

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting will take place via Zoom – Information below
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Meeting ID: 919 6914 9668
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Meeting ID: 919 6914 9668#



Monday, July 13th, 2020

12:30 PM – 1:00 PM Begin call/sign-in testing for video and audio connections

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM Advisory Committee Meeting

AGENDA:

Time	Agenda Topics	Presenter
1:00 PM	Call to Order	Arthur Babitz, Chair
1:05 PM	Opportunity for the public to comment on any item not on the agenda*	
1:10 PM	Approval Minutes	Arthur Babitz, Chair
1:15 PM	Funding strategy for Segments G and H	Terra/Wayne
1:45 PM	Discussion around Gorge access strategy to address congestion and safety	All
2:45 PM	Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway• ODOT• OPRD• Travel Oregon• USFS• WFLHD	Various
2:55 PM	Committee Round Table	All
3:00 PM	Adjourn	

Public comment will be accepted prior to the meeting and during the meeting itself.

*If possible, please contact Kerrie Franey at Kerrie.franey@odot.state.or.us or 503-731-3359 to indicate that you'd like to provide public comment during the meeting, and we will do our best to call on you during the public comment period.

If you'd like to share your testimony, please submit written testimony via email to Kerrie.franey@odot.state.or.us, phone 503-731-3359, or regular mail 123 NW Flanders Street, Portland, OR 97209. Comments received after the meeting will be shared with committee members.

September Agenda items

- Update on Wa Na Pa Street improvements
- Nationally Significant Federal and Tribal Lands Program funding opportunity update
- Oneonta Tunnel Construction update

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee 2020 Work Plan

1. **The Final Five Miles Engineering – in process**
2. **Mitchell Point to Hood River State Trail funding**
3. **Multnomah Falls Viaducts Railroad Coordination – in process**
4. **Columbia Gorge Express –Year 4**
5. **Eagle Creek Stairway Replacement**
6. Congestion and Safety Plan Implementation Projects
7. Gorge Commission Management Plan Update
8. Historic Guardrail Research/Analysis and speed zone analysis
9. Twin Tunnels Safety Improvements Implementation
10. Larch Mountain Slide – Funding

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting

Summary

May 27, 2020

WebEx

Members Attending:	Arthur Babitz, Chair (shown as abd) William Pattison Judy Davis (shown as Richard Davis) Ernie Drapela Francie Royce Rian Windsheimer (ODOT) Art Carrol Marc Berry Mark Stevenson (OPRD)
HCRH AC Staff:	Terra Lingley (ODOT) Katelyn Jackson (ODOT) Roxanne Glynn (ODOT) Kerrie Franey (ODOT)
Others Attending:	David Duncan Jeff Joe Gillis Kathy Fitzpatrick (MCEDD) Morai Helfen (USFS) Jeanette Kloos (FHCRH) Robin Shoal (USFS) Valerie Egon (ODOT) Kevin Bracy (DEA) Magnus Bernhardt (ODOT) Jennifer O'Donnell Maria Sipin (ODOT) John Horne (WSP) Molly Davis (DEA) Kent Kalsch (ODOT) Henry Miller (PSU student) Matthew Miller (WFLHD) Travis Hagenbuch Justin Sherrill (PSU student) Martin Christy Hey Richard And Bonnie Alfieri Beatriz Parga AJ Zelada

	Lizzie Keenan Shana Bucher Matt Wastradowski Jim from American Queens? Tom Kloster Seth Miller (PSU Student) Megan Ramey Lynn Burditt (USFS)
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Call to Order

Arthur Babitz, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. and invited the public to comment on items not on the agenda.

Welcome

Public Comment

AJ Zelada: The Multnomah County Budget is being voted on in June. Part of the budget includes a deputy position for the eastern patrol. AJ advocates for full position patrol.

Arthur: Hood River County passed levy supporting sheriff department

Beatriz Parga: What progress do you have with the parking lot at the old mill site at Bridal Veil? Terra: This is a private citizen pursuing this development, not ODOT.

Beatriz Parga: What can we expect to avoid parking along the Old highway along the waterfall corridor? Terra: This is a maintenance and enforcement question. We have put up bollards and sandwich boards currently as it is closed.

