

Cornelius Pass Road Safety Improvements Project Community Advisory Committee Meeting #1 Summary

November 13, 2013, 6:00–8:00 pm

Skyline Elementary School Gym, 11536 NW Skyline Boulevard, Portland, OR

CAC Members in Attendance:

- Jason Ascher
- Kirk Augustin
- Wayne Bauer
- Jan Campbell
- Carol Chesarek
- Drew Dubois
- Sarah Hanson
- Dave Linden
- Tim Love
- Senator Betsy Johnson
- Bruce Penney
- Steve Robertson
- Michele Roy
- Bob Russell
- George Sowder

County Staff in Attendance:

- Sandra Prock, Project Manager
- Brian Vincent, County Engineer
- Mike Pullen, Communications
- John Niiyama, Road Maintenance Program Manager
- Don Pfister, Road Operations Supervisor
- Jeff Schneider, Sheriff's Office
- Kim Peoples, Director of Department of Community Services
- Karen Schilling, Planning Director

Consultants in Attendance:

- Chris Link, Project Manager, Murray, Smith & Associates
- Troy Bowers, President, Murray, Smith & Associates
- Vaughn Brown, JLA Public Involvement
- Jamie Harvie, JLA Public Involvement

Members of the Public in Attendance:

- Pat Brady, N Skyline Road resident
- Catherine Dalziel, Resident
- Rosaline Elfick, CPR resident
- Devin Field, Resident
- Natalie Harger, Rock Creek Road resident
- Brian Lightcap, CPR resident and Director of the Soil Conservation District
- Larry Luethe, Resident
- Aaron McKay, CPR resident
- Miles Merwin, Resident and Editor of Skyline Ridge Runner
- Jim Munson, CPR user
- Elinor Markgraf, Resident
- Mike Sayer, Resident
- Diane Shaw, Skyline Road resident
- Sen Speroff, Resident
- Mark Tesauro, CPR resident

Welcome and Introductions

Mike Pullen of Multnomah County welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked the CAC members for volunteering their time. He said that projects which include volunteers working with the project team always have a better end result. This community advisory committee (CAC) was created in response to citizen requests to be more involved. He described the makeup of the committee. It includes a broad range of interests including neighbors, business owners, commuters, trucking, and emergency services. He said success for this project will be coming up with the best way to use allocated JTA money to improve the safety of Cornelius Pass Road.

Mike noted that the County Commissioner has changed since the last round of public input on this project, however the new Commissioner, Liesl Wendt, has kept the same staff, including Liz Smith Currie, who will be involved in this project and attend future CAC meetings.

Vaughn Brown of JLA Public Involvement briefly reviewed the agenda. The main purposes of tonight's meeting are: establishing the CAC charter and problem-solving relationship with the County, providing project background information and overview, updating CAC members on the latest data and project progress, and sharing stakeholder perspectives.

- **Bruce Penney** said he wants to ensure that the CAC provides meaningful input, so it should be clear what input is needed at each meeting, including the feedback that the County needs tonight to prepare for January's meeting.

The project team and CAC members introduced themselves. CAC members provided brief summaries of why they want to be on the committee. Most members live or work nearby, many have students at Skyline Elementary, and all use Cornelius Pass Road. Those with particular interests include:

- **Betsy Johnson** is the state senator representing this area; she helped bring the current funds for the project and hopes to find more funds.
- **Dave Linden** represents the grocery store on Skyline.
- **Tim Love** and **Bob Russell** represent trucking interests.
- **Drew DeBois** represents emergency services.
- **Sarah Hanson** works for Columbia County and will liaise with them about the project.
- **George Sowder** will serve as a liaison with Skyline Ridge Neighbors Neighborhood Association.
- **Carol Chesarek** will serve as a liaison with Forest Park Neighborhood Association.
- **Michelle Roy** works at Skyline Elementary and will serve as a liaison with the school, students and families.

Audience members introduced themselves and explained their interest in the project. Beside County staff members, all audience members were either residents of the area or travelled frequently on Cornelius Pass Road.

Vaughn Brown noted that each meeting will include people who can act in an advisory role (County staff, consultants, etc.) if committee members feel they need more information at any point.

CAC Chartering

Vaughn Brown briefly reviewed the charter. He noted that the committee includes 15 members; everyone who applied was included on the committee. He asked for feedback and revisions.

