

TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING
ROOM 126, MULTNOMAH BUILDING
501 SE HAWTHORNE BLVD, PORTLAND OR
AUGUST 24, 2015 6:30-8:30 PM

MEETING SUMMARY

I. Welcome, Introductions and Announcements

In attendance:

Subcommittee members

Andrew Holtz
Sara Grigsby
Martha Berndt
Jerry Grossnickle

Project Team

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

Other community members in attendance: Carol Chesarek and Greg Olson

Rich Faith welcomed everyone to the third meeting of this subcommittee, introductions were made, followed by a brief review of the meeting agenda.

II. Policies on Key Public Facility Topics

Rich introduced this agenda item by reminding the subcommittee that they have visited these two public facility topics in previous meetings.

Rest Stops Along Popular Transportation Routes

The policy on rest stops along popular travel routes has been revised based on their comments at the last meeting to make it more generic by taking out reference to bicycle routes and broadening it to apply to any heavily used travel route. The three strategies are new to reflect ideas from the last meeting.

One member thought that this policy goes counter to what is desired in the West Hills. The policy seems to be promoting recreational bicycle use of the roadways by offering more than just restrooms; it offers other amenities like picnic tables and water fountains. If rest stops are provided, that is like an open invitation for recreational use, and this is not what people in the West Hills want. Maybe if the policy talked about “designated” recreational and tourist routes it would be acceptable because that would narrow where rest stops are placed. My concern is that rest stops are placed in front of someone’s house or other places where they don’t belong.

Another member said that not all the listed amenities would have to be provided. Rather than say “should include”, the strategy could be changed to say “may include.” That would soften it a bit.

Another member felt that the third strategy addresses locatio because it talks about partnering with other agencies to determine suitable locations for these facilities. This raised a question about what type of permitting process these rest facilities would go through and whether it would involve notification and input from surrounding residents.

Other comments were:

- It would depend on the zone, but it would likely come under a community service use which is a conditional use and requires notification to surrounding property owners and the opportunity for their input.
- Rest stop facilities should be provided to support users of popular travel routes whether the people living along there want them or not.
- Rest stops are not in keeping with what residents of the West Hills want to see. Where are you going to put them?
- A rest stop at mile post 18 of Skyline is so far from where most people live that it won't affect anyone.
- Concern about the strategy that says to partner with other agencies. What if ODOT decides to put one in? How are you going to control them to put it in the most suitable spot? Affected property owners and residents need to be involved in the decision.
- All stakeholders need to be involved, not just those who live there. Stakeholders are those who travel the road and have a need for a rest stop.
- This conversation is similar to what occurred in Clackamas County when people got upset about placement of rest facilities. It all boiled down to I'm here and I don't want anyone else to be here.

Action Taken - Approved with the following changes:

- Change “should include amenities” to “may include amenities” in strategy a.
- Add a strategy about involving affected stakeholders in the decision process.
- Add a strategy about requiring a land use process ensuring that neighborhood compatibility and environmental impacts are addressed.

Sewage Disposal Requirements for Rural Developments

Rich provided brief background on this policy topic and the thinking behind the new policy language.

A subcommittee member asked if the change in how the policy is written will promote more development by permitting small lot sizes. The current one and two acre minimum lot sizes in rural centers are based on the ability of the land to accommodate a private

well and septic system – the carrying capacity of the site. And there are a number of existing small lots that cannot be developed because they can't support an in-ground septic system.

There was considerable discussion about the impact of this policy language and whether it could potentially result in more rural dwellings. Carol Chesarek expressed concern about the number of additional dwellings that might be allowed in the West Hills. She thought lots should have to be required to have the capacity to accommodate a septic system, but would be allowed to install another type of system if desired. This would ensure no increase in the number of dwellings over what is currently possible.

Some subcommittee members were OK with the policy language and felt it offered a good tradeoff because of better systems that are coming along with improved technology. These are actually more environmentally friendly than the older, conventional systems.

Another member thought that strategy 1a should also mention quality water as something that private wells need to provide. Others agreed.

Action Taken - Approved with the following change:

- Add a reference to water quality in strategy 1a.

III. Existing Public Facilities Policies

Rich introduced this agenda item and explained where these existing policies come from and the type of public facilities they address.

