

Meeting Summary



Washington County
Transportation Futures Study
Exploring options • Informing choices

Study Advisory Committee Meeting #9

Thursday, September 15, 2016

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Beaverton Library: Cathy Stanton Conference Room, 12375 SW 5th Avenue, Beaverton OR 97005

Members Present

Meeky Blizzard
Loren Behrman
Maria Caballero Rubio
Mark Fryburg
Steve Larrance
Deanna Palm

Marc San Soucie
Kathy Stalkamp
Bruce Starr
Pam Treece
Mayor Jerry Willey

Study Team and Staff

Andrew Singelakis, Washington County
Chris Deffebach, Washington County
Dyami Valentine, Washington County
Erin Wardell, Washington County
Jay Lyman, DEA

Adam Argo, DEA
Andrew Mortensen, DEA
Bruce Warner, Warner Group LLC
Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement
Stacy Thomas, JLA Public Involvement

Other Attendees

Chris Hardwick
Robert Bailey, Save Helvetia
Allen Amabisca, Save Helvetia
Don Odermott, City of Hillsboro

Michele Limas
Ron Swaren
Hal Bergsma, AARP Oregon
Raymond Eck, CPO 6/MTAC

Welcome and Agenda Review

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

Chris Deffebach, Washington County, reviewed the agenda. The purpose of the meeting is to continue building the committee's understanding of the evaluation findings. Chris noted that the group will receive some information they did not hear at the last meeting. The group will receive Chapter 7 next week. We will review the online open house format and will collect your input on the questions that the public will be asked. The team appreciates the online open house input you provided at the last meeting and incorporated your suggestions when it was possible.

Jeanne reviewed edits to the **September 15, 2016 SAC meeting summary** that were suggested prior to the meeting and collected additional edits. The meeting summary will be updated as follows:

- On page 7, the second bullet, second sentence will be updated to read: *If we assume a 20% or 40% increase in capacity due to technology, we see a reduction in vehicle hours of delay.*
- On page 3, we will make a qualification at the beginning of the section that the bulleted statements are observations and comments from SAC members, not findings. For example, it was noted by a member that the last bullet on page 3 indicates Package C offers significant benefits/performance over the other packages – but this is contradicted in other areas of the summary.

Rural Values Study Results

Pacific University Presentation

Andrew Singelakis introduced Dr. Mike Miller from Pacific University to review the results of their recent analysis of rural values in Washington County. Dr. Miller said the study was a joint faculty/student project and introduced the rest of the team which includes Dr. Jim Moore and four students. Prescott Devinney, an economics and math major, and Pablo Valenzuela, a political science and ethics major participated in the presentation.

Dr. Miller explained the study's methodology. Information was gathered through interviews, focus groups and included demographics questions. The students led a review of the findings and highlighted where opinions and input differed.

Key Findings

- The Washington County transportation system is an interconnected web; there is interdependence between the rural and urban systems.
- There is broad support for expanding transit to rural areas not currently served, especially among Latino populations.
- There is broad support for safety. This is especially true regarding pedestrians and bicyclists sharing the road with automobiles.

- There is support for growing the road system; roads have stayed the same over lifetimes but traffic continues to increase.
 - *A member asked what “grow” means – new connections or addition of capacity to existing roads. It was clarified that the meaning includes both scenarios.*
 - *A member asked that “original west side bypass” be defined so it is clear that people know what it means.*
- There is interest in a public awareness campaign to improve safety on rural roads.
- Jurisdictions should continue to consider different perspectives when planning for transportation.
- There is a need to resolve truck access as congestion increases, especially for farmers needing to transport products; congestion is increasing the cost of getting products to market.

Differing opinions

- Lifestyle farmers have a larger focus on preserving a rural lifestyle and family farmers are more interested in expanding roads to alleviate congestion.
- Some rural interests favor a west side bypass while others are concerned it could hurt valuable farmland.
- Regarding public transit, there is concern that there is not enough demand and first and last mile problems. Among Latinos, there is high support for expanding public transit.
 - *A member asked if there was a discussion about seasonal employers supplying busses for employees. Dr. Miller indicated that seasonality is dying out. Many employees have to work in the same location year round and their bus stops miles away. It is really a last three-mile issue.*
- *A member asked that since WCTFS deals with investments over 50 years, did your conversations focus on thinking way ahead, or did they focus on the present? The team indicated that immediate needs were the main focus, from now to about ten years out.*

The presentation concluded with the message that some people will have more to say than others, but everyone cares about our transportation system and broad perspectives should be sought as we plan for the future. We need to make the system work best for the most people. It will also be important to take the findings from this study and to dig deeper with a quantitative survey.

