



KITTELSON & ASSOCIATES, INC.

TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERING / PLANNING

354 SW Upper Terrace Drive, Suite 101, Bend, Oregon 97702 P 541.312.8300 F 541.312.4585

DRAFT TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM #2

Sherman County Transportation System Plan Update

Plan Goals, Objectives, and Evaluation Criteria

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Project #: 18054

To: Georgia MacNab, Sherman County
Michael Duncan, ODOT Region 4

From: Casey Bergh, PE, Ashleigh Griffin, and Marc Butorac, PE, PTOE

This memorandum documents the guiding principles, goals, objectives, and evaluation criteria for the Sherman County Transportation System Plan (TSP) update. The goals and objectives will guide the TSP update process to ensure key issues are addressed within this process.

This document is organized into three sections:

- Background – An overview of the goals and objectives from the 2003 Sherman County TSP. Key transportation issues and changes in Sherman County since the adoption of the current TSP.
- Goals and Objectives - Desired project outcomes and transportation needs that support the land use and growth vision for Sherman County. Plan goals for the Updated TSP were developed based on the prior TSP, the County's 2011 Comprehensive Plan, and County and ODOT input. Objectives outline the discrete elements that, taken as a whole, support and promote the goals.
- Evaluation Criteria - Establishes a method for evaluating future alternatives and policies that move in the direction of achieving the identified plan goals and objectives.

This document was developed with input from the County and State, and it will be refined to incorporate feedback from the Project Advisory Committee members who represent the cities and other local interests.

BACKGROUND

Transportation System Plans provide the County, Cities, and ODOT with guidance for operating and improving a multimodal transportation system. The TSP focuses on priority projects, policies, and programs for the next 20 years, and provides a vision for longer-term projects that could be implemented should funding become available. The TSP is intended to be flexible to respond to changing community needs and revenue sources over the next 20 years and will be updated approximately every 10 years. The TSP builds consensus among Cities, the County, and ODOT on the

transportation needs and priority projects for the communities, allowing the local citizens to inform projects that are carried forward for funding from state and federal agencies.

The existing 2003 Sherman County TSP focused on mobility, livability, and economic development and outlined in the following management approach:

- Focus on management, maintenance, operations and service improvements in the county, rather than modernization and large capital improvements;
- Reduce auto/truck conflicts through the strategic use of passing and climbing lanes on US 97;
- Establish a Special Transportation Area in Moro to improve safety for a variety of modes – trucks, bicycles, pedestrians and autos; and
- Develop transportation alternatives that reduce reliance on the auto.

The complete goals and objectives of the existing plan are provided as Attachment A.

Since the 2003 TSP was developed, time, growth, and development patterns have altered the County's forward vision. The following information provides context and illustrates the challenges, opportunities, and needs tied to the County's evolving transportation system:

- The incorporated cities of Rufus, Wasco, Moro, and Grass Valley are out of compliance with state rules and regulations, and have exhausted the project lists identified in the 2003 TSP. In addition, the current TSP does not properly reflect any revised zoning ordinances nor fully align with the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- The County has prioritized building livable, connected communities. The TSP Update will need to include strategies that promote accessibility and connectivity to preserve the local character of the Cities, including:
 - Networks that provide safe and more comfortable access for pedestrians and bicyclists to and from residential areas, schools, and downtown. The cities of Wasco, Grass Valley, and Moro have new sidewalks or bicycle facilities that connect schools, grocery stores, government facilities, or healthcare – with the exception of the City of Moro.
 - Balancing freight capacity and community accessibility and safety associated with the designated freight routes that bisect downtown neighborhoods and central business districts. The movement of freight is important to the County, as is providing safe, livable, and vibrant transportation corridors. US 97 is the primary arterial of the County, running north-south from Washington to California. US 97 will need continued focus to maintain and improve it to carry freight through the state.
 - The TSP will revisit the Cities' street development standards. The standards identified in the current TSP, in particular, the "skinny street" residential standards have not been successful in Sherman County communities. The City of Moro has

revised its own standards to require a more common street improvement width in its development code.

