

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting

Meeting will be Hybrid
Troutdale Sheriff's Office, Kellog Room
234 SW Kendall Ct, Troutdale, OR 97060

Online Information below
Login online: <https://tinyurl.com/AC-Dec2022>

Meeting ID: 853 9978 0066
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Call in (does not require internet): 1 (253) 215-8782
Meeting ID: # 853 9978 0066



Thursday, December 15th, 2022

10 AM – 2:00 PM Advisory Committee Meeting

MEMBERS:

Arthur Babitz, Chair

Leti Valle Moretti

Ernie Drapela, Vice-Chair

Tricia Forsi

Judy Davis

Lisa Farquharson

Clay Courtright

Rian Windsheimer

Staj Olson

Chrissy Curran

Hood River County Representative

Hood River County Governor's Representative

Multnomah County Governor's Representative

Multnomah County Representative

Wasco County Representative

Wasco County Governor's Representative

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department

Oregon Department of Transportation

Travel Oregon

State Historic Preservation Office

AGENDA:

Time	Agenda Topics	Presenter
10:00 AM	Call to Order	Arthur Babitz, Chair
10:05 AM	Opportunity for the public to comment on any item not on the agenda*	
10:10 AM	Approval of Minutes	Arthur Babitz, Chair
10:15 AM	Mitchell to Ruthton Trailhead Design Update	Kevin Bracy, DEA Matt Miller, FHWA
10:35 AM	Viento to Mitchell Pt State Trail Update	Jack Carlson, FHWA
10:55 AM	Mitchell Point Tunnel Update	Austin Armstrong, FHWA
11:15 AM	Pilot Evaluation Report	Terra/Clay Courtright, OPRD
12:00 PM	Lunch Break	

12:45 PM	Year in Review Storm damage/emergency response	
1:15 PM	2023 Workplan priorities	
1:45 PM	Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next meetings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ March 16, 2023 ○ June 15, 2023 ○ September 21, 2023 ○ December 21, 2023 • Friends of the Historic Highway • OPRD • Travel Oregon • USFS • WFLHD 	Terra, Jeanette, Clay, Staj, Donna, Matt
1:55 PM	Committee Round Table	All
2:00 PM	Adjourn	

March Agenda items

- Summer 2023 congestion planning
- Funding update

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee 2022 Work Plan

1. **The Final 1.5 Miles of 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 5**
5. **Eagle Creek Stairway Replacement**
6. Congestion and Safety Plan Implementation Projects
7. Historic Guardrail Research/Analysis
8. Twin Tunnels Safety Improvements Implementation
9. Larch Mountain Slide – Funding
10. Slide mitigation
11. Waterfall Corridor Visitor Experience Management

Historic Columbia River Highway Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Dec. 15, 2022

Hybrid – Zoom and Kellogg Room (Troutdale)

Members Attending:	Arthur Babitz, Chair Ernie Drapela, Vice Chair Judy Davis Tricia Forsi Clay Courtright, OPRD Rian Windsheimer, ODOT Wayne Stewart, Member Emeritus
Historic Highway AC Staff:	Terra Lingley (ODOT) Katelyn Jackson (ODOT)
Others Attending:	Jeanette Kloos Bonnie Clark Richard Alfieri AJ Zelada Austin Armstrong, WFL Jack Carlson, WFL Kevin Bracy, DEA Jennifer O'Donnell Paul Wilcox Mike Standley Jenny Hebert Dave Henne Bob Hadlow, ODOT Peter Belmont Dick Weber Kathy Fitzpatrick, MCEDD Kent Kalsch, ODOT Lynn Burditt Jim Morgan, Gorge Commission

Call to Order

Arthur called to order the meeting at 10:05

Public Comment

Holding Wayne's letter until later.

Approval of Minutes

Minutes approved.

Ernie shared a comment about the field trip to Morton Road, however, a summary was not included about the field trip.

Arthur: can Kevin summarize the field trip?

Terra: Mosier Bike Hub preliminary design memo included in packet after the presenter for September was unable to attend. There's a description of what they have budget for, what they hope to do with partner and volunteer work and next steps.

Terra: The other packet item is comments came in from the presentation in September, from Chris.

