

Cornelius Pass Road Safety Improvements Project Community Advisory Committee Meeting #4 Summary

Meeting 4: April 29, 2014, 6:00–8:30 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
- Senator Betsy Johnson
- Dave Linden
- Bruce Penney
- Michele Roy
- Bob Russell
- George Sowder

CAC Members Not in Attendance:

- Tim Love
 - Steve Robertson
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County Staff in Attendance:

- Sandra Prock, Project Manager
- Brian Vincent, County Engineer
- Mike Pullen, Communications
- Don Pfister, Road Operations Supervisor
- Kim Peoples, Director of Department of Community Services
- Deputy Kent Krumpschmidt, Multnomah County Sheriff's Office

Consultants in Attendance:

- Chris Link, Murray, Smith & Associates
 - Gabe Crop, Murray, Smith & Associates
 - Wade Scarbrough, Kittelson & Associates
 - Vaughn Brown, JLA Public Involvement
 - Jamie Harvie, JLA Public Involvement
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Members of the Public in Attendance who signed in:

- Rosaline Elfick, Resident
- Josette Hugo, Rep. Brad Witt
- Miles Merwin, Resident
- Mark Miller, Spotlight
- Diane Shaw, Resident
- Dick Springer, West Multnomah SWCD

Actions

- The CAC did not change their recommendation for a signalized intersection at Skyline Blvd. CAC members expressed a preference for a lower cost, 25 mph design speed.

Outstanding items/requests for information

- Change “traffic smoothing” language in intersection comparison table.
- Information on sidewalks in rural settings

Welcome and Agenda Review

Vaughn Brown of JLA Public Involvement welcomed everyone and reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting was to promote better understanding of options for the Skyline Blvd. intersection and answer Community Advisory Committee (CAC) questions about the options. He noted that the meeting is not intended to reopen conversations about the rest of the corridor or to ask the group to reconsider their previous input.

Wade Scarbrough, Kittelson & Associates, introduced himself as the traffic engineering consultant.

Approval of 3/18 Meeting Summary

Vaughn asked for comments or changes to 3/18 meeting summary. There were none and it was approved.

All Options Review for Skyline Intersection

Wade Scarbrough provided an overview of the traffic study. He explained that they evaluated the intersection on three different criteria, including level of service, average delay, and volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio. They considered four options: the 2013 existing conditions, the 2035 “no build” conditions, and the performance with a roundabout and signalized option. He noted that the team does not see the “no build” option as a viable option – if safety is a concern now, it will only get worse as more traffic tries to negotiate the already underperforming intersection. The team sees both the roundabout and signalized options as reasonable comprehensive solutions.

- A CAC member asked what volume of traffic increase they are anticipating. *[40–50% growth in traffic between 2013 and 2035.]*
- A CAC member asked for the definition of “critical movement.” *[At a stop sign controlled intersection, critical movement considers the worst case scenario. In this case, it is the left turn movement from the side street. For the signalized intersection or roundabout, overall intersection function is considered.]*
- Another CAC member asked whether they can evaluate the roundabout option based on critical movement. *[The traffic study has calculated this and the information is in the appendix of the traffic report.]*
- A CAC member said that none of the anticipated delays at Skyline come close to the amount of delay during a closure of Cornelius Pass Road at other hotspot locations.

Gabe Crop, Murray Smith & Associates, presented all of the options that the project team has considered for this intersection and explained why certain options were not carried forward. A table of this information was included in the meeting packets and is available in the alternatives analysis memo.

- One CAC member expressed frustration that use of the railroad tunnel was disregarded for budgetary reasons. He said that larger, more drastic changes could save money in the long run as opposed to incremental changes.

- One CAC member expressed concern that many options are dismissed with simply “does not address safety concerns”. *[This is the reason for going through each one at this meeting and answering any questions.]*

Signal and Roundabout Presentation

Gabe presented an overview of the signalized option, including a traffic simulation. He presented a profile along Skyline Blvd. for a 35 mph design speed and explained the difference if a 25 mph design speed is used for a signalized intersection. He presented some of the other signal options considered by the project team for higher speeds and explained that they had much higher associated cost and right-of-way impacts.

- The group discussed the Skyline Blvd. profiles. If a signal were to be designed using current profiles, 25 mph is the highest design speed that could be applied. The project team feels 25 mph may be an option but that applying a 35 mph design speed would allow for better sight distance for vehicles travelling straight through the intersection, which is why a wide cost estimate range has been provided. Gabe noted the design speed does not have to match the posted speed.
- The group discussed that the traffic analysis shows the majority of traffic is turning from Skyline Blvd. onto Cornelius Pass Road rather than traveling straight through the intersection. One CAC member felt that it is not worth the additional money for a 35mph design speed for the minority of drivers. It was pointed out that people coming down the hill and running the light is a safety consideration.

Gabe presented an overview of the roundabout option, including the three designs that have been considered and the one that the project team prefers. He explained that roundabouts slow traffic and have less severe kinds of accidents than a signal. The design team initially proposed the roundabout as the preferred option due to the documented safety benefits and given the goal and classification of this project as a safety project. He explained that with a roundabout option, Skyline Blvd. would be designed for 25 mph because slowing speed is one of the intentions of a roundabout.

