

Cornelius Pass Road Safety Improvements Project Community Advisory Committee Meeting #6 Summary

Meeting 6: January 5, 2017, 6:00-7:30 pm

Skyline Elementary School, 11536 NW Skyline Blvd, Portland, OR 97231

CAC Members in Attendance:

- Wayne Bauer
- Jan Campbell
- Carol Chesarek
- Drew Dubois
- Sarah Hanson
- Bruce Penney
- Senator Betsy Johnson
- Steve Robertson
- George Sowder

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- Jason Ascher
 - Dave Linden
 - Tim Love
 - Michele Roy
 - Bob Russell
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County Staff in Attendance:

- Riad Alharithi, CIP Program Manager
- Daren Taber, MCSO Sherriff
- Mike Pullen, Communications
- Ian Cannon, Transportation Director
- Don Pfister, Dist. 1 Road Maintenance Supervisor
- Carrie Warren, Senior Engineer
- Karyne Kieta, Community Services
- Joanna Valencia, Transportation Planning

Consultants/Partners in Attendance:

- Troy Bowers, Murray, Smith & Associates
 - Gabe Crop, Murray, Smith & Associates
 - Jessica Pickul, JLA Public Involvement
 - April Hasson, JLA Public Involvement
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Members of the Public in Attendance Who Signed In:

- Pat Brady, Neighborhood
- Catherine Dalzid, Neighborhood
- Laurel Harroun, Neighborhood
- Joe Kelly, Neighborhood
- Marta Kerly, Neighborhood
- Larry Luethe, Community Safety
- Aaron McKay, Neighborhood
- Michael Murray, Neighborhood
- Michael Newman, Neighborhood
- Sandy Newman, Neighborhood
- Nicki Pierce, Neighborhood
- Tom Pierce, Neighborhood
- Jayme Pohlman, Neighborhood
- Katie Sharon, Neighborhood
- Daniel Scheer, Neighborhood
- Leon Speroff, Neighborhood
- Heather Sturgill, Washington County LUT
- Mark Tesarro, Neighborhood
- Susan Watt, Neighborhood

Actions

- The CAC reviewed the 30% Design Package, asked questions and provided input.
- A public open house will be held in late 2017.

Outstanding items/requests for information

- The project team will meet with the sheriff's office to get the minimum size of pullouts needed for their enforcement purposes.
- The project team will share clarifying information about ODOT rumble strips and delineators and coordinate with ODOT's 2017 project.

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Jessica Pickul of JLA Public Involvement introduced herself as the facilitator and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Jessica led participant introductions and reviewed the agenda. She mentioned that a lot has happened in the last eighteen months. The purpose of this meeting was to review the safety improvements included in the 30% design and provide an opportunity for committee members and public attendees to ask questions and provide feedback. Jessica further explained the format of the night's meeting.

Project Update

Mike Pullen of Multnomah County provided background on the project and explained what had happened since the CAC met last. Mike said that ODOT had now restored \$3.9 million in funding for the project thanks to the help of Senator Johnson. Mike explained that it took longer than expected to get the design consultant back under contract, but once that happened last March, Murray, Smith & Associates were able to get things moving forward to the 30% design level. He said that once the 30% design package was accepted, the team would work to get to 100% design during 2017, with construction in 2018.

Modified Safety Improvement Package

Gabe Crop of Murray, Smith & Associates reviewed the Modified Safety Improvements Package. Gabe noted the changes since the last CAC meeting: 1) removing shoulder widening at Boyd's Lower Driveway, 2) removing the flashing vehicle-activated beacons at Kaiser Road, and 3) removing variable message signs (VMS). Gabe then provided more detail about the improvements included in the package:

The curve near 8th Ave. Smooth out the curve where truck rollover accidents have occurred and reduce speed. The team completed additional design work, which resulted in 12 foot lanes and 6 foot shoulders.

- Gabe showed the additional land that would need to be acquired (on slide 10, see Appendix for the complete presentation), stating that a lot of the land shown is for the slope, not the actual roadway. He said there would also be a construction easement that would revert back to the property following construction and conditions would be completely restored.
- A member of the public asked if the curve smoothing affects the dwelling located there. *[The design doesn't affect the house itself, but would require taking some of the land.]*

The 8th Ave. New Culvert. This is a culvert under the pass, along the bottom slope area.

