



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Transportation and Growth Management Program

*A joint program of the Department of Transportation and  
the Department of Land Conservation and Development*

635 Capitol Street NE, Suite 150  
Salem, Oregon 97301-2540

Phone: (503) 373-0050

Fax: (503) 378-5518

[www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM](http://www.oregon.gov/LCD/TGM)



May 18, 2015

City of Sweet Home  
Attention: Laura LaRoque, Planning Services Manager  
1140 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Sweet Home, OR 97386

Re: City of Sweet Home TSP Assessment

Laura,

Transportation System Plan (TSP) assessments are designed and used to evaluate a local jurisdiction's adopted TSP and other transportation planning documents against Transportation Growth Management (TGM) objectives that have been identified as common issues in TSP's across the state. Assessments are normally used to identify potential changes, updates or revisions recommended for existing TSP's and are primarily intended to assist local governments wishing to file TGM grant applications for the purpose of updating a TSP, as you have indicated you wish to do.

I have reviewed the City of Sweet Home's 2005 TSP and the Transportation Element of the City's Comprehensive Plan and offer the following assessment of the city's existing transportation planning documents.

### **Initial Thoughts**

The City's existing 2005 TSP was funded in part by a TGM grant and represents a good transportation planning foundation for the City. My understanding from ODOT TGM staff is that a prior TSP update (1998 – 2003?) to the City's TSP was prepared, but not adopted by the City of Sweet Home because the then City Council and others had issues with the TSP that were not resolved.

### **Alternatives to a TSP Update**

First, let me note that there are several programs and alternatives available short of a full update of the 2005 TSP that the City may wish to consider in the event that a TGM grant award is not forthcoming for the update in this grant cycle. These alternatives are briefly discussed below. The competition for TGM grant awards in ODOT Region 2 is highly competitive given the sheer number of grant applications received and the amount of grant funding available on an annual

basis. As you indicated, Sweet Home is already aware of and has taken advantage of two of these alternatives such as the Safe Routes to Schools Program and the grant program from the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department (OPRD) for the City's portion of a regional trail. The City could still pursue additional work under these grant programs should a grant not be forthcoming for a full TSP update.

### **Safe Routes to Schools Program**

The Oregon Safe Routes to School Program, housed at ODOT, could be of interest to the city as means of identifying and meeting part the city's needs for children going to and from school. This is a worthwhile program that could benefit the city in terms its overall pedestrian and bicycle safety, in addition to travel to and from school. We recommend that you pursue this approach as an alternative to a full TSP update if a TGM grant is not available or in addition to one, if TGM grant money is available this year. As noted on the program's website, the program helps communities identify and remove barriers and hazards to children, K-12, walking or biking within two miles of a school.

Contact Julie Yip, Oregon Safe Routes to Schools Program manager, at 503.986.4196 or [julie.a.yip@state.or.us](mailto:julie.a.yip@state.or.us) for more information or click on the following Internet links:

<http://www.oregon.gov/ODOT/TS/saferoutes.shtml>

<http://www.oregonsaferoutes.org/>.

### **Related Grant Programs**

As you are already aware, OPRD offers several grant programs that can be used as a resource to help improve recreational trail connectivity and access within and through the city, thus improving the city's facilities for a more walkable and bikeable community. These include Local Government Grants and Recreational Trails Grants, among others. Grant programs available through OPRD are more fully described at:

<http://www.oregon.gov/OPRD/GRANTS/index.shtml> .

### **TSP Elements Typically Included in a Full TSP Update**

Should the city decide to pursue a full TSP update and TGM grant funds are available during this grant cycle, the typical elements that should be addressed in an update are discussed below for your use.

### **Coordination of Existing and Planned Studies**

The City should coordinate updated plans implicating the state highway system with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT), particularly for the state highways running through the City. State Highway 228 joins State Hwy 20 at a "Y" in the western end of the City. Highway 20 runs through the entire length of the City of Sweet Home. Proposals and alternatives implicating

the state highway should be planned in conjunction with ODOT planning staff in ODOT Region 2. Ongoing issues and potential future plans should be discussed and coordinated with Region 2 staff, including ODOT staff at the Area and District levels.

### **20-Year Population/Economic Opportunities Analysis**

Our review shows that work on the city's current TSP was completed and adopted in 2005 through a TGM grant project, which means that the actual data used to prepare it likely dates back a few years before that. The 20-year planning horizon in the 2005 TSP must be updated to include a new 20-year planning horizon. The new 20-yr planning horizon should be coordinated to run for 20 years from the actual year in which the updated TSP is adopted.

The city's latest population projection from Linn County occurred a several years ago, so the population number for use in a TSP update will need to be updated. The updated TSP population number should be substantially aligned with or the same as the latest projection for the City of Sweet Home. Based on the information provided to me, you have already discussed updating the City's population projection with your DLCDC regional representative, Ed Moore. The population update would take place under the new process recently adopted by LCDC in OAR 660, division 32. My understanding is that the City is undertaking the process of updating its 20-yr population projection for use in an update of the City's Public Facilities plans.

An updated TSP should also take into account those policies and goals adopted in the City's Economic Opportunities Analysis (if it has one) and those in the Economic Element of the Comprehensive Plan.

