

## TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM #2

**DATE:** October 13, 2014

**TO:** Columbia County TSP Project Management Team

**FROM:** John Bosket, DKS Associates  
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**SUBJECT:** **Columbia County Transportation System Plan Update**  
Technical Memorandum #2: Stakeholder Interviews

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### Stakeholder Interviews

Project staff performed telephone interviews with sixteen local stakeholders between May 12th and July 3rd 2014. The purpose of these interviews was to identify the transportation needs that stakeholders feel are the most important in Columbia County and to gather input on potential improvements that are needed to the transportation system. This document summarizes the outcome of those meetings, with input provided from the following stakeholders:

- Dave Carpenter, Dyno Nobel Business Operations Superintendent.
- Paul Langner, Teeven Brothers Rainier.
- Mark Buffington, Clatskanie ODOT Maintenance Manager.
- Janine Salisbury, St. Helens School District Business Manager.
- Scott Parker, President Scappoose Sand & Gravel.
- Scott Jensen, Port Planner.
- Charley O'Hare, Clatskanie PUD.
- Kerry Kallunki, Clatskanie PUD.
- Glen Crinklaw, Citizen.
- Brad Brooks, St. Helens Post Master.
- Trevor Kaech, Timber Industry.
- Earl Fisher, Columbia County Commissioner.
- Henry Heinmuller, Columbia County Commissioner.
- Jay Tappan, Chief Columbia River Fire and Rescue.

- Janet Wright, Columbia County Rider Transit Director.
- Tony Hyde, Columbia County Commissioner.

## Driving

### Safety

Stakeholders identified safety issues along the following streets or at the following locations:

- There is a need for more signage along county roads to alert drivers of warnings and advisory speeds.
- Overhead and horizontal clearances mandated by the State are not maintained on all roads.
- Collisions occur on narrow roads when large logging trucks turn sharp corners and encroach into the opposite lane.
- There are sight line issues along Tide Creek Road, Apiary Road, and at US 30 and Gable Road, and US 30.
- Upper McDermott Road is vulnerable to wash-outs.
- Apiary Road and the Scappoose-Vernonia Highway have inadequate superelevation, sharp turns, and missing guardrails.

### Congestion

The following locations were identified as having a congestion problem:

- Queuing on the Longview Bridge.
- Congestion at the intersections of US 30 and Gable Road, and US 30 and Havlik Drive.
- Congestion on the segments of US 30 between Scappoose and St. Helens, particularly in the beach travel months of July and August.
- Other roads with congestion issues include Wyeth Road and Timber Road.
- Apiary Road is overly used by heavy vehicles.

### Other

- Major thoroughfares are in need of resurfacing, there is not enough funding to keep up with maintenance, and some roads have deteriorated to the extent that they have to be converted to gravel.
- Roads are not kept clear during winter maintenance and most drivers are not notified when the road restrictions are lifted after a heavy freeze.

## Main Highways

Stakeholders feel the following corridors need to be reviewed for improvements:

### US 30

- Bridges along US 30 were designed for trucks of significantly less weight and length than the trucks presently being served.
- All of US 30 within Columbia County should be four lanes or include passing lanes to ease the circulation of trucks and emergency vehicles, and prevent bottlenecks.
- There should be an alternative route to US 30 to prevent bottlenecks during traffic incidents, thus it is imperative that all incidents are cleared in a timely manner.
- Striping along US 30 gets worn off from winter maintenance and there are visibility issues when vegetation is not maintained.
- Safer school connections are needed on US 30 across from St. Helens High School.

### OR 202, OR 47 and Scappoose-Vernonia Highway

- There are traffic safety concerns along OR 202, OR 47 and Scappoose-Vernonia Highway because these highways are narrow, there are land sliding issues, and they are heavily trafficked by heavy vehicles.

### Cornelius Pass

- Cornelius Pass Road is a significant commuter route to Columbia County residents and it is windy, narrow, congested, and heavily trafficked by heavy vehicles.

