

Joint Interim Committee on Transportation

Meeting Summary- Happy Valley area site tour, stakeholder roundtable

Thursday, September 26th, 2024

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

Visiting Legislators Present: Sen. Meek, President Wagner, Rep. Gamba, Rep. Hartmann, Rep. Neron, Rep. Neron, Rep. Tran, Rep. Walters

Members Excused: Sen. Frederick; Rep. Boshart-Davis, Rep. Evans, Rep. Mannix, Rep. Nathanson

Happy Valley Site Tour

The Committee assembled at the Happy Valley City Hall and boarded a Sandy Public Transit bus, where they were greeted by ODOT Director Kris Strickler, ODOT Region 1 Manager Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region 7 Maintenance Manager Ted Miller, Happy Valley City Councilor Brett Sherman, and Region 1 Area Commission on Transportation Chair, Clackamas County Commissioner Paul Savas.

Councilor Sherman noted that fixing the transportation system will be a “herculean” effort in the coming 2025 session. He noted that Happy Valley has seen incredible changes in the past 20 years, due in large part to rapid and continuous population growth in the area, which has added nearly 30,000 residents during that time. The city has one of the state’s largest average household sizes, including a number of multigenerational homes. About 1,000 acres has been annexed since the disincorporation of the City of Damascus a few years ago, so that the city’s current comprehensive plan calls for 7,500 new housing units.

OR 224 Culvert Stop

The Committee debarked at a parking lot adjacent to a 48-inch culvert that failed and was recently repaired after the guardrail above began to slump. The repair process, which is only a stopgap measure until a replacement can take place, involved replacing the rusted-out bottom of the culvert and concrete infill above to retain the road’s original level.

Mr. Windsheimer noted that culverts are a problem all over the state, with as many as 25 percent in poor condition, based on inspections from 2013-2017. Repairing roadways following a culvert failure are especially costly, making it important to effect repairs prior to failure. ODOT faces a significant gap between available budget and need for culvert mitigation.

Mr. Windsheimer also spoke regarding safety issues on OR-224. There are many crashes on the segment, mostly between 3PM-6PM. Continued growth in the region will likely continue to

exacerbate the danger. Commissioner Savas noted that this portion of Clackamas County is “rural, urban, and wild,” adding that even Estacada has nearly tripled in population in the past 20 years.

Travel to Rock Creek Weigh Station

Mr. Miller noted that, under current budget cut scenarios, the Estacada maintenance station is slated to be closed, which will worsen response times in the region. Mr. Windsheimer commented on the impact of such a station closure.

Driving through a nearby neighborhood, Councilor Sherman noted that rapid population growth has led to several intersections being inadequate to handle the traffic volumes. From a safety perspective, several need new bike lanes, guardrails, and sidewalks. Commissioner Savas added that new construction in places is awaiting completion of studies following the Level 3 evacuations during the 2020 wildfires.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: whether major industries pay for a portion of the needed infrastructure when moving into the region.

Stop at Rock Creek Weigh Station

The Rock Creek station is the second oldest in the state system yet handles roughly 8,000 trucks daily. Some scales are seasonal, while others operate on specific days of the week, and Clackamas County has agreements between its weighmaster and local law enforcement.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: how truckers know which weigh station to visit.

Travel to Lawnfield Maintenance Station

On the road, Mr. Windsheimer provided a handout describing a cliff in the vicinity adjacent to OR-224 which has periodically seen rockfalls and collapses since 1938. Mr. Miller indicated that pavement replacement is on a roughly 10-20-year cycle in the area, depending on the traffic volumes.

The nearby industrial area sees as many as 40,000 trips per day, of which as many as half are freight trucks. The purpose of the Sunrise Corridor project was to address these traffic volumes.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: what accounts for the differences in rural road conditions.

Stop at Lawnfield Maintenance Station

The Committee deboarded at the Lawnfield Maintenance Station for a tour and examination of some of the signs that were replaced during the recent graffiti removal on Interstate 84 in Portland. Mr. Windsheimer emphasized the importance of interagency cooperation during the graffiti removal process. Also discussed were examples of vandalism against electronic traffic control devices. Many of the devices have been replaced in recent years more visible LED

signals. Signs also need to be replaced as they age or repaired or replaced when vandalized. The Committee also received a demonstration of a ‘lane blade’ that can be used to remove obstacles from the roadway with minimal danger to workers. There was also a description of the use of variable speed signs.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: what are some of the most expensive devices to replace; whether there are efforts to prevent vandalism rather than respond to it after the fact; and the cost of the lane blade.

