding options and standards through which the County can manage the transportation system so that facilities serve their intended function.

The next TRAC meeting is expected to be during the winter. The next public open house meeting series is also expected to occur during the winter.

A TRAC member noted that it is important to get public input, in addition to the TRAC members. TRAC members shouldn't be providing input at public open houses. We need to distinguish between public and TRAC comments. The TRAC already provides their input at these meetings, so we do not want to duplicate it at the public open house events. A TRAC member noted that we should go to where the people are for future public events.

2. Overview of Transportation Standards (Tech Memo #11)

Project staff discussed the transportation standards that help manage and design the county roadway system. The standards discussed with the TRAC include:

Functional Classification

- The functional classification of a roadway determines the level of mobility for all travel modes, level of access, and intended use.
- Since state highways serve regional travel through the county, they are principal arterial roadways (i.e., US 30, OR 47 and OR 202). Roadways providing primary access to principal arterial roadways are minor arterials. Roadways providing primary access to neighborhoods and activity generators in Columbia County are major or minor collectors. All other roadways are classified as local roads.

Freight and Resource Routes

- Roadways were designated as freight or resource routes to help ensure trucks can efficiently travel through and access major destinations in the county.
- ODOT has classified US 30 as a freight route and a reduction review route through Columbia County. The TSP update has not changed the ODOT designations.
- As part of the TSP update, it is recommended that County "resource routes" be designated to facilitate the movement of truck freight between major destinations (e.g., ports and harbors) and US 30. These roadways serve an important role in the county roadway network and should be designed and managed to safely accommodate the movement of goods. These routes would require a minimum of 12-foot travel lanes with five-foot shoulders and could be considered priority routes for maintenance.
- Designated resource routes would include portions of NW 5th Street-Beaver Falls Road, Quincy Mayger Road, and Kallunki Road near Clatskanie; Dike Road and Rock Crest Street near Rainier; Millard Road and Old Portland Road near St Helens; E Columbia Avenue,

Honeyman Road, W Lane Road, and Johnson Landing Road near Scappoose; and Banzer Road, Apiary Road, Scappoose Vernonia Highway, OR 202, and OR 47.

Emergency Response Routes

- The County, in coordination with other agencies in the Portland/Vancouver metropolitan area, has identified major roadways as Emergency Transportation Routes (ETR). These routes are needed during a major regional emergency or disaster to move response resources such as personnel, supplies, and equipment to heavily damaged areas.
- Designated routes include US 30, OR 47, OR 202, Timber Road, Apiary Road, and Scappoose Vernonia Highway. The TSP update will formally adopt these route designations, and will prioritize investments along them to preserve the function for emergency response.
- The Oregon Highway Plan (OHP) has designated lifeline routes for emergency response in the event of an earthquake, categorized as Tier 1, 2 and 3. US 30 is the only lifeline route in Columbia County, designated as Tier 1. Tier 1 routes are considered to be the most significant and necessary to ensure a functioning statewide transportation network. The TSP update has not changed the OHP designations.

Typical Roadway Cross-section Standards

- The TSP includes three typical standard cross-section types for county roadways outside of an UGB. These are consistent with the current roadway design standards, with the exception of major and minor collector roadways, which now require wider shoulders (5 feet versus 4 feet), and narrower through travel lanes (11 feet versus 12 feet). Local roadways also now require wider shoulders (4 feet versus 3 feet) where the average daily traffic (ADT) exceeds 3,000 vehicles. It is recommended that county roadways inside an UGB be subject to the roadway design standards from the respective city's TSP (e.g., Clatskanie, Columbia City, Rainier, Scappoose, St Helens, or Vernonia).
- The TSP update does not modify the design standards for US 30, OR 47 and OR 202, the county's only principal arterials. These roadways are state highways and subject to the design criteria in the state's Highway Design Manual.

Walking and Biking Design Standards

- The TSP update is recommending that county roadways within an UGB include walking and biking facilities consistent with the roadway design standards from the respective city's TSP
- The TSP update recommends that a paved shared-use path should be 12 feet wide in areas with significant walking or biking demand; otherwise, it should be 10 feet wide.

Roadway and Access Spacing Standards

- The TSP update identifies new recommended minimum public roadway intersection and minimum private access spacing standards for roadways in Columbia County.

- New roadways or redeveloping properties should comply with these standards to the extent practical. The County Road Department can allow deviation from these standards as appropriate.