- Jeanne Lawson said we would add the people that participated in the rural values study to our project database.
- *A member asked for more information about who was talked to. Dr. Miller provided this information:*
 - Nine leaders participated in intensive individual interviews (1-2 hours)
 - 80 people participated in Latino focus groups hosted by Centro Cultural and Adelante Mujeres
 - Seven people participated in the Helvetia group discussion
 - Fourteen people participated in the Kenton Grange discussion
 - *A member noted that Helvetia and Kenton are headquarters of anti-freeway people so the study didn’t get broad based opinions. Dr. Moore said the locations were chosen because they are areas where people easily come together.*

- *An SAC member who participated in the Kenton Grange discussion and noted that a lot of different opinions were shared.*
- A member said the study was helpful, as we don't get a lot of feedback from rural folks.

Evaluation Results – Part 2

Staff Presentation

Andy Mortenson, David Evans and Associates, presented an overview key highlights from the evaluation of transportation investment packages and the committee continued its discussion from the previous meeting. ([See PowerPoint](#) for more details and related graphics.)

Future Growth

- **Population.** We expect between a 41-55% increase in population.
- **Employment.** A 100 – 150% increase in employment is expected with intensified growth in North Hillsboro, along the Hwy 217 corridor and south county.

Future Travel Patterns

- We expect the total number of trips across all modes to increase by over 60%.
- The share of trips that stay within the county is expected to increase by 9%.
- More trips are expected into the county (425,800) vs. out (397,700).

Future Land Use Patterns Help Reduce Auto Trips

With increased urbanization, we expect:

- Better street connectivity.
- More paid and time-restricted on-street parking.
- Mobile apps that make it easier to use transit and bike and ride-sharing services.
- Demand management programs and incentives, which can increase non-auto use by 50% and reduce the number of vehicles on the roads.
- The findings also suggest that we could experience an increase in vehicle miles traveled.

VMT per Person Trip is Less Than Today

People will have better access to travel options like biking, walking, telecommuting and transit and be able to make shorter trips to meet their daily needs.

- Average VMT will drop from over 4.75 today in Package A to under 4.5, Package B will drop a little less, and in Package C, when more capacity added, you will see a higher VMT rate but all packages are lower than they are today.

Daily Person Trips by Mode Share

- Driving trips increase by 50%.
- Non-auto trips increase as a greater share of total trips.
 - Transit trips triple
 - Walking and biking trips double

Traffic Conditions Worsen

- An increase of 105-175% in traffic congestion and hours of delay is expected.
- Traffic on Hwy 26, I-5, I-205 and Hwy 217 will experience severe congestion most parts of the day.
- This congestion will overflow onto major roads and we'll see more cut through traffic on local roads.

Reliability Problems for Freight

- Major portals in/out of the county are at or approaching capacity.
- Truck hours of delay, especially on freeways, will increase four-fold.

Managed Lanes on Freeways

- Managed lanes for trucks, buses and HOV could improve traffic speed and reduce delay by 10% for general traffic and over 50% for trucks.
- Added lanes will not improve reliability, however.
- Higher speeds with the added lanes would increase crash risk and the total number of vehicle miles traveled, which could contribute to more greenhouse gas emissions.
- Committee Questions and Clarifications:
 - Members and staff discussed congestion vs reliability/predictability. Without the management of lanes, travelers are subject to erratic traffic.
 - A member asked if smart technology was considered and Andy said it is not included in the model, but sensitivity testing was done and smart technology was assumed across all three investment packages.

Pricing Can Help

- While tolling (managed lanes) may help manage traffic flow it may increase cut through traffic.
- Road user charges could reduce person hours of travel in the region by as much as 15% if implemented as a variable fee – by time of day and location, addressing congested areas.

Self-Driving Cars

Connected and autonomous vehicles could:

- Reduce congestion 11-22%;
- Reduce roadway lane miles over capacity 55-155%; and
- Increase VMT on freeways and arterials, but reduce VMT on collectors.
- Committee Questions and Clarifications
 - A member asked if the team tested the impact of technology on reliability. Andy responded that it has not been built into the models yet. In the industry there is competitive ideology at work on this topic. For example, smart technology might increase operating capacity but it might also increase VMT trip generation.

