

Steering Committee Meeting #4

Tuesday, July 19, 2016
5:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.
Downtown Fire Station Meeting Room
400 NW Harrison Blvd.
Corvallis, OR 97339



Members Present

Steve Rogers, Chair, *retired City Public Works Director*
Theresa Conley, *OCWCOG, Metropolitan Planning Coordinator*
Tatiana Dierwechter, *Benton County Health Department*
Meghan Karas, *Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board*

Juliana Recio, *Access Benton County*
Chuck Thierheimer, *Community- At- Large*
Mark O'Brien, *Corvallis Chamber of Commerce*
Jasmin Woodside, *Corvallis Planning Commission*

Members Absent

Hal Brauner, *City Council Liaison (non-voting)*
Stephan Friedt, *Transit Advisory Board*
Nick Fowler, *Economic Development Advisory Board*

Sal Hernandez, *Freight Representative*
Jay Thatcher, *South Corvallis Neighborhood Association*
Meredith Williams, *OSU Transportation Services*

Staff and Project Team

John Bosket, *DKS Associates*
Thomas Brennan, *Nelson/Nygaard*
Mary Steckel, *City of Corvallis*

April Hasson, *JLA Public Involvement*
Stacy Thomas, *JLA Public Involvement*

Members of the Public and Other Attendees

David Bella
Ali Bonakdar, *CAMPO*
Barbara Bull, *City Councilor*
Valerie Grigg Devis, *ODOT*

Paul Leitman, *NelsonWygaard*
Court Smith
Larry Weymouth

Welcome and Introductions

Steve Rogers, Steering Committee (SC) Chair, welcomed everyone to the fourth Corvallis Transportation System Plan (TSP) Steering Committee meeting. Steve introduced new members Jasmin Woodside of the Corvallis Planning Commission, Chuck Thierheimer, representing the community at large, and Sal Hernandez, who is a professor at OSU, works extensively with ODOT and is representing the freight industry. Steve also took a moment to direct all members to the personalized card from Mayor Traber, thanking all City advisory board volunteers for their service this year.

Steve stated that the purpose of the meeting is to review the project status, schedule and existing conditions analysis. The main goals for the technical memo review are to understand new information, identify information that committee members need clarification on or disagree with, and identify information that is missing.

Project Status and Schedule

John Bosket from DKS noted that due to some recent changes in OSU campus operations, OSU and ODOT are currently working on refining the regional travel demand model (CALM) to improve future forecasts of traffic. Because the project team needs to use this model for our next task of forecasting future traffic, we are experiencing a delay until the model is ready. At this time, we anticipate that the model will be available at the end of August/beginning of September.

The project schedule has been updated to reflect this change. As it stands now, we expect to meet again in early October to discuss the evaluation of future conditions with no further transportation improvements made. This would be followed by a City Council briefing and our first major round of public involvement, including topic-specific work groups and an open house. In the meantime, we will be conducting a survey of middle and high school students/parents in September.

Existing Conditions Analysis

Tech Memo 8: Existing Transit Conditions and Baseline Performance

Tom Brennan from Nelson/Nygaard presented the high-level findings for the existing transit system covering the following:

- Existing transit system overview:
 - Generally, the current bus routes go where people live and where businesses are concentrated.
 - There are sixteen routes that operate in a radial system including some commuter and Night Owl routes. All routes come in to the transit center, providing easy access for riders with a need to transfer.

- Route 5 is the most popular. Route 6, traveling through residential areas, has consistent ridership.
- Two of the 8 all-day routes have 30-minute headways. Feedback from the public indicates that riders would prefer more 30-minute routes vs. 60 minute routes.
- Market analysis:
 - A density map illustrates overlap between areas of employment density and areas of population density.
 - Highest concentrations of demographic factors that correlate with higher transit use (lower incomes, older adults, and people with disabilities) are in North Corvallis, coinciding with overall population densities. However a high rate of transit need exists in SE Corvallis.
- Employment travel patterns show a significant inbound commute to Corvallis.
- Citywide and onboard surveys were conducted to help assess existing conditions.
- System performance:
 - Ridership is stable after the increase experienced when CTS became fare free.
 - Ridership is high relative to the level of transit investment. The cost per boarding is in the \$2.40 per trip range. The peer average is \$3.87.
 - ADA paratransit ridership is consistent.
 - Productivity is high and on par with other systems in university communities.
 - On time performance is low. Many transit agencies are in the 95% range, but CTS is 55%. This is likely due to overly tight schedules that don't provide enough layover time to get back on schedule.