Mitchell to Ruthton Design Update

Kevin Bracy, DEA:

We've reached our 30% preliminary design milestone at the end of October and Terra submitted the NSA permit to Hood River County.

Kevin showed the design overview video, starting at Mitchell Point Drive and heading east.

Widening Mitchell Point Drive doesn't meet 5% grade, so they're continuing to review options. One option is to move the trail 23 feet north with a separated roadway and trail. Requires tree removal. The second alternative puts the trail adjacent to the road. Requires tree removal and cutting through a berm.

Depending on how we stage the construction for this segment, there may be a period of time where bikes and traffic have to share the tunnel. A temporary signal and pedestrian button could be installed in the interim.

The first wall, Forest Wall is over a thousand feet, then the Ruthton Wall before a viaduct.

At Morton Road Crossing, we had a site visit here after the last committee meeting. We looked at earlier options of going straight across. We've moved the crossing up to the intersection's existing island that will be rebuilt.

Rian: The other thing was making sure we have treatments on the off-ramp to make sure people know there's a trail there.

Ernie: We also had some discussion about trying to discourage truck parking just west.

Arthur: I recall ODOT said that was an existing discussion they are planning to do something about.

Continuing east to West Orchard Wall at over 1,000 feet with a pedestrian wall and a private irrigation crossing. The east Orchard Wall at 690-feet and second irrigation system.

Restroom, bike features and asphalt parking lot with concrete driveway at Ruthton Trailhead. Transit turnaround included. Signing, striping included in next phase.

We have multiple meetings coming up after the first of the year.

Tricia (in chat) If the trail has already be submitted for permit, what kind of delays can we expect for examining alternatives in the new year?

Terra: We usually submit our NSA permits at 30% design and inevitably there are changes. It's a pretty easy process to submit a modification. We're typically required to submit our 100% plans and highlight the differences. Very little delay generally.

Tricia (in chat) And on the ADA note, how long does the ped/bike signal stop traffic?

Kevin: It would be a programmable controller that can be field adjusted. We could start with the time it takes for a wheelchair.

Tricia (in chat) Could you please explain the decision process for which barriers (stone/wood/steel) were used in the various locations?

We have experience from previous projects on the styling of rail to use on the concrete barrier at 22-inch steel. At the Orchard walls, these railings are in snowplow throwing distance to the highway so need to be more robust. For the wood railing, where it will be installed on the original, historic location, that will be white to match the historic. In other cases, such as the railing on the viaduct, we have not designed. That location is a challenge because it's next to the historic rail. If we're far enough from the highway, we prefer to have a more natural wood or stone railing.

Arthur: Which railing is the one that has to resist the snow plow? Both orchard walls are within 16 feet of the shoulder of I-84. Snow will be impacting these. When we have the 22-inch railing on the concrete barrier, we've matched that on both sides of the trail.

Arthur: If you find anything indicating where the flume coming down from Belmont may have crossed, please let me know.

Arthur: How do you clean up after the snow plow?

Clay: With a broom or a bob cat, which leads to my question. From Ruthton Trailhead to the undercross signal, what's the distance?

Kevin: The entire project is 1.6 miles, so roughly a mile. You'd probably come in on Morton Road so that's even closer.

Austin Armstrong, WFL: Wouldn't the service road exit be easier to service the signal?

Clay: Will it truly be temporary?

Terra: until we build the new undercrossing.

Dick Webber: At the Orchard Steel wall, you have the cinders that go over onto the trail. Is it open enough to self-clean?

Kevin: The slope drains to the north over the face of the wall.

Clay: we get it cleaned off in the winter, then we clean it off with a broom in the spring.

AJ Zelada: Anytime you can have something that creates an audio barrier, it's great. The one that's further away on Mitchell Point, it's really great. At Forest Wall, I'm wondering if you can do what was done at Wyeth with pollinator bumps that were taller than the trail and helped mitigate noise. The Morton Crossing portrayed in the video is great and allows sightlines for people coming off the highway.

Kevin: We want to prohibit trail user parking on the side of the road, but we need to allow trail maintenance parking, neighbors and school bus access. It's still on our to-do list. Our project does have a revegetation and planting plan that includes trees and screening from the highway. At Morton Road, this area will be planted with more of an oak habitat with pollinators.

