

Office of Governor Kate Brown

Governor's Transportation Vision Panel

March 14, 2016 – Portland Metro and Hood River Regional Forum Summary

Project Overview

The Governor's Transportation Vision Panel is a yearlong effort to develop a series of recommendations for the Governor that address transportation issues across all modes and regions of the state. Members of the Vision Panel include legislative representatives, business owners, and civic leaders from across Oregon. Under the leadership of Governor Kate Brown, members of the Vision Panel have been charged with the following tasks:

1. Assess the current conditions of Oregon's transportation system
2. Develop a long-term vision for the future of Oregon's transportation system
3. Create a series of recommendations that can be enacted in the near-term to lay the groundwork for this vision

Forum Details

The regional forum was held on March 14th, 2016 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Portland International Airport (7000 NE Airport Way, Portland, OR 97218) Approximately 93 people attended the meeting.

Meeting Format

The meeting was organized around a discussion facilitated by Jeanne Lawson, JLA Public Involvement, between the meeting attendees and the chairs. The agenda was as follows:

1. Welcome and initial activities:
 - Dot exercise
 - Comment Wall
2. Panel overview
3. Preliminary findings, regional needs/priorities, and financing discussion
4. Wrap up and summary

Upon arrival, forum members were given a sheet explaining the preliminary findings, a comment card and four dots. They were then guided toward two posters listing the Key Preliminary Findings as well as a comment wall with questions about the region's needs and priorities. They were instructed to place their dots next to the issues on the posters they would most like to discuss, and answer the questions on the comment wall.

Once attendees were seated, the Co-Chair gave an introduction explaining the preliminary findings and turned the floor to Jeanne to facilitate the discussion. The discussion revolved around the issues identified on the Key Preliminary Findings poster, as well as the specific needs and priorities of the region. Jeanne wrapped up the discussion by asking attendees if there were any recommendations for financing transportation.

To close the meeting, forum members were briefly reminded how the input from these forums will be used, and thanked for their participation.

Key Input

Group Discussion: Preliminary Findings

At the beginning of the meeting attendees were asked to identify the preliminary findings that they wished to discuss using a dot exercise. The issues with the highest number of dots were then used to guide the group conversation. Below are the issues with the highest number of votes, and the input pertaining to them.

Bottlenecks

Reduce roadway bottlenecks and enhance freight network alternatives

- Expanding the urban highway system to remedy congestion will not adequately address the problem
- Increasing light rail connections may decrease peak hour traffic pressures
- Consider expanding I-205 in Clackamas County and Highway 217 in Washington County to improve freight mobility
- The I-5 bridge is a bottleneck that affects the market flow of the entire state
- Make improvements to the Sunrise Corridor in order to support the Clackamas industrial district
- Address congestion issues that result from conflicting modes
- The peak hours of congestion have widened and there are bottlenecks that occur at most hours of the day
 - I-205 to Portland
 - I-84
 - Highway 217
 - Boone Bridge
 - Highway 212
 - Highway 26
 - I-405
 - Highway 99
- Congestion has increased due to routes *initially* designed for freight being used heavily by commuters and tourists
- Address the factors that contribute to congestion on the Kent freight line
- Rail crossings and multimodal complications cause congestion in the Cascade Locks
- Consider extending rail transit to Vancouver to remedy commuter congestion on the I-5 bridge

Transit

Invest in transit service improvements targeting road congestion and system gaps

- Maintain home-rule authority in Cornelius and seek alternative funding for transportation improvements
- Providing transit passes to students enables mobility and encourages futures ridership
 - Work with Trimet to develop a strategy for funding
- Develop transit strategies based on the needs and priorities of each specific community

- Make increased reliability, convenience, and connections the priorities when developing a transit system
- Take advantage of the state's Special Transportation Fund in order to improve transit for the senior and disabled population
- Collaborate between the regions to develop a cohesive interregional transportation system
 - Model interregional transit after the Europe system in order to increase tourism
- The Green Line MAX has system gaps that need to be addressed
- Industrial districts lack adequate transit service

