

Meeting Summary



Study Advisory Committee Meeting #3

June 25, 2015

3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Beaverton Library, 12375 SW 5th St, Beaverton, OR

Members Present

Andrew Singelakis, Chair

Loren Behrman

Meeky Blizzard

Mark Fryburg

Robert Kellogg

Steve Larrance

Deanna Palm

Marc San Soucie

Pam Treece

Mayor Jerry Willey

Study Team and Staff

Chris Deffebach, Washington County

Mike Dahlstrom, Washington County

Erin Wardell, Washington County

Jay Lyman, DEA

Scott Richman, DEA

Matt Chwierut, ECONorthwest

Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement

Sylvia Ciborowski, JLA Public Involvement

Other Attendees

Robert Bailey, Save Helvetia

Lisa Frank, BTA

Welcome and Agenda Review

Andrew Singelakis, Washington County Director of Land Use and Transportation and SAC Chair, welcomed committee members. He directed members to the evaluation form, which will be handed out at each meeting to provide members with a chance to submit additional comments on discussion items or ideas for improving the meetings.

Jeanne Lawson, committee facilitator, reviewed the agenda.

May 21 Meeting Summary

Members provided the following edits to the May 21, 2015 SAC meeting summary:

- The summary should reflect that Transportation System Plans exist for *unincorporated* areas.
- The summary should reflect that Keith Peal was in attendance.

Chris Deffebach, Washington County project manager, reported that County staff is planning to meet with Save Helvetia representatives to discuss their concerns. The County is also setting up a meeting to follow up on Steve Larrance's suggestion to use AM peak traffic counts in the modeling. The County is not planning to use AM peak data, but believes that the planned approach addresses the concerns.

Community Values

Staff Presentation

Chris Deffebach and Jeanne Lawson kicked off the discussion. They referenced the [meeting packet](#) that includes an overview of SAC comments to date on the values. The purpose of the discussion today is to agree on a working version of the values that staff can use to develop evaluation measures.

Sylvia Ciborowski reviewed input from the [Health and Equity Work Group](#) that met on June 4, 2015. They recommended that the Social Equity value act as a lens for the evaluation framework. They noted that the Health value should be more than behavior-based, and address community health issues such as air and water quality impacts.

Committee Discussion

Members discussed each of the values and made the following comments and suggested evaluation measures:

1) Connectivity

- There is a need for **direct, clear routes** to allow one to go straight towards their destination. Although, recognize that routes that go straight through communities pose a tradeoff between connectivity and community identity. Direct, clear routes should go to **areas that need to be connected**.
- Need for **complete networks** for all modes.
- Need **redundancy in travel routes**. Alternate routes need to be available; the Highway 26 tunnel is an example.

2) Efficiency

- Include the word **reliability**.
- Suggested evaluation measures:
 - **Queueing**, both for vehicle and transit movement. Transit queuing measures the number of people waiting for the next bus.
 - Measure whether traffic moves at **design speed**.
 - To measure reliability, ask how much **cut through traffic** moves through neighborhoods as a result of unreliable regular traffic routes.

3) Transportation Options

- Should include **freight mobility** (might use the word “commercial vehicles” to include farm vehicles as well).
- Need **complete networks** for all modes. Members noted that the concept of complete networks cuts across many values.
- Need for a **variety of roadways**. Currently people use roads in ways they are not designed for.

4) Community Identity (formerly Geographic Equity)

- **Livability** should be clearly articulated as a value. The focus should not be just on meeting needs and requirements—but also recognize **desired** character or **aspirations**.
- **One size does not fit all**. Each community has different needs and aspirations, and transportation investments should respond to these unique attributes. (Staff noted the difficulty in measuring this concept without knowing community visions beyond the 5-20 year plans.)
- Suggested evaluation measures:
 - Measure **how much transportation investment** various parts of the County receive.