Some of the major comments and questions about these policies were:

- In reference to policy 1 under Parks and Recreation Planning on page 28, a subcommittee member wanted to know if the Intertwine Alliance is on Sauvie Island because she has never heard of them. That led to discussion about what the Intertwine Alliance is and its origin.
- Expand upon this policy by adding “other organizations” after The Intertwine Alliance.
- A member expressed his desire to change “adverse impacts” to “adverse effects” wherever that term is used.
- Someone wanted policy three under Parks and Recreation Planning on pg 28 of the packet to say “Allow...” rather than “Encourage...” After some discussion it was agreed to leave in the word “encourage” but to add “consistent with wildlife habitat and wildlife corridor protection” to the end of the policy.
- Leave in 4(2) that is proposed for deletion, but remove reference to the Bicycle Corridor Capital Improvements Program and just say Capital Improvements Program. Also delete the words “of bikeways” later in the policy.

- Policy 2c under Storm Water Drainage on page 22 should also say that run-off shall not adversely affect “existing improvements”.
- Internet service is problematic on Sauvie Island. Policies under Energy and Communications should speak to the desire for high quality, high speed internet service to the rural county, particularly to schools. Maybe this could be added to the list of factors under Strategy 1 on page 23. In this same strategy, don’t just say “Address provision for utility service needs...”, say “Address provision for utility services to adequately meet needs..”
- A subcommittee member brought up the matter of a power substation going in his neighborhood that is solely being done to serve a new residential development in North Bethany. How can that be prevented from happening again. Rich reminded the committee that this question has come up before and is on the parking lot list. Staff is in the process of researching it and will soon have information to share.
- Is reflection of sunlight off solar panels something that should be addressed in a policy? After more discussion it was decided it does not need to be.
- The policy on Alternative Uses of Public School Buildings is misleading because the building codes also regulate change of use from a school to other types of uses. Those codes have to be followed as well.
- Are the three alternate uses listed under policy C on page 26 listed as a hierarchy of the desired uses or do they all have equal status?
- Some members still had a list of other questions and comments on these policies, so in the interest of time, it was decided to finish the discussion of Existing Public Facilities Policies at the next meeting.

Action Taken - Continue to next meeting for further review.

IV. Policies on Key Transportation Topics

Joanna Valencia informed the subcommittee that the revisions to these various policies reflect comments from their last meeting. Major points from subcommittee members were:

- Under the policies for bicycle infrastructure, concern was expressed about including equestrian use as a mode of transportation to be accommodated on County roads. How can some of the narrow County roads in the West Hills, for example, safely accommodate horses? Maybe there should be a policy specifically on equestrian use.
- In response, others pointed out that this was discussed at the last meeting and those in attendance asked that the policy include all modes of transportation, including equestrian.
- If the policy is going to address accommodating all travel modes, maybe it should say “where reasonably possible”.

- The strategy that talks about considering climate change impacts should say “include climate change impacts...”
- In the second policy under Bicycle Infrastructure, rather than list out various modes of travel, just say all modes of travel similar to what is done in the first policy.
- Rather than say “all modes of transportation”, change it to “multiple modes of travel”.
- Rather than say “Consider context sensitive design..” say “Implement context sensitive design...”
- The fourth policy under Reduce Traffic Pressure on Westside Roads needs to go away because the biking community doesn’t like it. People don’t understand what is meant by “without encouraging purely recreational activities”.

Due to the late hour and because there was still much more to discuss on these key policy topics, everyone agreed that it will be necessary to hold another meeting to complete this discussion. There is another meeting of this subcommittee scheduled for October, but there will need to be another after that to complete everything that is left to do. Staff will take a look at the calendar and come back with a proposed meeting date, possibly in November or December.

Action Taken - Set up another meeting. Continue to that meeting for further review.

V. Existing Transportation Policies

Because there not enough time to cover everything, it was decided to postpone this agenda item to another time and to skip to the Alternatives Analysis.

VI. Alternatives Analysis

Susie Wright gave a quick introduction to this topic. She is mainly interested in feedback about the “filters” or criteria for evaluating and rating projects. When asked how the members can provide this feedback, Susie said they could phone or email her with the information. Some quick comments were:

- On Figures 5A and 5B, change the legend from “Proposed Shoulder Bikeways” to something else. Also, there should be more narrative about the different categories of bike facilities on these maps.
- Roadways going through wildlife corridors should be subject to different design standards than in other areas.
- Under the safety criteria, the ratings should not just be the number of bike or ped crashes, but should also try to gauge the fear factor, complaints about close calls, the user’s comfort zone on these roads. Safety perceptions are as important as actual crash data.
- On equity, is there a way of measuring access by low income populations. We should be looking for ways to help the lower income gain access to the roads.