Approval of Minutes

The Committee approved the minutes.

Cascade/30 Masters in Urban and Regional Planning (MURP) student project

Terra: ODOT and the City of Hood River has been working with a group of PSU students to look at how to move cyclists and pedestrians from the end of the Historic Highway State Trail through the City of Hood River. The group is looking at large, transformative changes, but details will need to be considered through the ODOT design process before implementation.

Jeff Broderick: Project Manager. As part of final project for MURP, a group named themselves Apiary Planning Group, which is made up of six students.

Justin Sherrill: GIS Technician. The purpose of the project has so much to do with the completion of the Historic Highway State Trail into Hood River. We're assuming the Stat Trail will increase bike and pedestrian traffic into Hood River and that it will be a transformative change that provides opportunity.

The project corridor extends from Westcliff Drive to 13th Street. The main focus is on ODOT's facility, not side streets. The existing conditions today, assuming 60 feet right of way along the corridor, with 10,000

trips a day that is expected to grow to 14,000 in 2040. There are noncontiguous sidewalks, limited transit, low density housing and commercial uses.

We're in a transitional period now and there may be changes to the assumptions.

Safety: This corridor represents 17% of all motor vehicle crashes within Hood River's urban growth boundary and 23% of all bike/ped crashes. Stakeholders did not feel comfortable as bike/ped users in this segment.

Henry Miller: Three core changes -- completing sidewalks between Exit 62 and 13th Street, install regular marked crosswalks, add a two-way cycle track on the north side of Cascade. Proposing separated bike/ped facility on Westcliff and on the Exit 62 overpass.

Cycle tracks provide physical separation, reduce conflicts between cyclists and motor vehicles by providing dedicated space, slows cars down when turning, makes an easier transition for people trying to reach downtown, and provides continuity of a dedicated historic highway state trail feel where there are currently less than comfortable accommodations.

For outreach, COVID-19 did change the outreach strategy. The team interviewed one-on-one and provided a plan on future outreach tools, with a focus on at-risk groups.

Jeff: Recommends creating commission or multijurisdictional panel to oversee project and involvement with community groups. A local improvement district is a potential funding mechanism – agencies cover initial cost and land owners pay back over time.

AJ: can right-hand turns be signalized? Jeff: we aren't specifying and new signalized intersections along this corridor. By locating most bike/ped facilities on the north side, we feel that could reduce potential signals.

Arthur: Where would the cycle track be at Walmart? Jeff: It would be along the north side at the driveway. At Rand, there is a signal already in development. Henry: It would widen the sidewalk area at Walmart so drivers have to take a sharper turn.

AJ: with so many cars turning left and right, could be a vulnerability.

Francie: Design for the overpass?

Jeff: We have a proposal for the overpass in development. The proposal will utilize the existing structure.

Megan Ramey: Amazing work, y'all, this will be a marvelous design for vulnerable children and seniors! Does the cycletrack continue on Oak or Cascade and was Columbia ever a consideration?

Henry Miller: At Oak and Cascade, there's currently an on-ramp that connects to upper and lower Cascade. That on-ramp would be turned into a cycle track and connect to lower Cascade. At Oak Street, the bike lane on the south side will continue to connect to 13th Street.

Kathy Fitzpatrick: CAT is already moving ahead with expansion plans, despite COVID.

Columbia Gorge Express Report Card

Valerie Egon, Columbia Gorge Express Program Manager, ODOT

The intent of the report card is to understand how CGE has met its goals. CGE identified metrics to evaluate its goals.

CGE transported 226,704 one-way trips from May 2016 to November 2019.

Nearly half of riders do not have access to a vehicle or no other option to get to their destination. Among local residents, a greater percentage also do not have vehicle access.

Near Exit 31 at Multnomah Falls, average daily traffic has grown, but the vehicle delay estimate has decreased.

Visitation continues to grow in the Gorge. CGE has demonstrated there is a demand for car-free transportation solutions in the Gorge. CGE is one piece of a broader approach.

CGE and summer 2020: CAT is relaunching intercity service. We are wanting to ensure transit continues to be seen as a resource while working within restrictions.