Discussion:

- Decision-making Process and CAC Influence: One member asked whether the CAC's input will genuinely impact project decisions. *[The committee will not make decisions, but if the County's decision differs from the CAC's recommendation, they will have an obligation to explain the reasons to the committee and community.]* One member asked what the decision making process is. **Brian Vincent** (Multnomah County) will provide the final recommendation but will consider a lot of sources of input; **Project consultants** will stamp the final plans.]
- Consensus: It was noted that consensus from the CAC will have much more impact than split opinions and will ensure a better chance of the recommendations being taken up by the County.
- Outputs from Committee: It was requested that the Charter make clear what the primary CAC outputs should be for each of the four meetings.
- Public Comments: Limited time for public comments will be provided at each meeting.
- Inter-meeting Communication and Privacy: CAC members were open to sharing emails between committee members for committee business/communications, but were also given the option to notify staff after the meeting if they choose otherwise. However, members requested that the inter-meeting communication section be re-worded to say that project team members will also respect CAC members' privacy. It was noted that public record requests would be an exception to this.
- Public Communication with the CAC: The group discussed how members of the public can communicate with the CAC. It was decided that using the existing project email (corneliuspass@multco.us) is the best approach. The project team will distribute emails intended for the CAC to all CAC members unless there is a reason to share with only individual members. The project email address is currently available on the project website www.multco.us/roads; click on Cornelius Pass Safety under Hot Topics) but will be made more prominent.

Updates to Charter:

- The second CAC meeting will be held January 14, 2014. Dates for the third and fourth meetings will be determined at future meetings.
- Wording update: The project team will work to make meeting agendas and initial materials available for member review *at least* one week prior to each meeting.
- The primary outputs from the CAC for each meeting will be defined in the charter:
 - Meeting 1: Provide input to project staff on proposed solutions and selection criteria.
 - Meeting 2: Review of staff solutions and criteria.
 - Meeting 3: Evaluate the revised solutions and criteria.
 - Meeting 4: Provide final input and review of plan design.
- Inter-meeting communication: This section will be re-worded to say that project team members will also respect CAC members' privacy.

Project Background and Update

The project team gave a presentation (available on the website). Multnomah County Project Manager **Sandy Prock** went through the project history including safety improvements made in 2010 and the current Hwy 30 intersection improvements, described how the team has responded to community feedback, provided an update of what has happened in 2013, and reviewed the anticipated project schedule. She noted that, though the accuracy of crash data from the 2011 JTA report was brought into question, the report still includes valuable information (the report is available through the project website). **Vaughn Brown** reviewed the anticipated public involvement schedule. MSA Project Manager **Chris Link** presented new 2007-2012 crash and safety data, which pointed to six primary accident cluster locations. Preliminary crash analysis considered: severity, type of crash, contributing factors, trucks, and lighting conditions. He said that the team has broadened the suite of projects being considered from those in the JTA report. He noted that the crashes at Sheltered Nook and Kaiser Road have gone down since the 2010 safety improvements.

Discussion

- Project Meeting Advertising: Method of public meeting announcement was discussed. CAC meetings are announced on the project website, sent by e-mail to those who have signed up to be on the contact list, and by press release to a number of area papers. Large public meetings such as open houses also use a postcard mail-out to about 2000 area addresses. Members of the public who wish to receive project communications can request to be added to the stakeholder contact list or provide their contact information on the sign-in sheet or online (by e-mail to corneliuspass@multco.us).
- Curve Speed Limits: There was a discussion around the term "Speed too fast for conditions (not exceeding limit)." Most crashes with this listed as a contributing factor had to do with vehicles taking corners too quickly (rather than road conditions, such as ice). Curve speed recommendations are advisory; going faster than the recommended advisory speed is not considered breaking the speed limit. It is difficult to change the speed limit on the road. However, updating the advisory curve speed signing will be a key consideration for the project.
- Truck Traffic/Crashes: Fifteen out of 100 ODOT reported crashes involved trucks. This roughly corresponds to the amount of truck traffic on the road, which is approximately 15% of total traffic.
- Over/underpass: One CAC member asked whether an over/underpass has been considered at the intersection of Skyline and Cornelius Pass Road. *[The traffic consultants noted that the over/underpass has not yet been considered.]*
- 2010 Safety Improvements: Several improvements were completed in 2010 using federal stimulus funds, including rumble strips, vehicle activated "stopped vehicle ahead" signing approaching the intersection with NW Sheltered Nook Road, and vehicle speed readout signs. No guardrail replacements were done as part of the improvements.
- Kaiser Road Turn Lane: A member of the public said that including a right turn lane at the intersection of Cornelius Pass Road and Kaiser Road is important. The current configuration requires traffic to slow behind those turning right and trucks have a difficult time regaining their speed.
- Severity of Accidents: There was discussion about whether the analysis should consider only more serious accidents and disregard "fender-benders." It was generally felt that this was not appropriate. "Serious accidents" are not always identified in the crash reporting and locations of less severe accidents may still indicate problem areas.