Steering Committee questions and discussion:

- Will late trips be addressed as part of the project?
 - Tom stated that yes, solutions may entail changing schedules, adding additional run times to schedules, and adjusting for traffic times. Schedules will need to change as traffic congestion increases.
- Why does the system performance graph show peaks and valleys over time, i.e. what is limiting growth?
 - Tom stated that it is not known exactly, but gas prices affect ridership. The biggest change to CTS ridership was in 2011, with the start of fare free service.
- How will the need for increased capacity be assessed?
 - Tom stated that the team has models that help to predict changes.
- There could be additional clarity about the funders for the Linn-Benton Loop system that are listed on page 23 of Tech Memo 8. Hewlett Packard, Benton County and Linn County helped fund the service in addition to Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPOs) and should be listed. Transfer opportunities (page 27) should include how the Linn-Benton Loop bus is connected to the Amtrak station in Albany. Also, as of July 8, the Pacific Crest Bus Lines no longer operates.
- Were the citywide and onboard surveys multiple choice or open comment?
 - Tom indicated that they included both elements, multiple choice and an open text box for comments.
- Would like to see the breakdown of operating costs for years prior to the fareless system. There will be people who don't believe we should have a fareless system, so it would be helpful to have the data showing what would occur without it.
- "High ridership" on page 49, figure 29 is a subjective term and it should be defined. Would be useful to have Route 7 broken down into two parts, since it is a long route, and each part analyzed separately?

- It would make sense to find out where Route 6 transfer riders are going in order to potentially add a longer route from major activity centers. This way, riders could take a direct bus route, which would minimize the need to transfer(s).

Tech Memo 7: Existing Transportation System Conditions and Baseline Performance – Motor Vehicles

John Bosket began by noting that the statement about traffic volumes changing throughout the year in Tech Memo 7 is incorrect. Traffic tends to be higher in the summer on the state highways, however this is not true at all for the local system. The local system peaks in October and May when OSU is in session. To account for this, traffic counts were specifically taken in October and May to capture that local peak.

John then presented the key findings on the existing transportation system conditions:

- Peak traffic occurs in Corvallis between 4:45 pm and 5:45 pm on weekdays.
- Most of the ten intersections that experience excessive delay during the peak hour are on state highways, which are also freight routes.
- Corvallis has a high percentage of commuters traveling by foot or bicycle. Investments in alternative modes of travel lessen motor vehicle traffic congestion.
- Truck route information was reviewed. There is currently a conflict of uses in the downtown where the need for deliveries and regional truck travel must be balanced with maintaining a comfortable environment for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Crash data was reviewed and discussed, including the severity and causes of crashes.
 - High-level findings for crash analysis showed that most crashes result in low severity injuries or only property damage. Most crashes are behavior related, so solutions should include education and enforcement strategies rather than relying solely on physical changes to infrastructure.
 - Crashes involving pedestrians tend to result in injuries of higher severity. 74% involve a driver failing to yield to a pedestrian in a crosswalk.
 - One of the most common types of bicycle crashes involves collisions with cars making right turns at intersections.

Steering Committee questions and discussion:

- The importance of educating walkers and bikers about being cautious in right hand turn lanes, especially considering the challenges of OSU's student community being transient and including many international students.
- Are the statistics regarding crashes involving speeding and alcohol/drug use independent or could both have been involved?
 - John thought that both were likely involved in some crashes reported, but would have to check to be sure.
- Was lighting/time of day an issue.
 - John will check, but noted that lighting usually does not play a big factor when considering a citywide analysis.
- Where was the crash data found?
 - The crash data was obtained from the Oregon Department of Transportation.
- Why were the intersections at Grant and 29th, and 9th and Conifer not addressed? Also, why not Kings and Garfield, which is a school crossing?
 - Mary Steckel, City of Corvallis, noted not all intersections were studied.

- Information might be missing regarding funding, specifically what funding is available. Most of the existing funding is used to maintain the system, but there is not a discussion in the existing conditions about paving. It is difficult to determine total funding for maintenance if there is no conclusion about what the maintenance level is.
 - Mary said we can include a reference to it; however the TSP isn't a maintenance plan. Steve suggested removing dollar amounts associated with maintenance costs to make this clearer.