5) Social Equity

- The term “no disproportionate impact” measures equality, not equity. It is inevitable that some investments and actions will impact some more than others.
- Suggestion to include the term “**no discernible impact or benefit**” to any one community.
- Suggestion to use the term “**including...**” rather than “*especially* those that have been historically represented.”
- Members discussed which kinds of communities are most impacted by the transportation system. Communities located in urban centers are negatively impacted by the transportation system because of the high level of **cut-through traffic**. At the same time, other communities also deal with cut-through traffic. Some people want to live with easy access to the transportation system, so will choose communities with large roads.
- Suggested evaluation measures:
 - Measurement of **complete networks**.
 - Measure **distance traveled to meet daily needs**. This requires a look at land uses and locating homes within a reasonable proximity of other land uses to meet daily needs.

6) Environmental Sustainability

- Environmental **stewardship** might be more appropriate than “sustainability.” For example, stewardship means farming in a way that protects land and opportunity for generations to come. Stewardship is a more active term, and can be applied to protection of parks and natural areas.

7) Strategic Investment

- This value should be about protection of **present and future investments**.
- Suggested using the term “**optimize...**” instead of “*protect* investments”
- This value measures **how spending is allocated**, rather than measuring the transportation system itself. One measurement question might ask: Does the plan accurately invest in the things necessary to protect the investment, i.e. maintenance?
- Members asked **how investment costs will be reflected** in this Study. Staff responded that the transportation investment packages will include a comparison of investment and maintenance costs. Most likely, maintenance cost will be measured by the standard cost per mile maintenance figures. Members suggested including **avoidance costs** (i.e., if some infrastructure is added to the transportation system, this translates to reduced use of existing roads.)

8) Economic Vitality

- Suggest incorporating the idea of **economic stewardship**.
- **Moving goods to port** and points of distribution is a large expense for farming. An efficient transportation system and reduced transportation costs are important to be competitive in the market.
- **Last mile solutions** are important to provide a good connection from transit to employment centers.
- Suggest including **job growth and access to jobs** in this value.
- Consider movement of the **service sector** that uses the transportation system throughout the day (not just 9-5 commuters).

9) Health

- High levels of congestion can impact **mental health and increase stress levels** and frustration. This might lead travelers to do dangerous things they would not ordinarily do. This applies across modes. For example, it is stressful to cycle without bike lanes, and stressful to use an inefficient transit system that might require multiple transfers to reach a job.
- This value should include **environmental health**—including clean air and water. Poor efficiency and connectivity means that more vehicles are idling on roadways, which creates an environmental health problem that affects people.
- Include **air quality impacts**.
- The **value of time** is important. Time wasted in traffic impacts mental health and stress levels.
- Suggested evaluation measures:
 - Traditional **mode split** measure (i.e., how many travelers are biking, walking, driving, or taking transit).
 - **Fleet change**: Percentage of vehicles that will be burning fossil fuels as opposed to electric or other clean options.
 - **Queuing data** to measure the level of travel-related stress and frustration or waste of time.
 - **Time spent traveling** as a measure of the value of time.

10) Safety

- Include the safety issue of **moving hazardous waste** around the County.
- Include security and efficient movement of **emergency services vehicles**.
- The transportation system should be designed to **manage—and reduce—risk**. We should manage risk and move towards the aspirational Vision Zero goals.
- Suggested evaluation measures:
 - Measure the level of **avoidance** of using the transportation system because of **perceived safety risk**. For example, not using bike areas because they seem unsafe.

Other Comments

- Members generally noted that many of these values overlap, or have potential evaluation measures that will overlap. Some even conflict with one another and it is difficult to imagine a transportation system that can meet so many conflicting values. Staff responded that the Study

team will work on developing an evaluation framework, and recognizes that the values do overlap. The evaluation will show the tradeoffs between investment packages.

- It is important to stay at a global level rather than looking at the impacts on particular neighborhoods within Washington County. The Study should first define the best way to move travelers to and from their destinations, and then consider ways to best meet other values.
- The evaluation framework helps keep this all in context. It is important to remember that there are transportation outcomes and non-transportation outcomes. We get some of the non-transportation outcomes (like health) as a result of the direct values of connectivity and efficiency. We should focus on the transportation-related outcomes.

