



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Board of Commissioners (Board)

FROM: Tarik Rawlings, Senior Transportation Planner

DATE: December 13, 2023

SUBJECT: Pre-Deliberations Update: Draft 2020-2040 Transportation System Plan (TSP)

The Road Department, with the assistance of the Community Development Department (CDD), has prepared an update of the 2010-2030 Deschutes County Transportation System Plan (TSP), covering the years 2020-2040. The TSP focuses on County arterials and collectors as well as bicycles, pedestrians, transit, and other modes. Following a public hearing on November 29, 2023, the Board of County Commissioners (Board) will engage in a pre-deliberation update on December 20, 2023 in preparation for a future deliberations process before the Board.

I. BACKGROUND

The County selected Kittelson & Associates Inc. (KAI) as the consultant for the 2020-2040 TSP. The County and KAI prepared the draft of the 2020-2040 TSP based on technical analysis, public comments, and internal staff review. During the plan development process, KAI and County staff from the Road Department and Planning Division have coordinated with Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) and staff from other local jurisdictions. KAI and County staff reviewed a proposal from the County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) on future road improvements and connectors. Additionally, KAI and the County held an on-line presentation from April 27 to May 14, 2021, including an online public meeting on May 4, 2021, to solicit public comment. The on-line presentation included technical memos on plans and policy reviews, goals and objectives, and needs analyses of existing and future conditions.

The background materials were posted at the following link:

<https://kaiproject.com/websites/68/>

The full record including public and agency comments is included at the following project-specific website: <https://www.deschutescounty.gov/cd/page/transportation-system-plan-update-2020-2040-247-23-000507-pa-508-ta>

The Deschutes County Planning Commission (PC) held a public hearing¹ on August 10, 2023 and held deliberations on October 12, 2023². Ultimately, the PC issued a recommendation to the Board, which is reviewed later in this memorandum.

II. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Overall, approximately 328 written comments were received from both individuals and public agencies. The main topics within the public testimony were highlighted for the Board during their November 29, 2023 public hearing. Of the highlighted public testimony topics, staff emphasizes the following topics which were directly referenced during the November 29, 2023 public hearing and in written comments leading up to the public hearing:

- Allowance/disallowance of multi-use pathways in the rural county related to wildlife values and resource-zoned lands;
- Multi-use pathway connection between the City of Sisters and Black Butte Ranch (BBR);
- Potential development of a footbridge across the Deschutes River near the Brookwood neighborhood of Deschutes River Woods;
- Concerns regarding Local Access Roads in Special Road District #1, including replacement of the canal crossing (culvert) on Island Loop Way; and
- Priority status elimination for BPAC Bicycle Route Community Connections

As a reminder, the written comments in public record appear at the following project-specific website under the tabs labeled “Comments & Submittals – Agencies”, “Comments & Submittals – Public”, “BOCC Hearing – Public Comments”, and “BOCC Hearing – New Evidence & Testimony”:
<https://www.deschutescounty.gov/cd/page/transportation-system-plan-update-2020-2040-247-23-000507-pa-508-ta>

The Sisters-BBR multi-use pathway connection has generated numerous e-mails and phone calls, some prior to the initiation of the TSP public process and some during the Comprehensive Plan process. Regarding the subject land use before the PC, the bulk of the submitted written comments have been in opposition with a small amount being in favor. Recurring themes from those opposed include concerns about the public using private paths in BBR; adverse effects to the forest; potential trespassing; criminal activity; attracting transients; disruption to wildlife; and safety. (Staff notes the multiuse path would lie on Deschutes National Forest (DNF) land and/or ODOT right of way, which each have their own regulations and environmental review processes.)

Concerning multi-use pathways generally, the TSP (at Table 5.6 - Bicycle Route Community Connections) describes and prioritizes connections between various cities, unincorporated communities, and destination resorts. Table 5.7 (Bicycle Route Recreation Connections) provides similar information about these corridors. Neither table lists design specific aspects such as precise routes, widths, surface type, etc., as those variables would be determined prior to actual construction. No specific alignments are identified or mapped, except for the Bend-Lava Butte Trail, which appears as S-3 on Figure 5-4 (ODOT Facility Changes). The TSP tables were prepared based

¹ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-38>

² <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-41>

on input from the Deschutes County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC). There has been a mix of public input regarding the overall allowance of multi-use pathways in Deschutes County with the bulk of testimony opposed to a full prohibition of multi-use pathways and additional comments in support of the prohibition based on wildlife habitat and resource-zoned property sensitivities.

