

# Meeting Summary



Washington County  
**Transportation Futures Study**  
Exploring options • Informing choices

## Study Advisory Committee Meeting #11

Thursday, February 2, 2017

2:00 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Washington County Sheriff's Office – East Precinct, 3700 SW Murray Blvd., Beaverton, OR 97005

### Members Present

Meeky Blizzard  
Loren Behrman  
Mark Fryburg  
Steve Larrance  
Marc San Soucie

Kathy Stallkamp  
Bruce Starr  
Jerry Willey  
Robert Kellogg  
Phillip Wu

### Study Team and Staff

Andrew Singelakis, Washington County  
Chris Deffebach, Washington County  
Dyami Valentine, Washington County  
Jay Lyman, DEA  
Adam Argo, DEA

Andrew Mortenson, DEA  
Bruce Warner, Warner Group LLC  
Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement  
Tom Eiland, CFM Strategic Communications

### Guests and Public

Rob Dixon, City of Hillsboro  
Don Odermott, City of Hillsboro  
Allen Amaisca, Save Helvetia  
Robert Bailey, Save Helvetia  
Phil Stamburgh  
Lynne Murtie

Jeff Pazdalski, Westside Transportation Alliance  
Nancy Kraushaar, City of Wilsonville  
Michele Limas  
Deborah Lockwood  
Jeff Patrillo  
Kay Nakamoto

## Welcome and Agenda Review

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Andrew Singelakis, Washington County Director of Land Use and Transportation, welcomed committee members.

Chris Deffebach, Washington County, reviewed the agenda. She noted that this meeting is a final chance to provide comments on the Study findings, and invited SAC members to submit written comments to accompany the Study Final Report for the February Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement, asked for comments on the January 5, 2017 meeting summary. Steve Larrance submitted written edits to the summary.

## Telephone Polling

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### Presentation

Tom Eiland, CFM Strategic Communications, presented a [PowerPoint presentation](#) that reviewed the findings from a telephone survey among a representative random sample of Washington County residents age 18 years and older. The questions in the telephone survey were not the same as the questions asked in the online open house, but it is possible to see some similarities between feedback gathered through the two instruments.

Key points from Tom's presentation and committee comments include:

- Almost everyone perceives **transportation will be a problem** in the county in the future.
- **Values and goals:** People consider congestion-type issues to be the most important goals for the County to address over the coming decades. However other transportation solutions and goals were also highly rated. People tend to rate all of the issues as very/somewhat important.
  - It is unusual for people to rate all of these transportation issues as somewhat/very important. In other surveys, there is usually more of a disparity. It seems like people were thinking about the longer term future and anticipate a number of solutions will be needed to solve transportation problems in the future.
  - There is some distinction among demographic groups. Younger people, lower income earners and Hispanics tended towards rating public and active transportation more highly. Yet Hispanics also rated freeway as very important. Older people rated congestion issues as more important.
  - **Committee comments:**
    - There seems to be a lot of interest in the many modes of transportation among the general population. This echoes the opinions of the more interested, sophisticated group that participated in the online open house.
    - A member asked if respondents might have been thinking of the values and goals presented as not mutually exclusive. For example, they might think that doing something in active transportation might reduce congestion? Tom responded that we didn't find that in the qualitative research in the focus groups, and the survey was not constructed in a way that participants would come to that kind of conclusion.
    - It seems like this survey really showed us about the user: people who use roads will rate congestion as important.
- **Price Elasticity:** 48% of respondents said they would be willing to pay \$300 more per year in taxes and fees to fund transportation improvements in Washington County. 74% would be willing to pay \$100 per year. Younger men and democrats are more willing to pay the most.
  - At least 60% of all demographic groups are willing to pay at least \$100.
  - **Committee comments:** A member noted that the "Not as willing to pay" column in the chart in the slideshow is misleading.

- **North/south Road:** 68% of respondents favor building a new limited access north/south road through rural Western Washington County from Hillsboro to Wilsonville. 9% are undecided which is a very small number—showing that most people have an opinion on this issue.
  - Those who favor it cited reasons related to reducing traffic congestion and improving traffic flow. Those opposed questioned whether there is need for such a road, and had concerns about environmental and loss of farmland issues. Tax issues were not particularly strong, which was surprising.
  - There was even more support when we told people that the road would reduce congestion. There was less support when we said the road would be tolled; that it would cost each taxpayer \$125/year; and that traffic on Hwy 217 would not be affected.
  - The level of support was similar whether the North/south road was located in the rural or urban area.
  - **Committee comments:**
    - A member questioned the conclusion that the North/south road would not alleviate traffic on Hwy 217.
    - A member noted that there might have been more support if people were told that the new road would reduce traffic on urban and rural roads, not just rural roads.
  
- **Northern connector:** 60% favor building a new limited access road connecting Highway 26 with Highway 30 and North Portland. A large share was undecided.
  - Those who favor the road cited traffic congestion and flow issues. Those opposed really just don't know the area, so they said that people will not use the road. This shows that it will be a challenge moving forward to explain to people where this road is, exactly.
  - There was even more support for the road when we told people that it would improve traffic flow on Hwy 26 and reduce traffic on other roads.
  - Even at a cost of \$50/year, there was high support for this road.
  - **Committee comments:**
    - A member requested responses to this question by zip code, to see if residents who live near the proposed road responded differently.
  
- **Investment priorities:** Participants ranked roads and highways as first priority, followed by transit, then technology, and then bike/ped. When first and second priorities are combined, both roads/highways and transit are almost identical.
  - Results change based on demographics: Higher income earners and Republicans tend to rate roads highest. Younger people, residents of west county, low income earners and Democrats are less likely to rate roads/highways as the first priority.
  