- Gabe showed an example of the approximate size of what the crossing might be, explaining that the end result would likely be a box culvert. In order to construct this, work will need to take place in the in-water work period, during the summertime.
- A closure of Cornelius Pass Rd. will be required in order to complete the work on the culvert. He said it was not yet known how long or when a closure would occur.
- A member of the public asked if the 8th Ave. culvert is the only area requiring right-of-way acquisition. *[Correct, this is the only place the design calls for obtaining land.]*
- A CAC member asked if the culvert goes under the road. *[Yes, an existing culvert was discovered that conveys flows to McCarthy Creek. Because the roadway is being reconstructed and fill material will be used, there is a federal requirement to replace the culvert. The average channel requires a fish-friendly channel with a concrete box culvert. This requirement has increased costs a little bit. It also helps address the requests for the wildlife crossing from previous CAC meetings.]*
- A CAC member asked what the lines on the design slide represent. *[They're contour lines to illustrate the slope.]*
- A committee member asked Gabe to distinguish between local closures and local access and to define residential access. *[Residents living to one side of the road closure would have local access to the north and residents from the other side could have local access to the south. It would mean that residents would have to approach from the south to get to the top of the hill.]*
- A CAC member asked whether it would allow enough room for four lanes if more land were obtained. *[No. It is not legally possible to obtain more right-of-way than the project requires.]*
- A member of the public asked if the team has done a cost analysis to decide what it would cost to buy the house instead of a portion of the land. *[The team had considered this but it appeared to be cost-prohibitive, so they went with this more modest approach.]*

Boyd's Lower Driveway. The designs widen the shoulder, where there was currently a steep drop-off. In this area, cars drive beyond the outside lane as they come around the curve. The designs create more recovery space.

Gabe reminded the group that the team originally would have liked to include shoulder widening with a retaining wall. Unfortunately, this is an area where landslides have occurred and after geotechnical investigation the team realized they couldn't mitigate the landslide for this project. In order to do shoulder widening, the team would need to do lightweight fill which costs more. It would cost \$1.5 million just for the shoulder widening. For that reason, it became less desirable. Gabe explained that, in the original estimate, the team was hoping to spend \$340k in the assessment phase, but is now suggesting it not be moved forward. The benefit-to-cost ratio was less than one.

- A CAC member said a car went off the road at this location last week, and at least a dozen cars a year go off there. It is usually people who are unfamiliar with the road. *[That's why the design team decided to widen the shoulder instead of just adding guardrail.]*
- A committee member commented that it is not OK to do nothing. There have to be more cautionary signs.
- A CAC member commented that it doesn't have to be all-or-nothing. *[There may be some barrier-specific things the team can look at.]*
- A member of the CAC asked if there is something that can be done to notify drivers when they're about to go outside of the lane. *[Maybe reflectorized guardrail. ODOT will be doing a separate road delineation project adding more reflectors.]*
- A committee member asked if the Cornelius Pass project team is going to remove anything from the ODOT road delineation project. *[The project team will need to talk with ODOT about how much they're investing. Generally, it's relatively low cost and we'll only remove small amounts.]*

- A CAC member mentioned that tearing up reflectors after ODOT has placed them is not a good strategy. *[The cost to do so would be less than \$10,000. The project team will coordinate with ODOT.]*
- A member of the public stated that this project should coordinate with ODOT. *[Depending on where they're at on the delineation project, this project team will be able to coordinate with ODOT.]*

S-Curves: The project team recommends straightening out the section of road between the two curves, allowing for transition. Gabe explained that the hill will need a cut on the inside with a 15-foot wide rock catchment and drainage area added. The water would flow off the newly reconstructed section of road and drain towards the rock catchment and drainage area.

This solution will involve some rock blasting in order to make the vertical cut, which will also require closures on Cornelius Pass Rd. The team needs to do more design work before they can say how long it will take.

