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# Meeting Minutes

## Sherman County Transportation System Plan (TSP)

### Project Advisory Committee Meeting

March 18, 2015: 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Moro, Oregon

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**Attendance: See attached sign-in sheet**

#### Meeting Notes

1. Casey Bergh provided an introduction to the project, its purpose and value to the County and cities.
2. Introductions – Everyone was asked to identify their top two transportation issues in the County. Transportation issues and concerns identified by the PAC during introductions include:
  - a. Safety
    - i. Traffic needs to be slowed on Main Street in Moro (this concern was reiterated by many people in the room). One idea was a flashing light at the corner of Main Street/1<sup>st</sup>.
    - ii. Access/egress is a concern for the Oregon Raceway. People arrive for events in waves, and they need to be able to accommodate everyone. There is also concern about emergency access during events with only one road serving the raceway and one connection to US 97.
    - iii. Concern about the congestion at Biggs.
    - iv. There is concern about kids crossing US 97 (e.g., going to school)
    - v. There is concern about how to design roads to accommodate elderly drivers and elderly pedestrians in the County.
    - vi. There is concern with wheat trucks trying to turn off highway at several public and private streets (Kent was mentioned as one location). Providing deceleration and storage for right-turn vehicles at locations where trucks turn into facilities may be helpful.
    - vii. There is concern about a bill that would raise the speed limit on Highway 97 and 197. The County wants to keep the speed limit at 55 mph in Sherman County because they have narrow roads, lots of trucks, and few resources when crashes occur. They noted that the ODOT staff work well with the County and do a good job. (Note: follow up on this bill revealed that the increased speed limit would not apply to US 97 in Sherman County.)
    - viii. There is concern with people falling asleep while driving on the highway, which the rescue units frequently deal with.
    - ix. There is concern about the south entrance to Wasco from US 97. PAC members said you have to make a decision and then make the turn fast. Concerns were noted at the north entrance as well.
    - x. There is opportunity for deceleration lanes in a lot of places.

- xi. There is concern about the lack of common sense and distracted drivers on US 97.
  - xii. There is interest and concern with Highway 30, which runs parallel to I-84. It is vital to keep it open, but there is an issue just outside/east of Biggs. The hillside is crumbling so a more permanent fix in this area may be needed. People that work in Biggs and live in Rufus rely on it, and it is an important alternate route when the freeway is closed.
  - xiii. A successful plan would be one that helps to reduce traffic fatality rates.
- b. Truck Traffic
- i. Concern about the lack of passing lanes on US 97. The emergency services group sees a lot of people making bad decisions while passing trucks because they get impatient. Locations mentioned for potential passing lanes were: coming up from Biggs, or on hills.
  - ii. Concern about the high volumes of truck traffic and high truck speeds, especially in Moro. The concern of truck traffic was reiterated by multiple people at the meeting.
- c. Economic Development
- i. Desire to create thriving communities, but hindered when the community is bisected by a highway.
  - ii. There is concern with providing transportation service (including maintained roadways and public transportation) to current and future businesses to support economic development, and continuing to serve agricultural businesses, which is a huge industry for the County.
  - iii. Bicycle tourism has great potential for the area, and the County would like to know how to encourage it in a safe way.
  - iv. There is interest in finding ways to get people to pull off the highway and linger more in communities, supporting economic vitality.
- d. Multimodal Transportation
- i. City of Moro needs to add sidewalk to all streets (some existing sidewalks are in disrepair).
  - ii. There are a lot of walkers/joggers, especially on Lonerock Road in Moro and other roads in each city. There is a need for more pedestrian routes.
  - iii. There is concern with bicyclists on the highway. The roads are narrow and it can be challenging to safely pass cyclists (they ride in the middle of the lane and there are a lot of blind corners).
  - iv. Multimodal transportation is another area of concern, particularly building bike paths into infrastructure to support bike tourism and adding sidewalks to help kids walk to school/enable adults to safely walk for recreation.
  - v. Getting patients to and from the Sherman County medical clinic (in Moro) and to other clinics as needed.
  - vi. A successful project would be a product or adopted TSP that embodies balance: balances safety with mobility issues (vehicles, freight, walking, etc.) and achieving a balance and equity for everyone involved in the process.
- e. Funding