- Since the 2003 TSP, land use patterns have changed.
 - The City of Rufus has developed a 60-acre industrial area that is shovel-ready and has access. The County is also home to a growing wind turbine industry. The ability to transport turbines for both installation and servicing is central to the development of this industry. The County recognizes that transportation system improvements are required to support these recent emerging trends. As the County's population has been declining in recent years, the County would like to facilitate economic development to attract new residents to Sherman County.
 - In recent years there have been two new residential developments in the County. These two subdivisions, one in Rufus and one in Wasco, are the first residential developments in over 40 years in the County. The Wasco development has a few constructed homes, but no construction has moved forward in the Rufus subdivision.
- The four Cities are widely dispersed and rely on a sizable and remote system of roadways for safe and effective travel. A number of these roadways are aging and could benefit from widened roadbeds, minimized grades, straightened curves, snow fencing, offset intersection/junction realignment or bridge upgrades. These improvements address the basic transportation needs of these communities and their industries. Enhancement and preservation projects such as these would also bolster the system of the emergency routes available in the event of a natural disaster and school bus routes transporting the students.

GUIDING PRINCIPLE AND PLAN GOALS

The overall guiding principle of the plan is to update it to provide and encourage a safe, convenient, efficient, and economic transportation system. To achieve this guiding principle, the following plan goals have been developed:

GOAL 1: MOBILITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Promote a transportation system within the County that links all four cities, and serves existing and future needs for transporting goods and people throughout the County and within each City.

Objectives

- Identify the 20-year roadway system needs to accommodate developing or undeveloped areas without undermining the rural nature of the county. Emphasis should be placed on

maintenance, operations, management, and service improvements rather than large capital improvements.

- Promote transportation linkages between the dispersed cities of Moro, Wasco, Grass Valley, and Rufus by promoting an integrated system of principal highways that move people and goods throughout the County and connects to other adjoining Counties, a County road system that facilitates transportation between various areas of the County and between principal highways, and a local road system that serves as access to commercial and residential areas. The County recognizes that automobiles will continue to be the primary mode of transportation between cities, given the rural nature of the County.
- Preserve the function, capacity, level of service, and safety of state highways and local roads in a manner consistent with adopted state and local plans.
- Update roadway cross section standards to balance the needs of all users and the primary purpose of the roadway.
- Coordinate with the Oregon Department of Transportation and local cities to identify priority roadway improvements and maintenance needs.
- Improve traffic circulation within the four cities, while maintaining the local character of each community.
- Balance local community and state goals for the state highways that run through the Cities.
- Promote and plan for future industrial, commercial, and residential growth areas.
- Retain countywide school bus service.
- Update roadway performance standards to ensure the efficient movement of people, goods, commodities, and commercial waste.
- Update policies and standards that address street connectivity, spacing, and access management.
- Plan for roads created in land division and development so that they are designed to tie into existing and anticipated road circulation patterns.
- Work with the local jurisdictions in establishing right-of-way needed for new roads identified in the TSP.
- Balance truck freight on US 97 with automobile needs by providing adequate passing and climbing lanes, expanded pull out areas, and shoulders.

GOAL 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Provide a transportation system that supports existing industry and encourages economic development in the County.

Objectives

- Develop and promote a multi-modal transportation network that supports the existing agriculture and wind turbine industries and supports economic diversification in the future.
- Identify the 20-year roadway system needs to accommodate developing or undeveloped areas without undermining the rural nature of the county.
- Promote railroad and waterway freight service when possible, and upgrade highways in nexus areas that lack this option.
- Prioritize improving and maintaining the key freight routes of US 97 and I-84 through the County.
- Identify truck routes to focus truck traffic to a limited number of roads in urban areas.
- Support long-term improvements in connections to major agricultural distribution facilities in Biggs and Moro.
- Support truck access to industrial sites, including turn and acceleration/deceleration lanes where appropriate and improvements to the Biggs Junction Interchange with I-84.
- Retain and promote rail freight service along I-84 in a manner consistent with the OTP and adopted Oregon Rail Freight Plan.
- Review transportation connections to the Wasco State Airport to ensure that it is adequately served by the transportation system and that the transportation system supports the development of supporting land uses around the airports.
- Protect the Wasco State Airport from the encroachment of incompatible land uses to ensure efficient aviation operations and to minimize the noise and safety problems for the general public in a manner consistent with the adopted Oregon Aviation Plan.
- Actively encourage the development of enterprises and commerce in the Port at Biggs Junction.
 - Maintain travel times for the movement of freight through the corridor to port facilities.
 - Support improvements to access and intermodal connections to port facilities.
- Encourage bicycle tourism by promoting and upgrading recreational routes through the County.