Mobility Targets

- The adoption of mobility targets for roadways and intersections in Columbia County is recommended as part of the TSP update to provide a metric for assessing the impacts of new development on the existing transportation system and for identifying where capacity improvements may be needed.
- All roadways and intersections owned by Columbia County must operate at or below the following recommended mobility targets. Signalized, All-way Stop, or Roundabout Controlled Intersections: The intersection as a whole must operate with a Level of Service (LOS) “E” or better and a volume to capacity (v/c) ratio not higher than 0.85 during the highest one-hour period on an average weekday. Two-way Stop and Yield Controlled Intersections: All intersection approaches serving more than 20 vehicles during the highest one-hour period on an average weekday shall operate with a LOS “E” or better and a v/c ratio not higher than 0.90. Mobility targets do not apply to approaches at intersections serving 20 vehicles or fewer during the peak hour.
- State-owned roadways are expected to comply with the mobility targets included in the Oregon Highway Plan. The TSP update does not modify these mobility targets.

3. Discuss Potential Funding Sources (Tech Memo #10)

Project staff discussed the transportation funding that can reasonably be expected to be available through 2035. The funding assumptions will help prioritize the investments the county can make in the transportation system, and will be utilized to develop reasonable budgeting assumptions when selecting a set of transportation improvements to meet identified needs over the next 20 years. The following was discussed with the TRAC:

Funding Sources

The county uses four general funding sources for transportation, including funds from:

- The Surface Transportation Program (STP), which includes Federal Highway Trust Funds that are received from federal motor vehicle fuel tax and truck-related weight-mile charges.
- The State Highway Trust Fund which includes distributions from the state motor vehicle fuel tax, vehicle registration fees, and truck weight-mile fees on a per capita basis.
- The Natural Resource Depletion Fee
- A System Development Charge (SDC) from new development.

Current annual revenue from these sources is around \$4.5 million.

Expenditures

- The county estimates that it needs approximately \$10 million per year to maintain and operate its roadways at status quo, more than double that of the current revenue.
- This means that over \$5 million per year in needed roadway maintenance and repair work will be deferred.
- Deferring necessary repair and preservation means spending much more to fix the same roadways later, as repair costs rise exponentially as roadways are left unmaintained.
- This transportation funding forecast is highlighting that the county needs new revenue just to maintain current facilities. If the county wants new projects, applying for grants will be very important. The TSP provides an important tool for applying for these grants.

Potential Additional Funding Sources

If the county does explore new revenue sources, what might those look like? The project team looked at a range of funding sources other agencies have used for transportation funding.

- **County Service District for Roads:** The road district could be used to fund roadway maintenance and repair. It would require voter approval, and would be a permanent tax rate. Cities must agree to be included in the road district, or the district could be drawn to include only unincorporated areas of the county. Clatsop County has a road district tax for unincorporated areas of the county of \$1.0175 per \$1,000 in assessed value, which brings in approximately \$2 million per year.
- **Property tax levy or issuing bonds:** Both methods require voter approval and would result in temporary increase in property tax. The difference between the two is the property tax levy will result in increased revenue over time but won't have to be repaid, while bonds will result in immediate funding but will result in interest payments. Tillamook County voters approved a \$15 million bond to fund transportation. The 10-year bond resulted in a tax around \$0.46 per \$1,000 in assessed value.
- **Vehicle impact fee:** The project team researched agencies around the Country to see how they addressed the impacts of heavy vehicles on their roadways. The research resulted in a methodology that based impact fees on the annual cost of maintaining roadways, and the weighted impact of various vehicle types. The studies found that heavy vehicles cause considerably more damage to roadways than passenger vehicles. The weighted impact by vehicle type was determined by converting single truck trips into car trips. This allowed an annual maintenance fee per vehicle type to be developed.

A TRAC member questioned whether heavy vehicles cause more damage. They noted that passenger cars cause more damage via studded tires, and suggested charging for studded tires. Another TRAC member suggested that a vehicle fee should be based on a weight per axel basis.

The TRAC also suggested requiring trucks to get a permit to operate on county roadways, and installing sensors along truck routes to identify trucks. They noted that truckers would likely help with compliance since they paid for a permit, by reporting trucks operating without a permit.

The TRAC stressed that any fee program should be structured to have all funds routed to the county road department, and not to the general fund. They noted that the county has a better chance of having the public approve a new fee if they identify where the additional revenue would go, instead of leaving it up to the commission and having it be shifted to the general fund. Any new tax has to be extremely well defined to pass a public vote. Identify what the tax payer is getting.

4. Intro to Transportation Solutions

The project team went over potential TSP projects from prior studies. The list did not include new projects that are currently being developed to address new issues. The list included potential bridge, freight, roadway capacity, roadway upgrade, roadway safety, pedestrian and bicycle, rail, and transit projects. The TRAC has two weeks to provide input on the potential transportation solutions, with comments being sent to Lonny Welter.

5. Questions/Comments from Public Attendees

There were no public attendees at the meeting.

6. Next Steps

- The TRAC has two weeks to provide comments on the potential TSP projects from prior studies. Comments should be returned to Lonny Welter by Friday, October 23rd.
- The project team is working on Technical Memorandum #12: Transportation Solutions.
- TRAC Meeting #4 is expected to be during the winter.
- The project team is also planning on meeting with the Board of Commissioners and holding the second public open house during the winter.