

# Meeting Summary



## Health & Equity Workgroup – Meeting #2

Monday, August 17, 2015

3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Beaverton Library, Cathy Stanton Conference Room, 12375 SW 5<sup>th</sup> St., Beaverton OR 97005

### Members and Attendees Present

Alfonso Lopez-Vasquez, Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Member and Pacific University

Amanda Garcia Snell, Washington County Department of Health and Human Services

Andrew Singelakis, Washington County Department of Land Use & Transportation

Ann Blaker, Bienestar

Jennie Proctor, Washington County Office of Community Development

Kimberly Armstrong, Washington County Department of Housing Services

Phillip Wu, Study Advisory Committee (SAC) Member and Kaiser Permanente

Maria Caballero-Rubio, Centro Cultural

Sam Diaz, 1000 Friends of Oregon

Scotty Ellis, Metro

Steve Boughton, Washington County Bicycle Transportation Coalition

Steve Franks, Washington County Department of Land Use & Transportation

### Study Team and Staff

Chris Deffebach, Washington County

Dyami Valentine, Washington County

Erin Wardell, Washington County

Mike Dahlstrom, Washington County

Karen Savage, Washington County

Jay Lyman, David Evans and Associates

Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement

Kenya Williams, JLA Public Involvement

## Welcome and Introductions

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Andrew Singelakis, Director, Washington County Department of Land Use & Transportation, welcomed participants to the meeting. The study team staff and workgroup members introduced themselves.

Jeanne Lawson, facilitator, reviewed the agenda and the purpose of the meeting – to gather input on evaluation criteria to measure the health and equity values, and to discuss ideas for the transportation investment packages.

## Study Update

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Chris Deffebach, Washington County, provided a brief update about the values statement and shared a graphic which detailed the link between scenarios and transportation investment packages.

## Trends, Challenges and Transportation Investment Packages

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Erin Wardell and Dyami Valentine, Washington County, presented future trends and challenges facing the county and the approach for developing transportation investment packages and ideas for those packages with a focus on health and equity concerns. The changes in socio-economic data also were presented and following the presentations [see handouts] the team sought input on the needs for future investments from a health and equity lens.

### Committee Discussion

#### Current Trends and Land Use Scenarios

Members were asked to discuss: *Are there any **health and equity trends** that you feel will have a strong influence on land use that have not been included?*

- Need to be more deliberate, exact, and **inclusive of diverse populations**. For example, look at demographics of the K-12 system to understand what our population will look like decades from now, and consider their income levels related to housing and transportation needs. The current elementary school population includes a large portion of Hispanic and Latino populations.
- **Climate refugees** will likely include a large number of wealthy retirees coming to region. They will have a different lifestyle and higher disposable income. Low-income populations are the least mobile; they will be the ones least able to move due to climate change influences.
- Look at **gentrification data** to see if/where spatial relationships may be intensifying.
- **Changes in political leadership** at the state or federal level can influence transportation. Look at patterns to see how political parties allocate transportation resources. Similarly, **widening disparity in political belief** and stalemate has an impact on policy making.
- See if there are **specific immigrant communities and unique needs** they have (for example, large families that need larger housing). Staff noted that household size and immigration of foreign-born populations is being considered, but the projections can't forecast where specific immigrant communities could be living in the future.
- **Affordable housing supplemental funding term limits** are typically thirty or forty years and then that housing may revert to market rate. Consider the supplemental funding expiration dates, and what that might mean for availability of affordable housing in the future.
- One trend is that **communities of color are moving to satellite communities** and cities west.
- Don't let **averages mask disparities** based on race and income. A relatively few high-income earners can result in a skewed average and misrepresent the overall income impression of a community or census block.
- **Transportation technology** (like e-bikes and autonomous vehicles) might impact the future.

One member recommended that staff look into this resource: Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education which develops 10 year reports on the demographics of education, to help better understand what might be expected of future populations in public schools.

## Transportation Investment Packages

Members had a discussion on: *What future transportation challenges should the study address, and what investments should be included to address those challenges?* Members identified:

- The need for an adequate transportation link to housing and jobs. Consider whether there is a **mismatch between housing and employment**. Transit lines may be a limiting factor. For example, if **transit lines** continue to only connect east-west well (not north-south), it could perpetuate a lack of access to jobs that are not along that east-west line.  
  
Keep people and the money within Washington County by adequately serving those transit needs. Keep jobs and affordable housing within reasonable distance of one another and appropriate connections between jobs and housing.
- Currently there are **long distances between transit “hubs.”** The goal should not be a 90-minute commute (too long). There should be more strategically located hubs and reduction in commute times. Last mile connections are important as well.
- Federal guidelines require **dispersed, not concentrated, affordable housing**. More high capacity transit may be needed to serve dispersed affordable housing.
- A “Friends of 175<sup>th</sup>” group has organized and went to the Study Advisory Committee (SAC) to communicate their concerns. This is an example of a community that has a voice. As this study continues, we need to find more ways to **listen to and be responsive to “unheard voices,”** – those who are not able to come out to meetings to bring their concerns.
- **Criteria that is used for Metro area transportation funding** tends to favor urban areas.. How can we influence criteria so that it favors Washington County, and particularly north-south connections?
- One challenge is **siting of schools**. Schools are not necessarily sited where the need is, but rather where land is inexpensive. This impacts transportation system development and the community.
- We know where residential land uses are in the future, but we cannot predict location of affordable housing in the future. Affordable housing tends to go where there are affordable lands. If we continue to invest transportation dollars in strong, high capacity corridors, then those corridors will get stronger and more expensive, and will lead to greater disparity between affordable housing and transit. Try to **diversify transportation investments**—so that we invest in both strong corridors, and also in communities with low-income populations that have few transportation options.
- One challenge is that **bike and pedestrian gaps** may remain into the future. Bike and pedestrian facilities are often designed at local level (cities), which perpetuates lack of regional connectivity

and integrated planning. There is a need for **integrated regional planning** that crosses geographic boundaries.

