

**Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting
SUMMARY
June 23, 2016
Fire Hall
Hood River, OR**

Members Attending:	Wayne Stewart (Chair) Bill Pattison Arthur Babitz Kevin Price (OPRD) Eric Timmons (OPRD) Ernie Drapela Judy Davis Marc Berry – <i>Emeritus</i> Art Carrol – <i>Emeritus</i>
HCRH AC Staff:	Kristen Stallman (ODOT) Sandra Koike (ODOT)
Others Attending: (8)	Bob Elken Gary Brannan (FHCRH) Jeanette Kloos (FHCRH) Dick Weber Scott Peters (ODOT) Brad DeHart (ODOT) Carolyn Wood Pat Cimmiyotti (ODOT)

Call to Order

Wayne called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes

Last meeting's minutes were approved.

Opportunity for Public Comment

Bob Elken, resident of Mosier, shared that he attended a committee meeting last year and addressed East Gorge state trail safety concerns. Recently, he was part of two cycling groups and witnessed two accidents. At this time, he would like to suggest striping and signage on the State Trail. There are some signs located along the trail, but people are not complying with them. Bob witnessed a family spread out along a trail and two kids in wheelchairs doing wheelies. Kevin Price acknowledged that conflicts are taking place and OPRD will continue to educate the public and work with the camp host. Kevin also pointed out that if trail users aren't complying with the messages on the existing signs, then adding more signs may not necessarily get more compliance.

Arthur Babitz noted the steep grades, limited site distance heading toward Mosier and one wouldn't expect the volumes of people on the state trail.

Kevin added when it comes to signs, less is more. Kristin Dahl shared a similar experience at MacKenzie Pass along the closed part of the trail. She has some seen pavement treatments and thinks this seems more effective than signage. Jeanette Kloos added that it isn't worth the expense to stripe the entire trail. We may want to consider doing some marking in strategic locations. Kristen Stallman suggested we bring in ODOT's bike coordinators Jessica Horning and Shiela Lyons and a traffic engineer to do a site visit with OPRD to look at solutions. ODOT can conduct a bike safety audit. Gary Brannan and Carolyn Wood stated that there were white stripes on the historic highway, so they don't see the issue with placing stripes on the state trail. Brad DeHart shared that Mosier will be doing a Transportation System Plan (TSP), so striping for the Historic Highway may be coming up for discussion through the TSP process. Arthur suggested that Marc Berry, as a citizen, request better connectivity of the Historic Highway transitions into Mosier.

Chenoweth Creek Bridge

Brad DeHart is working on three bridges Mosier Creek, Chenoweth and Dry Canyon Creek. The Mosier Creek and Dry Canyon Creek bridges are in need of a lot of repair. Preservation work is needed to deal with the slow deterioration of concrete and steel. This restoration will entail removal of asphalt pavement and placement of a waterproofing membrane on the deck, along with removal of spalling concrete and its replacement with patching. Once completed, the surface will be given a treatment to provide a more consistent, finished appearance.

Brad had a follow up conversation with Advisory Committee members and ODOT staff regarding the width and rail at the Chenoweth Bridge. Small cables run along the outside of the bridge, these are less visible than other options. Bill asked if there would be brush removal around the bridge as part of the contract to enhance the views. Brad responded that much of the vegetation will be removed. There will be a detour for emergency vehicles with an anticipated entire closure for 3 weeks. ODOT has been in contact with EMS and schools. Closures are expected from mid July 2017 to the first or second week in August. For cyclists and pedestrians, we would encourage people to take the waterfront trail. Kevin asked how many different outlets we can post this information about complete closure. Kristin suggested posting information on OPRD's website because it will be the peak travel season.

The project proposed replacing the existing two timber rail steel backed guardrail with the newer design which is much heftier. There were some concerns with the scale of the heftier design so the designers are looking at a single rail option. Jeanette stated that we have been working hard to replace single rail into double rail so her recommendation would be to stick with the double rail. Wayne suggested we go back and take a look at the steel back design. The problem is that the newer, two rail design is out of scale with the bridge rail design. The Region 1 manager in the past has tried using historical precedence for justification, but was not successful.

