

Rural Roads in the Transportation System Plan

The Washington County Transportation System Plan (TSP) in the rural area has traditionally been limited due to statewide planning rules. The plan designates rural arterials and collectors, as well as rural pedestrian activity areas, trails, on-road bikeways, and truck routes. The addition of new capacity in the rural area to serve urban traffic generally requires an exception from statewide planning goals. Therefore, the TSP update will not address or recommend new roads or expansion of existing roads in the rural area to serve urban traffic. Rather, planning staff is proposing that the rural element of the TSP identify a limited number of arterial routes for future safety enhancement studies.

Rural TSP Planning Background

Described below are the rural strategies identified by the TSP in 2002. These strategies are now over 10 years old, and have been updated by the revised TSP goals, objectives and strategies. These strategies are still relevant, but fail to provide any recommendation to adequately address rural issues:

"Study Area 1

Hillsboro-Sherwood Improvement Area

The study area will be evaluated to identify and improve safety and mobility on existing rural roads between Aloha/Hillsboro and Tualatin/Sherwood. For planning purposes various minor safety improvements on Arterials were assumed. This is not the Western Bypass. Specific improvements have not been identified.

Strategy 6.12

There continues to be considerable discussion in the Washington County community about how best to define and address north-south circulation and capacity needs in the western urban areas - between Hillsboro and the Tualatin/Sherwood area. This Plan identifies these needs and the facilities, programs and services necessary to accommodate them in a manner that is consistent with State, Regional and other local government transportation plans. This approach includes planned construction of numerous large projects within the Urban Growth Boundary and requires acceptance of several "deficiency areas" throughout the County.

In recognition of the substantial debate over whether alternative ways to define and meet these north-south circulation needs have been adequately explored, the Board has determined that additional attention should be given to this issue. This study should examine the effects of commuter rail and all other possible improvements along existing and proposed roads or corridors, including the possibility of a north-south circumferential highway. The Study should also consider, among other things, relevant land use laws, regulations, goals and objectives. If the Study recommends amendments to the Transportation Plan and identifies new projects not found in the 2002 version of the County's Transportation Plan, these issues should be addressed during a future appropriate ordinance period and in coordination with other affected planning agencies."

Current Rural Area Transportation Related Planning Efforts

Rural Road Safety Action Plan

A Rural Road Safety Strategic Action Plan is currently being developed. A component of this effort includes identifying the more suitable routes for bicycles. As well as identifying strategies to enhance safety for bicycles in the rural area. Many of these strategies may also improve safety for other modes.

Signal Projects

Capital Project Management is studying intersections for signalization in the rural area including:

- Roy Rogers Road at Scholls-Sherwood Rd
- Roy Rogers Road at Beef Bend Road
- Scholls Ferry Road at Tile Flat Road.

Rural Roads Operations and Maintenance Advisory Committee (RROMAC)

This Board-appointed advisory committee provides a platform and forum for assorted rural roads-related issues to be discussed, disseminated, and debated. These citizen advisory board members meet on a monthly basis and have regular interaction with County staff as well as external entities such as ODOT, the Farm Bureau, and many others.

The Westside Transportation Study

The leadership and focus regarding this study is still being determined.

- The legislature awarded Washington County \$1.5 million to conduct a transportation study for the Westside.
- The goal is to use solid data to identify short to mid term transportation packages that meet our transportation needs and identify longer term options
- The intent of the study is to be comprehensive and inclusive.
- The schedule includes several months for an initial scoping phase to define the specific project goals and objectives and engagement approach.
- Consultants are likely to be used for much of this work.
- The effort will build upon the analysis for the TSP and may result in future TSP amendments.

TSP update

In 2014 planning staff intends to update the TSP maps and modal elements. The map changes are intended to incorporate other adopted or approved transportation planning efforts. The map changes will also consider the needs of future growth, and current community aspirations. The TSP is intended to be consistent with state and regional transportation planning rules and requirements. Therefore, the map updates will not address or recommend new roads or expansion of existing roads in the rural area to serve urban traffic.

Planning staff recommends that the TSP update for the rural area focus on safety corridors, and related system enhancements. This effort within the rural area should go beyond the study areas identified in the existing TSP. Washington County planning would like to work with the Community Advisory Committee and members of RROMAC to identify a recommended set of a limited number of arterial corridors for future safety enhancement studies.

The Transportation System Plan identifies Strategy 1.2.4 which calls for "*developing a Transportation Safety Action Plan for Washington County or subsections or corridors of Washington County.*" The TSP development does not have the resources to complete such Safety Action Plans. Rather the TSP can identify rural roadways where a future Safety Action Plan ought to be considered. After the TSP has identified these locations, the Board of County Commissioners would need to identify future funding for the actual Safety Action Plan to be conducted. An investigation of safety enhancements would require additional resources to be allocated over time to implement the outcomes and recommendations.

The TSP rural element could also indicate potential rural road enhancement categories. The identified solutions would not be prescriptive. Rather, the TSP would provide the starting framework for the types of enhancements that a future Safety Action Plan investigation might consider.