Roundtable Discussion with Lower John Day Area Commission on Transportation, Jurisdictional Leaders, Business Representatives, and Topic Area Experts

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

Other participants at the roundtable included: Lisa Batey, Milwaukie mayor; Rory Bialystoski, West Linn mayor; Dwight Brashear, SMART Transit; Eliza Canty-Jones, Travel Information Council; Cierra Cook, Spoke & Word Books; Sam Desue, TriMet; Tom Ellis, Happy Valley mayor; Tonya Finley, Association of Civil Engineering Companies; Julie Fitzgerald, Wilsonville mayor; Larry Gescher, HP Civil; Jana Jarvis, Oregon Trucking Associations; Messene Mboup, City of Lake Oswego; Denyse McGriff, Oregon City mayor; Mike Olson, Market Express; Nicole Perry, Safe Routes to School/The Street Trust; Lynn Peterson, Metro Council President; Bruce Poinsette, Respond to Racism in Lake Oswego; Valerie Prett, Tualatin City Council; John Merrick Russell, disability advocate; Paul Savas, Clackamas County Commissioner; Bandana Srestha, AARP Oregon; Travis Stovall, Gresham mayor; Cassie Wilson, 1000 Friends of Oregon; and Todd Wood, Canby Area Transit.

In addition to participants, others present at the roundtable included: Kirsten Adams, Associated General Contractors; Lindsay Baker, ODOT; Mary Baumgardner, Wilsonville City Council; Mike Bezner, Clackamas County; Bridget Brooks, City of Tualatin; Ben Bryant, City of Happy Valley; Paul Edgar, Clackamas County; Will Farley, Lake Oswego; Brendan Finn, ODOT; Dick Hughes, Oregon Capital Insider; Kathryn Jones, Offices of Speaker and Senate President; Erich Lais, City of West Linn; Greg Leo, City of Wilsonville; Christine Lewis, Metro Councilor; Tanner Lloyd, Associated General Contractors; Jamie Lorenzini, Happy Valley; Jim McCauley, League of Oregon Cities; Emily Mooney, Office of Senate President; Heather Peck, Travel Information Council; Miles Pengilly, TriMet; Sang Tzun Pham, staff for Rep. Hoa Nguyen; Amy Ramsdell, ODOT; Doug Riggs, Willamette Falls Locks Authority; Patrick Sieng, Oregon Transit Association; Brett Sherman, Happy Valley City Councilor; Marcus Sis, staff for Sen. Meek; Andy Smith, Happy Valley; Jamie Stasny, Clackamas County; Kali Sullivan, ODOT; Colin

Swanson, staff for Congresswoman Chavez-Deremer; Lindsay Tenes, TriMet; Trent Wilson, Clackamas County; and Rian Windsheimer, ODOT.

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;
- Stakeholders invited to share examples of factors that cannot be controlled that affect transportation in their area, and;
- Stakeholders invited to share ideas for diverse, stable and sufficient transportation funding sources.

Major themes that were raised during the roundtable include:

- Inequitable distribution for Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund via qualified entities to local transit agencies;
- Importance of safety programs like Safe Routes to Schools;
- Need for multiple, diversified transportation funding tools;
- Examples of local funding mechanisms like Milwaukie sidewalk and street fees;
- Maintain the 50-30-20 split of funding from the State Highway Fund;
- Revenue must be increased;
- Need for street projects of all sizes, not just “megaprojects;”
- Need to develop more frequent transit services;
- Complete projects promised in House Bill 2017 (2017) and HB 3055 (2021);
- Need for public education campaigns to teach Oregonians the connection between transportation and the state economy;
- Need for more transportation options that enhance mobility and accessibility;
- Find permanent funding solutions to prevent from needing more funding in a decade;
- Index current funding streams to inflation;
- Importance of keeping rest areas clean, safe and open;
- Help people with disabilities to be independent participants in public life;
- Find solutions for orphan highways by funding jurisdictional transfers;
- Aging population will require more help getting around in near future;
- Difficult to control where people choose to live and work, expanding commute sheds;
- Lack of affordable housing exacerbates long commutes for many workers;
- Distribution of transportation revenue must be geographically equitable;
- Disconnect between motor fuel funding system and efforts to curb climate change;
- Cannot control economic conditions, inflation at the national and international levels;
- Reduce the red tape and regulations that increase project cost;
- Impact of supply chain disruptions caused by programs like Buy America;
- Need to institute right to repair laws;
- Shortage of available and willing contractors to complete projects;

- Need for resiliency against natural disasters;
- Consider funding transportation locally via system development charges;
- Will support nearly any funding proposal *except tolling*;
- Support increasing the employee payroll tax for more funding for transit;
- Consider imposing road user fees that accurately reflect use of roads;
- Continue to consider tolling and congestion pricing.