Beatriz: How can CAT and CG express expand along the old highway? Can you or will you limit the tour busses including the bike related bus tours along the old highway?

Valeria: Big question! We are having conversations, but right now CGE and CAT just serves I-84.

Mitchell Point Tunnel Design update

John Horne, WSP

Last week, WSP submitted the 100% package for design on the project and are undergoing about a one and a half month final revision process before submitting PS&E package. Aiming for notice to proceed for a contractor in early 2021.

At the 100% level, the estimate is just under the \$20 million available at \$19.6 million.

West portal aesthetics: there will be four in-laid basalt bands across the full trail width, and the wing wall rises upward to match the portal and a 42 inch tall railing for a viewing area that sweeps up in height at the portal.

East portal aesthetics: there are three basalt bands with a lower wing wall.

West plaza: We have the trail that comes through, then we have circulation of vehicular traffic that crosses the trail twice and required a lot of collaboration. There will be 18 parking spots with some picnic areas.

Arthur: On the wing wall, is there a mechanism to deter people from climbing on it? John: The tall pilaster should discourage it.

AJ: Bike parking please. John: There are bike racks planned near the restroom.

Francie: Very exciting to see the progress! Could you clarify the length of this project? How far west and east. John: The tunnel itself is 800 feet, but the segment is several miles.

Tom Kloster: This looks like a rebuild of the existing parking area at Mitchell Point. This lot is now full on weekends, will there be parking allowed on the access road during busy periods? John: No. There will not be parking allowed on the access roads on either side of Mitchell Point. Terra: The number of parking stalls we're able to provide is limited by recreational intensity class of where the parking lot is currently.

Rian: This project is more about connectivity and less about providing parking. So happy to see the progress. Can't wait to see construction start....

Arthur: timeline? John: Construction in early 2021. Bid package from WSP in August. Advertisement in September.

Beatriz: will there be space for small tour busses? John: The design vehicle for the parking lot is a firetruck. A tour bus could drop people off as needed.

Francie: Beautiful work on the tunnel. Where can the Advisory Committee see the trail east beyond the tunnel? Arthur: What's the rest of the trail, the connections on the east side of the trail look like? John: we can circulate that to the committee.

Tom Kloster: There are currently 11 parking spaces, 1 disabled space and a bus pullout at Mitchell Point (looking at Google).

[Viento to Mitchell Point Design Update](#)

Kevin Bracy, DEA

Very happy to let you all know that we're at the 70-95% phase. The scope is set, the footprint is set and we're diving into the details: concrete color, etc.

The Corbett Rock Quarry is in operation and has similar stones we will need available, including boulders up to 7 feet in length.

South Viento Campground: Layout of the campground is complete. You'll come from the trailhead parking lot and cross over the trail. It will be a counter clockwise circulation. COVID-19 has posed funding challenges for OPRD. ODOT and OPRD are coordinating on facilities.

I-84 Highway walls will mirror existing.

Rockfall mitigation: We have been working with ODOT to develop traffic control strategies to get traffic away from the slope. We have also been having detailed conversations as we anticipate the need for a helicopter at the step cut. The geotech was able to fine tune locations for posts at step cut so they do not stick out into the horizon and mitigate visual impacts.

Perham Creek Bridge: Final detailing underway.

The 95% package is due July 2020 and the 100% package is due March 2021. Phased construction is planned for 2021-2023.

Segments G&H

The 15% plans are on the shelf.

Our next step is to find funding to move forward. Two funding opportunities include the Nationally Significant Federal Lands and Tribal Program and the 2021 FLAP call for projects. We can apply for both opportunities as NEPA was approved May 13.

NSA permit for geotechnical exploration approved.

Multnomah Falls Viaducts

2020 is about coordination with UPRR. They approved structural review. In June 2020, we expect the UPRR signal review. Final design is expect in 2021 with construction in 2022-2024.

Oneonta Tunnel Rehabilitation

ODOT successfully expedited rock scaling in February 2020. The tunnel contractor will still scale the areas directly above the tunnel portals.