- Under community destination, natural areas used as recreation should be included.
- How does topography and terrain factor into the filter?
- There ought to be separate capital improvement plans for urban and rural areas.

VII. Public Comment

Greg Olson said that he is a lot happier with what we have done than he was at previous meetings.

VIII. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 8:52 pm.



Rich FAITH <rich.faith@multco.us>

transportation rating system email draft w/ policy recommendations

Carol Chesarek <chesarek4nature@earthlink.net>

Fri, Sep 18, 2015 at 12:24 PM

To: Joanna VALENCIA <joanna.valencia@multco.us>, Rich FAITH <rich.faith@multco.us>

Cc: Jerry Grossnickle <JerryGBW@aol.com>

Hi Joanna & Rich,

We've been thinking hard about the transportation project scoring criteria and rating system provided by staff, and wanted to provide both some general and specific comments. This email has been sent back and forth a few times, and the formatting has sometimes slipped around in odd ways, so I hope it is readable when it gets to you.

We appreciate the desirability of having a straightforward scoring system for transportation projects, and the thoughtful effort that staff has put into coming up with a set of objective criteria to use that reflect a wide variety of interests and input. But we found the proposed scoring and the results problematic, and based on Jerry's experience with ConnectOregon, we're doubtful that we'll easily find a good way to fix them given the limited time available.

Here are Jerry's general comments on transportation project rating systems. His experience with the project selection process used by ConnectOregon is especially relevant:

I do not think that a rating structure such as the one provided in the Overview is workable.

My experience with the project selection process of ConnectOregon leads me to make the following observations:

1. Staff work is important to identify quantitative (measurable) factors that can be considered in the ratings process, but it is very important that this function does NOT serve to predetermine decisions.
2. The criteria (or filters) must reflect considered and current policy decisions. An important element to this is that they must be continually updated, reconsidered and revised, preferably by many sets of eyes, representing different interests, with different backgrounds and points of view. This is not a staff job solely.
3. To be useful the point system needs to make at least some sense. At ConnectOregon meetings, especially in the early years, staff would propose criteria (usually based on statutory language) and suggest a point system, but committee

members would inevitably find that results defied common sense, with ridiculous projects often scoring higher than meritorious projects. It is not easy to quantify many aspects of the transportation system, and it is impossible to develop a scoring system that is perfect. Knowing this from the beginning makes it easier to revise and tweak when it makes sense to do so.

4. It should be noted that the point system itself should be a reasonable reflection of policy choices. If the range of points is just "0" or "1" (the same as "yes" or "no"), its impact on the final score is not very meaningful. But, just as an example, if there is an important wildlife corridor that would be benefitted or harmed by a project, it would be far more useful to have a larger number of points assigned to reflect its importance, with the possibility of negative points. The result more reasonably reflects a policy choice of protecting wildlife corridors, and it allows for ranking the relative importance of the particular corridor. This simple change could be applied to all of the criteria, with the number of allowable points per criterion reflecting its relative importance from a policy perspective. Very surely the project rankings ("priority") of the current system would shift dramatically.

5. Again, I suggest that developing a good project ratings system is a long-term and continuing proposition. The decisions of which filters to use and how many possible points to assign to a criterion are policy decisions, and they should be considered by many sets of eyes and should be revised regularly. (Perhaps the Planning Commission could take this on.) The system that ConnectOregon uses in the actual project selection process requires input from several different committees with very different transportation interests, and when their project rankings are complete, they are subject to consideration by a final review committee that compiles the results and deliberates on the inevitably conflicting committee rankings, eventually voting a final ranking (for further consideration by the Oregon Transportation Commission). Each of the ranking committees has developed its own project ratings system, so the final review committee uses just the committees' rankings as the basis of its deliberations, rather than delving into the various committees' project ratings systems.

To demonstrate the problems with the draft rating system provided by staff, we dug into the details and results and provide these specific comments on that proposal:

1. We need a way to rate projects based only on the factors relevant to the project. For example, why are vehicle crash numbers (and pavement quality) relevant to rating a "scenic viewing opportunity" acquisition (project #45 on Syline Blvd)? Unless the acquisition will somehow reduce vehicle crashes, that factor isn't relevant to this priority – depending on the location it might create more crashes as people pull in and out of the viewing area. How does an event permit calendar improve vehicle safety (project #17)? Perhaps the first decision should be which criteria are relevant to a project, and how those criteria should be weighted (for example, a recreation improvement such as a viewing area that will help repave 300 feet of a 10 mile road segment would get a low weight but a project that helped repave 5 of 10 miles would get a higher weight).