GOAL 3: SAFETY

Provide a transportation system that promotes the safety of current and future travel modes for all users.

Objectives

- Promote a transportation system that facilitates the use of state highways for safe and efficient travel but also provides safe, livable, and vibrant multimodal corridors in the downtown neighborhoods and central business districts.
- Review existing roadways and roadway standards to ensure that they are designed, constructed, and maintained to an appropriate standard for their expected use, vehicle speeds, and vehicle traffic.
- Reduce incidence and severity of motor vehicle crashes.
- Evaluate crash trends associated with an aging population.
- Provide a transportation system that allows for adequate emergency vehicle access to all land uses.
- Update County access management and roadway cross-section standards for all county roads.

GOAL 4: MULTIMODAL USERS

Provide a multimodal transportation system that permits the safe and efficient transport of people and goods through active modes.

Objectives

- Promote alternative modes, transit/dial-a-ride service, and rideshare/carpool programs that reduce reliance on the automobile through community awareness and education. Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation (walking, bicycling, rideshare/carpooling, and dial-a-ride transit) through improved access, safety, and service within urban areas and rural service centers within the County.
- Encourage development to occur within existing urban areas and rural service centers where services are presently available so as to reduce the dependence on automotive transportation.
- Consider bicycle and pedestrian facility needs during construction of new roads and during upgrades of existing roads.
- Review facilities for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

- Promote an interconnected network of bicycle, pedestrian, and transit facilities throughout the County.
- Promote a transportation system that includes pedestrian and bicycle facilities within the cities to promote active transportation to and from schools, downtown areas, grocery stores, government buildings, and healthcare facilities.
- Develop plan elements that guide pedestrian and bicycle pathways and facilities to achieve maximum connectivity between bicycle, pedestrian, transit, and vehicle routes and facilities, securing an intermodal network of safety and access for all types of users.
- Undertake bicycle facility improvements, such as establishing bike lanes and paths, where appropriate, within the cities of Rufus, Wasco, Moro, and Grass Valley that will balance the need for safe and convenient bicycle travel within the communities against the need to preserve through movement of traffic on the roadway.
- Identify needs for sidewalks and bicycle lanes in urban areas and develop programs to fulfill needs.
- Support maintenance of State highways as bicycle routes, with use of local parallel routes as alternative routes where feasible.
- Emphasize shoulder maintenance (surfacing, cleaning, vegetation removal), particularly in the peak summer cycling months
- Support widening shoulders as for bicycle travel as part of roadway preservation and improvement projects or as separate projects.
- Provide pedestrian facilities, such as establishing sidewalks and paths, where appropriate, within the cities of Rufus, Wasco, Moro, and Grass Valley that connect residential areas with important destinations such as parks, schools, commercial areas, and community buildings.
- Encourage development of connective sidewalk systems in commercial areas, and along arterials, and major and minor collectors within urban areas.
- Examine the need for specific pedestrian crossing locations in urban areas.
- Ensure that adequate services are provided for the transportation disadvantaged.
- Support the development of regional public transit opportunities.
- Provide paratransit, dial-a-ride service to all residents within the county matched to the availability of financial resources.
- Coordinate paratransit service with other providers and between modes within and outside the county to optimize use of equipment and minimize costs to government and the user.

GOAL 5: ENVIRONMENT

Provide a transportation system that balances transportation services with the need to protect the environment.

