

APPENDIX 16: Interview Summaries

Informational Needs: What stakeholders need to know about the transportation planning process

Generally speaking, stakeholders had little understanding of the role and function of the MPO, its membership, and its responsibility for transportation planning. Typically individuals pointed to publicized conflict between the City of Clarkston and the MPO as their only cognizance of the agency. Informational needs must be met at that level and carry through the transportation planning process. Specifically, stakeholders want to know:

- What is an MPO?
- Why are MPOs convened?
- Who is our MPO?
- What does an MPO do?
- What value does it add?
- How is the MPO funded?
- How is the MPO operated?
- What is a long range transportation plan? What is its purpose?
- How is the planning process funded? Where is the money coming from? How does the funding process work (i.e. public transit, projects, etc.)
- What are you planning for?
- Are we prepared to follow through?
- Is this transportation plan just roads or is it inter-modal and to what extent?
- What is the goal of the process – are we looking for outcomes, transitions, economic impacts?
- Does it include public transit?
- What is the planning area?
- What studies are you conducting?
- How does the planning area relate to/coordinate with areas just outside the planning area?
- How will the City of Clarkston be included in the process?

- What is the scope of the transportation plan? Is it project specific? Does it identify funding for projects? Is it prioritized? Is it system or infrastructure? Coordination of traffic? Bridges and roads? Modes?
- What is the status of the plan? How do we know what is going on?
- To what extent does this plan go? Design work, rerouting, etc.?
- How can we be involved?
- How are you going to involve others?
- What is the duration of the project? How long until it is done?
- What are Garvee bonds? How does Garvee bonding factor into this process?

Issues to Address: What stakeholders see as issues in the valley that they would hope that the transportation plan would address, including public transit

The following are a list of issues stakeholders would like to see the planning process address. During this original round of interviews, no distinction was made among what would and would not be within the scope of the planning process, and no consensus was sought among all interviewees or identified.

The issues summarized below are roughly grouped in like categories for ease of reading. The list of issues is not prioritized.

Issues

Safety:

- The addressing system in Asotin County generates challenges for emergency vehicles trying to reach a specific address where the road is a name very similar to another in a different part of the county, or where a road with one name is disjointed in several different sections and different parts of the grid.
- Sometimes we know road conditions are going to be bad due to weather (e.g. Highway 12 at Myrtle Beach); we need to explore ways to communicate with drivers when we know that is the case.
- On 21st street and the bridge, truck and vehicular traffic merge on one side of the bridge and then route to a variety of directions on the other, generating safety issues, congestion, and accidents.
- Traffic moving up 21st through Thain generates the highest collision rate due to the amount of traffic and many access points along the way.
- The Valley is a hub for commercial, professional and medical services throughout the region. Drivers who frequent those services are often from very rural areas and not

accustomed to the amount of traffic and congestion in the Lewis-Clark Valley. Need to consider that in planning and improvements and in signage.

- The intersections on either side of Southside Bridge are traffic hazards and need to be redesigned.
- Need to ensure pedestrian safety – pedestrians have to compete with traffic to travel along roads, cross 4-6 lanes of traffic to schools and shopping areas, and cannot depend on automobiles to yield to cross walks.
- Urban roads need to consider access and egress for safety vehicles using a sensible grid and providing for connectivity with new subdivisions.
- Need to provide for more safety during an emergency response—every intersection with a traffic signal should be overridden with an opticom device
- Truck traffic finds it difficult moving into the Intersection of 128 and Highway 12, particularly during commuting hours.
- Not enough fire hydrants in Asotin County.

Infrastructure and Development

- Growth is dependent on the transportation system. Need infrastructure to support economic base, specifically new manufacturing activities, in the Lewis-Clark Valley. An economic base will enable communities to thrive and our children to stay here and work here.
- A north-south four lane highway (Highway 95) is needed for access in and out of the area, helping to provide infrastructure for and economic base and facilitate additional recreational and tourism activities.
- The valley is not conducive to manufacturing of products because distribution facilities are limited, road system antiquated; still, we are growing due to retirees, medical services; concentrate on what we can do.
- We are losing the community's navigation channel/river system – need to be able to dredge and maintain the dam system to be able to move goods and products, have power, maintain recreational activities (fishing, boating, etc.); dredging vs. salmon recovery.
- Losing the railroad system – concern that Lewiston will become the rail head as more lines are pulled all the time; need the rail for movement of goods and products; rail could potentially provide for a recreational activity, passenger service that makes for a tourist attraction.
- Concern about how to prioritize needs, for example, why take on rail issues when we are so far behind on roads and bridges?

