

Meeting Summary



Washington County
Transportation Futures Study
Exploring options • Informing choices

Study Advisory Committee Meeting #4

August 13, 2015

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

Griffith Building; 4755 SW Griffith Drive, Beaverton OR 97005

Members Present

Andrew Singelakis, Chair

Loren Behrman

Meeky Blizzard

Robert Kellogg

Steve Larrance

Alfonso Lopez-Vasquez

Deanna Palm

Kathy Stallkamp

Bruce Starr

Pam Treece

Mayor Jerry Willey

Phillip Wu

Study Team and Staff

Chris Deffebach, Washington County

Dyami Valentine, Washington County

Mike Dahlstrom, Washington County

Erin Wardell, Washington County

Karen Savage, Washington County

Steve Szigethy, Washington County

Jay Lyman, DEA

Scott Harmon, DEA

Adam Argo, DEA

Matt Chwierut, ECONorthwest

Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement

Stacy Thomas, JLA Public Involvement

Other Attendees

Don Odermott, City of Hillsboro

Rob Dixon, City of Hillsboro

Todd Juhasz, City of Beaverton

Chris Merz, MLG

Fran Warren, Cooper Mountain 175th Avenue
Neighborhood Association

Steve Tarranu

Jake Mintz

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.

Jeanne asked the group if they had any edits to the **June 25, 2015 SAC meeting summary**. Members had no edits.

Chris Deffebach, Washington County project manager, set the context for the discussion. She used a graphic to explain the relations between adopted plans, the drivers, the two land use scenarios and the transportation investment packages. She noted that a goal of the meeting is to get members' input and guidance on the two land use scenarios and to begin discussing the transportation investment packages.

Drivers and Land Use Scenarios

Staff Presentations

Chris Deffebach introduced Erin Wardell, Washington County and Matt Chwierut, ECONorthwest, who made a PowerPoint presentation on the two land use scenarios. Jeanne noted that SAC discussion should focus mostly on Scenario 2.

Scenario 1: Current Trends

Erin Wardell presented Scenario 1 and explained that it looks at the future under current trends. Current trends are the foundation for both Scenarios 1 and 2. Erin referred to the Place Palate map that was displayed, and encouraged members to review it on their break.

Erin began by outlining the known drivers that most impact land use:

- Aging population
- Climate change refugees
- In-migration
- Urbanization and growth in metro areas
- Urban Growth Boundary
- Land use plans encouraging co-location
- Climate change
- Increase in service- and technology- industries

Erin reviewed the trends taken into account in Scenario 1, which are based on regional forecast to 2060. Highlights included:

- **Population** and **employment** forecasts show both increases in both population and employment. A higher percentage of population will move in from outside the region rather than being born in the area.
- The **aging population** is increasing and the population age twenty-one and younger is decreasing.
- The **average household size** is trending to slightly decrease over time, which is a national trend. Single family homes are increasing.
- The **number of automobiles** per household is decreasing over time.
- The forecast shows a **growth in multi-family units**. There was a focus on single family units during the recession, but this has changed, and Washington County is tracking with Metro region numbers.
- **Median household income** is increasing over time due to high earners. There is an increasing income gap between high and low earners. The middle income earners are shrinking as a percentage of the whole.
- **Diversity** continues to grow in the County. Diversity has dramatically increased from 1980 to 2012.

Committee Discussion – Scenario 1: Current Trends

Jeanne asked committee members for input on these trends and whether any other trends could have a strong influence on land use and should be considered. Members made the following comments:

- **Future policies** (such as changes in the Urban Growth Boundary) and land use plans will be different from today and will impact what the County ultimately looks like. How do we include policy change as a driver? Erin explained that Scenario 1 assumes current policies stay in place. Scenario 2 can capture potential policies and plan changes.
- The **limitations of the transportation system** should be a driver. Erin explained that transportation drivers will be taken into account in the transportation investment packages. The land use scenarios, on the other hand, include land use drivers.
- The scenarios shouldn't ignore the **disparity/inequality in income** between high and low earners. Erin noted that the model does assume this trending increased gap in income.
- How is the Metro survey that found preference for single family housing vs multi-family housing being considered? Erin indicated that it would be considered in some of the future forecasts.

The group generally agreed Scenario 1 is on the right track.