Regarding the specific improvements requested for the Island Loop Way canal crossing/culvert and the larger Three Rivers community in general, the Road Department Director Chris Doty has provided individual responses to multiple comments received from the Three Rivers community related to project feasibility, funding, and legal constraints. Stakeholders have been referred to Special Road District #1 for maintenance and operational concerns within the District.

Staff requests that the Board review this list of topics (in addition to the amendments recommended by the PC) and highlight any topics which they would like to include in deliberations at a future meeting.

III. PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

Staff held a June 22, 2023, work session³ with the Planning Commission (PC) to provide an overview of the updated TSP and the process to create it. The PC held a public hearing⁴ on August 10, 2023, on the draft 2020-2040 TSP. The PC closed the oral record and left the written record open until 4 p.m., August 24, 2023. Staff provided an update on record submittals during the August 24, 2023 Planning Commission meeting⁵. The PC held deliberations⁶ on October 12, 2023, ultimately making a recommendation to the Board to adopt the TSP document including five (5) amendments. In addition to the deliberation topics outlined in “Section II – Public Testimony” of this memorandum, staff presents the five (5) amendments offered by the PC, below, which the Board may also request for inclusion in a forthcoming deliberation matrix.

- Removal of the Conceptual Multi-use Pathway Connection between City of Sisters and Black Butte Ranch. (6 Commissioners in favor, 1 Commissioner in opposition)
- Changing the Multi-use Pathway Connection between Baker Road and Lava Butte to be located on the west side of Highway 97 rather than the east side. (7 Commissioners unanimously in favor)
- Changing the priority status for the 2nd Street/Cook Ave sidewalks in Tumalo project (Table 5.5 ID BP-3) from Medium to High. (6 Commissioners in favor, 1 Commissioner absent)
- Changing the priority status for the US 20/Powell Butte Highway Roundabout project (Table 5.4 ID S-9) from Low to High. (6 Commissioners in favor, 1 Commissioner absent)
- Changing the priority status for the US 20/Locust St Roundabout project (Table 5.4 ID S-11) from Low to High and noting that the project, with contributions from Deschutes County, City of Sisters, and ODOT, is funded for construction in 2024. (6 Commissioners in favor, 1 Commissioner absent)

³ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-30>

⁴ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-38>

⁵ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-39>

⁶ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-41>

Throughout deliberations, the Planning Commission entertained other motions including the allowance of multi-use pathways generally within the County jurisdiction and dark skies standards. On both motions, the Planning Commission's vote resulted in a tie, leading to the failure of those motions. Staff includes this information to illustrate how the Planning Commission was generally closely aligned on certain deliberative aspects of these topics, but ultimately diverged on some of the more detailed points.

In addition to the topics raised in Section II, staff requests that the Board review the amendments recommended by the PC and highlight any topics which they would like to include during future deliberations. The Board is, of course, not limited to the topics and amendments outlined in Sections II and III of this memorandum and the Commissioners are welcome to identify any desired topics from public record that they would like to see reflected on a future decision matrix during Deliberations.

IV. NEXT STEPS

Following the Board's review of topics outlined in Section II and the PC recommendation and amendments outlined in Section III of this memorandum, staff requests that the Board identify the specific topics that they would like to see reflected in a future decision matrix. The future decision matrix (reflecting the topics requested by the Board) will be utilized for deliberations at a future meeting, likely sometime in January 2024. Again, the Board is not limited to the topics and amendments outlined in Sections II and III of this memorandum and the Commissioners are welcome to identify any desired topics from public record that they would like to see reflected on a future decision matrix during Deliberations.

Following future deliberations, the Board will ultimately vote on the proposal either adopting the plan as drafted, with amendments, or denying the plan.

V. CONCLUSION

Staff is prepared to answer any questions.

Attachments:

- 1. Draft 2020-2040 Transportation System Plan*