- i. City of Rufus needs some road upgrades and bridge repairs/upgrades because a lot more trucks are traveling through the City.
  - ii. Wasco is the only community that is bypassed by US 97 and the downtown area of Wasco is in disrepair.
  - iii. The bridge in downtown Wasco is starting to crumble, with concrete that falls off. The bridge is in limbo in terms of who is responsible for taking care of it.
  - iv. The County would like to figure out how to partner with ODOT more, although they still have a good working relationship.
  - v. There is the need for a voice at the planning commission meeting and hopes that this TSP process is a great opportunity to take that voice to a level to guide infrastructure improvements.
- 3. Project Overview: Casey gave an overview of the project.
  - a. Purpose of the project:
    - i. Documenting priorities for transportation projects
    - ii. Guide the County to allocate financial resources appropriately to meet transportation needs over next 20 years;
    - iii. If projects are documented in plan, they are more likely to get funding through grants.
  - b. KAI to add Kent to study area maps. It is included in the study area, so an inset will be included to make sure people consider it when providing comments and reviewing material.
  - c. KAI will provide an alphabetical list of acronyms and their definition to be used as a reference document throughout the project.
  - d. Casey noted that we will try to put an executive summary up front of memos to give them key information.
  - e. Casey highlighted the project website and noted that the public involvement tab will be an important link as we move forward. We will use it to gather feedback from those unable to attend meetings in person.
- 4. Goals & Objectives
  - a. Mobility –
    - i. The group discussed the high school and how people access it south of Moro. The majority of people drive to high school, and just a few walk to school. People are using the state highway to get to school. There may be a need for an off-street path to high school. The County has a plan to redo the high school entrance; they want to consolidate two accesses to one. Even more traffic will use this location when the future elementary school is constructed near the high school. The fire chief said that 2 entrances are needed to get to the high school in the event of an emergency.
    - ii. The sidewalk along US 97 (Main Street) to the school is also a common walking path for recreation.
  - b. Environment – Some concern about funding was expressed, noting that the PAC doesn't want to allocate limited dollars to active transportation projects (sidewalks, bike lanes, etc.) at the expense of other roadways that need maintenance. There is concern about how to fund bike/ped projects when they don't even have the money to fund highway

projects. They want to be realistic and expressed the desire to get funding from people using the bike paths. A discussion followed about how bicyclists also pay income and property taxes and that maintenance funds are in different pots of money from Enhance/Fit It funds, lottery funds, license fees at the state level, etc. Michael reminded the group that it is a balance and that there is often money set aside specifically for bike/ped projects and we want to help them be in a position to apply for that money.

5. Casey gave a brief overview of the plans and policy memorandum.
6. Ashleigh summarized the results of the existing and future conditions analysis.
  - a. Population forecast:
    - i. The group believed the 2015 population forecast numbers are slightly inaccurate, noting that their existing populations were higher than the numbers shown.
  - b. Priority land for development:
    - i. The group agreed with the majority of the priority lands for development shown and noted that:
      1. The west end of Wasco is another residential development;
      2. The west side of Wasco is zoned agriculture (the KAI map needs to be updated).
  - c. We reviewed safety statistics and crash trends.
    - i. KAI to double-check the volume at Van Gilder Rd/OR 206, those in the room thought this should have fairly high volume as it is a major intersection. (KAI had referenced the low volume as the reason for a high crash rate at this intersection with only one crash.)
    - ii. The group also discussed concern about truck speed southbound on US 97 at Biggs-Rufus. A concern that the future traffic signal would just lead to more rear-end crashes was voiced.
7. Workshop: After reviewing the materials, the group split up and marked up the boards in the room with locations of additional concerns or issues in the County. Comments received from these boards will be incorporated into the next Technical Memorandum.
8. Upcoming Meetings and Deliverables
  - a. Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00 PM is confirmed for the next PAC meeting.
    - i. Technical Memorandum #4 (Alternatives Analysis) will be distributed to PAC for review prior to next meeting.
  - b. Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, from 6:00 PM will be the public open house (held in Moro). There will also be an online virtual open house where people can provide comments.