

Meeting Summary



Washington County
Transportation Futures Study
Exploring options • Informing choices

Study Advisory Committee Meeting #7

Thursday, March 3, 2016

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Beaverton City Hall - Council Chambers, 12725 SW Millikan Way, Beaverton, OR 97005

Members Present

Andrew Singelakis, Chair

Loren Behrman

Meeky Blizzard

Mark Fryburg

Robert Kellogg

Steve Larrance

Deanna Palm

Marc SanSoucie

Pam Treece

Mayor Jerry Willey

Phillip Wu

Study Team and Staff

Chris Deffebach, Washington County

Dyami Valentine, Washington County

Erin Wardell, Washington County

Jay Lyman, DEA

Scott Harmon, DEA

Scott Richman, DEA

Bruce Warner, Warner Group LLC

Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement

Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement

Other Attendees

Robert Bailey, Save Helvetia

Fran Hosey, Save Helvetia

Sam Louke, Cooper Mountain Neighborhood Association

Jeff Petrillo, CPO 7 and Planning commission

Mary Manseau

Ron Swaren

Carol Chesarek, Forest Park Neighborhood

Allen Amabisca, Save Helvetia

Nacia Bonha

Dan Schauer, -OSU Extension Service

Welcome and Agenda Review

Andrew Singelakis, Washington County Director of Land Use and Transportation and SAC Chair, welcomed committee members. Jeanne Lawson, committee facilitator, reviewed the agenda and meeting objectives. She noted that the purpose of today's meeting is to review and provide final comments on the Transportation Investment Packages, and to review and provide input on the evaluation framework and measures.

Jeanne asked the group if they had any edits to the **January 15, 2016 SAC meeting summary**. Members had no edits.

Public Input and Online Open House

Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement, reviewed [key themes heard from members of the public](#) on the transportation investment ideas. The study team conducted public outreach in January-February 2016 to present and solicit input on future transportation trends and proposed investments to study to meet the economic health and quality of life in Washington County in the coming decades.

The main focus of the outreach was an online open house. 274 people submitted surveys through the online open house. They provided suggestions for new ideas and projects to include in the transportation investment packages.

Transportation Investment Packages

Dyami Valentine, Washington County, explained that the study team updated the [Transportation Investment Packages Matrix](#) to reflect some of the ideas provided by members of the public. Ideas were included that have the potential to be modeled or referenced in the evaluation. Dyami highlighted the new projects included in the packages, per category.

Committee Discussion

SAC members discussed and made these comments, organized by category:

Technology

- Concern that studying **solar-celled paved pathways** is not realistic. Staff noted that this could inform cost of infrastructure. As the fleet moves more and more towards electric vehicles, it is important to think about how to charge these vehicles.

Transit

- Suggestion to change the way that transit projects are framed: Either articulate all projects specifically, or be **more general without calling out specific projects**. For example, Transit Package B lists a “frequent bus line between North Bethany and high-tech employment areas.” Suggest changing to: “frequent bus lines connecting high residential areas with employment areas.”
- Transit package A: In addition to upgrading **WES**, also add **new stations** including a station in the new industrial area at Basalt Creek.
- Concern about studying **extended High Capacity Transit to Sherwood**. The Southwest Corridor planning process considered this but rejected it due to projected low ridership.
- Suggest clarifying that Transit Package A includes **TriMet’s Southwest Enhancement package**.

Local Roadways (Arterials and Collectors)

- Concern about Local Roadways Package B: **SW 65th Ave extension project**. Residents in River Grove would likely oppose a SW 65th Ave extension across the Tualatin River. Suggest studying a project that improves SW 65th Ave headed south, past the limits of Tualatin.

Regional Facilities

- Suggestion to model different placements for the **North-South limited access corridor** (i.e., further west versus further east). Some members of the public feel it is located too far west. The evaluation should help us understand where it should be best located to meet people's travel needs.
 - The new limited access corridor can also be considered a way to move jobs closer to houses, because a new travel corridor provides a mechanism to create more job opportunities. A limited access road also provides a good opportunity to include express transit. It would be harder to include express transit on a new North-South arterial, where traffic speeds are slower.
- Package C should include studying **split diamond interchanges on Hwy 217** to reduce vehicle weaving. Staff noted that Regional Facilities Package A includes safety and reliability improvements on Hwy 217, which includes split diamond interchanges.

Sensitivity Testing

- **Emerging Technology.** The report proposes studying the effect of a 10% increase in productivity as a result of new transportation technologies. Suggest studying the **effect of a 25% increase in productivity**. Over the next 50 years we are likely to see a lot of technology improvements. Using a higher percentage would help us to understand whether it makes more sense to invest in technology rather than putting money into widening lanes or other improvements.
 - The consultant team responded that once they understand the constraints of the model better, they can determine what levels of sensitivity testing are possible. The effect of technology is one aspect of this study that is most uncertain, and it is difficult to predict the correct percentage of efficiency gain. Staff said they would consider including a higher increase for technology impacts as they refine the methodology for the sensitivity test.