Arthur: I think he was talking about Forest Wall and putting some bumps in to elevate it further.

Kevin: That is a challenge. We're on a steep slope so trying to add mounds of soil we've looked at it and it's on too steep a slope to do that.

Arthur: Is it far enough down there will be some respite from the freeway noise?

Kevin: Oh absolutely. We had two options. We looked at putting it right next to the highway, but it was 7-8% grade. If we can get the trail down, it's a nicer user experience and uses the existing terrain climbing up.

Richard Alfieri: Study about tunnel use and how long the temporary would be?

Terra: It's funding dependent – if we get the entire funding all at once, we wouldn't need the signal, but if we get smaller chunks of funding. We do have traffic volumes for Morton Road.

Kevin: the traffic volumes were super low, around 100 a day. Essentially only the Morton Road community and residents along Mitchell Point Drive use the undercrossing.

[Viento State Park to Mitchell Point construction update](#)

Jack Carlson, WFL

Since Sept. 15, we have a lot of high impact activities on the project site. At Hackley Cut, we scaled the slope and are placing mid-slope attenuators with rockfall mesh draped over top. We've also placed rock dowels to hold the rock together.

The contractor recycled the blasting material from Mitchell Point on the haul roads and permanent roads. There are two reinforced Soil Slope walls at Viento Creek with a box culvert. The second wall is at the Viento Maintenance facility visible from I-84. They put in layers of 1.5-foot-tall mesh to build the wall.

They're building the fifth and final rockery wall at the Viento Trailhead Parking Lot.

They've placed the septic tanks for the maintenance facility and the restroom. The footings are in for the maintenance facility and restroom.

They have started remodeling the maintenance facility and reframed walls. They have placed the trusses and roofing for the new addition and poured the concrete.

In early October, they had the opportunity to close the right lane of I-84 east around-the-clock. They had to repave the shoulder to reopen the lane for winter. They also poured the bottom concrete pieces of the MSE walls

Since September, scaling at Stepcut's 200-foot cliff. They used a rockfall containment net, which is 100-foot wide and 150-feet tall wire mesh to protect the public. We've had up to 4 people working in unison. We used two rolling slowdowns on Nov. 3 to take a large rock over 100-feet high. We have a 20-minute window to get this operation done. When that time came, they use an air bladder to open the crevice and trigger the rock. We had to safety scale the rest of it before opening the roadway again. There's a lot of energy in these rocks that come down.

AJ: What kind of rock is this?

Kevin: This is all volcanic.

We were able to pull that whole section off and make it safe. After the scaling, we put in rock bolts 25-30 feet into the rock. The contractor used a crane to raise the wire mesh. It's over 100-feet tall and is attached to cables on the top of the hill. They lace up the mesh and then contour it to the slope.

Dick: Are the bolts epoxied?

Jack: They're grouted and tension tested, then re-grouted.

Richard: do the drills ever break?

Jack: not very often. There's a technique to feather it and get the most production. We have close to 50 bolts at step cut.

Wayne: What's the schedule for completion of rock work and the whole thing?

Jack: They would like to continue working on rock work through the winter and be complete early next year. At Hackley Cut, we're only two feet of the asphalt. For the project, it could go into October 2024, but the contractor is hoping to get done in 2023.

[Mitchell Point Tunnel](#)

Austin Armstrong, WFL

The tunnel itself is completed. We need to pave through the tunnel. We're working on the east portal and they just started on the west masonry wall. At the east portal, the steel rebar will be encased in cast-in-place concrete with masonry. The first few stones of the stone arch are placed. This is pretty complicated layout because it's in a spiral. We're verifying proper placement before continuing. The first of the cast-in-place concrete is in place. We will likely come in with some tinted shotcrete to make a seamless transition. The current plan is a rubbed finished using concrete on the cast-in-place concrete. There are some concerns we will not get a smooth transition between panels. We're looking at a light sand-blasted finish.

An engineered arch in place to hold the concrete. There are about four stones in place on each side of the east portal.

