



Project Leadership Team Meeting #5 – Agenda

MEETING DATE: Monday, April 15, 2019

MEETING TIME: 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

LOCATION: ODOT Region 1 – 123 NW Flanders St. Portland Oregon; Conf Room A/B (1st floor)

PLT ATTENDEES: Rian Windsheimer, Region 1 Manager, Oregon Department of Transportation
Lynn Burditt, Area Manager, US Forest Service
Commissioner Lori Stegmann, Multnomah County
Mark Stevenson, District Manager, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department

FACILITATOR: Kirsten Pennington, WSP

Meeting Objectives

Provide final direction on draft Hist Hwy Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan and identify priority next steps.

Agenda

Time	Purpose	Topic	Lead
9:00 AM		Welcome and introductions	Kirsten Pennington, WSP
9:10 AM	Information	Project update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Schedule and milestones 	Kirsten Pennington Terra Lingley, ODOT
9:20 AM	Comment	Public comment	
9:50 AM	Comment	Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Perspective	Wayne Stewart, Vice Chair HCRH AC
10:00 AM	Decision	Draft Congestion and Transportation Safety and Improvement Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review draft plan – what is different? Public feedback on draft plan PLT direction on edits 	Kirsten Pennington Ryan Farncomb, Jacobs

11:15 AM	Discussion	Identify key next steps <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Priority projects • Timing for forum 	Kirsten Pennington
Noon		Thank you! Adjourn	

Meeting materials:

- Agenda
- PLT #4 meeting summary
- DRAFT Historic Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan
- PowerPoint presentation



Project Leadership Team Meeting #5 Summary

PREPARED BY: Stuart Campbell, Jacobs

MEETING DATE: April 15, 2019

COPY TO: Terra Lingley, ODOT

Project Leadership Team

Project Management Team

PLT Attendees

Lynn Burditt, Area Manager, US Forest Service

Commissioner Lori Stegmann, Multnomah County

Mark Stevenson, District Manager, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department

Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Region 1 Manager

Terra Lingley, Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Coordinator

Kirsten Pennington, WSP, Facilitator and Consultant Team Project Manager

Ryan Farncomb, Jacobs, Project Team

Overview

The fifth and final meeting of the Project Leadership Team (PLT) was held on Monday, April 15, from 9:00 to 10:30 at the Region 1 offices of the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT). The meeting objective was to review and determine final changes to the draft Historic Columbia River Highway Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan.

Welcome and Introductions

Kirsten Pennington, WSP, meeting facilitator and consultant Project Manager, welcomed participants. Kirsten asked the PLT, consultant team, and audience members to introduce themselves. She then reviewed the meeting purpose and emphasized that PLT meeting #5 was the last and final meeting to discuss and decide on final draft implementation strategies and actions for the plan. All materials from the meeting will be posted online and made publicly available.

Project Update

Schedule

Kirsten reviewed previous meeting topics and tasks that set the stage for final decisions to be made at PLT meeting #5. Kirsten noted that in the last meeting (PLT #4), the PLT provided feedback on draft strategies and that the project team worked to develop a draft final plan that incorporated comments and feedback. Any revisions made today will be incorporated into the final plan document.

Project Update

Terra Lingley, ODOT Project Manager and Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area Coordinator, updated the group on the temporary one-way demonstration project along the Historic Highway. The project was tentatively scheduled for Spring 2019, but reopening the Historic Highway after the Eagle Creek fire delayed the process. ODOT is going to consider implementing this temporary project during future construction projects, at a time when disruption might already be planned. Details and timeline are to be determined.

Public Feedback on Draft Plan

Terra provided an overview of recent plan outreach. Since the initial draft of the plan, Terra has been engaging with the East Multnomah County Transportation Committee and various tourism entities that have an interest in the project.

Eleven people took the online project survey. The survey was available from January 11, 2019 through February 11, 2019. Comments were also received through email from Gray Line of Portland, Mid-Columbia Economic Development District (MCEDD), and Corbett residents. Staff also met with the Historic Highway Advisory Committee and attended PLT #5 to present their comments in person.

Generally, commenters were appreciative of the strategies in the Plan, but emphasized that strategies should target congestion with quick implementation. There was concern around the number of visitors at trailheads, and an interest in identifying ways to educate tourists on how their visits impact the Gorge.

Some of the main takeaways from public feedback included:

Shuttle:

- Generally in favor of a shuttle.
- Congestion needs to be reduced for shuttle to be effective.
- Concerns for hikers if parking reduced and shuttle is mandatory, need reliable, high frequency service.

Park and Ride:

- Favor park and rides outside of the corridor.
- Note potential for economic gains in the areas near park and rides.
- Concern about increased crime.

Security and Enforcement:

- Concerns about car break-ins and other crime.
- Prioritize cameras and other enhanced security at parking areas.
- Increase parking enforcement.

Multnomah Falls:

- Prefer using flaggers at Multnomah Falls area to keep traffic moving.

Large Vehicle Restrictions:

- Generally supportive of restricting larger vehicles.
- Tour buses relieve congestion by removing cars from the road.

Vehicle Restrictions:

- Positive responses to road closure gates.
- Concern about access for people who live in the gorge.