Other Comments

- Members asked how the **comments from the online open house** would affect the packages. Staff replied that some ideas from members of the public were included as new projects to study. Other comments, such as those expressing concern or support for proposed projects, can help the team understand what the community cares about and what will be important to report about in the evaluation results.

Committee Recommendation

Jeanne Lawson recapped members' comments on the Transportation Investment Packages. She asked if members were comfortable moving the Packages forward into evaluation, updated with these key changes:

- Modification to SW 65th Ave extension project
- Transit package A: Add new stations along WES line
- Evaluate up to three routes for the North-South limited access corridor

- Sensitivity testing: Consider modeling a higher increase in productivity as a result of new transportation technologies (to be determined once the team understands the constraints of the model better)

Members accepted moving the Packages forward into evaluation.

Evaluation Framework and Criteria

Jeanne Lawson explained that the purpose of today’s conversation is determine whether the study team is asking the right questions through the evaluation framework, and whether it will result in measuring things that are important to the committee and to the people of Washington County. She noted that the Combined Planners Group and Health and Equity Workgroup are also providing input on the evaluation criteria.

Terry Moore, ECONorthwest, made a [presentation](#) that reviewed the proposed framework, criteria and measures for evaluating the transportation investment packages.

Evaluation Framework:

- The study will essentially look at the impact of evaluating **six different options** (three transportation investment packages against two potential land use scenarios). The evaluation includes **eight categories of impacts**. Each category includes three to four criteria. These criteria can be considered the “things that people care about.”
- The evaluation will operate under these **key principles**:
 - Studying everything that is significant and important to the community, while minimizing **double counting**. It is very difficult to avoid all double counting, but the results will be explicit where there is double counting.
 - Seeking **practical results** that are understandable. This study will result in 3,000 measurements, and it will be a challenge to report this in a way that is comprehensible. Using **consolidation** can help to clarify results, but the team will strive to do as little consolidation as possible to avoid making value judgments.
 - The evaluation will not include a formal **weighting** process because the purpose of the study is not to make a decision or to recommend a plan. Rather, the intent is to provide results and data for decision makers to use to inform future decisions.

Committee Discussion

Members made the following comments on the evaluation framework and criteria:

Safety

- A member asked how the study evaluates safety of **limited access roads** or roads with few **intersections** (since crashes tend to occur at intersections).
 - Staff noted that many types of solutions can improve safety, including grade separation, improving traffic volume, turn radiuses, speeds, etc. The evaluation will consider whether a package will create roads or areas that are likely to add new high crash areas

as well as facilities/improvements that would reduce crashes at intersections. If one package makes safety improvements at a greater number of intersections, then the result would show that that package performs better in terms of safety.

- It is important that the packages address safety problems for pedestrians and cyclists by making it **easier and safer to bike and walk**—not by removing those modes from the system. Bicycle and pedestrian crashes with vehicle often occur due to no or insufficient bike/ped facilities. Staff noted that each package includes complete streets, including bike/ped facilities on urban arterials and collectors.
- The results should show the **tradeoff between improving safety and improving throughput**. For example, installing crosswalks improves safety, but can negatively affect throughput.
- Concern that **Package C will have an inherently lower safety score** because it includes higher speeds and more throughways. The evaluation could consider the safety benefits of reducing conflicts on arterials as a result of more vehicles using the new throughways. Staff noted that the evaluation will show whether building new throughways would reduce traffic on arterials, and identify the associated safety benefits.

Mobility and Accessibility

- Concern that the evaluation is not measuring **bike/ped mobility and accessibility** as finely as it measures vehicle mobility and accessibility. It is important to understand how the packages impact the safety, accessibility, and enjoyment of bicycling and walking. Ideas for other measures include:
 - Time spent traveling, efficiency, distance between crosswalks, buffered sidewalks, etc. for cyclists and pedestrians.
 - Expand the first measure to include “travel time benefits for all trips *for all modes.*”
 - Expand the “employer access to the labor force” measurement to include number of workers within reasonable walking, biking, vehicle or transit commute of employment areas.

Staff noted that bike/ped mobility and accessibility is addressed somewhat by the mode-split measurement in another category and by other measures. There may not be data available to include the other proposed measures, and it is important to limit the number of measures to keep the results comprehensible.

One member added that it is important to respect **cities’ local plans and aspirations** for locations where they do and *do not* want to prioritize bicycle and pedestrian access.

Reliability

- Concern that including a specific measure for “**freight-trip reliability**” is double-counting with “roadway travel-time reliability.” Staff acknowledged that this is double-counting to some extent, but that stakeholders have expressed the need to understand how well the packages improve freight trip reliability, especially in regards to moving freight traffic outside of the County and to the Port. Reliability is crucial for the freight industry in order to plan deliveries

and routes. Staff noted that this measure focuses on off-peak reliability for freight, which differs from the other measures which focus on peak conditions.

- Suggest measuring the number of **bottlenecks/chokepoints** that each investment package addresses (i.e., areas where there are often fender benders due to traffic, but which are not considered high crash safety intersections.) Staff responded that this is better addressed in the safety category.