Transit Enhancements

- Portland is the strongest transit market with trips to Portland more than doubling by 2055.
- Increased capacity and frequencies between Hillsboro and Portland and Tualatin and Portland can rival auto trip time, providing greater reliability.
- Express service between Hillsboro and Sherwood shows low ridership.
- Committee Questions and Clarifications
 - A member asked if the low ridership for express service between Hillsboro and Sherwood assumed a limited access corridor. Andy said it did and indicated that transit performs better when you have regular high density trip generators serving whole corridor – not just at one end or the other. You just don't see a level of demand that suggests adding more frequency.

Transit Access

- Use of transit will increase in city centers.
- Almost 80% of county households will be within ¼ mile of transit service.
- Lower income households are well served by transit and use it more than the county average.
- Over 30% of population will have access to key major employment centers in the county by a 30-minute transit trip.

Biking and Walking Facilities

- Bike and pedestrian travel will almost double.
- Protected bike lanes can improve bike safety with the trade-off of needing more road right-of-way.

- Off road trails and pathways are another option, but can be less attractive if not direct.

Biking and Walking Access

- Almost 80% of the households will be within ¼ mile of a complete street.
- Lower income households have better access to biking and walking facilities than the county average.

Roadway Options

- Adding capacity to higher class facilities shifts traffic from lower class facilities.
- Faster speeds with throughway investments increases risk of fatal crashes.
- Right of way with wider streets reduces land development potential.
- More VMT increases crash risk; technology potentially reduces impact.
- There are farm impacts with new roads in rural areas.
- Investments that add new roads and throughway capacity improve access to major employment areas

Freight Access

- A new “northern connector” between US 26 and Hwy 30 with a new bridge across the Willamette River to Columbia Blvd would attract 60% of the trucks traveling on US 26 at the tunnel.
- Managed lanes reduce truck VHD over 50%.

Land Use and Community

- New throughway capacity reduces cut-through traffic through regional centers by 3-14% and neighborhoods by nearly 10%.
- Additional right of way with wider/new streets reduces land development potential in urban areas and agricultural productivity in rural areas.
- Non-auto mode share is highest with transportation-efficient land use plans and multimodal investments.

Health and Safety

- Strategies that reduce VMT result in greatest potential for increased health outcomes.
- Minutes of active transportation is highest with a focus on enhanced transit and demand management.
- As physical activity levels go up, related disease rates go down.
- Congestion negatively impacts air quality and safety.

Environment

- Poorer air quality with increased congestion and VHD.
- Increased impervious surface negatively impacts water quality and habitat.
- Higher GHG emissions with more VMT.

Relative Cost

- \$10 billion to build planned investments, complete streets with bike and pedestrian facilities and implement enhanced transit services.
- \$24 billion to build new roadways and transit in exclusive right of way.
- These investments would cost more than planned resources could fund.

Committee Discussion

SAC members discussed the finding and made the following comments or asked the following questions:

- Regarding VMT increases greenhouse gas emissions and reduction in VMT how much did the team take into account electric vehicles, lane management for trucks, etc.?
 - We expect more electric vehicles in the future and the share of electric vehicles was assumed to be the same in all packages.
- Is air pollution as big as it used to be with VHD?
 - We don't know. In our modeling we have tested continued maturity of fleet composition that assumes more non- combustion engine utility, assumed across all packages.
- There is a difference between the relative costs among the packages – for example, Package A is showing as the least expensive to build but when you consider the long-term expense of running the system, it might actually be the most expensive. How do we note this so it is not so misleading?
 - Andy reviewed what is included in each package. Maintenance costs were not calculated. This is such a long-range study, there are many unknowns and it isn't possible to do a defensible analysis of future operations and maintenance.
- It is not fair to assume transit improvements in all options because we might not need them if capacity in the system has been added in other ways.
 - Jeanne noted that we are not asking for input on what is in the packages at this time. We are focusing on comparison among the packages.
- Only **fatal** crashes on freeway system that occur more often, correct? Need to note that there are **more** crashes on arterials system.
- We are going to be walking and biking more in the future, we are making a big assumption that people are willing to walk three miles to work – seems much too high. We just heard in the earlier presentation that this won't work for the rural community.
 - The findings don't say that people will walk 3-miles. This is the trip length that could potentially shift to walk or bike use.
- We haven't added the cost of congestion to our cost estimates. Portland has done a cost of congestion study. At end of day we need to take this into account as the region determines what investments to make or not to make.

