

## **Joint Interim Committee on Transportation**

### **Meeting Summary – Tillamook area site tour, stakeholder roundtable**

**Tuesday, June 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

**Members Present: Sen. Gorsek, Co-Chair, Sen. Boquist, Co-Vice-Chair, Sen. Frederick; Rep. McLain, Co-Chair; Rep. Pham**

**Visiting Legislators Present: Sen. Anderson, President Wagner, Sen. Weber; Rep. Gomberg Rep. Javadi, Rep. Tran**

**Members Excused: Sen. Findley, Sen. Woods; Rep. Boshart Davis, Rep. Evans, Rep. Nathanson, Rep. Mannix, Rep. Reschke**

#### **Tillamook Site Tour**

The Committee assembled at the Red Barn at the Tillamook Creamery site and boarded a Tillamook County Transportation District bus for a tour of transportation facilities and sites in and around Tillamook. Members were welcomed by ODOT Director Kris Strickler, who emphasized that, like each tour at statewide meetings, the Committee will see local examples that can be seen in areas throughout the state. He noted that the state system deficiencies are also occurring at the local level, and that the \$19 million allocation by the Legislative Assembly was intended as a stopgap until the 2025 session.

Savannah Crawford, ODOT Region 2 Manager, briefly reviewed the findings from the recent safety study and analysis of Oregon Highway 6. Slides at milepost 33-35 will likely require a rebuild similar to the Pioneer Mountain/Eddyville project on U.S Highway 20. The safety study noted 428 crashes on a 40-mile stretch between 2016-2020; safety improvements could include signage, curve warnings, speed signs, reflective pavement markings, passing lanes, and slope reconstruction, each of which have varying estimated costs. Chris Laity, Tillamook County Public Works, noted that there are limited alternate routes from the coast to the Willamette Valley during closures of Highway 6, and limited alternate routes north-south during closures of U.S. Highway 101. Limited alternate routes pose problems for schools, hospitals and health care, and commerce.

Tillamook County Commissioner Doug Olson spoke to the lack of adequate cellular service throughout portions of the Highway 6 corridor, and indicated that Amazon is funding and constructing infrastructure to remedy that deficiency. Chris Laity, Tillamook Public Works, noted that traffic volumes increase greatly during certain times of the year due to the influx of tourists, bringing the area population from 28,000 to above 100,000 at times. Sen. Suzanne

Weber noted that the cost of improvements to the corridor could be achieved by a variety of funding sources.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: impact of landslides on area communities; low long pavement improvements and repairs tend to last; whether Life Flight can respond to accidents on Highway 6; and whether the region would be open to tolling as a funding mechanism to pay for the needed safety improvements.

#### *Zig Zag Creek Culvert Stop*

Savannah Crawford, ODOT Region 2 Manager, spoke to issues related to culvert blockage and damage caused by storms, landslides, and animal activity. Chris Laity, Tillamook Public Works, noted that of the state's 40,000 road system culverts, roughly 10 percent are in Tillamook County alone, with 7.5 percent located in Columbia County. Culvert maintenance is costly and time consuming and is an ongoing expense, as are periodic repairs following unexpected blowouts.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: expected length of culvert replacements; responsibility for costs to Highway 6 and U.S. 101; funding source for culvert maintenance.

#### *Wilson River Loop and Commerce/Compliance Weigh Station*

Kris Strickler, ODOT Director, provided an overview of the weight-mile program, noting the increasing operating costs of weigh stations and the impact of staffing and service reductions. He also spoke to the dangers of chain reaction accidents related to trucks during weather conditions, and noted that weight limitations on certain bridges can impose significant impacts on freight movement due to the need to reroute.

Chris Laity, Tillamook Public Works, provided an overview of the Wilson River Loop project. Designed as a bypass to allow trucks to avoid traveling Highway 101 through Tillamook, the project allows alternative access to the region's biggest tourist attraction and one of its central commerce hubs. He also noted that tourism impacts area roads, often without a commensurate increase in state highway funds, as vehicles are registered elsewhere and most travelers do not need to purchase fuel in Tillamook County. He also spoke to the dangers to bridges up and down the Oregon Coast, adding that five rivers empty into Tillamook Bay. He also spoke to the need for vegetation management to keep roads safe. Michelle Bradley, Port of Tillamook Bay, stressed the importance of the Connect Oregon Program for funding improvements.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: whether ODOT's Commerce and Compliance Division is adequately staffed; and estimated rerouting times and distances in the event of bridge closures.

### *Garibaldi and Oregon Coast Scenic Railway*

Lianne Welch, Bay City Mayor and Garibaldi City Manager, spoke to the need for seismic upgrades to the road and bridge system. She noted that winter storms regularly cause closures of Highway 101, forcing traffic onto alternate routes not capable of carrying such volumes. She also mentioned that while there is often federal money for modernization projects, there is not a commensurate increase in ongoing funding for operation and maintenance. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure also needs additional funding.