Tech Memo 7: Existing Transportation System Conditions and Baseline Performance – Active Transportation

Tom Brennan reviewed findings for the active transportation portion of the existing conditions:

- Corvallis ranks very high when compared to other cities in the nation regarding mode-share travel for biking and walking.
- The availability of sidewalks was reviewed. Traffic buffers, average speeds, number of lanes, shoulder width and availability of lighting are the important factors when judging the quality of sidewalks.
 - The five lowest scoring segments are mostly state facilities, and several are outside of city limits and most were on the south side of Highway 20/34.
 - There were many trips generated from pedestrians walking to/from transit. There is good sidewalk coverage for access to transit, as well as around schools and major job centers.
 - Most households have access to high-quality walkways.
- For cities with populations over 50,000, Corvallis is the second highest in the country for bike mode share (after Davis, California).
 - Bicycle conditions are generally favorable.
 - Public comments collected indicate that bicyclists want reduced traffic speeds and want the downtown to be more bike and pedestrian accessible. Installing “leading intervals” to allow bikes/peds to get out in front of right hand turns would help.
- Data was not collected for other alternative modes of travel (e.g., skateboards, electric bikes).

Steering Committee questions and discussion:

- Bald Hill and Crescent Valley High School are two key activity centers where sidewalks are needed.
- The Corvallis Planning Commission is looking to get a multiuse path added back into the capital improvement plan (in south Corvallis, on the west side of Highway 99).
- Be careful about mixing urban growth boundary versus city limits data, as well as state highway versus city data. The team should be very clear where the data is from to avoid misconceptions about what's inside the UGB with what's outside.
- On page 33, “effective bike detection” is noted. All city signals have bike detection, so they should all be “effective.” ODOT has a map with substandard bike facilities, but it doesn't include the Van Buren Bridge, which does not have a good bicycle connection.
- Why is 2nd Street marked as red when there are and sidewalks?
 - The project team will look into this.

Transportation and Transit Funding

Tech Memo 9: Transportation Funding

John Bosket noted that the key purposes of the memo are to help readers understand where transportation revenue currently comes from, how it gets spent, how much might be available for improvement projects in the future, and options for increasing revenue. His points included:

- Currently most transportation funding (other than funds coming from System Development Charges (SDCs)) is used for maintenance and operations. State and federal grants are usually targeted toward a specific project.
- SDCs do not pay for existing system deficiencies, but rather for transportation needs to support growth.
- The project team projected how much funding may be available for transportation system enhancements through the year 2040 and that came to \$22-27 million. However, most of this revenue is anticipated to come from sources such as SDCs or grants, which are restricted in how they can be used.
- Future revenues will need to increase at the same rate as expenses just to maintain current service levels. New revenues will be needed to enhance current service.

Steering Committee questions and discussion:

- Federal and state funding channeled through the MPO are generally guaranteed every five years, however the allocation between the cities and the County, and how much is allocated to new projects is not guaranteed. In the past, 51% went to projects, not maintenance. Some of those funds are available for improvements. John specified that he will make this clearer in the Tech Memo.
- Most streets in Corvallis were built by developers as part of new development, and this is not mentioned in the Tech Memo. It is difficult to identify the investment dollars coming from new development. Mary Steckel noted that the City's estimation of the value of the street system is one way to capture that.

Tech Memo 10: Transit Funding

Tom Brennan reviewed transit funding with the committee. His key points included:

- A review of how transit funds are spent. Operations and maintenance contracts and fuel are the largest expenses.
- The largest funding source is the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).
- Operations are primarily funded through federal grants and the Transit Operations Fee (TOF); capital investments are primarily funded through competitive grants.
- There is often a 20% match requirement when competing for federal grant dollars.

Steering Committee questions and discussion:

- The First Student contract recently increased in price, and it would be nice to know how much the prior contract was in order to compare. Tom will provide this information to the group.

- The treatment of the 5310 funds in the MPO area was unclear and it would be nice to get clarification. Tom noted that there is some discussion in the transit section on the issue.
- It would be interesting to see a fare comparison with other cities, as Corvallis is very unique.
- Corvallis, Eugene and Lane County are starting to use renewable diesel in their fleet vehicles. It would be good to track what the long term cost savings are for maintenance. Mary Steckel added that Corvallis is currently at 50% and will go to 99% at the end of December and that there will likely be positive maintenance impacts.
- The table on adding dollars under high growth scenario on the Future Funding Assumptions slide only had a 20% increase in the fee, which would probably get absorbed by inflation over five years and not provide funding for service enhancements.
- Steve asked about the alternative forms of funding, and how it would change if transit districts existed. If there was a district, OSU would be required to pay a larger amount. Tom stated that the transit plan will have a future funding section. District funding would change ADA funds as well.

Public Comment

Steve Rogers asked committee members and the project team for their approval to move the public comment period up in the agenda to accommodate people who have been waiting. Everyone agreed.