The east bench retaining wall goes from the portal and extends east. They place the concrete section and rebar before masonry. Some sections are about 90% complete. We had some difficulty fitting the straight rebar into the curves of the arches at the overlook. The majority of the inside face is done, but the outside face still has to be placed, which has to be done from a lift.

On the west bench, they have excavated the area, removing the old wall and pouring the footing for the new wall. They are looking at options to construct the wall in areas where there are rock outcrops where excavation is planned. The rockfall protection on site is planned for much smaller rock.

Current completion date is January 2024, but we're looking at April/May 2024 for completion. 61% of work is complete and 62% of time used.

Dick: where did the stone you're placing come from?

Austin: There's a local quarry we've used on the previous phases.

Wayne's proposal

Wayne Stewart: We haven't met with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) since pre-COVID and membership has changed. I talked to Lisa, the OTC executive assistant and she indicated if we're interested in asking for time on a future agenda, we should send a letter to the OTC chair via Terra and it's up to the chair.

I've drafted a letter and I think it's appropriate. I propose we ask for time on the agenda.

The National Landscape Architects published an 18-page article on the Wyeth to Starvation Creek section. I'd offer to purchase 7-8 for the OTC members, director and Rian.

Rian: I agree that we need to be communicating with the OTC and we haven't in a while. We want to make sure we know what we want to do and ask for. To me, the things we need to focus on are 1. where are we and our status, the other is what else do we still need (funding)? Are we going to ask for a liaison or other things? I'd like to spend more time thinking about how we want to engage them and get them excited. I think we need an advocate there. Tour?

Arthur: presented previously for Wyeth to Lindsey Creek to ask for funding. Rian is suggesting we spend some time figuring out our ask and how to split our time between an update and an ask.

Wayne: We've had an ask in the past. Maybe it would be nice to offer an update or a tour. Maybe we will have an ask in the future.

Arthur: I think it depends on how quickly we get on an agenda.

Ernie: I think it does have merit. New members need to be brought up to speed. Agenda thoughts could be significant accomplishments to be brought to their attention and if there's a target we want to aim for (a next accomplishment for them to track).

Arthur: Former Director Garrett presented it as a legacy project and we have the chance to see it completed. That's the way I see it. In politics, I usually look for an individual champion also. Are there any individual members that make sense?

Rian: We're getting a new member and we also will have a vacancy. I do think it's useful. If we can get a couple of them out on the tour, ideally before the meeting, they can say how awesome it was. Maybe somebody from that area would be more appropriate. We will keep working on it.

Arthur: when we did the last one, it was at the Columbia Gorge Hotel, which was great. Maybe we can beg for a spot on the agenda when they're in the neighborhood.

Ernie: does the OTC have a schedule or regular interval?

Wayne: next few meetings are in person in Salem.

Second Thursday of every other month.

Wayne: We've also met with the OPRD board previously but haven't in a while. Would it be appropriate, Clay?

Clay: timing could be good. The Oregon State Parks Commission is figuring out where they will host their next meeting and it could be in the gorge. Do we want to see about getting on that agenda?

Arthur: yes.

Terra: the charter is advisory to ODOT, OTC and the Parks commission. I'd like an advisory committee member to speak, but I'm happy to help prepare the presentation.

[Waterfall Corridor Evaluation Strategy](#)

Clay: Leadership met in November. There were a lot of successes and challenges. Parks has concerns with us operating the access point because we don't have extra staff. With OSHA requirements, lunch, breaks, etc. it becomes much more involved than 4-5 people running the points.

The visitor experience was very successful I would say. It's the staffing piece without dedicated funding that's going to get tricky. With the absence of a booth, which can be a pro/con for the impression of tolling, it's pretty tricky.

Terra: I promised I would be pulling information into a compressive evaluation report. A draft will be available for public review.

Goals: improve safety, reduce congestion and improve visitor experience.

As a reminder, from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. to use your personal vehicle to access federal lands along the Historic Highway between Bridal Veil and Ainsworth State Park, you needed a permit. There was a separate permit for I-84 Exit 31.

We had ongoing monitoring, snapshot in time traffic counts and longitudinal data to check them against. We modified the flagger configuration at Bridal Veil to create a more consolidated point. We also consolidated flaggers at Ainsworth to reduce the number of staff and improve the flow of traffic.