Katy Finley, Garibaldi City Manager, discussed ongoing ODOT projects related to transit, compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, and pavement projects. She emphasized the need for a new funding stream to make up for the fact that gas tax distribution to cities based on population cannot account for the impacts of large number of tourists on the system.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the meeting included: what are the most important industries in the area; whether cities in the region have tried to impose local gas taxes; whether there is support for tolling in the region; differences in population between offseason and peak tourist season; how to prioritize facilities for seismic upgrades; and important bicycle and pedestrian connections such as the Salmonberry Trail.

### Stakeholder Roundtable with Members of North West Area Commission on Transportation, Jurisdictional Leaders, Business Representative, and Topic Area Experts

Committee members were joined by a number of participants and observers for a roundtable discussion of goals, possible funding strategies, and challenges moving forward. Welcoming remarks were provided by ODOT Director Kris Strickler and Oregon Transportation Commission Vice-Chair Lee Beyer.

Other participants at the table included: Commissioner Mary Faith Bell, Tillamook County; Michele Bradley, Port of Tillamook Bay; Cynda Bruce, Lincoln County Transit; Colin Cooper, Columbia Pacific Economic Development District; Mikel Diwan, Lincoln County Public Works; Tonya Finley, American Council of Engineering Companies; Commissioner Casey Garrett, Columbia County; Terry Hendryx, Clatsop County Public Works; Joe Jenck, Jenck Farms LLC; Casey Kulla, Oregon Wild/Cycle Yamhill County; Chris Laity, Tillamook County Public Works; Patrick McHugh, Tillamook County Logistics Manager; Greg Morrill, Bergerson Construction, Inc.; Commissioner Doug Olson, Tillamook County; Mike Russell, Columbia County Public Works; Heather Taksdal, Zwald Transportation, Inc.; Commissioner Lianne Thompson, Clatsop County; Brian Vituli, Tillamook County Transportation; Thom Walters, Salmonberry Trail; Brian Worley, Association of Oregon Counties; and Mayor Steve Wright, City of Seaside.

In addition to participants, others present at the roundtable included: Kristen Adams, Associated General Contractors; Rachael Aldridge, Oregon Coast Scenic Railroad; Lindsay Baker, ODOT; Trevor Beltz, Tillamook Creamery; Mark Buffington, ODOT; Sierra Canfield, Senate Democratic Office; Sean Clark, Port of Columbia County; Savannah Crawford, ODOT; Jennifer Geisler, Sunset Empire Transportation; Sarah Lu Heath, Columbia Pacific Economic Development District; Anna Howe, ODOT; Bill Jablonsky, ODOT; Jana Jarvis, Oregon Trucking Associations; Tanner Lloyd, Associated General Contractors; Mac Lynde, ODOT; Tim Martinez, GeoToll, Inc.; Tim McCauley, League of Oregon Cities; Tom Messenger, Tillamook citizen; Emily Mooney, Office of Senate President; Brett Morgan, Climate Solutions; Patrick Sieng, Oregon Transit Association; and Mayor Kathryn Stock, City of Manzanita.

### *Topics of Discussion*

- Stakeholders invited to share “top of mind” issue for transportation work/package;
- Stakeholders invited to share one item that is a ‘regional challenge;’
- Stakeholder invited to share examples of factors that cannot be controlled that affect transportation in their area;
- Stakeholders invited to share ideas for diverse, stable, and sufficient transportation funding sources.

### *Major themes that were raised during the roundtable included:*

- Maintaining the traditional 50/30/20 split of State Highway Fund revenues;
- Need for additional revenue specific to operations, maintenance and preservation;
- Importance of ODOT’s winter storm maintenance;
- Need for more diverse funding sources for transportation;
- Need to collect revenues from electric vehicles to help pay for roads;
- Need for funding for bicycle and transportation facilities, including offroad trails;
- Importance of keeping freight and commerce moving, both at Coast and in Portland metro region;
- Importance of landslide repair, mitigation, and prevention;
- Need to maintain and increase funding for public transit options;
- Need for increased investment in seismic resiliency and retrofitting;
- Importance of investments to improve highway safety;
- Find way to capture revenue related to tourism on the Oregon Coast;
- Consider transitioning to, or adding, a fee based on vehicle miles traveled;
- Consider indexing the gas tax to inflation;
- Consider imposing user fees, delivery fees, or rental car fees;
- Find way to make allocation of Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) transit moneys more equitable to tourism-heavy areas;
- Find way to relieve burden on trucking in Oregon/move away from weight-mile tax;

- Consider tolling specific facilities to pay for needed improvements on those facilities;
- Large percentage of population does not drive – need to provide options for them;
- Consider finding ways to lower costs in addition to raising revenues;
- Find ways to increase allocations through the Connect Oregon Fund.