UPRR maintenance consent letter and NSA permit are in hand. The design package is with WFL and the bid is expected in July 2020. Notice to proceed is expected in September 2020.

Tom Kloster: Will the restored Oneonta Tunnel be gated to prevent a repeat of the vandalism that happened before the fire? Terra: No, we are required to replace exactly in kind that was destroyed by the fire for the permit to be approved – a gate is considered a structure in County Code and would need additional approvals.

Arthur: Soon after the tunnel was constructed there were reports about vandalism. There's a quote from Sam Lancaster about his dismay.

Rian: Thanks for your comment Tom, I'm also worried about that issue at Mitchell Point Tunnel...

Rian: Just excited to see all the progress

Congestion Discussion

AJ Zelada: AJ and Wayne presented to the Forum over the winter and to several other groups. Wayne is leading the effort.

We are approaching the congestion mitigation through the concerns of the dynamism of what's happening on the highway.

Wayne's concern is that our population is huge. The expectation of people moving to the northwest is still great.

In 2040, we are assuming visitation to increase by 35%, the State Trail will be complete, I-84 will not be widened, there are limited areas to increase parking, and transit will need to be part of the solution.

Wayne's question: Are we going to be car centric or transit centric?

We have six transit sub groups in the Gorge. These are important for social services. The transit areas connect communities.

Rooster Rock to Multnomah Falls service continues with small shuttle. We begin to divide the waterfall transit from the intercity service. Wayne has predicted a 10-15 interval between the key stops. He's anticipating the use of about 8 buses to drop off and pick up people from about 9-4.

Wayne went to Zion in 1961 and was able to drive up, park and hike. In 1991, there was congestion and difficulty in access and the road was overwhelmed. In 2015, there was the shuttle system. You pay access to the park and a fee to park your car. There's a free shuttle.

In Washington Park, we have a wonderful role model. In 2012, they created a transportation management association and worked through the national long range transportation plan. 78% of people use parking spaces, which are metered through an app. The surplus in profit from parking funds covers shuttle and capital improvement. There has been a decreased in private vehicle trips.

On the Historic Highway, the shuttle gets stuck in traffic. The congestion of single cars is going to occur whether one lane or two lanes.

Proposed actions: Transit presentation to Gorge Commission, Policy maker's transit ride to Washington Park, prioritize policy direction.

The vision is to allow all residents, varieties of tour buses, shuttle.

Kathy Fitzpatrick: Now, during the COVID-19 disruption of the status quo, is the ideal time to implement these types of pilot projects. ODOT has already completed a lot of planning work to support some of these ideas. Many other US cities are taking advantage of decreased traffic congestion to launch new projects that will move them forward toward their goals. The consequence of doing nothing now could result in the post-COVID carnage that transportation professionals are warning us about. Any re-opening phases of the waterfall corridor need to move us closer to our stated goals, not further away.

Jeff: Despite the challenge of working with Union Pacific, what types of consideration has there been with intercity rail as part of the solution to longer distance travel within the Gorge and travel to/from other regions? I'll admit, I'm graduating next month and am looking for career opportunities! AJ: Space is the concern.

Shana Bucher: You mentioned two hubs, East/West. Where do you propose putting those? AJ: what has been considered in the past is Ainsworth. I know residents are concerned about bringing more people into a quiet area. The debate is about 35 individual cars or buses? We need to bring this into a bigger conversation. We need a vision of connection. Beatriz: Dodson is a small community and this would impact them greatly. We cannot accommodate bike riders only and leave out folks with children and dogs. Your scope is too narrow.

Judy Davis: Interesting ideas. I hope we can discuss at another meeting as we are already over time today.

Updates

Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway:

Jeanette Kloos

The gap at Starvation Creek is completed. They have pledged funds for Ruthton Point Wall Repair. Activities are canceled.

ODOT:

Terra Lingley: We are continuing to work with OPRD and USFS on when and what reopening will look like.

Kent Kalsch: We capitalized on some projects when the road is closed. We pressure washed the sidewalk at Vista House, replaced spindles at Shepherd's Dell, repairing viaduct damage, spraying, ditching, and working on catch basins at Larch Mountain. We are putting up some more guardrail at parking violation locations, including at Thousand Acres.