- For safety and mobility reasons, we need to think about road planning that gets commercial trucks and freight off of the system that pedestrians, bicyclists and transit users use. We could have **dedicated truck paths** in addition to dedicated bike/ped paths.
- Transportation investments should **serve both commute and non-commute trip** demands. (Staff noted that they are considering both in the modeling.) If most trips are not work related, then perhaps more of the investment needs to go to non-work related/recreational trips.
- From a **health perspective**, we should promote a **transportation system that facilitates recreational trips**, so that we aren't just going from home to work. There should be good transportation options to reach recreational areas, like trails and open spaces. One challenge is that, the more time a family spends on essential transportation (getting to work), it deprives them of the opportunity to recreate, which negatively impacts the health of the whole family.

## Health and Equity Evaluation Measures

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Chris Deffebach presented draft evaluation measures to assess the health and equity values of the transportation alternatives in this study. [See handouts]

### Committee Discussion

Members were asked to discuss: *What are the best methods to define vulnerable populations in the future? What are the best measures to evaluate trade-offs for health and equity values in this futures study?*

### Defining "Vulnerable Populations"

- Members discussed using **income as a proxy** for vulnerable populations. One person said that it may be good to lead with "income" to define vulnerable populations because there is a **correlation between race and income**, and because we are not strictly talking about racial justice.

On the other hand, it seems that other processes and jurisdictions are using race as a proxy for income, focused on racial equity. Our current data and how we currently define things is going to drive the future, and how we think about future disparities. It makes sense to **adopt racial equity as a framework** looking out into the future. However, it is difficult to turn this into evaluation measures.

- Recommend looking into this reference: **EPA C-FERST/Environmental Justice Communities**. This work looks at specific transportation measures, and maps it out.
- Historically, housing and transportation policies have been discriminatory, and many of these **discriminatory policies** are still being implemented. We need to consider this moving forward.

One guideline is: transportation planning should be considered from the view of a person pushing a stroller or using a wheelchair.

## Discussion of Evaluation Measures

- Suggest using data to define the current **average travel time of white versus non-white** households. For future snapshots, use those same breakdowns and see if there are still disparities between travel time of white and non-white households.
- Members discussed how to include **race and ethnicity** in the evaluation measures:
  - Race is the major issue that we need to reconcile in the study. There are inequities in housing, health, and education due to historic segregation. If more African Americans and other ethnic groups move to Washington County in the future as a result of displacement from Portland, we need to be responsive to their needs.
  - **“Equity”** should be the measure. Segregation and discrimination gave us the inequities.
  - We need to recognize that there are **data limitations** currently, but aim in the future to acquire better data. We may use proxies currently because it is all we have. But going forward, we should collect data that includes breakdowns of race and ethnicity so that we can compare whether there are disparities and assess the impacts.
  - We may not have good measures that will evaluate things along the race and ethnicity line. It may be useful to add context through a **qualitative narrative** to illuminate historical inequities in transportation (acknowledge paradox).
- **“Equal treatment” is not “equity.”** Averages mask equity issues. If we serve everyone in the County with the same level of access, it is still not equity. Some people need more support; it takes more investment to help those that are furthest behind to catch up. Historically, we have invested more in certain industries and groups (not underserved communities). We may need to invest more in underserved communities to level the playing field.

## Definition of “low-income”

Members discussed the draft definition of “low income” in the evaluation measures:

- Some members felt that the 50% of median household income (MHI) definition is adequate, and represents what is traditionally used. Households at 50% of MHI and below truly are the most housing/transportation burdened. Some members felt that 50% is too low and suggested as much as 75%.
- One recommendation is to use the **self-sufficiency index** (used by Greater Portland Pulse and others). It goes beyond housing and transportation and includes more cost impacts.
- In order to make the data useful for the affordable housing community, the bar for low-income should not be higher than 60% (because the standard used by HUD and other groups is a little less than this).

- Overall, members were comfortable with a definition between 50-60% of median household income.
- Age is also an important reference data.

### Suggestions for Measures

Staff presented a list of the Study teams' intended measurements for health and equity. Members gave these ideas for *what* to measure:

- Travel time
- Number of affordable housing units located within specific distance to transit
- Can students walk to grade school? Measure this by presence of sidewalks (sidewalk coverage within "x" radius of school).
- Sidewalk coverage within "last mile" of transit stops/hubs.

### Action Items and Next Steps

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Chris Deffebach asked members to email suggestions for health and equity measures (email to: [Christina\\_Deffebach@co.washington.or.us](mailto:Christina_Deffebach@co.washington.or.us)).

The county will work to identify two transportation packages that will be submitted for public comment in late October or early November and continue to solicit ideas from the public about what should go into the packages. Members are encouraged to help with this process by being a part of small discussion groups or setting up meetings with the County.

The next meeting will be in early 2016 unless members would like to meet in small group to provide the County with feedback.