Drivers and Land Use Scenarios

Staff Presentation

Staff reminded members that transportation drivers are those trends and considerations that may change our transportation system and the way we travel in the long-term future. The drivers will be used to develop land use scenarios.

Matt Chwierut, ECONorthwest, gave a [PowerPoint presentation](#) on drivers as background for SAC members to consider as they provide guidance to the team on key drivers:

- The Study team developed a list of drivers using three inputs: 1) review of existing literature, 2) input from experts through online surveys, and 3) local input from Planning Directors and SAC members.
- The original list of 300 potential drivers was reduced to the top fifteen. From this list of fifteen, national experts felt that the following seven drivers are of top importance to consider:
 1. **Aging population** – In 20 years, 26% of the population will be retired, and our retired culture is changing. Retirees are expected to work, be healthier and more active, and be wealthier than past retirees. The associated impacts on housing, transportation and land use are unclear.
 2. **Pricing** – Demand side pricing is expected to occur (road pricing, Vehicle Miles Traveled fee, etc.) This will increase the cost of travel and likely increase the shift to other modes.
 3. **Growth in metro areas** – Growth in metro areas (as opposed to suburban and rural) will continue.
 4. **Autonomous vehicles** – There is general agreement that connected vehicles will come into practice. The impacts on development density are somewhat unclear; generally, there will be less space for parking and fewer miles of surface transportation needed to accommodate the same amount of service.
 5. **Climate change regulations** – Regulations will increase the cost of transportation and encourage shifts to living in denser areas closer to employment.
 6. **Privatization and partnerships in financing** – Transportation funding constraints will be a huge driver but the impact is unclear.

7. **Increase in online shopping** – There is general agreement that online shopping will continue to grow, which means an increase in service deliveries.

Planning Directors’ and SAC member input on drivers generally concurred with what national experts are saying, with more emphasis on the impacts of climate change regulation. The Planning Directors’ input focused on funding limitations, autonomous vehicles, telecommuting and flexible work schedules, west coast shipping routes, and 3D printing.

Committee Discussion

Small Group Discussion

SAC members formed three groups, and each group discussed the top drivers they think are likely to affect transportation in the long term:

Group 1

Top five drivers that this group discussed include:

1. **Urban Growth Boundary** – The UGB is both a wall and increaser of density. Because of the region’s unique regulatory structure, the County will likely experience more density than other communities in the U.S
2. **Climate change** – There are two drivers related to climate change. Climate change **regulations** will likely increase the cost of driving and have other impacts on multi-modal choice. Climate change itself can also impact transportation by bringing in **climate refugees** to our region.
3. **Demographic changes**
4. **Autonomous vehicles and related pricing changes** – The increase in autonomous vehicles will have its own impact on pricing and will be influenced by congestion pricing.
5. **Changes and growth in manufacturing** – The Washington County area is a manufacturing center and growth in manufacturing will likely continue, increasing commuter and freight transportation needs. Changes in the way we manufacture goods will have a great impact on local transportation (for example, local 3D printing rather than shipping).

Other drivers this group discussed:

- **Millennials** – Travel behavior and walkable community preferences of the newer generation.
- **Urban centers in suburbs** – County residents prefer to have services available within their own communities, rather than traveling to “the big city.” Communities want their own urban centers and community identity.

Group 2

Top drivers for this group:

1. **Technology** – This includes more than just smart cars. It includes traffic technology, like smart signals, that are already happening in the County.
2. **Politics** – This includes **urban and rural reserves**. If the County had followed through with the urban and rural reserves it was mandated to create, then we could be more efficient in creating transportation grids with more certainty over the next 50 years. **Metro's land use choices** in terms of creating density will also impact the transportation grid.
3. **Cost of transportation** – The way we fund transportation, who pays, and how they pay will all affect transportation choices.

