

NW Oregon Area Commission on Transportation

September 9, 2021

Zoom Meeting

Tillamook, OR

The meeting was called to order by Henry Heimuller at 1:03pm.

The following members and guests attended:

Rosemary Baker-Monahan	Marsha Kirk	Jae Pudewell
Trevor Beltz	Kathy Kleczek	Ken Shonkweiler
Jenna Berman	Jim Knight	Erin Skaar
Mike Borensen	Chris Laity	Frank Spence
Michele Bradley	Mary McArthur	Robert Stevens
Josh Brown	Patrick McHugh	Lianne Thompson
Mark Buffington	Megan McKibben	Suzanne Weber
Ayreann Colombo	Tom Messenger	Jerry Willey
Jeff Harrington	Arla Miller	Steve Wright
Jeff Hazen	Melanie Olson	David Yamamoto
Sarah Lu Heath	Ken Pearrow	Joe Younkins
Henry Heimuller	Susan Peithman	Naomi Zwerdling
Juliet Hyams	Dennis Price	
Sen. Johnson	Katy Pritchard	

1. Welcome and Introductions

2. NWACT Minutes/Updates

- a. Meeting Minutes: Moved by Michelle, Seconded by Lianne Thompson.
- b. Public Comment: None
- c. ODOT Region 2 Updates: Ken Shonkwiler reported there are five recruitments out right now, including a transportation project manager. Enhance Projects forwarded to the next round of vetting: Hwy 6, Staleys Junction, Hwy 101 at Broadway in Seaside. Federal Land Access application is for paving and bike, ped, and covert replacement at 101 & 26 for bikes. Safe Routes to School project moving forward in Warrenton. Community Path Grants in Rockaway, Astoria, Warrenton. These grants are taking more time than anticipated. Path Grants in Wheeler and Gearhart will begin in November. STIP scoping for bridges and board signs has begun. Region 1 Area Manager position is open

and two internal employees are still in the process. ACT chairs and members should have received invitation to participate in the process. Enhance project for Garibaldi is under scoping. Seaside is on schedule.

Curve warning systems are being updated on all major highways in Area 1 this cycle and lower volume highways will start this winter. Mallard intersection is continuing through September. Necanicum and Nehalem River Bridge on 26 is underway and will continue through September. Hayward to Mountindale on 26 is being paved through September 19. Weather has been helpful. Megler Bridge three-year painting project will start this winter; daytime lane closures will begin at the end of September.

Tom Messenger wants to know when Area 1 Manager will be hired. Ken Shonkwiler: Hoping for a decision by October. Henry Heimuller inquired about Staley Junction and if improvements have helped. Mike Borresen offered story of seeing someone ignore striping and signing. Sen. Johnson wants to know about feedback on Hood to Coast. Ken: We get a lot of complaints every year. Sen. Johnson says particularly grumpy folks complaining about ST Johns to Scapoose; at what point is there a recap of Hood to Coast? Mark: There may not be one scheduled, but we can reach out to the race hosts. Mark has asked them to reconsider lane restrictions, it did not seem necessary. Its not expected to happen again next year and race operators want to make improvements. Marks: Maintenance wise, we are focused on paving over cracks Hwy 6, 26, 101, and 30. Late start due to large chip seal project on 47. Sen. Johnson: Bump at Bennet Road fix is much appreciated. Mike Borresen: Paving of Hwy 26 grinding and paving or only overlay? Ken: grinding and overlay. Marsha: Hood To Coast may continue onto this weekend. Yamamoto says that the permit was denied due to covid. Suzanne Weber: echoed concerns and complaints on Hood to Coast; Wilson River loop signage still needs to be improved. Ken: We know what needs to be done for design, but we have a funding limitation for signs and extending turn lane for the agreed upon solutions. Kathy: do accidents on 26 and 30 compare to last year? Ken: we had a 17 year high in traffic fatalities in 2020; this year has shown a 22% increase to date across all highways. We're seeing a lot of reckless driving and receiving a lot of complaints about it. Unsure how to engineer their way out of poor driver behavior. Henry: the accumulating affect is disturbing, is there a pattern beyond ignorance? Ken: mostly it seems to be inattentive or aggressive behavior. The number one cause of accidents is folks leaving the lane. Even rumble strips on 202 have not had a huge impact. Lianne Thompson: if accidents are across types, is this a mental health breakdown? Ken: ODOT is using RITIS to use Bluetooth data to find places where speed slows, crashes, etc and it does not seem to be delay oriented but due to not paying attention. Skaar: Are there any education campaigns planned? Henry previously suggested using signage to tell folks about recent fatalities. Patrick McHugh: Lack of repercussions for bad behavior and lack of police presence on 6 is noticeable. Driver in accident was cited the same day without license or insurance. Ken: Solutions state-wide need to include a multi-layer approach including education and enforcement. There are grant opportunity to fund police on certain highways though safety corridor designation and other. Tom Messenger: In other parts of the country there was a billboard "Accident here one month ago with two fatalities" and that caused him to slow down.