When we get into roadside safety and new standards, it's more difficult to trump the more robust railing with taller and bigger vehicles. Kristen suggested we revisit the rail with a subcommittee and let Brad know as soon as possible. 60' and 50' run on the west end, 108' off the east end in front of the monument sign, and 208' on the other side. Kristen will send out images of the double rail from when she did a presentation earlier. Brad needs a response within the next three weeks would be nice. If there is a change, it may not be reflected in the preliminary plans, but it will go into the advanced plans and will be shared with the public.

Related to Chenoweth Creek design will have a paved asphalt surface and not a concrete bridge deck. Schedule advance plans in October. Overall project will cost \$3.8 million for all three projects. Pat may salvage materials from the old bridge and use them for repairs.

Mosier Rail Derailment Impacts

Scott Peters shared information about the Mosier rail derailment impacts. The biggest damage was from the train cars and the oil. 550' of roadway needs to be relaid. One part of highway was dug 20' deep to clean up the oil and 6 monitoring wells are now in place. The trail that goes under the bridge and to Rock Creek was totally destroyed and will need to be replaced. 365' of cable barrier and bollards were wiped out and rail would not pay for any added expenses. Kristen asked if the city is doing a plan for the parking area and the wastewater treatment plant because it is visible from the Historic Highway. Scott responded that this will be addressed. Rail will be paying for the cost of repairs and restoration in full. No damage to the Historic Highway, but Kevin Price will double check with OPRD staff. Arthur would like a better way to describe trail closures. It was difficult to understand what was closed and what was open during the incident. This would be clearer for the trail users.

Centennial Celebration Review

Jeanette provided an update for the Multnomah Falls rededication event. Overall it went well thanks to all the partners. It was great to have April Severson Events involved as the event planners and Lee Weinstein for the PR and media component. The antique cars were a huge hit with all the participants and onlookers. Former Governor Ted Kulongoski's expectation to complete the trail by 2022 was great. It was a surprise to have a letter from Obama read at the event. In hindsight, we should have reminded the VIPs about the VIP event at the Multnomah Falls Lodge after the ceremony. In the afternoon, back in Troutdale, the unveiling of the sculpture of Sam Hill and Sam Lancaster at Visionary Park was well attended. At a later time, once all the landscaping work is complete for Visionary Park, there will be a dedication.

Historic Columbia River Highway Collaborative Assessment Update

A resolution was signed at the Multnomah Falls Lodge. Several small solutions are proposed at Oneonta Gorge, Angel's Rest parking lot and messaging to inform travelers to plan accordingly when heading out to the Gorge. Kristen acknowledged Art for initiating this whole conversation and process when he shared his concerns around congestion. Art shared that the Gorge is already beyond capacity, so there is still a lot more work to do on the ground. Kristen mentioned there is a Phase 2 in the form of a Congestion Management Study which will examine the parking capacity and also investigate the impacts. It is because of the Collaborative Assessment group that we are able to get work accomplished. Kevin mentioned that the John B. Yeon trailhead is the west end of the state trail and the start of a popular trail to Elowah Falls. Parking at this location is limited so people are parking along the road. OPRD manages the sites and trailheads, but the parking overflows beyond OPRD property, so it is not within their jurisdiction. Kristen summarized there is a key messaging plan being put together by Weinstein PR, that incorporates recreating with respect, when to travel to the Gorge, etc. This will hopefully, help people reduce peak travel times. This is an experiment and the key messages will be going out to all the partners in a week or two.

Columbia Gorge Express Review

Kristen informed the group that service went up in one year and the cost to take transit is \$5 from the Gateway Transit Center to Multnomah Falls with free overflow parking at Rooster Rock. The transit

service started on Memorial Day weekend and there was a line of 300 people at Rooster Rock. The variable message signs worked like a charm and attracted many to park at Rooster Rock. Part of the first year's funding is from a source usually designated for elderly and disabled folks to attend medical appointments, but by applying these funds to the Columbia Gorge Express, this is an opportunity for elderly and disability folks to recreate and go outside. Kristen shared a story from an elderly person who took the trip every weekend. Kevin asked the question is more, better? We have to protect to the resources we have. Nationally, they limited the number of tours and buses that can access these locations. The pinch point for Rooster Rock is the fee station where cars were packed up to the overpass because people would ask questions about the transit service.

