



# Columbia County Transportation System Plan Update

## Open House Meeting Series #1 Summary

### MEETING LOCATIONS:

**Monday, March 30, 2015.** Rainier Senior Center, 48 West 7th Street, Rainier, 1:00 P.M.-3:00 P.M.

**Thursday, April 9, 2015.** Columbia County Roads Department, 1054 Oregon Street, St. Helens, 6:00 P.M.-8:00 P.M.

---

Columbia County is in the process of updating its Transportation System Plan (TSP). The TSP provides a long term (20-year) plan for how to best meet transportation needs of community residents, workers and businesses. The plan evaluates the current transportation system and determines how it could be improved to make travel in Columbia County better.

As part of this planning process, the TSP team (staff and consultants) facilitated two open houses to review work completed to date on the project and talk to participants about how to solve current and future transportation issues in the county. The open houses were held at the Rainier Senior Center (in the north end of the county) and at the Columbia County Roads Department (in the south end of the county). Approximately 15 people attended the open houses, which had open, “drop in” formats, consisting of a welcome table and seven stations. The Participants included staff from Columbia County, the Oregon Department of Transportation, as well as residents, property owners, business owners, and members of the consulting team. At the Rainier Senior Center, the project team gave a short presentation on the TSP update before the open house to approximately 50 seniors.

The county informed people about and encouraged them to participate in the open houses through a variety of means, including:

- Announcements on the project and county websites.
- Advertising flyers posted in a variety of locations (e.g., senior centers, library, post office, and county courthouse).
- Advertising flyers placed at the CC Rider terminal in St. Helens.
- Project informational letters and advertising flyers were mailed to Native American tribes with interests in Columbia County (e.g., Confederated Tribes of the Grande Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs).
- E-mail announcements to county commissioners, TRAC members, and other stakeholders that were interviewed for the TSP.

The open houses featured a series of activities that included:

- A welcome table that included a poster with information regarding the transportation system plan, how to get involved, and the purpose of the open house. A handout was provided at this station for attendees to provide written comments.
- A station that gave an overview of the cost of transportation in Columbia County. It summarized current transportation revenue sources and maintenance needs, highlighting an expected \$6.1 million transportation funding gap per year to maintain the roadways at status quo.
- Five stations featuring information about topics related to travel – Driving, Roadway Safety, Public Transit, Walking and Biking, Freight and Rail and Other Modes. These included large maps of the county for commenting, drawing, and posting notes. Project team members were present to explain work done for the project thus far, answer questions, and generally discuss the station topic with participants.
- A station was provided with an interactive exercise to gather public input on the highest investment priorities for the transportation system. This included eight statements summarizing potential investment priorities. Attendees could also write-in a priority that was not captured. Attendees were given sticky dots and asked to rank the four statements that would be their highest priorities to focus investments.

For those who were unable to attend the open houses, all materials were available via the project website and were offered upon request in Spanish. The interactive exercise was made available via an online poll. Each venue was accessible by transit, however, the hours of the open house at the County Roads Department extended beyond the availability of transit service.

The following public feedback was provided at each station:

## Transportation Funding

- The county should consider additional revenue sources to support improvements to the transportation system.

## Driving

- OR 202 has many sharp curves. Consider smoothing them.
- The Cater Road intersection with Scappoose-Vernonia Highway is unsafe.

## Roadway Safety

- Adding warning signs in trouble areas might help to keep drivers aware of the roadway conditions.

## Public Transit

- An after-hours route is needed. TriMet provides service to Sauvie Island until 10 p.m. Consider extending CC Rider service between St. Helens and Sauvie Island until 10 p.m. This could help people that work late, suffer from transit delays, or deal with other problems that causes them to miss the existing 6 p.m. CC Rider bus from downtown Portland.
- To save on costs, consider connecting the downtown Portland route to the existing TriMet service to Sauvie Island.

## Walking and Biking

- County roadways do not have adequate shoulders to support bicycles.
- Improved walking and biking connections to transit stops are needed along US 30.

## Freight and Rail and Other Modes

- Emergency vehicles and freight have difficulties accessing A Street in Rainier.
- Emergency vehicles could be blocked by trains crossing when attempting to respond to events on the other side of the tracks. Consider grade-separation.

## Transportation Priorities

The eight statements summarizing potential investment priorities were scored and ranked as follows. No write-in priorities were suggested. One participant submitted votes via the project website.

**Open house participants' highest priorities for transportation system investments.**