- A CAC member asked if the project team knows about the landslide in that area to the upper left side of the slide. *[Yes, the project team is aware. The team will shift the roadside to the more stable part of the hill. A lot of the previous landslide area was constructed on fill.]*
- A CAC member asked if this includes the camber fixes. *[The project team is now transitioning it in a way that is much safer.]*
- A committee member said they thought the CAC previously discussed sheeting of water across the roadway and ice formation. What is being done to address that? *[Gabe stated they should talk about it more so that he can understand the specifics of it.]*

Beacons on the top of the S-Curves. The project team is proposing to put in a couple of beacons on the S-curves on the north side of the bottom of the hill and the south side of the top of the hill along with a curve warning sign.

Plainview Road. The team recommends shoulder widening, vegetation clearing and guardrail improvements to improve sight distance. More design work is needed for these solutions.

Kaiser Road. There is an overlap of the sight line with vegetation along Kaiser Rd. The project team considered installation of part-time restriction signs similar to those at Sheltered Nook Road, but didn't think it would be as effective, as sightlines at Kaiser Road are fairly good and it would probably be too expensive. The team is hoping to do vegetation clearing and hillside grading.

- A CAC member asked how far up the road the clearing extends. *[The clearing doesn't extend much farther than shown. It's focused at the intersection.]*

Corridor-wide improvements. Gabe explained the corridor-wide improvements, listed below:

- Variable Message Signs (VMS):** Not recommended (more detail included below);
- Signage upgrades:** Replace and upgrade all signs to current standards (more detail included below);
- Vehicle pullouts:** For police, refuge, mailbox, school buses;
- Guardrail and barrier upgrades** (more detail included below);
- Wildlife crossings:** Where other improvements are located;
- Reduce pavement drop-offs:** Fill in abrupt edges with aggregate.

Reduce pavement drop-offs. Gabe explained that the drop-offs are throughout the entire corridor, however aggregate may not be needed in all places.

- A CAC member asked what the minimum shoulder width would be. *[The paved shoulder width won't be changed. It's whatever the existing width is. The existing gravel area will get filled with crushed aggregate.]*
- A CAC member asked if the aggregate is going to be filled in so that a vehicle wheel would be able to get back on pavement. *[Yes, it would be filled in. One exception could be where we install guardrail.]*

Variable message signs (VMS). There are a number of benefits and drawbacks to consider with VMS. The team looked into placing them in several locations, including placing signs at the north and south ends of Cornelius Pass Road to communicate if there's a crash, emergency or detours; putting one on Hwy 30 so people could avoid turning off if needed; and placing a sign on the Washington County side, which would require some coordination and wouldn't capture traffic on Hwy 26. Gabe explained that this could cost \$400,000-\$500,000, which is a large amount relative to the existing budget and the potential safety benefit isn't known until the sign is installed. There would also be operational challenges as to ODOT or Washington County ownership, so the project team is recommending not including variable message signs at this time.

- A CAC member inquired about the existing sign on Highway 30 on the Scappoose side. They wondered if there is any coordination between Multnomah County and ODOT that communicates not using Cornelius Pass Rd. when there are issues. *[Yes.]*

Signage upgrades. The project team plans to do comprehensive sign upgrades throughout the entire corridor so that signs are up to standards. This includes: replacing all existing signs; replacing chevrons with reflective signs; including mile point markers every half mile instead of every mile; installing school bus stop signs; updating all of the curve warning signs; and ensuring the posted speeds are correct. New signs are effective and have a fairly low cost.

Pullouts. The team looked at seven locations, based on where space was available. Pullouts are for emergencies and law enforcement and need to be located in flat areas.

- A CAC member asked if there is a pullout for southbound traffic by Columbia St. near the mailboxes. *[No, it's a function of where the space is available and where additional asphalt could be added.]*

Guardrail upgrades: The committee has discussed how guardrail updates are necessary due to an unfortunate fatality. The project team found more guardrails are needed in the area than originally discussed. Criteria for guardrails were examined for the 30% Design and the team came up with a spectrum that included a range of options by technology and cost. The project team recommends adding 15,000 linear feet, or three miles, of guardrail which will cost approximately \$698,000. Guardrail locations are mostly on the east side of road, because there is a slope on most of the west side.

There are technical challenges here. One of the key standards is a two-foot minimum space between the rail and striping, which is not necessarily feasible in all locations. Other challenges include not having enough space for proper end-treatments and a potential increase in property damage-only crashes. The project team will carefully consider all of these challenges in the design.

