

## **Joint Interim Committee on Transportation**

### **Meeting Summary- Hillsboro area site tour, stakeholder roundtable**

**Friday, September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2024**

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

**Visiting Legislators Present: Sen. Campos, Sen. Sollman; Rep. Neron, Rep. Sosa**

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

#### Hillsboro Site Tour

The Committee assembled at the Hillsboro Civic Center and boarded a TriMet electric bus, where they were greeted by ODOT Director Kris Strickler, ODOT Region 1 Manager Rian WINDSHEIMER, Metro Councilor Juan Carlos Gonzalez, Mayor Steve Calloway of Hillsboro, and Miles Pengilly of TriMet. Director Strickler's remarks were a summary of the eleven site tours that preceded this one, as well as the primary theme of the need for additional funding for transportation operations and maintenance.

#### *Stop at Hillsboro DMV Office*

Dave McKay, DMV Operations Manager for ODOT, spoke to ongoing challenges that DMV faces in providing a wide range of services to the motoring public. Operating below optimum staffing levels results in errors and delays, though he did indicate that those staffing shortages are not solely responsible for the recently discovered voter registration of unqualified individuals. DMV, as an employer, cannot offer the same level of pay or working conditions as many competing employers, and the DMV is a challenging work environment. He also noted that the Hillsboro DMV is one of three in the metro area that are slated for facility replacements, along with Gladstone and Mall 205. Facilities concerns also include vandalism and threats, so DMV provides trainings on de-escalation strategies.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: what is DMV's starting wages at their metro region offices.

#### *Travel to Cornelius via TV Highway and to Reed's Crossing*

Mr. Windsheimer provided remarks on the Great Streets Program, which is used to provide a suite of complex road and intersection improvements designed to improve both bicycle/pedestrian safety and connections to transit options. The Tualatin Valley (TV) Highway started out as a farm-to-market road, but with development has become a major arterial, meaning that much of the facility does not meet its current needs. A road safety audit (RSA) is a tool that can be used to address some of these deficiencies, which were made apparent by three fatal crashes on the corridor. Strategies like road inserts, striping, signage, and safety lighting can help

alleviate some of the dangers. He noted that there is an annual gap of about \$30 million for such improvements.

Councilor Gonzalez spoke specifically to the U.S. 26 corridor to Highway 217 through communities of Aloha, Cornelius and Forest Grove. The area is very diverse, with 85 percent of its Census data tracts more diverse than state average. This means that there are both people of color as well as a diverse array of languages spoken, with Spanish the most common. As a result, the region has installed the first of its bilingual rapid flashing beacons in Cornelius.

Mr. Windsheimer also noted that the Great Streets Program can be used to make improvements to transportation facilities in advance of conducting jurisdictional transfers. He also spoke briefly of the Vulnerable Crash Response (VCR) program, conducted by maintenance personnel, that can make rapid changes to an area following a crash incident.

Mr. Pengilly offered an overview of transit operations in the region. TriMet is the area's public transportation provider. He emphasized the importance of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Fund (STIF) as a major source of revenue for transit agencies, and demand is high and growing in the region. However, delivering timely service will likely require consolidation of some of the 133 stops on the line. He also offered an example of multijurisdictional cooperation between TriMet and Washington County. He also noted that TriMet is in the process of reducing the greenhouse gas emissions of its fleet, adding that fully converting its bus fleet to all-electric buses like the one for the tour would cost \$2 billion.

Ted Miller, ODOT Region Maintenance Manager, discussed challenges of working highway projects adjacent to an active rail line. ODOT often needs to put money up front just to begin negotiations with the railroad.

Committee questions and comments for this portion of the tour included: what entity can make change happen regarding the railroad.

#### *Stop at Reeds Crossing Development*

The Committee deboarded the bus at a parking area in the Reeds Crossing housing development. Mayor Calloway provided a high-level overview of the development, which began nearly 30 years ago with the purchase of large tracts of land which were periodically added to the urban growth boundary. At the beginning of the project, developers sought to lower expectations for sales; however, sales have greatly exceeded the most optimistic expectations, with over 8,000 housing units on 15,000 acres. Assessed fees raise \$4 million per year, which helps keep up with costs, but deferred maintenance will eventually kick in unless revenues hold with the state-county-city distribution of the State Highway Fund.

Washington County Commissioner Nisa Fai welcomed the Committee to Reeds Crossing, adding that she is a resident of the neighborhood. She spoke to the rapid growth of the area, and urged continued support for the Great Streets program and bus rapid transit.