FLAP Grant Update

- The Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) signed a letter saying that the Historic Highway was the number one priority for the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) grant. Kristin Dahl announced Travel Oregon's \$100,000 match for the Historic Highway state trail grant, FHCRH matched \$10,000 and Friends of the Gorge is also adding a match of \$5,000. Arthur mentioned that the OTC left their legacy 100 years ago, and this is the current OTC's legacy for the reconnection of the state trail. Arthur asked if there was a dedication on 1922 or a celebration. He would like to see an event take place in the East Gorge.
- ODOT is applying for a grant to assess congestion and meter the number of visitors. The second grant is to continue the Gorge transit service. The third grant is for the last segment of state trail including Mitchell Point. The last grant we are collaborating with Forest Service is for site improvements for parking and access at Multnomah Falls and updates to the septic system.

Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway

Jeanette provided a list of current and ongoing projects.

ODOT Maintenance

Not Present. Dan Bacon is the new District 2C Manager, formerly held by Larry Olson.

OPRD

- Kevin emailed Dan Bacon about rocks, mud, debris because there is no place for them to go, but on the trail.
- There is one OPRD and one community event for historic cars to get on the Historic Highway state trail for those that cannot walk or bike on the trail.
- Ask ODOT for assistance for McCord Creek Bridge where cyclists are slipping and crashing into the bridge railing. The surface has been power washed, marked and signed, but it is still an issue. Kristen suggested that we will take a look at it when we examine the safety issues on the east end of the trail as well. Two new rangers will be hired at the east end of the Gorge. Kevin will be assuming a position for 6 months as a HR manager beginning July 1st. Eric Timmons will be involved in the advisory committee meetings through the end of the year while Kevin is serving his temporary role.

Travel Oregon

- Kristin shared that Travel Oregon completed the Gorge Tourism Studio with 220 participants, connecting with the Gorge communities and offering information on different topics such as Cultural Tourism. At the end of the Tourism Studio, steering committees were created and next

steps were identified to continue doing some of the leg work. Travel Oregon will be investing in some organizational support. One of the steering committees, the Gorge Outdoor Action Team (GOAT) is working to positively impact the Gorge user experience. Towns to Trails Program and the Historic Highway State Trail reconnection are the two highest priorities.

- Travel Oregon has a Grant program offering from \$200,000 to \$3million. This was possible due to an increase in the hotel usage tax.

Gorge Commission – not present

USFS – not present

WFLHD – not present

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Round Table

- Arthur is looking forward to celebrating the State Trail in 2022. It's important to remember that there are two ends to the Historic Highway.
- Kristin would like to hear about the Gorge congestion update around law enforcement. Also hear a follow up from the Oregon Solutions project. And lastly, she would like to see an update from the GOAT subcommittee.
- Bill shared that exposure to the Historic Highway is important, so how can the advisory committee help contribute to the personal touch and share more about the Historic Highway. Bill also asked about the railing maintenance and Kevin responded that the maintenance does fall on OPRD.
- Wayne anticipates some state trail funding to start coming in and we should look holistically at what the various agencies and organizations should be looking at how to coordinate - natural resources etc.
- Judy did a presentation to One Gorge, a mix of various agencies and private entities. We need to continue conversations about congestion and its impacts.
- Art asked is there something we can do between now and end of Sept (when we hear about the grants) to work towards Mitchell Point. We need to finalize our recommendations around the alternatives. Arthur reminded the group that we need funds to do the engineering work to assess the geotechnical work will be involved. The FLAP grant would be included in this.
- Kevin shared Vista House 100 yr birthday is just around the corner.
- Kristen mentioned that a time capsule that was buried with plaque at Columbia Gorge Hotel. We had feedback from the June 7th event that there wasn't enough involvement with children. So there is an opportunity to involve children in an event around the time capsule. Also the Friends of Gorge will be doing a Gorge bingo activity which should appeal to all engages and particularly engage kids in the Historic Highway.

Next Advisory Committee Meeting – Thursday, September 8th Corbett Fire Hall