USFS –

Robin Shoal:

We have distributed a press release about some limited opens of recreation sites in the Gorge. We have had an amazing amount of coordination from agencies and jurisdictions on a reopening strategy that really thinks about the communities and residents in the Gorge, and the health and wellbeing of employees.

Management review info on Gorgecommission.org

OPRD

No representative available at time of updates.

Travel Oregon

No rep in attendance.

Terra: I know they are working on applying for recovery funds. Their budget is taking a hit and scope will be limited.

Committee Round Table

Ernie: nothing else to add

Francie: There's been a lot of progress made and it's exciting. When will the transit/car conversation continue? Terra: June agenda item

Francie: Will Wayne and AJ get input on funding mechanisms? AJ: we want to involve Kathy Fitzpatrick, Valerie Egon, etc. The next step is bringing people to the table able to talk about barriers within their own agency/entity.

Marc: nothing

Judy: N/A

Arthur: I was able to dig up the 1915 Hood River Glacier news article about the Mitchell Point Tunnel that references names being scratched into the rail – Lancaster: “The meanest and most despicable people in the world.” Arthur is the only candidate for the County commission seat.

Public Comments prior to the July 13, 2020 Advisory Committee Meeting

Below are verbatim comments from members of the public prior to the July 13th Advisory Committee to be shared with committee members.

"The unique conditions caused by the road closure of the HCRH due to COVID-19 have created a powerful reminder of the impact of traffic on the delicate and rich environment here. The massive reduction of noise, light, and air pollution from cars has allowed residents along this corridor to see what "normal" conditions would be in the absence of heavy, persistent, and invasive motor vehicle traffic. The difference is notable and unforgettable. We have seen a healthy profusion of deer, elk, and coyote, and even signs of one lone (and shy) cougar. We've also noted a remarkable abundance of local and migratory birds, including several species that we (dedicated birdwatchers) have never observed here before. Apex predators like osprey, bald eagles, red-tailed hawks, and several species of owls are thriving.

These flourishing conditions are sobering when we consider how little it takes to alter the ecosystem--the presence of even a few hundred more cars per day drastically changes this area, let alone the overwhelming flow of traffic on peak days. While access to the waterfall corridor is vital to maintain and encourage, we residents of Waterfall Alley continue to ask for measures to be taken to reduce the human impact on this fragile and pristine environment in coming years. All measures to educate the public on lower impact recreation matter--especially when it comes to reducing traffic, encouraging "digital leave no trace" practices to reduce social media mobbing of popular tourist sites and trails (which often encourage undereducated or irresponsible visitor behavior), and other ways to mitigate our inevitable human impact on this special place.

As conversations continue about the future of this corridor, let's remember the Spring of 2020 as a unique insight into what this place can be if we learn to tread more lightly on it. It's beautiful."

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-p

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A hearty thank you for your work in managing this amazing resource! I'm a very frequent user of the historic highway, usually by bicycle between Troutdale and Ainsworth.

Regarding ideas to reduce congestion, I strongly support an idea once raised to restrict the highway to one-way Eastbound car traffic between Larch and Bridal Veil. Ideally, the recovered roadway width

could be used for a combination of increased automobile parking plus a pedestrian, hiker, and uphill biker lane. In this scenario, the roadway itself could be even serve as a wheelchair accessible access method/interpretive path to the waterfall corridor.

Thank you for accepting my comments.

Joe Lagerstrom

If possible, I'd like to request a few minutes at the July 13 HCRHAC meeting to share and discuss this research project. It is a non-profit endeavour to collect and share research material on the CRH. I used to work with Kristen on this, but she left her position while I was on a hiatus working on other projects.

This year, I've been bringing the website up to speed, working on new formatting and some other issues, and expanding the scope of researchers delving into the old highway history.

What I would like to do is to take a few minutes to introduce this resource to the committee, so they can utilize it as a resource, and also so we can work together documenting information on the history of the highway, and the construction of the state trail, that is relevant to our project.

Thank you for your time,

Aaron Litt

<https://sites.google.com/site/recreatingthehcrh/home>

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