- The group talked about a roundabout being proposed north of Forest Grove. This intersection is a different situation than Cornelius Pass Road, though some of the safety benefits listed for that roundabout would be the same at Cornelius Pass Road.
- There was some discussion about driver confusion and concern that people would not know to yield in a roundabout. A member of the public said that a roundabout would require adjusting a long-term culture of people used to going straight through on Cornelius Pass Road.
- A CAC member asked if the intersection will be illuminated. *[Yes, it would be illuminated.]*
- There was some conversation about the safety of bicyclists and pedestrians in the roundabout crossings. There are ways to enhance bicycle and pedestrian visibility at roundabouts, such as flashing beacons at crossings.
- There was discussion about trucks using the roundabout. The roundabout is designed for trucks to take both lanes. It can be posted as illegal for a car to pass a truck in the roundabout. A CAC member said that heavy hauling is done along Cornelius Pass Road, which means very long trucks. There are roundabout designs that accommodate very large trucks better than the design proposed; however, they require a much bigger footprint.

Gabe presented a table comparing the signalized and roundabout options.

- One CAC member noted that “traffic smoothing” is not necessarily a benefit for those people with driveways on Cornelius Pass Road because they need gaps to exit. *[This will be added to the table.]*

- The group discussed conflict points of the two options. A CAC member pointed out that the roundabout conflict points do not include the potential conflicts from trucks taking both lanes in the roundabout as those conflicts could occur anywhere in the intersection.

Discussion:

- Several CAC members asked how the project is accommodating the Plainview Grocery Store. *[The goal is to provide sufficient access to the store. Exact access would be determined during final design. Multnomah County has continued to meet with the owner to work on access issues.]*
- A CAC member asked whether those parties with right-of-way impacts are amenable to the change. *[This has not been established. These will be partial takes. The project team will try to avoid or minimize adverse impacts to property owners.]*
- A CAC member asked whether a calculation has been done to consider the overall loss of business for the store. *[Adverse impact is assessed as part of the “before” and “after” appraisals by the real estate experts]*
- A CAC member asked whether right-of-way purchases can be made in anticipation of impacts. *[The federal funds process is used for acquisitions. Design must clearly show the required right of way for the project to pay for the acquisition.]*
- A CAC member asked how the “racetrack” effect (faster traffic passing slower traffic in the additional lane at the intersection) has been addressed in the designs. *[The project team is still addressing this. One option is to extend the passing lanes further ahead to provide for longer passing opportunities.]*
- One CAC member said that the improvements at Skyline Blvd. are focused on capacity rather than safety. *[Safety and capacity are tied together. As delays increase, people take more risks to get through the intersection.]*
- Several CAC members expressed concern that bicycle facilities are being incorporated into the design when Cornelius Pass Road is inherently unfriendly to bicycles. *[The project team is considering that most bicycle traffic comes from Skyline Blvd. and has focused on designing a safe crossing across Cornelius Pass Road.]*
- One CAC member asked for an explanation to the term, “wetland ditch impact.” *[This is a roadside ditch that may be regulated as a wetland.]*
- One CAC member said that the signal just put in at Cornelius Pass Road and Hwy 30 does not work well, and suggested it might not work well at Skyline Blvd.
- One CAC member asked whether it may be possible to get more money for the project. CAC member Senator Betsy Johnson recommended using the money in hand and to not hold off on improvements in hope of more money.
- There was some discussion about spending more money on other high-priority areas along Cornelius Pass Road rather than at this intersection. One CAC member expressed a desire to hold off on Skyline Blvd. intersection improvements in favor of more extensive changes to other areas. Overall, the group supported making improvements at the intersection.
- The group discussed the second-tier or “bubble” items that will be included in the project if budget is available. The group noted that if the Skyline Blvd. intersection were designed to be less expensive (e.g. designed to a 25 mph design speed), savings can be spent in other areas. Some CAC members wanted to further discuss which items could be included with saved money from the intersection, however it was noted that more accurate estimates will be developed for the first-tier and second-tier options that will be taken into further design. The design package will then undergo another round of review at an open house and final CAC meeting where the issue of how to allocate excess budget (if any) will occur.

Public Comment

Roslyn Elfick asked why the Skyline Blvd. level of service is an F and whether other local intersections are also rated F. *[This rating is based on delay, so intersections with less delay may not be failing. The project team offered to discuss this further with her following the meeting.]*

CAC Recommendation

Vaughn asked the group if they would like to recommend moving forward with the listed improvement options, including a signalized intersection, with a preference for a 25 mph design speed. There was a consensus to move forward with that recommendation.

Next Steps & Close

The project team will work on more advanced designs and costs. These designs and costs will be brought to a public meeting and then a final CAC meeting for input in late summer/early fall. The project team will send out specifics for these meetings when they are known.

One CAC member said that she is currently working on putting together more information on wildlife crossings and will provide that to the project team.