Objectives

- Develop a multi-modal transportation system that avoids reliance upon one form of transportation as well as minimizes energy consumptions and air quality impacts.
- Encourage development patterns that decrease reliance on motor vehicles within cities.
- Promote design standards that support acquiring only the minimum roadway width necessary for the roadway, including facilities for all users for the roadway classification, and maintenance to reduce weed infestation and conserve agricultural land.
- Develop and upgrade transportation facilities in such a manner consistent with the adopted Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), the Oregon Highway Plan (OHP), and the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), and ensure that valuable soil, water, scenic, historic, and cultural resources are not damaged or impaired.
- Comply with all applicable state and federal noise, air, water, and land quality regulations.
- Design all transportation improvements to preserve and enhance natural and scenic resources, i.e., new roads should not be constructed in areas identified as sensitive wildlife areas.

GOAL 6: PLANNING AND FUNDING

Maintain the safety, physical integrity, and function of the County's multi-modal transportation network.

Objectives

- Maintain long-term funding stability for transportation maintenance projects.
- Evaluate new innovative funding sources for transportation improvements.
- Ensure that the existing transportation network is conserved and enhanced through maintenance and preservation.
- Identify interim, short-term, and long-term transportation solutions that will encourage development within the existing city boundaries.
- Identify areas where refinement plans or interim measures would increase the life of a facility or delay the need for improvements.

- Continue and enhance relationships and improve coordination among Sherman County, ODOT, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and local jurisdictions.
 - Cooperate with ODOT in the implementation of the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP);
 - Encourage the improvement of state highways;
 - Encourage planning coordination between local jurisdictions, the County, and the State.
 - Work with local jurisdictions in establishing cooperative road improvement programs, funding alternatives, and schedules;
 - Work with the local jurisdictions in establishing the right-of-way needed for new roads identified in the TSP;
 - Leverage federal and state highway funding programs.
 - Encourage citizen involvement in identifying and solving local issues.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

A qualitative process using the six goals and corresponding objectives above will be used to evaluate the policies and alternatives developed during the TSP update process. The policies and alternatives will be qualitatively scored for each criteria based on the following scale:

- Most Desirable: The concept addresses the criterion and/or makes substantial improvements in this criteria category.
- Moderately Desirable: The concept partially addresses the criterion and/or makes some improvements in this criteria category.
- No Effect: The criterion does not apply to the concept or the concept has no influence on the criteria.
- Least Desirable: This concept does not support the intent of and/or negatively impacts the criteria category.

At this level of screening, the qualitative comparison will be used to inform discussions about the benefits and tradeoffs of each alternative.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: 2003 Sherman County TSP Goals and Objectives

ATTACHMENT A: 2003 SHERMAN COUNTY TSP GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

CHAPTER 2

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the TSP is to provide a guide for Sherman County to meet its transportation goals and objectives. The following goals and objectives were developed from information contained in the county's and cities' comprehensive plans and public concerns as expressed during public meetings. ODOT's US Highway 97 draft Corridor Plan and Biggs Junction Refinement Plan were also considered. An overall goal was drawn from the plan, along with more specific goals and objectives. Throughout the planning process, each element of the plan was evaluated against these parameters.

OVERALL TRANSPORTATION GOAL

To accommodate the efficient movement of people, goods and services while maintaining the livability of existing communities within the county by encouraging development within communities and rural service centers, protecting the integrity of the environment, enhancing travel safety and supporting economic development within the county, region and the state.

Overall Direction

The role of and management solutions for the auto differ throughout the Corridor. In the urban area, it is one of many possible travel choices. In the rural area, in many cases the automobile is the only transportation mode available, making the rural portion of the Corridor more reliant on automobile travel.

In the rural areas, it is recognized that the automobile will, out of necessity, continue to be the overwhelmingly dominant mode for moving people in the Corridor. Travel distances between residences and destinations are generally too great for bicycling and walking. The absence of transit service reduces travel options for those without ready access to an auto in rural areas. Generally, the management approach is to:

Focus on management, maintenance, operations and service improvements in the county, rather than modernization and large capital improvements.

Reduce auto/truck conflicts through the strategic use of passing and climbing lanes on US 97.

Establish a Special Transportation Area in Moro to improve safety for a variety of modes – trucks, bicycles, pedestrians and autos.

Continue to develop transportation alternatives that reduce reliance on the auto.

