PHILOMATH TSP – Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
Meeting Notes
Thursday, February 25, 2016
6:00 PM

Present:
Citizen Members: Sonlla Heern, Ron Hartz, Van Hunsaker, Lauri Lehman, Severn Thomas, Rick Wells.
City Staff: Chris Workman, City Manager; and Ruth Post, City Recorder.
Consultant: John Bosket, DKS Associates
Public: Barb Hartz

I. Sign-in, Agenda Overview, and Introductions

Chris welcomed everyone and thanked them for volunteering to participate.

John Bosket introduced himself as the project manager for the consultant team and explained the coordinated effort to update Transportation System Plans (TSPs) across the region. In addition to Philomath's TSP update, Corvallis is updating their TSP, the Corvallis Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) is updating the Regional Transportation Plan, and Benton County will be updating their TSP soon as well. He explained the purpose the TSP serves as an extension of the city's Comprehensive Plan. During introductions, John asked everyone to identify what they would like the transportation system in Philomath to look like in 20 years.

Van Hunsaker, Community Services Consortium President and former Mayor.
- Continue to improve streets and sidewalks (bringing incomplete streets up to city standards)
- Lots of progress in last 17 years but more to do, sidewalks, Benton View Drive.
- Important as we grow to make sure we're making good connections within our street system.
- Get streets like Benton View Drive fully improved to urban standards.

Rick Wells, Philomath School Board and truck driver. Different view of improving things. He thinks of what's good for the trucks. If/when Hwy 20 gets finished, will be a lot more truck traffic through town.
- Need improvements for trucks to get through the city and to create places for them to stop and spend money (like places for trucks to stop close to convenience stores - Mill City & Lyons have places near stores to park trucks).
- Street improvements, upgrade and modernize.

Lauri Lehman, Strengthening Rural Families serving rural communities.
- Lack of transportation in rural areas is a major need.
- Bus system doesn't run at convenient times to get people to work and back home. Can catch the bus to LBCC but can't catch it back.
- Improve public transit system.
- As a parent: bike lanes, sidewalks and better biking and walking options for youth. Safe Routes to School grant did help with addition of bike racks at schools but wasn't feasible to take next steps with it.
- Should be a priority to get from town-to-town.
- Served on couplet committee and it was "enlightening."

- How can low-income families get around without it costing a small fortune?

Sonlla Heern, worked with Safe Routes to School, citizen with kids in high school.
- Walking, biking paths that connect across town and particularly the schools.
- Connectivity and safety, particularly for youngsters.
- Make sure transportation system keeps up with growth.
- Serves on Park Advisory Board and wants to consider connectivity between parks.

Chris Workman, City Manager
- No specific targets.
- Has young kids and concerned about potential growth and needing a plan - doesn't like flying by seat of his pants.
- Resolve some issues created by the couplet.
- We're not Portland, nor do we want to be; but we're also not Monroe or Adair Village.
- No mass transit down Main Street but need a good balance.
- Trucks do go through town.
- Encourages everyone to talk to friends and neighbors and collect feedback.
- Need a good solid usable plan that can be followed.

Severn Thomas, business owner, State Farm agent. Newer member of community for four years. There were a lot of reasons to choose to live in Philomath. Great place for family and well situated for recreational activities.
- Noticed, as a newcomer and business owner, access to businesses and parking are concerns.
- Businesses need to be seen.
- Businesses on the highway need to get people to stop and park – needs a downtown/destination feel.
- Alternate transit, bussing, cycling especially for kids.
- Seeing kids riding on North 19th Street with no sidewalks.
- Bike paths for kids.
- Safety for kids.
- Business on 24th & Main and sees people going way too fast. Speeding is a problem.

Lauri Lehman
- More crosswalks and safer crossings of highway.
- Sees kids making bad decisions to cross mid-blocks through the medians. Safety education is needed.

Ron Hartz, Landmark Realty, retired. Came here in the early 1970s.
- Wants to see Hwy 20 widened to 4 lanes between Philomath and Corvallis, as was previously planned.
- Like to see Main Street widened to make it easier for trucks.
- Wanted to know who would be paying for improvements.

John: This TSP covers everything and isn't limited to residential streets.

Ron Hartz
- Bottleneck between Corvallis and Philomath wastes far more time than the Hwy 20 improvements between here and the Coast.

John: Our focus will be primarily within Philomath's Urban Growth Boundary but regional issues can be raised.

Chris: Coordination of regional issues is the benefit of updating our plan at the same time as Corvallis and others and using same consultant.

Van
- Understands that widening roads is expensive and not always the best answer, but a minimum level or standard of traffic flow should be met before that is dismissed.

Barb Hartz, Landmark Realty and was involved with Philomath Solutions. Sometimes we overlook the ideal versus the practical. These would be wonderful things but if the additional expense prevents development because it becomes too expensive, is it worth it?
- Bus enhancements would help.
- Pet peeve: bike paths not being used by bikers; have invested money in it and it's being wasted.
- Crosswalk nightmares of cars stopping for pedestrians but other lane doesn't stop.

Rick Wells
- Flashing light crosswalk at 17th & Main is an example of an effective crosswalk.