Public Comment

One member of the public provided comments.

Kevin Gorman, Friends of the Gorge:

- Kevin began his comments by thanking the PLT for their work and appreciated the time and effort they put into outreach for the project. As the PLT makes their final decision on plan recommendations, Kevin wanted to ensure that they continue to consider congestion reduction as the most important goal of the plan; he was concerned that the plan does not contain enough immediately implementable actions to reduce congestion. Kevin suggested that strategies be measured using a 50% congestion reduction threshold.
- Kevin mentioned that he was unsure if tour buses, while carrying a lot of people, actually achieve a reduction in congestion as the plan suggests. Rather, removing private vehicles would reduce congestion, which is the ultimate goal.

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Perspective

Wayne Stewart, Vice Chair, and Ernie Drapela, Member, Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee provided comments:

- Both Wayne and Ernie's main concern echoed Kevin's, in that congestion on the Historic Highway is of high importance. They stated that 2014 was the first year that the Advisory Committee noticed congestion getting worse. Since that time, workshops have been held to understand issues, but the basic problem is that demand exceeds the road's capacity.

Wayne Stewart:

- Wayne told the PLT that the plan should work faster, especially with future population growth. Too few actions are being presented that will solve problems of demand in a timely manner.
- Wayne provided a list of 3 short-term actions within the Plan that would reduce congestion and could be implemented immediately:
 - Provide a flagger at Multnomah Falls to keep traffic moving.
 - Painting fog lines where they are currently missing, allowing for better enforcement.
 - Increase enforcement throughout the project area.
- Wayne provided 2 mid-term actions that could be implemented soon:
 - Add traffic signal at Multnomah Falls.
 - Test a shuttle service.

Ernie Drapela:

- Ernie told the PLT that the Advisory Committee has followed the plan very closely. From their perspective, each stakeholder involved in the creation of the Plan doesn't have a mandate to accomplish the goals of plan on their own, but together there is capacity and ability to accomplish congestion reduction. Ernie encouraged members of the PLT to take a leadership role, move the plan forward, and move actions and strategies that make a difference to the forefront of the conversation.

Responses:

- Rian Windsheimer:
 - Rian reiterated that there is interest, from an ODOT perspective, to provide shuttles to and from parking areas to help relieve personal vehicle trips on the Historic Highway.
 - Rian asked Wayne what ideas he had to reduce demand along the Historic Highway.
 - Wayne said that in order to improve the experience of a natural setting such as Multnomah Falls, the number of people there at one time must decrease.
 - Wayne provided an example of how Zion National Park shuttles people into the park, reducing congestion. ODOT could do the same from, perhaps, Rooster Rock.
 - He suggested that as this plan moves forward to consider parking capacity ratios; when parking is at 85-90 percent capacity, congestion will begin to increase. Aside from there not being enough parking spaces, reducing the number of cars trying to find parking is one option in controlling or reducing congestion.
 - Wayne also reiterated that implementing flaggers has potential to keep traffic flowing and reducing congestion.
- Mark Stevenson mentioned that a one-way roadway design could cut traffic in half by simply reducing the number of people coming into the area at one time. While it may be inconvenient for people who regularly travel through and around the area, the benefit may outweigh the inconvenience.
- Kevin Gorman mentioned that that newly constructed bike lanes open will invite cycling opportunities for a variety of people. However, people will not know where to park once they drive out to the area to bike, potentially creating unintended congestion and additional parking issues.

Draft Congestion and Transportation Safety Improvement Plan Changes

Ryan Farncomb provided an overview of the revised strategies that the PLT previously provided feedback on. Following review of the prior changes, Kirsten reminded the group that this was the final opportunity to make comments/changes to the Plan. The PLT then discussed the following changes to Plan strategies:

- ST12: Satellite parking at Benson Lake – Ensure that that the strategy reflects experience from Rooster Rock parking to inform new parking areas.
- MT5: Expand park-and-ride facilities and agreements to use satellite lots – Maintain discussion of the railroad-owned location as a potential satellite parking lot, but explain and clarify the challenges of the location within the description of strategy in the plan.
- ST4: Clarify the meaning of ‘Forum’ – Kirsten clarified that the Forum is a shift from the TMA concept. The Forum would be used to continue discussion and advocate for implementation of the Plan recommendations. The forum would specifically:
 - Identify participants and charter.
 - Establish staff to manage day-to-day operations.
 - Determine who would be representing forum partners/members.

The project team also briefly reviewed the previously-discussed priority strategies for implementation:

- ST3: Flagger
- ST4: Establishment of a forum for agency collaboration
- ST10: Large Vehicle Restriction (ODOT currently talking with staff)
- ST11: Reduce Speed Limits (ODOT is conducting a speed study this year)
- ST12: Satellite parking at Benson Lake

- ST15: Columbia River Gorge Express governance and funding (Ongoing discussions at ODOT about funding)
- MT3: Signalized Crossing at Multnomah Falls (ODOT traffic engineers discussing)
- MT4: Install Road Closure gates (ODOT maintenance staff are interested in moving forward)

Next Steps and Adjourn

Kirsten asked for any final comments from the PLT. There were none; the meeting was then adjourned.