We had a number of crashes that impacted I-84, including on June 27 that closed I-84. We suspended the pilot project that day. A crash on July 14 pushed traffic onto the Historic Highway and disrupted the traffic counts. July 24 we also had an I-84 closure.

Visitation patterns saw Friday-Monday peak visitation and 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Monthly visitation at Latourell, outside of the pilot area, is where we saw the biggest change, including at Guy Talbot below, with a huge increase in July and August – maybe due to the ebike business operating out of Guy Talbot.

A Year in Review

In January, we submitted the Nationally Significant Federal and Tribal Lands grant (not successful), EDA grant submittal for funding shortage for Viento-Mitchell (not successful), and Mosquito Creek slide permit.

February Mitchell Point rock blasting.

In March, we did site visits for the road closure gates, pilot planning (presentation to residents and site visits), Mitchell Point to Ruthton webinar with residents.

In April, we resubmitted the Federal Lands Access Program applications for Ruthton Point to Ruthton Park and Viento to Mitchell Option Y. Gateway to the Gorge Grand opening, Mitchell Point final blast.

In May, pre-pilot congestion and launch of the pilot, Mitchell Point Tour.

In June, Congressman Blumenauer Tour, Viento to Mitchell and Mitchell Point Tunnel construction continues, gave a tour to society for industrial archeology and witnessed transit and tours using the shuttle loading zones.

In July, Congressman DeFazio visited Mitchell Point, and regular Viento State Park to Mitchell Point tour.

In August, The Dalles murals were created.

In September, we concluded the pilot, visited Morton Road, took the R1 active transportation liaison to the Gorge, and checked on post-Eagle Creek Fire mitigation at Eagle Creek.

In October, we submitted again to NSFLTP, celebrated the paving centennial, and the Vista House masonry wall was damaged.

In November, we had a boulder fall on I-84 and the Historic Highway State Trail near Starvation Creek.

In December, snow fell on Multnomah Falls, Stan Hinatsu had his retirement party and additional landslides near Vista House and destroyed another section of guardrail. Sense of Place hosted a Mitchell Point Tunnel presentation.

2023 Work Plan Priorities

Highest priority is completing the State Trail. Green is construction fully funded, polka dot is unfunded, blue is planning/design.

Terra walked through the rest of the work plan.

Arthur: For the programmatic agreements item, I think that's a bigger item because Hood River is doing a bigger effort. In 2024, the tunnel is complete. What do we do to manage traffic before the trail connects east? There's no place to park. I'd like to know there's been conversation between ODOT and OPRD.

18:58

Jeanette: to the programmatic agreements, the existing ones were spearheaded by SHPO so we need to make sure they're involved. Staffing has changed.

Arthur: Bob Hadlow has been involved and in discussion. We've talked about Hood River.

Terra: ODOT has already transferred a section to the city. Having an agreement in place before more is transferred would be ideal.

Arthur: The section of Oak Street in downtown was transferred to allow for parklets.

Wayne: Waterfall Corridor Visitor Experience Management from 2022. We've got a number of situations exacerbated by the fire, concrete barriers, temporary signage, that are not historic and don't match the character, especially between Oneonta and Wahkeena. The temporary fencing at Oneonta has been in place since 2017. There are sandbags next to Multnomah Creek. The whole area needs to be brought up to date. I think it's an area the committee should be taking a look at since you have three agencies. I'd like to see it moved up higher than No. 11 on the list.

Arthur: It's visitor experience but it's also viewshed. The Gorge and the highway is so different and so choked with trees and the views. I'd like to tag that on to the discussion. When you run into plastic, etc. or into a viewpoint without a view, it takes you out of the moment. We can advocate for the public.

Wayne: ODOT and OPRD did some work a few years ago on opening the views. I don't think it was completed and it has probably regrown.

Ernie: I strongly feel view shed management should be an ongoing thing. I used to ride through and say "I wish it were" about the views. We have a duty to restore those.

Clay: I agree. It's been a while. It's something ODOT and OPRD would need to collaborate on. If Terra can help with the permits, we have tree fellers, etc. We received a national award for Women's Forum but that was 10-12 years ago.