If there have been 10 vehicle crashes in a project area, will the project result in a drop of 100%, 50%, or 0% in the crash rate? Reducing 10 crashes by 50% should score better than reducing 2 crashes by 100% (assuming all crashes are equal in terms of injury/fatality/property damage). The question shouldn't be whether the project is located in an area with a safety problem, but how effectively the project will improve safety.

2. Pavement condition is variable over time and problematic (repaving is a maintenance operation, not a capital improvement). Will we re-score and re-prioritize projects every time a paving-only maintenance project is completed? There is some important synergy with projects that could improve pavement quality. But a safety project that only affects a couple hundred feet on a road section that's miles long has limited value. We need to scale this factor to correspond to the length of the project, and a way to update the scores based on updated pavement condition evaluations each year.

3. Safety projects should be evaluated based on whether the project itself will improve safety, not on how many crashes have occurred on a stretch of road. You could have a "safety improvement" proposed on a short stretch of a long road segment, and the safety project might have little or nothing to do with most or all of the accidents reported on that road segment.

4. We need a more detailed assessment of potential wildlife crossings if we are going to score them. If we can't get a meaningful system-wide assessment of the needs and opportunities for wildlife crossings, then the project's effect on wildlife needs to be assessed no later than the initial project planning stages (and added into the project budget at that time). If a project will widen a road without creating effective new wildlife crossings, its location in a wildlife corridor should result in a negative score, not a positive one.

5. We need a wider range of scores. Why can equity and wildlife corridors never score more than 1 point? Only 2 bike/ped crashes gets a project 2 points, should it be possible to score more points?

6. New recreation (scenic viewing) projects shouldn't rate higher than safety and public transportation improvements, especially when we can't adequately maintain the transportation facilities we have today. We can't keep the roads paved, but we're going to build and pave a new scenic viewing area?

7. We need a score for environmental impact (positive and negative), and for factors relating to the climate action plan. Will a project reduce vehicle miles and/or carbon emissions? Will it provide affordable transportation alternatives in a low income area?

8. Can we delete or redefine projects from the list, for example the safety improvements on Cornelius Pass Road have been redefined by that advisory committee, and the speed humps on Skyline Blvd seem of dubious value. These "traffic calming" humps make it significantly harder to safely pass cyclists, they are dangerous in ice and snow, and they

often aren't effective at reducing vehicle speeds.

9. If we are going to score animal crashes, we need a more thorough reporting mechanism. Do county maintenance staff and emergency responders report all animal crashes today, or only accidents resulting in property damage or human injury? An assessment of wildlife crossing areas would be a more useful measure of the value of a project for wildlife – just getting full reporting of wildlife related accidents could be a struggle, and really should include all roadkill.

10. Project cost should also be a factor. A \$200K project that eliminates 10 vehicle crashes should be a higher priority than a \$5M project that eliminates 10 vehicle crashes (again assuming the crashes are roughly equivalent for injuries/fatalities/property damage). One of the comments we heard over and over from the Cornelius Pass Road Safety Advisory Committee was that they wanted projects to be cost-effective.

We suggest that instead of a defined rating system, there should be a policy that requires the county to establish a system to rate projects on an ongoing basis (at least once every 2 years). That system should be based on an advisory committee, and the local community should have a strong voice in prioritizing projects in their area.

- Some or all of the criteria provided by staff in their draft should be considered by the advisory committee, but the committee needs to have flexibility to adapt the criteria, weights, ratings, etc.
- A similar (possibly the same) process should make decisions about transportation projects to be modified, added, or deleted from the list.
- Both policies need to require strong engagement with local neighborhoods/communities about projects in their area, in addition to appropriate experts.
- Criteria and recommendations by the advisory committee should reflect adopted transportation policies and local input.

Obviously more discussion will be needed, but we wanted to provide this input well in advance of the next transportation subcommittee meeting. We would, of course, be happy to answer questions or discuss possible policy language.

Many thanks, and we look forward to working with you to develop and implement policy.

Carol and Jerry