- There is statement in the meeting summary from the last meeting that we need to explain (Page 7 summary). (See Welcome and Agenda Review Section above for correction). How do you explain not seeing a reduction in VHD if we make the system more efficient? Is there some kind of induced demand going on? Can modeling induced demand provide some detail and is the presumption of induced demand the same for efficiency improvement than for capacity improvements?
 - Chris Deffebach referred to an earlier slide that shows an 11-22% reduction in VHD with 20-40% increase due to technology. It is hard to reduce delay completely with anything we considered.
 - Andy stated that when you add capacity, it is going to get used. If you have increased capacity, you have induced people to think they can take advantage of taking trips they wouldn't have taken when congested. This shows up in the results as greater VMT with new road capacity.
- The last bullet on the Relative Costs slide, “these investments would cost more than planned resources could fund.” Does someone know current estimate of planned resources? Chris said we don't know beyond 20-years. The team will look into whether they can look creating this estimate.

Online Open House Review

Staff Presentation

Jeanne Lawson led the online open house discussion. The purpose of this outreach effort is to provide decision makers input on what people see are the trade-offs as transportation investments are made as they respond to growth in the region. At the last SAC meeting, members provided input on what questions to ask the public and we developed the online open house in response. Jeanne noted that broader questions will be captured when we do polling. We will talk about polling at the December 8th meeting.

The online open house will be open for three to four weeks, October 24 through November 18. This allows time for people to pass it along to friends and colleagues, with a deadline that motivates people to participate.

The following draft online open house questions were discussed:

Question 1 – Future Travel Behavior: Traffic congestion levels can change travel behavior. With the future traffic conditions and levels of congestion that the study found which of the following reflects how you might change your travel behavior? (select all that apply)

Committee Questions and Comments

- Don't combine biking and walking anywhere – those that walk may not bike.
- How do you get people to answer these questions with a future perspective? It seems hard to get them to think 50-years out vs. what they would do currently.

- Information preceding the questions sets the question up and will provide future conditions.
- We will use charts that illustrate future trips that will get people thinking ahead.
- This question is useful in that it helps people understand the reality of future conditions.
- Traffic is now becoming a factor in all parts of our lives – we modify meeting locations, work schedules, etc. Business and personal interactions are now driven by traffic. We need to get away from the 8 am – 5 pm mentality. We need to capture these daily schedule modifications.
- Ride share and carpooling are missing as answers.
- What are we trying to learn from this question aside from it being an education effort? It seems like most people will check all the boxes and that is probably not helpful. It might be more helpful to have the answers ranked. The team agreed.
- Add some reminder about what the increase in congestion will be – quantify.
- To get people to look forward, maybe change the question for more future focus – ask about their kids or grandkids when answering.
- There are no timeframes in any of the solutions (answers).
- Are we tracking demographics? Jeanne indicated that we are.
- Suggestion to ask high school students these questions.

Question 2- Reducing Vehicle Trips: Which of these options would you support exploring further to manage demand? (select all that apply)

Committee Questions and Comments

- Same comment as above about ranking. Jeanne indicated that we may use sliding bars, etc. to help get people to prioritize.
- “Managed demand” is pretty technical and we should globally go through this and use plainer language. People will stop participating if it is too technical.
 - Jeanne agreed, we will make the language more readable and accessible.

Question 3 – Self-Driving Cars: Please indicate how strongly you agree with the following statement: The technology of self-driving cars will reduce the need for widening or building new roads due to increased efficiency and safety.

The value of this question is to get a sense of how much stock people put in technology solving our transportation challenges.

Committee Questions and Comments

- Does the public even know enough about the technology and its impact on roads to answer this question?
- Some don’t think this question is useful.
- More than self-driving cars, it is smart technology – cars talking to other cars – that helps manage traffic. That isn’t currently captured.

- The purpose is to see is what extent there is a belief that we don't need to worry about capacity improvements because technology will solve our problems.
- We will use the SAC's input to revise the question.

Question 4 – Meeting Increased Transit Demand: Which of the following would you support exploring further to meet the county's increasing transit demand? (select all that apply)