## Bridges

Stakeholders provided the following information regarding bridges in Columbia County:

- Bridges along main arterial and collector roads do not have the weight capacity to accommodate most of the heavy vehicles that circulate along them. This includes mainly logging trucks and emergency vehicles.
- Agencies responsible for maintaining bridges throughout Columbia County should be clearly designated.
- Reevaluate bridge weight restrictions. Some bridges may have capacity to accommodate heavier trucks than what is currently allowed and vice-versa.
- A new bridge is needed to connect Columbia County and Washington State.

## Transit

### Existing Services

Stakeholders provided the following information regarding bus service in Columbia County:

- Existing service routes include commuter routes between Westport and St Helens, Rainier and Longview, and other routes that connect the County to the Portland metro area.
- Stakeholder were aware of transit flex routes that run between Scappoose and St. Helens and to other major destinations.

### Transit Needs

Stakeholders feel that the following are existing issues or needs of the Columbia County Transit System:

- General infrastructural improvements are needed to facilitate transit access, such as safe transit stops along US 30, transit centers in Clatskanie and Rainier, and Park-and-Rides at key locations throughout the County.
- Additional funds are needed to maintain or improve existing transit operations, to provide demand response services and to use as matching funds when federal grants become available.
- Additional transit connections are needed between the northern part of the county and Portland and Astoria.
- Public transportation needs to be incorporated in the improvement of major thoroughfares as part of new land development, and at interfaces with existing business.
- Improve flexible connections to Portland to provide better access for people that need to travel for medical services, shopping, and college.

## Bike and pedestrian

Stakeholders stated that due to geography and size, Columbia County is not conducive to biking and walking, however, they would like to see improvements in the following intersections and roadway segments:

- Improve bike connectivity along US 30.
- Define designated bike paths, routes, and lanes throughout Columbia County
- Provide a pedestrian crossing at US 30 and Gable Road.
- Promote bicycle education for commuter and recreational bike riders.
- Improve bike detection on major intersections.
- Provide pedestrian crossings along major thoroughfares, especially at bus stop locations along US 30.
- Promote the use of buses to transport bikes to reduce bike-vehicle conflicts along US 30.
- Provide more and better connections to recreational bike facilities and/or shared-use paths.

## Rail

Stakeholders provided the following information regarding rail transportation:

- A second rail track is needed at single rail track locations to expand rail capacity and promote commerce.
- Improve rail crossings in terms of safety and vehicular access to accommodate all modes of transportation, including heavy vehicles.
- There are frequent problems with trains blocking traffic, which affects all users of the transportation system, such as school traffic, public transportation and emergency services. Train blockages of up to 20 minutes regularly occur.

## Needs of Disadvantaged Populations

Stakeholders feel that the following are transportation needs of disadvantaged populations:

- Improve overall public transportation for the elderly, in particular demand response transit, which includes non-emergency medical transportation and Dial-a-Ride programs.
- Provide public transportation to the mental health facility in St. Helens and to health providers outside of Columbia County.
- Meals on Wheels offers meals to seniors, but participation of this service is limited because there are not enough drivers.
- Veterans need medical transportation to get to Portland.
- Transportation services that can serve lower-income minorities; options are not always well communicated to the elderly and the disabled.

## Funding Allocation

Stakeholders feel that the following transportation areas should be prioritized as funding becomes available; topics are ranked in order of importance:

1. Prioritize maintenance and repair of existing county roads and highways.
2. Prioritize investments that support economic development and help create new revenue for further transportation improvements.
3. Increase funding for transit.
4. Improve the safety of railroad crossings and reduce crossing closure times.
5. Improve overall transportation safety.
6. Provide improvements for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, including recreational shared-use paths.

## Additional Stakeholders

Stakeholders identified the following entities as additional stakeholders that should be consulted in the development of the Transportation System Plan:

- ODOT Public Transit Division
- County Transportation Safety Committee
- Columbia County Emergency Management
- Pacific Gas & Electric Company
- Police and fire districts
- Towing truck companies
- Bicycle groups
- School district administrators
- Industrial park residents
- US Gypsum
- Kiwanis
- Rotary Clubs
- Chambers of Commerce

## Other

Stakeholders provided the following information regarding other transportation topics:

- Increase law enforcement to enforce weight limits and posted speeds.
- Provide parking for public transportation, currently public transportation has to rely on private parking lots.
- Provide access to the Columbia River to promote development near port facilities and expand the use of maritime transportation.