Other drivers this group discussed:

- **Uber and Rideshare** – The increase in rideshare options and their decreasing cost could affect transportation. For example, Uber's carpool option makes rideshare much less expensive. These are things we could never have envisioned a decade ago, and we're likely to see similar innovation in the future that we cannot plan for.
- **Work environment** – The workplace is changing. Innovative technology companies provide open, collaborate work environments with flexible schedules that are anything but the traditional 9-5 job. This will affect the way we travel and at what time of day.
- **Regulations** – Regulations will affect transportation.

Group 3

Top drivers for this group include:

- **People's attitudes towards transportation and livability** – This should be a top driver (though the experts discounted it in the survey work). People's attitudes and choices of how to travel can be influenced by many factors that decision makers have influence over. Millennials tend to drive less and prefer walkability and alternative modes of transportation.
- **Availability of options** – Attitudes towards transportation are shaped by the options available. Investment in options can increase convenience and usage.
- **Shifts in land use** – Policy makers can choose to put diverse uses closer together, which could reduce the need for some automobile trips. There is likely to be an increase in neighborhood commercial centers with local commerce and retail that will shape the distance that people have to travel.
- **Ease of lifestyle changes** – It is easier to make lifestyle changes than it used to be (for the middle and upper class). People today tend to change careers more often and move more often than they used to.
- **In-migration** – The number of people that come into the region will shape transportation.
- **Distance between home and work** – To the extent that drivers change the distance between employment and residential centers, it will affect transportation.

Large Group Discussion

Members made the following comments during the large group discussion on drivers:

- The **Urban Growth Boundary** was a top driver for each of the small groups, though each group discussed it in slightly different ways.
- **East coast port traffic** does not seem to be an important driver for Washington County. The team noted that the expanded Panama Canal will accommodate larger ships and move some marine freight activity away from congested West Coast ports, which could affect the west coast transportation system.
- Members discussed **change in manufacturing practices and 3D printing**. This could have two impacts as a driver. First, 3D printing might reduce the need to ship some goods, which will reduce travel demand. Second, Intel might become a leader in 3D printing and bring in a large employment base, perhaps causing a major shift similar to what Mountain View did for San Francisco.
- While policy drivers are important, it is also important to focus on one major issue in Washington County that other cities and regions do not struggle with—which is the lack of a **complete transportation system**. We need to focus on finding a way to not move 40% of our traffic through city centers, and the way to do that is by creating a complete system.
- **Behavioral change** will be an important driver. According to one study, there is a high tolerance level before someone will choose to shift from Single Occupancy Vehicle travel to some other form of transportation. Need to look at: how much congestion and increase in driving cost does it take to cause a behavioral change?
- Members discussed some of the **expert findings**: The increase in number of people working from home might mean that they choose not to live in denser urban areas, since they do not have to deal with a commute. Vehicle technology might actually increase the number of trips, since the vehicle will be automated and efficient.
- Members discussed the **SAC charge** regarding drivers. One member expressed that the committee's charge is to start by looking at the current transportation system and what can be done in the next five to twenty years to reduce gridlock. The Committee Chair and others explained that this Study is looking beyond the County's twenty-year TSP. If there is some project or opportunity that is not included in the TSP but which the Study identifies as important for the future transportation system, then that should be part of the discussion. In the end it will be up to decision makers to decide what to do with the information and conclusions that the Study produces.
- **Investment choices** made by Washington County leaders can change which drivers are most important.
- Members requested the opportunity to **expand on the drivers conversation** by sending in further comments to staff.

Next Steps

The next meeting will be held in late July 2015. This meeting will include further discussion on drivers. The Study team will also explain the process for developing transportation investment packages and may provide draft evaluation measures or framework for evaluating values.

Members requested a deeper explanation of the land use scenarios and transportation investment packages, and staff noted that this will be included in next meeting's agenda.

Members requested a better way to share information with one another, beyond posting documents in the online library or sending emails to staff. Staff will work on ideas for sharing information.

Andrew Singelakis noted that the Study team has requested help from Mayor Jerry Willey and Meeky Blizzard to act as a sounding board for SAC agenda topics and materials for future meetings.

Meeky Blizzard handed out a [summary of nine resources](#) posted on the Transportation Futures Study [SAC Library](#).