David Bella presented a slide presentation of “The ALIVE Proposal.” He developed it with Court Smith to get people to think in different ways. He learned from ODOT modelers that vehicle miles traveled are going to increase. The only thing they could find that would decrease vehicular miles traveled was clustered, mixed-use development.

David called attention to Step 2 of the ALIVE Proposal, which shows new transportation modes for bikes and tramways. OSU could implement these tramways now. David and Court have provided this idea to students and to Ed Ray, the president of OSU, who was encouraging. To get momentum, the proposal needs support from the group “in between” the president and the students. David mentioned the issue of OSU’s Beaver Bus being largely underutilized. *[Upon review of the meeting summary, an absent SC member noted that when OSU moved to the zonal parking system in 2014-15 and made improvements to the shuttle, ridership more than doubled, and it increased another 13% this past year. However, ridership on the North Route is low. A study of the whole shuttle service is being conducted with the intention of finding the ways to increase ridership on all routes.]*

The last two slides featured walkable areas that people really like in Corvallis, including the waterfront and OSU gathering spaces. These areas could be even more livable with less cars and the addition of bike tramways. This is an opportunity to approach transportation and livability in a creative way.

Steering Committee questions and comments:

- Jasmin thanked David and said she’d love to figure out a way to make this happen.
- Are there other projects besides the bike tramway project?

- David suggests starting with the tramway - let people actually see it and then build off that idea. The most likely place to pilot the tramway is the OSU campus. Ed Ray and students have been supportive, but the overall institution needs to support it which can be difficult to navigate. David cautioned about irreversibility - when CO2 emissions are out there, they're out there for centuries. Even if you stop everything, they are warming the earth and making oceans acidic. Streets and roads are the longest lasting infrastructure.

Larry Weymouth reiterated Dave Bella's points. He encouraged the TSP to coordinate with the current visioning taking place with the City of Corvallis.

A committee member commented that this gets to the earlier question about whether the transit survey had open ended comments, as there are likely people who'd like to move to more climate-friendly options.

Fall Public Involvement Plan

Stacy Thomas, JLA Public Involvement, provided an overview of the fall outreach activities that are planned – the first in-person public events for the project. In addition to an open house, the project will host three topic-specific workgroups a week or two before the open house.

The team is proposing the following workgroups: 1) Bike/Ped; 2) Transit and 3) Auto/Freight. The main format for each group meeting will include a topic-specific discussion about existing conditions, current and future funding, and a solutions conversation. The groups are open to the public but the team does plan to invite specific people to participate, including Steering Committee member representation.

The Bike/Ped and Transit group meetings will include a field visit. The project team is seeking input from the group to determine if the bike/ped group should have a bike tour or a pedestrian tour. The transit-focused field visit will use a city bus to tour participants. She discussed the different options that tour could take and asked for feedback on those. Stacy will follow up with a written plan for the committee members to respond to.

We will collect information, observations and input gathered at the workgroups to share with the public at the open house.

Steering Committee questions and discussion:

- A "virtual tour" for the Auto/Freight workgroup was suggested.
- Liked the transit tour option of identifying what's working and what's not working on existing transit routes.
- The Benton County Health Department has key partnerships and coalitions working with low income, minority and English language learners, and that they can help to partner to promote these events with their constituents. This fall being a very busy time for the health department and the Corvallis task forces. We should coordinate these efforts and have a shared conversation and outreach. Mary Steckel asked for the event dates so we can begin coordinating.

- A bike tour versus a pedestrian tour was discussed. A combined tour was ok because bikers can also park bikes and become pedestrians.
- 9th Street and Circle was suggested as a bike tour stop, where the tour could watch some of the complicated bike maneuvers taking place.

The project team will review the survey results and online comment map to help identify possible areas for the tours.

Barbara Bull, City Councilor, commented from the audience that Monroe and South Corvallis could be possible areas to visit, due to the infill and growth areas.

Action Items for Project Team:

Action	Responsibility	Estimated Completion	Date Complete
Check US20/OR 34 analyses to see if it predated recent signal timing changes.	DKS	3 weeks	
Check crash data to see to what degree the speed-related crashes overlap with those involving alcohol drug use.	DKS	3 weeks	
Check if lighting/time of day is a significant factor in citywide crash trends.	DKS	3 weeks	
Make it clear in Tech Memo 9 that some of the funding channeled through the MPO may be available for new improvements.	DKS	3 weeks	
Add David Bella's presentation to the online meeting materials and library.	JLA	2 weeks	
Provide the new First Student transit contract pricing.	DKS	3 weeks	
Determine if 2 nd Street should be marked red since there are sidewalks.	DKS	3 weeks	