



Columbia County Transportation System Plan Update

Transportation Road Advisory Committee (TRAC) Meeting #1

Summary

MEETING DATE:	July 24, 2014
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 is to provide an orientation to the TSP project and to obtain input on the Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Criteria for transportation in Columbia County.

TOPICS

1. Sign-in, Agenda Overview, and Introductions

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

- Dave Hill- Columbia County
- Lonny Welter- Columbia County
- Cherie Moylan- Columbia County
- John Bosket- DKS
- Kevin Chewuk- DKS
- Nita Greene- TRAC Member
- Rosemary Lohrke- TRAC Member
- Janet Wright- TRAC Member

2. Project Orientation

Project staff presented the following to the TRAC through a PowerPoint presentation:

What is a TSP and why are they important? The TSP is a long-range plan that establishes a system of transportation facilities to meet current and future needs. It is the transportation element of the comprehensive plan. The TSP is important because it provides direction for developing the county's transportation system, provides a basis for making better decisions about how to invest in the transportation system, coordinates state, county, and local planning, and makes the county more competitive for state and federal transportation funding.

What should TSPs include? The TSP must provide direction for future decisions. This is done through documented vision, goals, and policies that describe the values and priorities of the community, as well as through amendments to the county’s municipal code to support action and enforcement.

The TSP must also include projects to expand and improve the existing transportation system for all modes of travel. In addition to projects that build new facilities, an array of tools should also be provided to help maximize the return on investments made in facilities you already have through better management practices (e.g., street connectivity requirements, neighborhood traffic management, street design standards, standards for mobility and driveway spacing that vary with the intended function of the street). Furthermore, the TSP should include a strategic approach to planning future investments that acknowledges fiscal constraints.

The Columbia County TSP development process: The TSP development process includes the following project stages:

- Establishing an initial set of TSP Goals and Policies
- Evaluation of Existing and Future Conditions
- Develop Evaluation Criteria
- Develop Transportation Solutions
- Draft Plan
- Adoption Hearings

During this process, there will be a series of TRAC meetings, public open houses, and county commission work sessions. To stay informed of project progress and upcoming events, TRAC members and citizens are encouraged to regularly check our project website at www.columbiacountytsp.org.

TRAC roles and responsibilities: the TRAC will serve as community representatives and will help to develop the county’s Vision, Goals, and Objectives; identify system needs; develop solutions; and evaluate and prioritize solutions. Our goal is to have the TSP reflect Columbia County’s interests and have the TRAC willing to endorse the plan before the County Commission.

3. Transportation Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Criteria

This part of the meeting focused on describing values, key areas of interest, and desired direction for transportation system development in the future. The project team will take the input gained from this discussion and use it to draft a vision and complimentary goals and objectives for the TSP. While the vision, goals, and objectives are subject to change throughout the project, they will be used to guide the development of the types of improvements the community would like to see and evaluate the plan to ensure it aligns with local interests.

The Vision: What should the transportation system look like in 20 years and what should it accomplish?

In this part of the meeting, TRAC members discussed what they thought was important to incorporate into Columbia County's vision of its future transportation system. Ideas brought forth included:

- Keep existing transportation infrastructure operational and in good repair.
- Make incremental investments to the transportation system where funding allows.
- Improve access and ease of access to transportation facilities.
- Improve access to Highway 30.
- Improve accessibility over and around rail tracks.

After discussing the vision for the transportation system, it was agreed upon that the existing transportation goal in the 1998 Columbia County TSP will be the new vision statement for the TSP Update. It will be modified slightly to include a statement about managing the existing transportation infrastructure.

Proposed Transportation Vision Statement:

The creation of efficient, safe, and diverse transportation system to serve the needs of Columbia County residents, where existing transportation infrastructure and assets are managed and maintained, and investments to the transportation system use available funding efficiently.

Goals & Objectives: What do we want to accomplish and what should our priorities be?

TRAC members discussed the Draft Goals and Objectives for the TSP update. The following input was provided:

- Objective 1a: The TRAC asked project staff to explain what a mobility standard is. Project staff explained that it is a threshold for how much congestion the community is willing to live with along streets and at intersections.
- Objective 1e: The TRAC asked project staff to explain what ITS means. Project staff explained that it is technology that can make the transportation system more efficient or effective.
- Goal 4: The TRAC noted that if you are within walking or biking distance of your destination, the transportation infrastructure should allow for that trip to occur safely.
- Objective 4c: Modify description to include large employment centers, such as industrial park/areas.
- Evaluation Criteria: The TRAC questioned what it was for. Project staff explained that it is used to filter project solutions to help identify those with the most importance to the community.

TRAC members agreed the Draft Goals and Objectives were consistent with their priorities of the TSP Update. The TRAC then prioritized the 9 Goals into tiers, as follows:

- Goals 1, 2, 7: Tier 1

- Goal 5: Tier 1.5 (between Tier 1 and 2)
- Goals 3, 4, 6: Tier 2
- Goals 8, and 9: Tier 3

4. Next Steps

The TRAC has two weeks to provide comments on the draft Memo's. Comments should be returned to Lonny Welter by Thursday, August 7th. We will also be proceeding with the assessment of existing conditions and will begin forecasting conditions for the year 2035. Our next meetings will be in the winter, when we will discuss current and projected transportation issues and preferred methods for addressing them. The TRAC requested that someone from ODOT Rail attend the next meeting to discuss concerns over rail crossings. In the meantime, please visit the project website www.columbiacountytsp.org and provide comments on issues you see in the county.