## 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, Oregon Transportation Commissioner Jeff Baker, and Metro Council President Lynn Peterson.

Other participants at the roundtable included: Tina Adams, American Council of Engineering Companies; Muhanad Alnajjar, Unite Oregon; Lacey Beaty, Beaverton mayor; Dwight Brashear, SMART Transit; Frank Bubenik, Tualatin mayor; Steve Calloway, Hillsboro mayor; Joaquin Castaneda, Genentech, Inc.; Jeff Dalin, Washington County Commissioner; Nafisa Fai, Washington County Commissioner; Jon Howorth, Westside Economic Alliance; Sarah Iannarone, The Street Trust; Ken Kubacki, Associated General Contractors; Heidi Lueb, Tigard mayor; Bill Meyer, Oregon Electric Vehicle Association; Brett Morgan, Climate Solutions; Deanna Palm, Washington County Chamber; Tim Rosener, Tigard mayor; Brad Smith, Windsor Properties; Stacey Triplett, AARP Oregon; J.C. Vnannatta, TriMet; Jerry Willey, Washington County Commissioner; Blake Woodbury, Carson Oil; Park Woodsworth, Ride Connection; and Erik Zander, Omega Morgan.

In addition to participants, others present at the roundtable included: Kirsten Adams, Associated General Contractors; Anne Marie Backstrom, staff for Rep. Chaichi; Tina Bailey, City of Hillsboro; Jocelyn Blake, City of Beaverton; Jen Christy, City of Beaverton; Kimberly Culbertson, Hillsboro Downtown Partnership; Nathan Davis, City of Beaverton; Matt Delata, City of Hillsboro; Mike Eliason, Association of Oregon Counties; Brendan Finn, ODOT; Matt Freitag, ODOT; Mark Gibson, Oregon Trucking Associations; Kathryn Harrington, Washington County; Dick Hughes, Oregon Capital Insider; Jana Jarvis, Oregon Trucking Associations; Sarah Kim, staff for Rep. Hai Pham; Tanner Lloyd, Associated General Contractors; Nansi Lopez, Centro Cultural; Jim McCauley, League of Oregon Cities; Ariel Nelson, City of Hillsboro; Don Odermott, David Evans and Associates; Jessica Pelz, Washington County; Miles Pengilly, TriMet; Amy Ramsdell, ODOT; Stephen Roberts, Washington County; Gerritt Rosenthal, Metro councilor; Paul Savas, Clackamas County Commissioner; Cass Sinclair, Oregon Helps; Carly Sylva-Gabrielson, Washington County; Danielle Silver, Westside Economic Alliance; Andy Smith, City of Hillsboro; Kali Sullivan, ODOT; Lindsay Tenes, TriMet; John Whitman, Ride Connection; 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:*

- Need for a reliable and sustainable source for transportation funding;
- Funding should be equitable for all people;
- Need for an accessible and equitable system of public transportation;
- Expand use of electric bicycles and e-micromobility to alleviate congestion;
- Need to increase gas tax and index it to inflation;
- Increase employee payroll tax to bring in additional money for transit;
- Need a diverse array of funding sources to provide sustainable funding;
- Public trust and education on transportation is needed to enact more funding;
- Costs for public transportation services have increased dramatically;
- The aging population will result in more and more non-drivers;
- Complete the promised HB 2017 projects to relieve congestion;
- Importance of freight mobility to the state economy;
- Impending impacts of climate change;
- Need to focus on community needs and racial justice;
- Local governments also face significant funding shortfalls;
- Increase funding for safety through Safe Routes to Schools and Great Streets program;
- Need to make more investment into electric vehicles and charging infrastructure;
- Deferred maintenance comes with higher costs in the long run;
- Costs and inconvenience of traffic congestion;
- Cannot control what other states are doing that might affect Oregon;
- Inflation on wages and construction materials affect project delivery;
- Cannot control the demographics or the economy of the region;
- Consumer behavior has led to significant increase in home package delivery;
- Too much competition for federal grants, too little funding for federal matching moneys;
- Rising number of people who work in a town other than where they live;
- Consider instituting a vehicle miles traveled tax for all vehicles;
- Property tax reform to give more funding flexibility to local governments;
- Tap the kicker to pay for transportation operations and maintenance;
- Transition from weight-mile tax to diesel tax for trucks;
- Consider delivery fee for goods delivered to homes;
- Consider making registration fees proportionate to vehicle size or cost of vehicle;
- Consider income-based or zone-based fees.