More discussion about history of contentious atmosphere surrounding couplet. Discussion about access issues caused by couplet (trying to go eastbound from the north side) and medians (plantings).

Based on discussion, added:
- Support job growth and access to jobs.

II. Project Orientation
John reviewed slides:
What is a TSP?
- Projects/Policies/Standards

Why are TSPs important?
- Emphasized coordination of plans between city, MPO, county and state.
- Better investment decisions.
- More competitive for funding.

What should TSPs include?
- Direction for future decisions.
- Vision/Goals/Policies and municipal code amendments.
- Projects.
- Tools to manage what you have, connectivity and neighborhood traffic management.
- Street design standards.
- Standards for mobility and driveway spacing.
- Strategic approach based on fiscal constraints.

The Philomath TSP Process:
- 18 months to 2 years, depends on some of the public process.
- Currently in the "Understand" Phase. To be followed by the "Evaluate" Phase and "Recommend & Adopt" Phase.
- Review of timeline.
- Make sure everyone on Committee is on board before adoption.

Distributed Technical Memorandum #1 (Public and Stakeholder Involvement Strategy).

Reviewed makeup of Project Management Team (PMT) and Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). Discussed roles/responsibilities of PMT, TAC, CAC, City Council and public.

Review of project website. Encouraged members to promote website. Lauri asked if there are materials that can be handed out. Strengthening Rural Families is planning a Health & Wellness Fair (April) and could hand out website info. Barb suggested the Chamber would be another place where info could be distributed. Lauri suggested contacting Brad Fuqua at Philomath Express to promote open houses.

Lauri was concerned that there is already some type of plan that opinions are expected to conform to and there is already some funding that has to be approved. John explained the only plan is the existing TSP and there are no commitments to retain any of it through this update. Van noted that funding for local streets will typically come from local city sources; the state highway is funded by the state and 19th and 13th Streets are County streets and are the County's responsibility. John said the plan will identify likely funding sources for future projects, but this will not commit any agency or party to funding them. Decisions to change transportation revenue streams will not be part of this TSP process, but will be discussed. There was further discussion about funding sources.

III. Transportation Vision, Goals, and Objectives
John summarized the contents of Technical Memoranda #2 and 3. They should be on the website soon.

Technical Memorandum #4
Vision Statement: John will develop based on input from this meeting and send out for feedback.

Draft Goals: Started with goals from 1999 TSP. Cleaned them up - some were projects, not necessarily goals. Can go back and change Goals & Objectives throughout the process and all the way to the end. Lump together bigger themes as Goals and get more specific under Objectives. There will be some redundancy, which is okay and generally unavoidable.

Review of proposed updated goals. Tried to preserve old goals and incorporate some that have come up in other communities.

Lauri: What is West Corvallis-North Philomath Plan?
John: There is information in Technical Memorandum #2 related to that plan. It relates to connectivity between Philomath and Corvallis in areas to the north.
Van: It was an idea to work together with Corvallis to coordinate areas outside of the UGB.

Van: Old Goal #1 Analyze impacts of signalized ... Didn't see that carried over.
John: Doesn't see that as a goal or objective but more a specific action to be done in developing the TSP.

Van: Truck route goal?
Ruth: See proposed Goal #3(b).

Van: Have to balance expanding capacity but not overbuilding.
Lauri: Suggested PG#5(c) addresses this.

Sonlla: Safety issues, lack of street lights.
John: Could be either under safety or sustainability (i.e. Replace with LEDs).
Ruth: The City is already replacing burned out lights with LEDs.
John: Then let's add this under safety.

John: If you think of other ideas or comments, contact Chris. Will take the information presented earlier to ensure it is all incorporated.

Rick: Is it better to shut off some side streets onto Main and force traffic to use a specific access point or not?

John: You need to discuss and balance competing objectives in situations like that to find the right answer. Some streets are intended to serve high volumes of traffic at higher speeds (e.g., and expressway or freeway) and should have as few access points as possible for safety and efficiency reasons. Other streets, such as the local streets many of us live on, are designed for low volumes of traffic and low speeds. Those streets are primarily intended to provide direct access to adjacent land so having lots of access points is okay. Then you have places like the downtown where a highway runs past businesses. The objective of the highway might be to serve high volumes of traffic efficiently, but the surrounding land uses suggest lower speeds and access to businesses are appropriate while in the downtown area. This balance and what is appropriate for Philomath's downtown is something we can discuss during the TSP process. There was additional discussion about the Downtown Streetscape plan.

Severn: Always seems to be a competing interest between keeping your downtown viable and yet move traffic through.

Ruth: There is information about the Downtown Streetscape available on the City's website. Will get the link.

Rick: It would be helpful to know of any traffic projections that have been made estimating the amount of truck traffic anticipated after completion of Highway 20 Pioneer Mtn. project.

Sonlla: It's obvious there are many systems to be considered, not just the transportation system. One system affects another. Need to take this into account.

IV: Questions/Comments from Public Attendees:
None.

V. Next Steps/Adjourn

John: Next meeting later this spring before school lets out. Discussion about meeting dates. Friday daytime works for most. Thursday night competes with Car Show meetings for Lauri and Severn.

Adjourn 7:56 p.m.