- A CAC member asked about guardrail in the area from Skyline down to the S-curves. *[The recommendation would be to not install guardrail from the inside edges of the curve, but still place guardrail in the straight sections. Adding guardrails here is more about improving safety along the steep slope than being on the curve.]*

Summary of costs. The project team came up with an alternative cost and Draft DAP (Design Acceptance Package). Gabe explained that the suggested package is taking away three initial options. The total number includes construction, administration and right-of-way acquisition. *(The complete summary can be found in the Appendix.)*

Recap of schedule. The project is now at 30% Design. The project team will be working on the 90% design package and anticipates having a final design by summer 2017. Construction is anticipated to begin in winter 2017/ 2018.

Construction detour. Several detour routes are being considered for construction. These include: McNamee Rd., which is what the County uses when there's a one-day shutdown for striping; and, Newberry Rd., which might be more truck-friendly. The duration of detours is not yet known.

Public Comment

Susan Watt stressed her concerns about Newberry Rd. being used as a detour route. Newberry Rd. already has size limitations, heavy traffic and a lack of enforcement and she would like to know what the County is going to do to address it for this project and beyond. She stated that the Multnomah County Comprehensive Transportation Plan has a statement about maintaining these roads as rural roads.

Laurel Harroun seconded concerns about Newberry Rd., stating that traffic is heavy during mornings and evenings and there is a lot of litter.

Larry Luethe echoed concerns about Newberry Road, saying that people heading north need a turn lane. He said drivers can't turn around when there are bottlenecks on Hwy 30. Drivers on Cornelius Pass Rd., turning on Kaiser Rd. or Brooks Rd. need to slow down to 5 miles an hour to get around the corner. This area is hazardous, particularly needing to turn right when going downhill. He reminded the team to think about businesses and gas trucks when considering closures on Cornelius Pass Rd.

Catherine Delzell lives on Columbia St., which connects to Cornelius Pass and has a blind corner going northbound. In absence of any road straightening, there should be some warning signs. Drivers that attempt to turn onto Columbia St. can easily get rear-ended. The team should consider an advanced warning sign as drivers approach Columbia St.

Marta Kerley stressed the need to reduce speed limits. When curves are straightened, it may encourage people to drive fast.

Mike Murray said that having no place for law enforcement to pull people over was an issue, but that pullouts will be available.

Matt McCarthy said he hopes that reflecting studs and delineators on the insides of the curves will help prevent collisions.

Sandy Newman mentioned the locals take Logie Trail as an alternate route. If there's a detour, people will bring trucks up Newberry Rd., which has a lack of enforcement.

Niki Pierce mentioned that there is an increase in truck traffic in the area due to construction in Washington County. She asked what will happen to all of the trucks when Cornelius Pass Rd. is shut down.

- A member of the public brought up concerns about trucks carrying hazardous material driving near a culvert that feeds into a creek. They asked if there have been any new conversations that would allow trucks in the Hwy 26 tunnel. A member of the audience responded that fuel trucks can't use the Hwy 26 tunnel, so they have to take 217 to I-5 to get to Linnton. She said trucks hauling dirt down to Scappoose do not have other options.
- Another member of the public responded that trucks are paying about \$2.50 a mile to drive those roads through the PUC, which is a lot of money to drive this road.

CAC Discussion

Senator Betsy Johnson told the committee that this is a vast improvement from where the project was at the last meeting. She noted that the project was supposed to get more money, but it was given to the SE Powell Project. She'd like the team to consider performance incentives for the contractor to stick to the completion schedule. The senator said that comments regarding connecting Columbia County Rider would be welcome, as they've had a change of management.