### **Evaluation of TSP Elements**

The bicycle and pedestrian element of the 2005 TSP are limited, but adequate, with a good list of needed projects, and should receive additional attention in an update to the City's TSP. A draft 1995 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan was incorporated into the 2005 TSP by reference. It contains a list of needed projects and existing facilities as of 1995. This plan certainly needs updating, as it will be well over 20 years old by the time an update is completed. This will help ensure that the updated TSP is a true multi-modal plan to serve the city's future transportation needs. An examination of aerial photographs from Google Earth and Google Maps show that sidewalks are lacking in some parts of the City and if they are present, there are stretches of disconnect where sidewalks are not continuous and therefore, of limited use to pedestrians as a means of reaching a destination. It also shows that at some point, pedestrian and bicycle traffic will have a need to cross a busy state highway, of which it appears there are somewhat limited opportunities to do safely.

The bicycle and pedestrian plan element of the 2005 TSP should be reviewed, updated, and needed multi-modal changes incorporated into the TSP during the update. Of critical importance in the update should be a plan to fund and construct needed infrastructure improvements that are or should be identified in the TSP update – such as additional sidewalks, walking trails and paths, and dedicated bike lanes and paths. As discussed earlier, some aspects of bicycle and pedestrian

planning can probably be addressed through measures short of a full TSP update, such as ODOT's Safe Routes to Schools Program and the OPRD grants for trails programs.

A TSP update process should assess whether any additional transportation and/or planning studies related to the City's comprehensive plan and transportation system are needed or have been completed, but not yet incorporated into the full TSP. To that end, the city should coordinate an update implicating the state highway system (Highway 228 and Highway 20) with the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) staff in ODOT Region 2. Any identified existing studies that are not part of the current TSP and those that have occurred since 2005 should be incorporated into the TSP in this update and a timetable should be established to complete and adopt any additional studies and area or corridor plans that are identified as needed.

New developments or plans for new development, such as the (large) master planned development approved since the 2005 TSP was adopted, should be accounted for and integrated into the updated TSP, including the planned and funded project list, if the City has not already done so. Changes to elements in the Comprehensive Plan that could affect both long and short term transportation planning should also be accounted for and integrated into a TSP update.

As part of an update process, the city should continue to work with ODOT Region 2, and the ODOT Freight and ODOT Rail Divisions where appropriate, to identify and incorporate additional updated multi-modal, and access and corridor management strategies. Additional access management planning and coordination would seem to be of critical importance given the prominent nature of the state highways running through the City. Since you indicated that rail crossings (or a rail crossing) are/is an issue for Sweet Home, that issue in particular should be discussed and coordinated with ODOT Rail Division.

The TSP's planned and funded project list(s) should be revised as necessary to coincide with the identified 20-year planning horizon, with those projects in the current 2005 TSP that are already completed removed and those deemed to be no longer appropriate because of changing City priorities and planning direction in the comprehensive plan, dropped from the project list. New transportation projects planned for the next 20 years according to the City's current vision for growth and adopted comprehensive plan should be added to the list of planned (and funded) transportation projects. The update should examine whether there is a need for increased spending (dependent on funding availability) on road construction and maintenance.

Key areas such as access management, traffic safety, street connectivity, safe routes to schools, bicycle and pedestrian recreation trail system connectivity, and secure funding for road, street, and sidewalk upgrades where necessary should be studied and incorporated into the TSP update. Additionally, we encourage the city to complete and incorporate any necessary studies and work for alternative modes of transportation and other Smart Growth/TGM principles to help plan for and create a more vibrant, walkable, and connected community.

### **OHP and TPR Revisions**

Please keep in mind that revisions to both the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR) - specifically OAR 660-012-0060 and the Oregon Highway Plan (Policy 1F Mobility) (OHP) have been

completed since the last update of the city's TSP. Revisions to Section -0060 of the TPR were adopted by the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) at the Commission's December 2011 meeting. Revisions to the OHP were adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in January 2012.

Revisions to OHP policy now allow ODOT greater flexibility in consideration of alternative mobility targets for addressing significant effects on the transportation system. The revisions to Section -0060 of the TPR allow local governments more flexibility in addressing significant effects on the transportation system and could conceivably affect how the city plans for and prepares the planned update to the TSP. I am noting these changes to the OHP and TPR as they may warrant additional discussion of strategies and options by the city and the transportation and planning consultants as an update of the current TSP is considered and/or completed.

In addition to the above changes, some changes to the TSP requirements outlined in the TPR have occurred since the preparation and adoption of the city's existing TSP. OAR 660-012-0020 contains the required elements of a TSP and was updated in 2006, after the completion and adoption of the city's current TSP. A TSP update should review the intervening TPR changes for applicability to the City's plans to update the 2005 TSP.

### **Conclusion**

The current TSP can be updated to more closely align with the City's current and future needs and desires. This will involve considerable work on the part of the City and will be expensive. There are options short of a full update that could help the city meet its needs, should TGM grant funding not be immediately available for the proposed TSP update.

I have tried to be very thorough in the review and in presenting multiple options for the City of Sweet Home. I hope that you will find this TSP assessment beneficial in helping to meet the city's future transportation needs and in applying for a TGM grant or other grant funding to do so.

Please contact me by phone at 503-934-0030 or by e-mail at [gary.fish@state.or.us](mailto:gary.fish@state.or.us) if you have any additional questions regarding the assessment.

Sincerely,



Gary Fish  
Transportation Planner

cc: Naomi Zwerdling, ODOT Region 2 TGM (e-mail)  
Ed Moore, DLCD (e-mail)