Committee Questions and Comments

- What is the lead in to this to the questions to get people engaged? Questions get harder as they progress.
 - The questions are too in-depth and complex and we are trying to get too much out of this. Agreement from other members.
 - Participants can't discern the benefit or cost of one answer or solution over another. Participants will likely pick them all.
 - Jeanne said we are structuring the online open house with key evaluation findings, and then asking for feedback. But she agrees that it is a lot of information to digest.
 - Member said there is too much to read.
 - Jeanne said we need informed input so need to balance information provided with questions asked. We do need to reduce the number of answer choices.
- Who do you think is responding to these questions/participating in the online open house?
 - First online open house did broad notification and built an interested parties list. We are expecting people who are informed and expressed interest.
 - Stacy Thomas talked about notification channels in addition to our stakeholder list:
 - Social media, TVCTV, paid advertising in area newspapers
 - Emails to partner organizations
 - Underserved communities will be reached via Centro Cultural
- Do we really want feedback or are we just trying to be transparent?
 - We do truly want feedback, but we likely won't get statistically valid feedback; that will happen during polling. We want to provide the technical input and bring the public along.
 - Andrew Singelakis said input will also inform the random sample survey we conduct via polling
- Is doing outreach online the best method or should we conduct in-person outreach?
 - Not a lot of people come to in-person meetings when something is so long range.
 - Online feedback provides broader perspectives.
- Are we planning a statistically valid survey? Yes.
- Why is the answer "Improved transit connections to Yamhill, Columbia and Clark Counties" an option – when it is not contemplated anywhere?
- Most of the transit options are included in all packages so how is the data useful?

Question 5 – Transit Access: What investment would you support exploring further to make transit more attractive and accessible?

Committee Questions and Comments

- Does this question get at more people using transit? Why don't we ask about what new corridors to be in? Jeanne said this is about how you get to transit being provided. Expanding in to new corridors is addressed in the preceding question.

Question 6 - Biking and Walking: Where would you prioritize additional bike/ped improvements? Please rank the following.

Committee Questions and Comments

- Noted that this question does use ranking.
- Reminder to separate biking and walking.

Question 7 – Managed Lanes on Freeways: Based on the pros and cons for managed lanes, what treatments would you support exploring further? (select all that apply)

Jeanne noted that this question on managed lanes is critical because it made a lot of difference between packages.

Question 8 – Freight Access to PDX and North: What additional investments would you support exploring further to address the needs on Cornelius Pass Road and other roads in the NW Hills and improve access for freight (select all that apply).

Committee Questions and Comments

- Replace “PDX” with “Port Facilities”.
- Take the reference to Cornelius Pass out of the introduction, not needed.

Question 9 – Roadway Options: Which additional roadway capacity improvements would you support exploring further?

Committee Questions and Comments

- This question doesn't address solutions like improving intersections and other efficiencies – seems to focus on roadway expansions.
- On limited access options, don't think it is possible to be totally inside or outside the UGB.
- Do we separate answers by users? Freight would answer this differently than a commuter.

Question 10 – Funding: Are you willing to pay higher taxes or fees to fund a comprehensive transportation system that offers transit and highway improvements (select all that apply).

Committee Questions and Comments

- No one is going to say yes, I'm tired of congestion tax me. We should put better description in the options of what we are trying to figure out.

Community Values Pop Up

These capture the original values. We zeroed in on the projects that best meet each particular value. We will follow up with an open ended question and a final summary question.

Question 11 – Summary Question: Considering the trade-offs between these values, how would you prioritize the investment areas to best meet the County's needs and values? You have 100 points to assign. Use the sliders to assign points to each investment area.

- Can people put all their points under one investment? Yes.

General Online Open House Input

- Some questions ask what should be explored further and others just ask what they like – make these more parallel.
- Demographics in last survey, we had three times the responses from bike pedestrians over the county average. We didn't try to get responses from roadway users. We are not finding out what these users are supporting.
 - This study covers the county-wide system, so it's harder to use signage to notify. Signage works well for localized projects.
 - Member asked about using the electronic sign on US 26. Andrew noted that it is owned by ODOT and likely not available for notifying of the survey.
 - Member said we need to focus on notification and awareness. That said, what we have is really complicated and timely. It is ok if we are targeting input if we are transparent about it.
 - Allow people to weigh in more simply and dig in if they want to.

Jeanne thanked everyone for their input and the team will use it to revise the content. The co-chairs will meet with the team to discuss revisions.

Public Comment

Chris Hardway: One part of the transportation model is currently underutilized. Most cars seat four people and most of those seats are empty. We should look at ways to renting the unused seats to maximize trips, utilizing this part of the system. Do a pilot project where people can use their phones to track open seats.

Ray Eck, CPO 6: Can we put the survey into a paper product and distribute?

Ron Swaren: If we don't build a northern connection we are going to experience huge impacts. It can solve many problems. The project could appeal to environmentalists if reclamation is utilized. Look to

other examples for inspiration in use of materials and techniques that can actually save money (used an example in Germany).

Michele Limas: Mailers are a good way to reach people to let them know about the online open house.

Next Steps

The next SAC meeting is scheduled for December 8, 2016.