Bruce Penney said that the project has made incredible progress and thanked everyone for their work. A quarter of a million dollars is a lot of money. While he initially proposed the vehicle pullouts, he is now against them for the following reasons:

- 1) County engineers and the sheriff say they can't enforce speeds on the curves. Pullouts aren't going to help. The proposed turnouts already exist and vehicles can pull out on gravel just fine, so paving isn't needed.
 - Other committee members agreed that there's no reason to pave them, and that the County plans not to.
- 2) Portland Public Schools said they'd like pullouts for buses, but there are no houses near most of the proposed pullouts.
- 3) Some of the team has worked with the post office to make mail delivery safer and have spent \$1,000 to make a pullout. Maybe clustering mailboxes is a solution.
- 4) Illegal dumping happens at vehicle pullouts.
- 5) Commuters relieve themselves on pullouts.
- 6) Shoulders and guardrails are more important. Pullouts are not needed, so reallocate that portion of the budget. Bruce stated that the minimum size of pullouts should be what's acceptable to the sheriff's office.

Mike Pullen asked the Sheriff's deputy if he has looked at any of these pullouts. Sherriff Daren Taber stated that, for speed enforcement on the road, law enforcement needs a pullout they can accelerate from. That way, officers can pull over people who are heading into a curve going 60 mph. As long as the aggregate shoulder is maintained, that is fine and additional paved pullouts may not be necessary. Project team to coordinate with Sheriff office on surface treatment of pullouts.

Ian Cannon asked if there is a way to prioritize a few pullouts with the Sheriff's Office. Sheriff Daren Taber said that the northbound pullout and the pullout approaching Hwy 30 would be most used by the sheriff's office.

Senator Johnson, Jan, Bruce and Carol noted they don't think the pullouts need to be paved. Mike asked if any CAC members would like to see all seven paved. No one on the committee indicated a preference for paving all the proposed pullouts.

Mike stated there will be another public meeting to discuss final design and the construction schedule, including road closures.

Carol Chesarek shared several comments with the committee. She said she would like to see what can be done with the current funding of \$3.5 million before more funding is considered. She suggested coordinating with West Multnomah Conservation on the 8th Ave. improvements, as they've already done stream work. She stressed not to undo restoration that's already been done. For the box culvert, Carol suggested a raised and short culvert for safe wildlife passage.

Carol suggested that it would be helpful to have some way to tell people when there's snow and ice and suggested that reflectors shift from blue to white when ice is on the roadway. *[Riad stated that these types of reflectors cause difficulty in that they only sense ambient temperature, not pavement temperature, creating a false impression of safety.]* Carol acknowledged that there were a lot of comments from the audience about volume of traffic and speeding. She stated that this is not just an issue on Cornelius Pass, but also on Newberry and Germantown roads. She said that funding is needed to do a Transportation Land Management Study. She expressed that single occupancy car trips need to be reduced and that CC Rider has a bus that comes down from Columbia County to connect to PCC Rock Creek campus in Washington County. One option would be to get CC Rider to connect to light rail.

Sarah Hanson also shared several comments on the 30% design. She would like to see signs that warn commuters of driveways entering the roadway. She is not familiar with the delineation project and is hoping to get some more information about it. She followed the transportation planning project (TSP) that the County undertook this year and was shocked by how much the planning group took from the Cornelius Pass Safety project and the result was strange. In the TSP that was adopted the Skyline Blvd. intersection was listed as a medium priority, which she found to be absurd. She emphasized that the County should spend money where people are dying. Sarah encouraged everyone to look at the ratings (on page 106) of the TSP on Multnomah County website. Finally, she would like to see some legislation passed that would allow for photo radar on the pass.

Drew DeBois stated that his Fire Department will need to coordinate closely with the construction team regarding the road closure schedule. The Fire Department will need to know if they have full or partial access to the road, if it's one or two lanes and will need to base their access needs on call volume. Mike agreed with this.

Jan Campbell suggested a Park and Ride for CC Rider. Wayne Bauer stated that a project has been proposed with CC Rider. He also said that a short-term closure benefits the project because things get done faster, saving construction dollars.

Steve Robertson said it would be nice to find alternatives to single occupancy vehicles. If Washington County is encouraged to expand its section of Cornelius Pass Road to six lanes, congestion on Multnomah County's section will continue to increase.

Gabe provided some additional information on the ODOT rumble strips and delineators. Delineators are typically posts with a small reflector to provide people with a sense of where the road is. They are not embedded in the pavement, but rather sticks that can be flexible or on steel posts with reflectors. More information about these options will be shared with the committee.

Meeting Close

Jessica thanked everyone for attending and adjourned the meeting.