POLICIES:

General

1. Maintain and upgrade the overall transportation system within the county and cities to meet present and future needs.
2. Cooperate with ODOT in the implementation of the STIP.
3. Take advantage of federal and state highway funding programs.
4. Increase the use of alternative modes of transportation (walking, bicycling, rideshare/carpooling, and dial-a-ride transit) through improved access, safety, and service within urban areas and rural service centers within the county.
5. Ensure planning coordination between the local jurisdictions, the county and the state.
6. Seek Transportation and Growth Management (TGM) and other funding for projects evaluating and improving the environment for alternative modes of transportation.
7. Develop and upgrade transportation facilities in such a manner consistent with the adopted Oregon Transportation Plan (OTP), The Oregon Highway Plan (OHP), and the Transportation Planning Rule (TPR), and insure that valuable soil, water, scenic, historic, or cultural resources are not damaged or impaired.
8. Encourage citizen involvement in identifying and solving local problem spots.
9. Work with the local jurisdictions in establishing cooperative road improvement programs, funding alternatives, and schedules.
10. Comply with all applicable state and federal noise, air, water, and land quality regulations.
11. Promote alternative modes and rideshare/carpool programs through community awareness and education.
12. The general policy of the Planning Commission will be to not create any traffic hazard in the granting of variances, conditional uses permits, and zone amendments.
13. Encourage active pedestrian and bicycle use within urban areas and along state highways.
14. Promote use of available dial-a-ride transit, carpooling, and telecommuting.

Auto

15. Preserve the function, capacity, level of service, and safety of the state highways and local roads in a manner consistent with the adopted OTP, OHP, TPR, draft US Highway 97 Corridor Plan, and the February 2001 Biggs Junction Refinement Plan.

16. Adopt access management standards that will meet the requirements of the TPR, the OHP, US Highway 97 Corridor Plan, Biggs Junction Refinement Plan, and Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 734-051, and also consider the needs of the affected communities.
17. Provide for safe and efficient high-speed continuous flow operation in rural areas (a V/C of 7.0 or less) and moderate-speed operations of flow in the urban areas of Rufus, Wasco, Moro and Grass Valley and the rural development centers of Biggs Junction and Kent (a V/C ratio of 0.75) and 0.85 within an STA.
18. Improve and maintain all existing public roadways to: 1) achieve a pavement condition of 70% in fair or better condition, 2) provide bike lanes on all arterials within urban areas, 3) provide shoulder widths adequate to accommodate bicycles on rural arterial and major collectors, and 4) provide crosswalks when warranted.
19. Improve the access on to and off of arterial roadways to accommodate projected growth in a manner consistent with adopted comprehensive plans and implementing regulations.
20. Encourage development to occur within existing urban area and rural service centers where services are presently available so as to reduce the dependence on automotive transportation.
21. Provide adequate signage along major and minor county roads for the purpose of easy identification.
22. Adopt policies and standards that address street connectivity, spacing, and access management.
23. Work with the local jurisdictions in establishing the right-of-way needed for new roads identified in the TSP.
24. Ensure that roads created in land division and development be designed to tie into existing and anticipated road circulation patterns.
25. Direct commercial development and use access onto major arterials by means of improved county roads.
26. Continue to develop and maintain the road system as the principal mode of transportation both for access to the county and within the county.
27. Review and revise, if necessary, street cross section standards for local, collector, and arterial streets to enhance safety and mobility.
28. Analyze the safety of traveling speeds and consider modifying posted speeds as necessary.
29. Expanded shoulder areas, and pull-outs along U.S. 97.
30. Design all transportation improvements to preserve and enhance natural and scenic resources, i.e., new roads should not be constructed in areas identified as sensitive wildlife areas.
31. Retain countywide school bus service.

Bicycle

32. Incorporate balanced opportunities for bicyclists in new or reconstructed transportation facilities.
33. Develop a county bicycle plan.
34. Identify needs for bike lanes in urban areas and develop programs to fulfill needs.
35. Support maintenance of State highways as a bicycle routes, with use of local parallel routes as alternative routes where feasible.
36. Undertake bicycle facility improvements, such as establishing bike lanes and paths, where appropriate, within the cities of Rufus, Wasco, Moro, and Grass Valley that will balance the need for safe and convenient bicycle travel within the communities against the need to preserve through movement of traffic on the roadway.
37. Support widening shoulders as for bicycle travel as part of roadway preservation and improvement projects or as separate projects. Where feasible, provide standard continuous five-foot (4-foot at a minimum) shoulders on all State highways.
38. Emphasize shoulder maintenance (surfacing, cleaning, vegetation removal), particularly in the peak summer cycling months.