Arthur: there were far fewer trees. The city of Hood River is probably 10 times as vegetated as it was in 1900. It's a very different experience.

Jeanette: I was out with a volunteer and he really wants to reopen the view for the rockslide viaduct.

Tricia: The challenge of view shed management is a lot of players involved and approaches to land management.

Terra: what comes down if we move No. 11 up?

Wayne: I would like to see No. 11 moved up and become bold (priority item)

Arthur: I want to see planning happening for view sheds, but I wouldn't expect action to open views this year.

AJ: I think Wayne's view is a greater umbrella than the able-bodied experience. AJ and Kent had done an audit for the Waterfall Corridor. The visitor experience is not necessarily a person in a vehicle anymore.

Arthur: Visitor experience isn't the right term because there's so much to it. Equity and Inclusion is its own thing.

Kent: The temporary control measures are a long time for us, but not for nature. We had a tree take down all historic rail from the Multnomah Falls Bridge. We still have rockfall. As slopes become stable, we review and remove. We assess it each year. We have liability for safety.

Arthur: Past a certain point, the temporary isn't a temporary measure so we have to think about what it looks like. If it may not stabilize for 10-15 years, maybe we're looking at a more historically compatible mitigation.

Kent: past fires show 5-15 years is when the tree roots die. Balance of the scales: rarity of incident vs. safety.

Terra: The USFS has an application in to improve some of the aesthetic elements, like replacing the concrete barrier.

Lynn Burditt (in chat): A great coordination opportunity. there remain some safety issues - so it may be more about how to improve the visual impacts rather than how to go back to pre-2017. Around 5 years is when you will experience more loss of roots and more trees coming down as well as rock fall as Kent is mentioning

Updates

Discussion of Dec. 21, 2022 scheduled meeting. Move forward a week to Dec. 14.

ODOT

Kent: We lost about 65-feet of historic rail between Vista House and Larch Mountain. The historic rail is starting to dry rot a little and doesn't have the strength it used to. We also had 80-feet of rail at Multnomah Falls. Current work near Vista House for 40 feet of rail replacement.

At the Mosquito Debris flow, we're working to put a pipe under the freeway and railroad track to manage the flow. We had a chance of losing the interstate because of the saturation. When we finish the work at Mosquito Creek, we will replace the white rail.

We will be taking concrete rail out at Exit 41. The slides are smaller and more stable.

Arthur: when you replace the masonry rail, is there a new model with longer life?

Kent: we have 3-4 masons that do the quality work we want. Every piece of rail is different and unique. The upgrades are in kind with like materials. We had a section next to a recently repaired section get

taken out but the new section held. We're doing like kind because there are often rock walls stacked below.

Arthur: do you go after insurance?

Kent: yes, if they're caught. We're running \$1,000-1,100 a foot. That comes out of my budget that I can't use to replace other things.

Terra: we're still working on the fix for the gabion basket hit on the state trail.

Kent: I think we will be moving forward on that.

Wayne: Where was that?

Terra: The Wyeth to Lindsey Creek section.

Friends of the Historic Columbia River Highway

Jeanette: Planning to compare the State Trail Inventory to the guidelines. We did a \$10,000 donation to Hood River County for the developmental review of Mitchell Point Drive to Ruthton Trailhead.

Vista House displays, and concerts resume in 2023. Attendance of the National Bike Summit in March. Gorge Ride June 24, 2023. Antique Car Tour July 8, 2023. Seeking board members and volunteers.

OPRD

Nothing additional.

USFS

Jenny Hebert: Internal conversations about clutter and mitigation

Travel Oregon: N/A

Committee Roundtable

Ernie: Very successful year. We've been very resourceful in the way we've managed our funding. I hope no additional funding doesn't mean funding is getting tighter.

Wayne: In the landscape architect magazine, there's a new photo of the side trail that Friends paid for and OPRD cleared.

Tricia: Eager to hear more about permits and funding.

Arthur: We have a certificate for Ernie for his last official day on the committee. Ernie: It's been an honor. I think back to when I traveled the highway with my parents. Now I can do it by foot, on bicycle. I had a new great grandson born in Idaho yesterday and we'll make sure he gets here one of these days.

Adjourned.