- **Key findings:** The top findings out of the telephone survey are that:
  - People recognize that transportation is a problem. You don't need to sell them on it.

- People recognize the necessity of investing in all areas.
- People are willing to pay to get a better transportation system.
- There is good support for both of the new roads proposed, especially as they relate to reducing congestion. Support declines when people learn about environmental, farmland, and greenhouse gas emissions impacts.

## Final Comments on Study Findings

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### Committee Discussion

Sylvia led a round-table discussion around:

- *What have you learned from the Study?*
- *What is the one thing you want decision-makers to know about this Study and its findings?*

Members made the following comments and observations. Comments are organized by key theme and category.

Comments on the **public process and public feedback**:

- It was valuable to do a statistically valid telephone poll. It gives a scientific answer that shows that the top priority of residents is roads and highways. (Tom noted that while the top priority was roads and highways, when the first and second priorities were combined, roads/highways and transit were almost identical. This is an important finding and shows that people find both modes to be very important.)
- The polling shows that people will change their opinion on certain investments when presented with educational information about that investment. Education on the implications and impacts of the investments will be critical as we move forward.
- The sophistication of the public is impressive, especially when given information about how the different transportation investments could impact our future.
- Concern that the survey results could help support certain agendas if they are taken out of context.
- The County should seek more input from industry. This voice seemed missing from the conversation.

There is still a **need to be more futuristic and forward-thinking**:

- The Study can help answer certain questions around transportation. Yet it doesn't answer certain questions, and does not help us look as far out into the future as we could have. There are investments being made today: we need to know how best to design and build roads today so they can serve the needs of people decades from now.
- It is difficult to project the future. The next generation may have a different perspective than the people who provided their input in the polling and online open house, particularly since many people who participated were older.
- Government agencies need to embrace transportation technology immediately. Technology changes so rapidly, and agencies need to be able to respond to those changes quickly.

- The County should look at the 78 applications submitted as part of a grant award process that challenged people to consider how to use smart city technology to improve their transportation system. The ideas in these applications could be implemented in the County.

**Collaboration and partnership** will be critical in the future:

- This Study shows that there is a great need to work with partners (other agencies as well as agricultural, environmental and other interests). The County cannot work in a silo.
- Going forward, it will be important to involve the private sector. Public-Private Partnerships will be needed to build new infrastructure.
- The transportation solutions require collaboration. Collaboration with other agencies is an important next step.
- It will be important to continue the “big picture look” into the future with regional decision makers.

The need for **transportation funding and investment today is urgent**:

- There is a need for transportation funding *now*. This Study shows that there is a sense of urgency to make investments today. (Several members echoed this comment.)
- It is encouraging to hear that members of the public are willing to pay for investments through taxes and fees.
- It is important to get to work now. The outcomes of this Study should help guide the way we build our streets and communities.
- We learned that a high level of growth is expected for the future, which will lead to major congestion. Congestion will be worse every year.

We need to **invest in all modes**, and the public supports it:

- The Study resulted in identifying a number of valid multi-modal solutions to improve our transportation system.
- The public seems to support all transportation modes and recognize the need to invest in all modes—regardless of how they personally travel.
- Transportation oriented developments and smart communities can increase active transportation usage without increasing congestion. We need to look at the transportation/land use link as the next step, before devoting millions of dollars to high-price tag road projects.

Comments on **potential next steps** as a result of the Study:

- There seem to be two logical next steps: 1) Have a futuristic conversation with TriMet on how to enhance transit, and 2) study road and highway investments with more specificity.
- The Study shows that we will need to make a lot of investments in all categories of transportation. The challenge will be how to pay for it. A next step could be to go through a return on investment process to determine which investments to pursue.
- We will need more right-of-way in the future, regardless of which policy direction the County goes in. A next step may be that the County change codes and require developers to provide right-of-way for travel.

## Public Comment

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**Phil Stamburgh** (Cedar Mill resident): Mass transit should play a major role in 40-50 years. The County is lucky that it has open space to work with to build transit lines, unlike New York City. Living in Cedar Mill, I cannot use a transit center without having to drive or get a ride to the transit center. More transit would take traffic off of Hwy 26. It is important to make mass transit usable.

**Jeff Petrillo** (Bethany resident and member of Washington County Planning Commission): No one on this committee is under the age of 30, which is concerning. It is hard to look 30 years into the future. The Study conclusions are helpful for a TSP update, but not so much for the longer term. For example, the Chinese are essentially building out Frank Lloyd Wright's 1930's "Broad Acres" concept, developing an individual helicopter that costs \$250,000 (autonomous aerial vehicle). The FAA is looking at it. When looking 50 years out, a public opinion study doesn't inform much. The Study looked at how to solve congestion on certain roads we have now; but a 40 or 50 year look should consider other types of issues. Going forward, it will be important to plug in to Intel to see what they're doing with autonomous vehicle technology. Intel can collaborate on the dreaming and innovation that needs to occur. The County has applied for money to improve connectedness on highways. There's a lot we can do with vehicle-to-vehicle communication that can improve congestion; this is a cost effective step moving forward.

**Kay Nakamoto** (Resident on 175<sup>th</sup>): There are 4,000 homes and a new school being built in the 175<sup>th</sup> St area. The urgency for roads is high and traffic is already terrible. The Beaverton School District is supposed to take care of some traffic issues, but they haven't. The traffic will back up half a mile to the street I live on. We need a way around the mountain to relieve the roads for residents.