Freight

Invest in strategic intermodal freight infrastructure

- There was general support for the continued funding of Connect Oregon
- Consider implementing high-occupancy vehicle lanes
- Movement of goods should be a priority when developing a state transportation plan

Bicycle & Pedestrian

Invest in bicycle and pedestrian improvements targeting safety, system gaps, and road congestion

- Create safe routes to schools using bike and pedestrian infrastructure
- Troutdale, Gresham and Corbett are lacking the infrastructure to relieve issues between vehicle, bike, and pedestrian traffic
- The Gorge needs connections to an interregional system
- Many streets in East Portland that are along TriMet routes don't have sidewalks and are in need of investments to increase safety
- Explore altering restrictions on state transportation funding

Seismic

Invest in seismic resiliency

- Prioritize seismic retrofits for the 205 and Burnside bridges
- Ensure that the Columbia River Rail Crossing is included in seismic retrofitting plans
- Operational funding needs to be allocated for emergency planning and post seismic emergency services
- Increase the resiliency of Oregon's rail system
- Hood River Bridge is in need of updates to support short and long term needs as well as create a critical link
- Build redundancy to support mobility following a seismic event
 - Repurpose bridges

Group Discussion & Comment Wall Exercise: Regional Needs/Priorities

The discussion was then guided toward the questions posed in the comment wall exercise pertaining to the needs and priorities of the region.

What do you see as the key driver of your region's economy? How does the transportation system impact these economic drivers?

- Economic drivers:
 - Manufacturing
 - Agriculture
 - Innovative transportation systems
- Freight needs to support and attract businesses in order to ensure Oregon's ability to participate in the global market
- Investments in improving Portland as a gateway
- Trade and industry are priorities
- Make investments to support the growth of Silicon Forest
- Improved schools to prevent families relocating due to lack of adequate education
 - Will reduce congestion from students commuting to schools
- Access to goods and services is prioritized
- Success for a diverse population
- Make Portland livable
- Collaborate with Washington to approach issues in the Columbia River Gorge

What are the strengths and weaknesses of your region's transportation system? What are its important connections to the rest of the state and nation?

- Strengths:
 - Connectivity
 - Access to ports, airports, rails and highways
 - Well aligned routes
 - Strong interstate system
 - Improving transit
 - Collaboration
 - Bike friendly and community oriented population
 - Joint Policy Advisory Committee on Transportation structure
- Weaknesses:
 - Lack of transparency in the decision making process
 - Roads are overcapacity
 - Congestion expanding to most hours of the day
 - Lack of consistent, statewide transit funding
 - Road deterioration
 - Transit ridership has not increased enough
 - Inadequate ports
 - Inadequate funding base for passenger rail
 - Connections are needed between housing affordability and transit access
 - Lack of funding for rural transit connections

- Clackamas County needs improved access and connections in order to serve employment growth
- Seismic vulnerability
- Lack of equity in public transit options
- Lack of transit fare reciprocity
- Many regional airports are in need of upgrades

As you look to the future of your region, how does the transportation system serve your community's long-term goals and priorities?

- Create a strong and robust transportation system to support the growth of the state's economy
 - Ensure the system is able to be maintained
- Invest in seismic resiliency to prevent catastrophic destruction in the wake of the Cascadia event
- Coordinate decisions between development and transportation capacity investment
- Create a transportation system that effectively provides for the senior and disabled population
- Increase international trade
- Make *Vision Zero* a priority
- Provide alternative modes in rural communities to enhance the freight network and improve overall mobility
- Promote active transportation and make the connection to public health

Group Discussion: Transportation Financing

Concepts for consideration

- Road tolls
 - Explore prepaid road tolls for rental car users to act as a tourism tax
- Carbon tax
- Sales tax
- Studded tire excise tax
- Alter the allocation of the income tax
- Eliminate constitutional restrictions
- Allow regional governments to levy taxes
- Ensure transit user fees remain low to promote ridership
- Approval/permit fees for development that occurs away from transit connections