Cost

- Suggestion to measure **transportation cost per household**. Staff responded that this is very difficult to estimate and would not result in accurate or reliable comparisons between the packages.
- Concern that including Package A in Packages B and C makes **Packages B and C a lot more expensive**. Staff responded that we'll be able to identify the cost elements of Packages A, B and C in the evaluation results separately. The reason that Package A is included in all options is that Package A is the set of projects that are generally accepted as feasible and supported for 50 years from now. The projects are in current plans and demand management, technology and transit are all generally applied prior to adding road capacity.

Environmental Sustainability

- Members asked for clarification on the “**efficient vehicle use**” measurement. Staff responded that this looks at the number of *persons* travelling in each vehicle on the road. Essentially, a package that results in more carpooling and full transit vehicles would score better than a package that results in more single-occupancy vehicle travel and empty transit vehicles.

Land Use and Community

- “**Alignment of transportation investments with key local policies and objectives**” measure:
 - Suggestion to **strike the word “urban” from walkable urban areas**. More remote areas should also be walkable.
 - This study is an opportunity to look at not just whether we are aligning transportation investments with key local policies—but about whether our land use plans will successfully create **the kinds of communities we want**, i.e. communities that have character and needed services within the local community, such as services within a 30 minute walk. Staff responded that they will think of measures that might address this.
 - Concern that separating out “**agricultural preservation**” and “**rural reserves**” **might be double counting**. Staff responded that they can separate them to avoid double counting.

Health

- Concern that the **local air quality measure** will not accurately assess the packages because it **focuses solely on vehicle miles traveled (VMT)**; and does not call out areas where there may be high amounts of **congestion and idling traffic**, causing particulate matter emissions. The

measure is unfair to packages that include more/wider roads. Well-timed, smooth flowing traffic on a throughway could reduce particulate emissions. Staff responded that they will think of how to measure this in a way that is more nuanced than just focusing on VMT; for example, by measuring VMT in combination with hours of vehicle delay.

Equity

- A member asked whether the model will predict where low income communities will be located in 50 years. Staff clarified that the model includes location of households per type, where income is an attribute of the household. These will be mapped by Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ).
- This would be the right place to include a “transportation cost per household measure.” Staff reiterated that they probably cannot model this accurately but can assess qualitatively.
- Suggestion to measure **change in property values** (ex: places with congestion and lack of access might have lower property values). Staff responded that the evaluation will not include property values because it does not include a land value model.
- The evaluation report should clearly state that **equity is a common thread** to all of the categories; that all of the measures have an element of equity to them.

Public Comment

Ron Swaren: *[Provided a handout to SAC members]* A western arterial highway makes sense. Transportation problems are caused by congestion on Hwy 26 and I-5. The proposed western arterial is not a big freeway; it can use existing routes. The handout I’m providing includes a summary of an article I wrote, and the middle page shows bridge designs that are very cost effective. Building the western route as a throughway resolves a lot of transportation issues: it helps freight movement, enhances bus transit, and connects neighborhoods in areas that were not connected before. It would benefit all modes. It is a well- received idea; Clark County put the western arterial highway out for a vote and most people were in favor.

I live on the Springwater Trail. Summer and winter use is very different. Long distance bike commuting does not work in the winter. The new Milwaukie MAX line is being subsidized at \$30/ride and does not have high ridership. We need to be looking at cost-effective solutions.

Jeff Petrillo, CPO 7 Steering Committee and Washington County Planning Commission: The quality of planning is best judged by the quality of public involvement. The online survey was a good first step, but it was only open for 26 days; it needed to be longer. 284 responses is an insufficient response for such a big county. 5,000 responses should be the target. Historically, lack of public engagement in transportation planning was an unfortunate chapter. Let’s not repeat those historic mistakes. Public engagement is difficult and expensive. County should make public input a top priority through every step.

Robert Bailey, Save Helvetia: In terms of the safety evaluation measures, ODOT has shown that traffic fatalities are higher on rural roads because of the high speeds of vehicles coming off of highways, and because rural roads are further away from medical evacuation. In terms of health, consider doing a prevailing winds rosette to show where particulates from a new freight hub might end up (see the Hillsboro Airport prevailing winds rosette). Particulate matter would travel to South Hillsboro in summer months and north in the winter. Please include my previous letter in the public record.

Comments Submitted by the Public:

- [These written comments](#) were submitted by members of the public at the SAC Meeting.

Next Steps

Chris Deffebach explained that the study team will work on the technical evaluation over the next several months. The team proposes bringing in guest speakers during optional May/June SAC meetings to help members better understand some of the issues that will come up in the evaluation. She handed out a survey for members to indicate which topics they would be most interested in learning about.

Next steps in the study include:

- **Aug-Oct 2016:** The **next two SAC meetings** will be held in August/September and October 2016. The meetings will include review of the evaluation results and public outreach materials before going out for public comment. Four members said that they would likely have conflicts with an August SAC meeting. Staff will send out meeting date options for consideration.
- **Fall 2016: Public Outreach** – The fall public outreach will be the focal point for getting public input. It will include telephone surveys and polling, in addition to an online open house and broader outreach.
- **December 2016: Final SAC Meeting** – To review public comment and provide final input.