

Office of Governor Kate Brown

Governor's Transportation Vision Panel

March 10, 2016 – Northwest Oregon 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 10th, 2016 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Port of Tillamook Bay (6825 Officer's Row, Tillamook, OR 97414). Approximately 45 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 attendees 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

- Portland is a major bottleneck that affects mobility for the rest of the state
 - I-5 North to Washington and Highway 30
 - I-5 Bridge congestion impacts market flow for the entire state
 - Consider creating freight lanes along I-5
 - Intercity transit service is needed
- Improve the mobility of agriculture freight
- Highway 20 repairs have caused congestion
- Tourism is the main driver of congestion in the region, and is more frequent during summer months, however, traffic is becoming increasingly common year-round
- Conditions on rural roads impact the ability to prevent or respond to accidents or road impediments
 - Accidents on Highway 26
- Make efforts to support those commuting to other regions for employment
- Evaluate freight bottlenecks and make the analysis available to each region
- Maritime bottlenecks are caused by:
 - Lack of parking alongside the river
 - Depth restrictions
 - Lack of container terminals
 - Maritime restrictions that allow only container cargo shipping
 - Consider expanding to more freight cargo
- Consider incentives for companies that promote alternative routes for freight, with the goal of relieving congestion
 - Staggering times on major arterials to avoid peak hours
 - Consider implementing a tiered rate structure

Freight

Invest in strategic intermodal freight infrastructure

- Invest in improving and increasing the utility of Port Westward
 - The docks provide 42-72 ft. depth
- Creating a robust road system that includes improved intermodal infrastructure will decrease congestion

- Four County Trail has an opportunity to connect to Portland
- Regulations impede the efficiency of freight projects
- There was regional support for Connect Oregon
 - Money should be focused on multimodal improvements that benefit the state system and economic development
- Ensure that politics don't restrict the movement of products
- While economic growth should be a priority, transportation improvements should be looked at holistically

Transit

Invest in transit service improvements targeting road congestion and system gaps

- Transit funding for seniors, the disabled and students has dropped below what is necessary to provide transit to Portland for health services, etc.
- Allocating transit funding based on population does not adequately serve smaller communities
- Consider removing barriers to school bus usage
 - Explore offering free public transit for students
- FTA charter rules
 - Finding solutions for rural areas with limited resources
- The senior and retired community makes up 50% of the population in the region
 - Transit flexibility is a necessity for this community
- Transit can be a key component to diminishing congestion
- Increase frequency and reliability to build customer base

Bicycle & Pedestrian

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

- Rural roads lack the infrastructure to provide safety for bicycles
 - Highway 30 has a 74% commute rate and would benefit from safety improvements and increased bicycle infrastructure
- Bike lanes to the St. John's Bridge are often used for vehicle parking
- Bike tourism improves the economy
- People often decide against biking due to unsafe infrastructure
 - It's common for people to commute by car in order to bike in a safe area
- When a separated bike path isn't viable, bike lanes should be implemented
- Ensure that bike infrastructure is a locally defined issue
 - Bike infrastructure is not a priority in many communities in the region
- While maintenance is a priority, bike and pedestrian improvements shouldn't be considered a tradeoff
- Public safety should be a driver in implementing bike and pedestrian infrastructure
- Pursue a cohesive system

- When investing in active transportation infrastructure, consider that 74% of the working population in the area commutes out of the region for employment
- Combined siloes prevent specified spending and cause competition between modes

Seismic

Invest in seismic resiliency

- Use seismic, tsunami and other natural hazard mapping to identify and prioritize lifelines
- Seismic preparation needs to be included in all future infrastructure plans
- Consider the Nehalem Bridge seismic requirements and include them in future plans
- Tsunami retrofits aren't specifically stated in the preliminary findings, but are a key concern of coastal regions
- Ensure that funding is allocated to infrastructure improvements, not just analysis

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?

- Key drivers include:
 - Tourism
 - Natural resources
 - Retirement and a growing senior population
 - Fishing
 - Farming
 - Manufacturing and industrial development
- County roads are too narrow to support agriculture and tourism traffic
- Balance priorities between freight, tourism and other economic drivers

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:
 - Transit district coordination
 - Diverse agriculture products
 - Access to marine ports, rail, airports, and highways
 - Scenery and tourism
 - Ensure regional "charm" is preserved when making improvements
 - Connect Oregon

Group Discussion: Transportation Financing

Concepts for consideration

- Focus on doable strategies
- Consider implementing tolls
- It would be beneficial to gather revenue from out-of-state electric car users
 - Install state regulated car chargers at lodging destinations
- Collaborate with federal partners to develop sustainable funding strategies
- Demonstrate transportation's role in public health in order to take advantage of federal incentives
- Ensure employment, health, economic growth and statewide mobility is prioritized
 - Include alternative voices in the conversation
- Consider a transit tax for employees
- Explore funding transportation through payroll taxes

Comment Cards

Below is the feedback, not raised during the group discussion, from the 8 comment cards submitted by meeting attendees.

K-12

Increase the flexibility of K-12 student transportation services across the state

- Collaborate with transit districts to develop efficient student transportation strategies
- Consider removing barriers to school bus usage