Pedestrian

39. Provide pedestrian facilities, such as establishing sidewalks and paths, where appropriate, within the cities of Rufus, Wasco, Moro, and Grass Valley that connect residential areas with important destinations such as parks, schools, commercial areas and community buildings.
40. Identify needs for sidewalks in urban areas and develop programs to fulfill needs.
41. Encourage development of connective sidewalk systems in commercial areas, and along arterials, and major and minor collectors within urban areas.
42. All pedestrian facilities and crossings should be accessible to people with disabilities to meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
43. Examine the need for specific pedestrian crossing locations in urban areas.
44. Sidewalks should be buffered from the Highway with adequate landscaping, shoulders, and/or parking in areas with design speeds of 45 mph or above.
45. Within the corridor's urban section, provide, at a minimum, six-foot sidewalks to increase mobility and safety of pedestrian activities.
46. Where feasible, provide separation between pedestrians and autos through access management and landscaping, or street design guidelines within urban areas.
47. Provide adequate shoulders on rural collector and arterial roads to support biking and walking.

48. Incorporate traffic calming measures (curb extensions, raised medians, landscape treatments) within designated Special Transportation Areas as part of new highway projects or major reconstruction. Retrofit projects should be programmed based on need.
49. Provide adequate pedestrian warning signs in rural service centers.

Public Transit

50. Support OTP policies to develop a “seamless” public transportation system over time with multimodal alternatives and proper facilities.
51. Work with existing inter-city bus districts and special needs transportation operations to maintain or increase bus service frequency.
52. Explore potential for a new passenger collector depot station, where local service providers from the surrounding counties (Sherman, Gilliam and Wheeler) could meet and transfer passengers to larger busses bound for The Dalles and other destinations.
53. Ensure that adequate services are provided for the transportation disadvantaged in the Corridor.
54. Provide paratransit, dial-a-ride service to all residents within the county matched to the availability of financial resources.
55. Coordinate paratransit service with other providers and between modes within and outside the corridor to optimize use of equipment and minimize costs to government and the user.
56. Enhance and/or maintain regularly scheduled commercial transit service along the corridor.
57. Support local efforts to establish a public or private bus passenger terminal at Biggs Junction.

Rail Freight

58. Retain and promote rail freight service along I-84 and southward along the Deschutes River in a manner consistent with the OTP and adopted Oregon Rail Freight Plan.
59. Support long-term improvements in connections to major agricultural distribution facilities in Biggs and Moro.
60. Partner with carriers and receivers to facilitate transfer of highway freight to rail where economically feasible.
61. Work with the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe and Union Pacific railroads and Sherman County staff, key businesses, and other interested parties to explore redevelopment of a truck/rail distribution facility in Biggs.

Truck Freight

62. Provide for safe and efficient high-speed continuous flow operation in rural areas and moderate-speed operations of flow in urban and urbanizing areas and rural development centers.
63. Partner with carriers and receivers to facilitate transfer of highway freight to rail where economically feasible.
64. Identify truck routes to focus truck traffic to a limited number of roads in urban areas.
65. Support long-term improvements in connections to major agricultural distribution facilities in Biggs.
66. Support construction of additional truck climbing/passing lanes on US 97.
67. Support truck access to industrial sites, including turn and acceleration/deceleration lanes where appropriate.
68. Support improvements to US 97 Interchange with I-84 in Biggs Junction to improve overall operation of the interchange as part of the Statewide Freight System.

Water Transport

69. Actively encourage development of enterprises and commerce in the Port at Biggs Junction.
70. Maintain travel times for the movement of freight through the corridor to port facilities.
71. Support improvements to access and intermodal connections to port facilities.

Air Transport

72. Protect the Wasco State Airport from the encroachment of incompatible land uses to ensure efficient aviation operations and to minimize the noise and safety problems for the general public in a manner consistent with the adopted Oregon Aviation Plan.