Scenario 2: Greater Population/Job Growth

Matt Chwierut introduced Scenario 2 and explained that the logic for this scenario includes **more people and more jobs** than the baseline Scenario 1. He also noted that both scenarios involve land use drivers that are external to local land use and transportation policy choices. For example, the scenarios do not assume road pricing or Urban Growth Boundary beyond the Urban Reserves.

Matt walked the group through the three example packages for Scenario 2 which illustrate how drivers come together to show potential futures for the region. Highlights of his presentation include:

Scenario 2A: A Changing Climate

- Climate models illustrate significant physical climate change effects throughout the United States (drought, hurricane, snow, sea level rise), with the Pacific Northwest relatively unaffected.
- Some land use drivers include: more climate change refugees, area becoming a retirement destination, and shifting attitudes toward transportation.
- Some land use effects include: regulation and migration, increase in construction costs, and in-migration of mobile families.

Scenario 2B: A Rising Economic Tide

- Some land use drivers include: an emerging *global* middle class, growth in metro areas, telecommuting and ride-sharing.
- Some land use effects include: job growth in the region and a rising cost of living.

Scenario 2C: Circuits and Sensors

- This scenario includes major advances in technology.

- Land use drivers include: 3D printing, an increase in online shopping, and autonomous vehicles.
- If technology and autonomous vehicles flourish, it will impact the region through job growth.
- Increasing room on roads makes room for population growth.

Committee Discussion – Scenario 2

Members made the following comments during their discussion of Scenario 2:

- A member asked a clarifying question about conflicting information regarding autonomous cars and online shopping and its effect on road capacity. Matt indicated that impacts on roadway capacity will be discussed in the transportation investment packages.
- In 50 years, cars/smart vehicles will talk to each other and create better flow. A suggestion was made to use the term “smart transportation system” versus autonomous automobiles. The group and team agreed.
- A member asked: What are the demographics of climate refugees? Matt said at this point in the process we don’t know but we will get answers to this question as we move forward. He noted that the last climate migration was the “dust bowl” where 3.5 million people were displaced.
- There is a need to look at the climate refugee demographics because the needs of young people differ from older refugees and we will need to plan for that.
- There was general discussion about the growth of the middle class globally while the US middle class is hollowing. Matt noted most of the global middle class growth is in India and China currently. The impact for Washington County is that the growth in the global middle class presents an opportunity to capture regional benefits by, for example, increasing exports.

Jeanne Lawson asked the group to consider the likelihood of whether the Scenario 2 examples would occur in our future: very likely, highly unlikely or on the fence. Jay Lyman, David Evans and Associates, noted that the purpose of Scenario 2 is to provide a reasonable, credible *alternate* future to test the resilience of our transportation investments. You don’t have to believe it is likely, but it is a good first test to see what will resonate with the broader community.

The following discussion took place:

- A general issue was raised regarding who will buy the houses of climate refugees in impacted areas of the country. They may not be moving here with a lot of equity because the value will be reduced in their places of origin.
- Regarding climate change, the focus is to determine how likely it is population will increase due to climate change IF it occurs, not to determine if climate change is likely.
- Climate change is not exclusively about in-migration; it is also about our economy and other broad effects. The committee discussed impacts on agriculture and the economy. Matt agreed that if we imagine a shift in population due to climate change but don’t consider agriculture implications, for example, it won’t be a plausible scenario.
- Each geographic area in the nation has variable climate change impacts – for example, the southwest is impacted at a higher level as compared to the mid-west.

- The growing global middle class in China will have biggest impact on the economy.
- We need to wisely invest in the transportation system.

Members indicated as a group how reasonable they believed each of the Scenario 2 examples would be as an alternate land use:

- *Scenario 2A: A Changing Climate* received mixed input from committee regarding its reasonability.
- *Scenario 2B: A Rising Economic Tide* received more agreement that it would be reasonable.
- *Scenario 2C: Circuits and Sensors* received most agreement that represents a reasonable alternative future.

Matt suggested developing a Scenario 2 that blends together various elements of all three examples. The committee discussed the need for roadway capacity improvements. A suggestion was raised to use the values that the committee discussed to create one scenario focusing on roadways and another scenario focusing on alternate transportation investments, and then evaluate drivers against each of the two types of transportation systems.

The facilitator reviewed the steps in the process and the role of values. The values will lead to the evaluation measures, and values help shape the transportation investment packages (next agenda item) as well. Typically in a transportation planning effort, future population and employment growth are forecast using adopted land use plans; the group is being asked to help shape an alternative land use for this effort that reflects ‘drivers’ that could change the population and employment growth forecast. This is a way of testing the resiliency of different transportation investment packages under different land use scenarios and how well they address the values.