With drivers unfamiliar with the area, this messaging may have an effect. Josh Brown: staffing levels at sheriff's office are critical and OSP also down on staff. After the fatalities we were able to use ODOT funds to get deputies on overtime. Josh reached out to OSP to focus patrols on 6. A police presence does help slow people down. Sheriff is aware of frustration, poor decisions, and is doing what they can.

- d. Washington County Transportation Update: Joe Younkens: Appreciates ODOTs continued commitment on 47 near Westport Dairy Creek and Hwy 26 culvert work. We're looking to OR 6 Main Street in Banks, intersection revamp. Looking to do both projects at the same time to use closure efficiently. Highway 47 and Martin Rd near Forest Grove, plans to bid the new roundabout and a new bridge over Council Creek. Traffic updates at Maple intersection at 47 design is underway and construction to between in 2 years. Culvert at Dairy Creek and starting on bridge. We are using detour on Hwy 26. South Rd bridge over Tualatin River to improve weight limits and will go to bid this winter. Sen. Johnson: Do you ever ensure roundabout size is okay with truckers? Joe: yes, we check with freight mobility for each project and can in some cases create a bypass for oversized vehicles or provide smaller curb so folks can drive over it if need be. We also work with the farm bureau for farm equipment on smaller rural roads.
3. ODOT 2024-2027 Ped/Bike Strategy: Susan Peithman: GET SLIDES. Jenna Berman also involved. 24-27 Step includes \$45m for Ped/Bike and \$10m for SRTS infrastructure that is discretionary; these are fed funds for state highway system. Why fund walking and biking? Most trips are under 3 miles, economic vitality and development, healthcare savings, greenhouse gas reduction, equity. Program Goals: address gaps for ped/walk on state system, prioritize safety and equity, identify cost savings pairing with other projects. Active Transportation Needs Inventory is used to help prioritize needs. Selection strategy for funds is to leverage with other ODOT projects. Standalone projects had very high bar to meet due to expense. List will be revised on feasibility, readiness, and funding. Public involvement includes online open house in Sept -Oct; Discussions w ACTs and Advisory Committees May-Oct.
4. Highway 6
 - a. Status of OR 6 study relating to slides in the MP 33-37 area
Ken reported: this is a coordinated effort between county law enforcement, education programs, and the NW ACT. It's not a simple engineering fix. Safety messaging installed and reevaluated at 90 days. County Commissioners have been great to work with and are planning on scheduling listening sessions which ODOT will attend. Press releases have been sent as well in Tillamook. Region traffic engineers and others have been meeting about weekly to provide solutions. There is a pavement concern issue and a geo tech study underway which will wrap up in about 2 years investigating the slide. In the poor pavement area, we are not seeing the worst crashes.
 - b. July 2021 Fatalities: 73% of crashes are lane departure crashes either off the road or crossing the yellow lane, which included the three crashes recently on Highway 6. Bluetooth data reveals crashes are not congestion related. Speeding and inappropriate driving behavior contribute to most recent crashes and unsafe passing. Solutions: community listening sessions including ODOT, County, and Law Enforcement; Rumble Strip project in 24-27 and trying to move that forward (this is stymied by poor pavement

