



MEMORANDUM

TO: Deschutes County Board of County Commissioners

FROM: Tarik Rawlings, Senior Transportation Planner

DATE: November 20, 2023

RE: November 27, 2023 work session in preparation for public hearing: 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). The new TSP will cover the years 2020-2040. The TSP focuses on County arterials and collectors as well as bicycles, pedestrians, transit, and other modes. The work session provides an overview of the updated TSP and the process to create it. The Board of County Commissioners (Board) will hold a public hearing on November 29, 2023, on the draft 2020-2040 TSP.

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, including an online public meeting on May 4, 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:

[Deschutes County TSP Update \(kaiproject.com\)](https://www.deschutescounty.gov/kaiproject.com)

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>

II. KEY ASPECTS OF THE 2020-2040 TSP

The TSP's major component is a list of future projects categorized into high, medium, or low priority. These appear in Chapter 5 with a brief description of the project. The relevant project tables are for improving roadway intersections; roadway changes; changes to functional classifications; ODOT intersections and roadways; pedestrian facilities on County roadways; bicycle facilities, bridges, Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP) roadways, transit, and Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP) projects. Many of the roadway projects also benefit bicyclists by widening shoulders, for instance. The financial portion benefitting bicyclists is provided in the cost estimates.

The TSP also presents goals and policies to achieve the vision of the County's transportation system over the next 20 years. The seven goals are:

1. Coordination and Collaboration
2. Safety
3. Mobility and Connectivity
4. Economic Development
5. Equity and Accessibility
6. Sustainability and Environment
7. Strategic Investments

III. INTENDED OUTCOMES

The 2020-2040 TSP will result in a list of prioritized projects, updated goals and policies, changes to functional classifications of selected County roads, a better network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, transit stops in the unincorporated communities, and an improved transportation system for all modes.

The TSP will assist the Board in determining projects to fund in the Road Department's annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as well as providing a reference when pursuing state and federal grants to fund transportation projects. Additionally, planners cite the TSP when reviewing land use applications for developments that involve a plan amendment or zone change.

IV. PLANNING COMMISSION REVIEW

Staff held a June 22, 2023, work session¹ with the Planning Commission (PC) to provide an overview of the updated TSP and the process to create it. The PC held a public hearing² 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 meeting³. The PC held deliberations⁴ on October 12, 2023, ultimately making

¹ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-30>

² <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-38>

³ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-39>

⁴ <https://www.deschutes.org/bc-pc/page/planning-commission-41>

a recommendation to the Board of County Commissioners (Board) to adopt the TSP document including the following amendments:

- 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)*

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 anticipation of the Board's public hearing on November 29, 2023, notice was provided to the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) on July 6, 2023 with a Notice of Application sent to agency partners on July 21, 2023. Additionally, an initial Notice of Public Hearing was published in the Bulletin newspaper on October 10, 2023 listing the public hearing date as November 8, 2023. Due to scheduling conflicts, the public hearing date was moved to November 29, 2023 and an amended Notice of Public Hearing was subsequently published in the Bulletin newspaper outlining the new public hearing date and process.

V. PUBLIC TESTIMONY

Overall, approximately 150 public comments were received from both individuals and public agencies as of the date of this memo. The main topics within the public testimony include:

- 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;
- Classification change and improvement of Sunrise Boulevard;
- Deschutes River Woods South Interchange Project;
- City of Redmond US97 South Interchange (Quarry or McVeigh);

- A desire to see the Three Rivers community as the subject of a comprehensive planning process similar to Tumalo or Terrebonne with goals and policies reflecting the needs and priorities of that local population;
- Requests for several specific infrastructure improvement projects in the Three Rivers area including pedestrian improvements, intersection safety improvements, roundabouts along Highway 97, and speeding mitigation;
- Concerns with operational aspects of the Bend Municipal Airport;
- Requests to change priority statuses for several transportation-related projects;
- Designation of bicycle routes;
- Adequacy of County-based public transit;
- Vegetation management practices for County transportation facilities.

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”, and “BOCC Hearing – Public Comments”:

<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), which has its own regulations and environmental review process.)

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 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 and will be available for questions during the public hearing on November 29, 2023.

V. NEXT STEPS

Staff will hold a work session with the Board on November 27, 2023 in preparation for a public hearing on November 29, 2023.

VI. CONCLUSION

Staff is prepared to answer any questions.

Attachments:

- 1. Draft 2020-2040 Transportation System Plan*
- 2. Draft 2020-2040 Transportation System Plan Appendices*
- 3. 2020-2040 Transportation System Plan Findings*