Additional committee discussion included:

- No one is saying there won’t be growth. We should spend less time speculating on the reasons behind the growth and move on to the next stage in the study process.
- More insight is needed into how a rising global middle class will help create jobs in the county. Matt said new jobs would not be in manufacturing. Rather, when Nike and Intel grow their markets it will result in more positions in design, sales, etc.
- There is demand for high quality agricultural products to be exported overseas now; lower quality products stay domestic because consumers do not want to pay high prices. The export of agricultural products will continue to grow based on the growing global middle class.

Transportation Investment Packages

A staff presentation provided an understanding of the level of detail that will go into the transportation investment packages.

Staff Presentation

Dyami Valentine, Washington County and Scott Harmon, David Evans and Associates, reviewed the team's **approach to developing the transportation investment packages**.

- The packages will build off **adopted transportation plans**, which identify priority projects based on available funding.
- The packages will **address future challenges**. Persistent challenges may continue and/or not be adequately addressed in current plans. For example, lack of redundancy and major bottlenecks (ex.: Sylvan Tunnel, OR 217, I-5), balancing mobility with walkability, reliance on arterials to serve regional traffic, and gaps in the system.
- The packages will be developed by soliciting **conceptual investment ideas**. The team has been meeting with local jurisdictions to discuss current and future challenges and types of investments that should be studied. The team will be collecting SAC ideas today and in smaller group meetings over the next month.
- A **common package of projects** will be determined and will be part of both investment packages. The two transportation investment packages will build on the common projects and then look forward farther into the future. The goal is to think big and be aspirational while not being entirely out of the range of possibility. The packages will be set up to take new approaches and try new things. The packages can be **theme based**.

Committee Workshop

The committee was split into three groups. Each group participated in each of three stations that included:

- **Streets and Highways** (facilitator Scott Harmon)
- **Active Transportation** (Bike, pedestrian and transit) (facilitator Dyami Valentine)
- **Demand Management, Fleet and Technology, and Pricing** (facilitator Matt Chwierut)

Each group answered the following questions at each station:

- What future **challenges** do you think are critical to address through this study?
- What transportation **investments** would you like considered?

Small Group Report-Out

The facilitators reported on the highlights from their group discussions. Full notes from each section are attached as *Appendix A*.

Streets and Highways

Key Challenges:

- Need for connectivity; ability to get around
- Spend more on operations and maintenance
- North/South travel
- Politics are involved; investments line up with politics
- Urban traffic on rural roads
- Capacity for through traffic and tension around roadway needs; needs for mobility and long distance travel; through traffic impacting neighborhood streets
- Right of way impacts

Key Investments:

- Alternative routes and connectivity projects
- Redundant and better connected system. We currently rely on too few roadways.
- Remedy conflicts and tension between different users: i.e. commuters and freight/agriculture

Active Transportation

Key Challenges:

- Lack of complete network for bicyclists, pedestrian and transit
- Need increased safety for all users

Key Investments:

- Major bike system; bike highways that connect origins and destinations between cities
- Funding for bike/ped
- Connectivity in south Washington County
- On rural roads look at transportation function vs recreational function
- Encourage TriMet to serve employment areas and increase service area
- Increase high capacity transit
 - Lower cost approaches
 - Last mile connections

Demand Management, Fleet and Technology, and Pricing

Key Challenges:

- Social acceptance for paying for what was formally free, i.e. road pricing
- Equity issues should be addressed in pricing
- Look upstream at land use policies affecting the land use/transportation relationship

Key investments:

- Graded implementation to overcome political barriers
- Land use as the ultimate demand management tool
- Look at what other incentive programs are in place that we should keep

Large Group Discussion

Jeanne Lawson reminded the group that the study will test two distinct transportation investment packages against the two land use scenarios. **Members were asked, “If you could dictate the themes for the two packages, what would they be?”**

Members made the following comments regarding ideas for package themes:

- Develop two vision-based futures: Theme one: **road centric**, focusing on capacity and traveling quickly with low disruption. Theme two: **alternative transportation centric**, focusing on enhanced bike/ped and transit improvements to reduce the need for roadway enhancements.
- One of the packages should focus on **regional mobility meeting growth needs** and allowing **flexibility for cities to make local investments**. Specific investment needs include additional capacity for north/south arterials and highway system improvements to get people from where they work to where they live with something like the Western Bypass. Investments need to show a return on investment in terms of moving people and freight; use a similar measurement as on transit investments. Flexibility provides the ability for cities to maintain their community identities; one city doesn't have to look like another. Each community should manage their own bike/ped needs.
- One of the packages should emphasize **increased capacity**, focusing on roadway improvements. We need a more flexible transit system to accommodate Washington County's needs.
- One of the packages should center on **roadway systems**, focusing on alternatives to the Sunset tunnel and north/south connectivity. OR 217 is not an option due to congestion. 30% of funds are already spent on active transportation. Need to coordinate active transportation with commuter traffic and freight.
- The main goal should be to develop **a system that functions**, focusing on increasing roadway capacity. Local residents and landowners need to be consulted. The system needs to increase efficiency for all road users. Need to find new revenue streams to pay for improvements.
- Develop two themes: one emphasizing **increased transit** and the other **roadway capacity** focusing on travel to Portland and Highway 30 and between Sherwood and Hillsboro.
- Base the packages on **community values**, focusing on solving a complex problem in a way that meets community needs. We can accomplish this through a quality system that equitably serves the community. We also need education so that people can understand the transportation investments, in order to gain acceptance for the needed improvements.
- One of the packages should emphasize **expanded roadways**, focusing on freight-to-market through-put. We need a separate analysis of freight-to-market movement and how we move

commercial vehicles versus non-commercial traffic. We should also study the impact of making the most of the current system, using demand management and a VMT tax. We should also look at urban area versus rural area needs.

- Use the theme of **connectivity**, focusing on meeting the needs of all users, not just roadway or active transportation. Evaluate options while being conscious of cost. There are alternative ways of achieving similar outcomes for very different costs.
- Use a theme of **moving commercial traffic**, focusing on constructing or expanding major arterials dedicated to commercial traffic. The adjoining system can be geared toward providing options for personal travel. We need a **multimodal system** including transit to provide options to travel across the community. It isn't possible to build enough redundancy into the highway system to avoid major blockages.
- Develop two themes: Theme one: **increase capacity of roadways**, focusing on demand pricing, east/west arterials, and a western bypass. Don't wait for technology to catch up to reduce congestion; start now. Theme two: **increase capacity and utility for mass transit**, focusing on the public and freight users. Need land use reform allowing mixed uses to reduce trips, increased funding for bike/ped facilities and north/south connectivity for all modes.
- Develop two themes: Theme one: **status quo**, focusing on Metro's current limits. Theme two: **no Metro restrictions**, focusing on a **balanced multimodal system** with a north/south limited access multimodal corridor. We need to assure access through cities in specific areas to get commercial traffic through on surface system, and a complete bike/ped system with emphasis around schools.

Public Comment

Jake Mintz recommended *The National Association of Realtors/PSU Community & Transportation Preferences Survey - US Metro Areas, 2015* as a good resource for the Study. It considers transportation, housing and community attitudes and preferences. The study talks about millennial transportation choices and understanding the drivers in social economic demographics. Half of the people moving into the state are millennials and want alternate transportation options. The Study needs to put more emphasis on the millennials.

Fran Warren representing the Cooper Mountain 175th Avenue Neighborhood Association presented a large photograph showing the bumper-to-bumper congestion on 175th before Cooper Mountain and River Terrace developments have been completed. There is a big problem with arterials and commuters using them and has raised the issue locally, regionally and at the state level. The problem exists both in the morning as well as the late afternoon/evening. She is interested in staying involved and thanked the committee.

Next Steps

The next meeting will be held on October 8, 2015. This meeting will include review and discussion of the draft transportation investment packages. Over the next month, the team will continue to meet with local jurisdictions and other stakeholders as well as small groups of SAC members to further solicit input and explore transportation investment ideas.

Scott Harmon addressed the issue of modeling AM peak hour traffic and not just PM peak. Scott noted that Washington County has more detailed information on the operations of the county's road network than what is applied in Metro's model. The team will model the PM peak, which has the heaviest traffic, but will work with the County's operations information to better understand the AM peak operation.

Jeanne noted that the team has established a "Google group" to provide a forum for the committee to share ideas with each other, if they wish. Directions on how to use it will be sent out to the group. The SAC's references page on the website will continue to be a resource as well.

The team will solicit public input on the packages this fall, and the SAC will have a chance to comment on the final transportation investment packages in December.