condition), sign fixes, reviewing paving and striping, reviewing passing lanes and evaluating for improvements, (unsafe passing behavior at passing lanes have caused crashes and these lanes may be removed), looking at safety corridor designation. Crash rates are determined for corridors once we have 150% of state average. At this time there are some places on Highway 6 that would qualify. A safety corridor designation would provide funding for signage and police presence. Because designation is unlikely, we're looking at other funding to address the same issues. Kathy Kleczek: Is camera-based ticketing being considered with signage that tickets are being written by photo? This would also be helpful due to staffing shortages. Ken: That's not within ODOT's preview. Marsha: photo enforcement is regulated by population. Tom Messenger: Could rumble strips be added in places where the road is strong enough? Ken: Yes, we're determining those areas right now for future installation. Tom: With long wait times from OSP on accident reports, can we speed up this process so data-based decisions can happen faster? Ken: ODOT administrators are working on making this process faster, as it's currently a four-to-five-year process. Sen. Johnson: remember that rumble strips create noise and nearby houses are affected by that noise. Ken: there have been sections on Hwy 6 that we've removed rumble strips due to complaints so we must be strategic. Marsha: With shortage of police, there are many accidents going without reports so accidents may be under reported. Ken: Fatal and serious injury crashes almost always have a report, which drive action most. Henry: Geotech report on slide, will the result tell us that the whole section may slide off the mountain entirely? Ken: The report will inform the fix, regardless of magnitude. Report will also present several solutions at different scales. We're trying to figure out the size of slide and which direction its moving. Mark: I asked for the study as a way to get a prescription for the cure. The last time the slide moved was in '96 and we fixed it with sawdust, which we've learned doesn't work. We're looking for expert opinion on how to fix in an emergency and long-term. Skaar: other ideas include center barriers. Ken: center barriers are problematic due to width of road and are difficult to install on curves, they also remove access along each side of the highway which can lead to crashes.

5. NW Oregon Transit Alliance Update

Jeff Hazen: Last fiscal year ridership was down 17% over previous year, it was down 25% at certain points with a rebound in the last three months. Lower Columbia Connector on Hwy 30 saw 54% increase in the last year. Waldport, Pacific City, and Warrenton will each get a new bus stop to serve connector routes. Final design and construction is upcoming. Biggest issue at this moment is deal with work force shortages leading to curtailed routes/schedules. This is not due to funding but a shortage of employees. Sen. Johnson: We hope that transit can get the message out to the public on affecting wait times and route changes. Jeff: Agreed, this is not a funding issue. We're also working with a team of agencies, Dept of Corrections, and DMV to discuss possibility of standing up a driver training program within prisons to train folks prior to release. Jeff is also co-hosting a nation-wide call on the same topic. Housing is another concern and he will be working with Helping Hands to place these potential drivers. Sen. Johnson: Training for truck drivers might also work well with this program idea. Consider contacting Knife River and their training solution near Salem. Inside the prison, you might want to connect with recovery organizations to assist

with soft skills necessary to become a driver, funding could come from these programs. Also Work Source Oregon should be involved. Jeff: Funding seems to be available. We're meeting with parole and probation professionals to identify clients. Also, the 'Get There Challenge' is starting in October encouraging folks to take alternative transportation options. Arla Miller: COVID is making an impact on transit, including data collection and bus drivers passing away from COVID. Biden has mandated that Federal employees get vaccines and is increasing fines for folks not wearing masks on public transit. Sen. Johnson: Are vaccination mandates causing folks to quit their jobs? Mark: ODOT discussing mandates and loss of employees; if understaffed we will prioritize busiest highways and leave lesser traveled roads un-serviced. Marsha: Oregon State Parks are requiring volunteers to be vaccinated.

6. Connect Oregon Grants – NWACT Priorities Review

Sen. Johnson: Need to update as some projects have been completed or otherwise moved along. Jay: Applications need to have a sponsor and applications are quite a bit of work. Henry: if we need a special ACT meeting, that will be called. For now an ad hoc committee of volunteers will review the priorities list for full review at the next meeting. Even one project would be a good win. Jay: Tongue Point, Biz OR, ODOT are working with an app for a haul out for 2022 application cycle to fund 30% match for 1200 ton haul out facility \$12-14m.

7. NWACT Business/Member Updates

Kathy Kleczak: ODOT sponsored annual 'Get There Challenge; Oct 4-17 encouraging alternative transportation. Van shares available to employers. Michele Bradley: Dept of Aviation grants are open and closing shortly. Connect OR could be used to match Federal programs. Jim Knight will reach out to airports to alert them to Core Grant deadline, approvals will come Feb 2022. Juliet: Now City Manager of Garibaldi, working on highway redesign project with ODOT, Ports, Salmonberry Trail, and others. Also looking for grant to underground utilities. Sen. Johnson: info available on state funds for undergrounding utilities. Chris Laity: COVID is causing labor shortages due to quarantines. Neskowin emergency egress route will be completed shortly. Currently have four bridges under design. Culvert projects are also underway with several agencies needed to approve. Kiwanda Corridor project has been challenging and ongoing at Pacific City. All together 12 bridges are being worked on. Sen. Johnson: Re-districting is underway and suggests the group reviews the proposed maps and weighing in with the redistricting committee.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10pm.