- Speed: Several CAC and audience members said that excessive speed is a major issue on Cornelius Pass Road. It was expressed that road safety improvements may not be effective without first addressing speed issues including better enforcement.
- Planning for the Future: The group discussed the need to plan for population growth and increased traffic. The project team is considering traffic projections for 2035.
- Project Selection: Discussion around whether to choose the best project mix that can be done with available JTA funding, or recommend a best-case list of projects with the hope of more funding.

Vaughn Brown asked whether the group would be willing to stay a little longer than scheduled in order to allow for public comment and CAC input on success criteria. The CAC members agreed to stay.

Public Comment

Jim Munson asked what the term “crashes” includes, and suggested this term might be unclear. *[Chris Link said that crashes include every accident to people or property that was reported to officials.]* Jim also asked why it takes so long to move from last CAC meeting in June 2014 to the start of construction in autumn 2015. He also felt that some of the improvements on the "S" curves that the County performed in the 1990s had not been effective at reducing crashes.

Brian Lightcap said that drivers use Newberry Road as a shortcut and it is a dangerous road. He also thought that the project should spend money as wisely as possible; the goal should not be simply to spend the entire \$8.5 million.

Natalie Harger had concerns about mailbox locations and retrieving mail safely. She also said that pull-outs are needed for school bus stops. She also recommended creating an alert system for when there is a chemical spill on Cornelius Pass Road.

Mike Sayer asked about the Northside Bypass project. *[Senator Betsy Johnson said this project is no longer being considered due to high cost, lack of political will and a range of other complications.]*

Pat Brady asked how the project will plan for future conditions and whether projections include truck traffic. *[Chris Link said that they use Metro’s regional forecasts, future truck traffic is accounted for in the future projections.]*

Catherine Dalziel said that speeding is a major problem on Cornelius Pass Road. She noted that, though the road is a major thoroughfare, it also goes through neighborhoods – and she hopes the CAC and project team will consider this.

Elinor Markgraf noted that the current Cornelius Pass Road is built on top of a much older corduroy (log) road. She felt that the traffic loading and higher speeds may more quickly deteriorate the road because of this.

Rosaline Elfick said it was hard for cleanup crews to access the recent chemical spill on Cornelius Pass Road and asked whether it would be possible for hazardous waste trucks to use Highway 26 instead. *[This is outside the scope of this project. This project will not change modes of traffic using Cornelius Pass Road, but rather try to make road safer for all modes.]*

Success Criteria

CAC members were asked to define their primary success criteria that would express each member's hoped-for accomplishments. Safety for school buses was mentioned by several committee members; many CAC members do not allow their students to use school buses or bus stops on Cornelius Pass Road due to safety concerns. Improved speed monitoring and enforcement were also mentioned several times.

A complete list of success criteria included:

- Improved safety for school buses
- Improved speed monitoring and enforcement
- Addressing key community needs/desires
- Accommodating future growth
- Ensuring fast response times for emergency services
- Reducing crashes that close Cornelius Pass Road
- Wise use of public funds
 - Consider cost/benefit analysis
 - Best “bang for the buck”
- Consideration for environment and wildlife
 - Improved safety without harming wildlife
 - Include environmental impacts in the cost/benefit analysis
- Specific improvements in place, including:
 - Wider shoulders to provide more reaction time if there is driver error
 - Improved sightlines
 - Road definition
 - Guardrails
 - Feedback to drivers (reflectors)
 - Turnouts for school buses and police
 - Improvements to intersection of Cornelius Pass Road and Skyline Boulevard
 - Better safety at driveway connections to Cornelius Pass Road
 - Safety at Sheltered Nook Road
- Not back addressing the same issues in 25 years

Next Steps & Close

Vaughn Brown said the project team would be in touch with CAC members regarding the January meeting, thanked everyone for coming, and adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.