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- Need system that supports the Valley's opportunities to develop as a retirement, tourism and regional hub for services via regular transportation services, variety of modes, and connectivity of modes.
- A trolley/bus service used particularly in the downtown areas would generate tourism and support the efforts to further develop the downtown.
- Regular service with reasonable prices in and out of the airport is an issue. Stakeholders are appreciative of the additional service recently provided in the Valley and there appears to be an increasing amount of use, but the cost of that service and the frequency of the collective service have some traveling to Spokane to meet their air transportation needs.
- Concerns exist that there is not a shared vision for the valley that this transportation planning process can efficiently support.
- Some are concerned about the City of Clarkston and its choice to not join the MPO, and what that means from a planning, prioritizing, and funding perspective.
- People are resistant to change; change will occur whether we plan for it or not.
- Ability of people to work together in the valley – we are all part of the MPO so let's plan like one; communities have to get together.
- Any improvement that touches residential areas generates conflict and complaints.
- Concerns exist that the planning process will be completed without ensuring the funding for infrastructure development, maintenance and improvements.
- Need to better integrate the four communities – Clarkston, Lewiston, Pullman, Moscow due to employment, education, transportation issues
- Need an overall road plan with methods of how to finance, roads can't just stop at County line – look beyond city limits.
- Need to more fully develop opportunities at airport with aviation, because of weather we should be larger, have a top flight aviation school.

Facilities and Connectivity

- Urban roads are not built to a consistent standard and usually just to what is minimally required. Need to identify and build to consistent standard on all roads.
- The bike path along the levee is considered an asset, but connectivity between the bike path and other areas of the valley, including the colleges, and other modes of transportation for a variety of populations is lacking.
- Bryden Canyon-Fleshman Way provides an easy and convenient east-west access throughout the Valley. Concerns respective to that are the potential for commercial growth along that corridor, which will negate the efficiency of the east-west option.

- The Valley does not have a similar option for North-South traffic, particularly given congestion and safety issues on 21st and Thain Road. One is needed.
- Rerouting traffic downtown is needed to provide for a pedestrian friendly environment with intermodal connectivity to help generate further development and tourism activities.
- Bicycle traffic exists on perimeter of valley but not throughout – can see a need for alternate modes for biking, jogging, walking, particularly important to college, persons with disabilities, children and the elderly. Consider also how to provide for students at LCSC who have potential new student housing a mile to mile and a half away.
- Need to ensure adequate right of way for road expansion especially in intersection areas – turn bays allow for more efficient movement. Right of way not available now to make needed improvements.
- Connect neighborhoods together with pathways that take to other areas, the levee.
- Road conditions are not adequately maintained now. Need to make sure we maintain the roads we have and that we are able to maintain improvements we create.
- Concern that planning emphasis is always on roads – need to look at big picture and make sure we are considering all modal options
- Traffic patterns and congestion, especially around LCSC.
- Need Master Plan to tie roads together.
- There are no designated bicycle routes throughout the Valley or in the cities. We need a coordinated and connected recreational and transportation system for bicycles, including bike lanes to access bike paths that is safe. The bike systems on the levee/river are only accessible via car/parking lots. Need to be able to get there from other areas of the community (Orchards, Downtown).

Public Transit

- A number of local needs exist that could be addressed by a more fully developed public transit system, including transporting retirees from Asotin County to recreational, commercial, professional and medical services via an hourly schedule so they don't have to spend an entire day away from home.
- The public transit system will be truly viable when it can generate an appeal to the broader public and can be accessible by only having to walk a number of blocks to access it.
- Buy-in of city officials to recognize the importance of public transit
- Dialysis patients have specific scheduling needs that cannot currently be supported by public transit given dialysis scheduling requirements and public transit availability. This applies to both local and rural patients.

- Quad-City coordination – would like to see routed transit system between Moscow and Pullman, work and airport.
- Opportunity to develop equestrian pathway from Round Up grounds to Hell’s Gate and in Asotin County too.
- Mass transit needs to be accessible to residents in neighborhoods.
- Ambulance service is regularly used to transport folks to hospital/medical appointments who are in wheel chairs – public transit could do that but 24 hour advance call doesn’t work for some folks.
- Public transit needs to provide rural access in Asotin County, LapWai, and perhaps other rural locations to meet peoples’ mobility needs.
- Is there an opportunity to coordinate more closely with colleges?
- Buses all look like they’re from a retirement home, need a new look to generate greater appeal to broader populations.
- Need do develop greater use of public transit for all populations, as people use it successfully, fewer will be driving cars.

Suggestions

In discussing these issues, a number of stakeholders provided specific suggestions that would address them. Those suggestions include:

- Making highway 95 a four lane highway/interstate that connects to the Canadian border
- Providing hourly public transit service in and out of Asotin County
- Obtaining and using an antique trolley car downtown
- Reroute traffic flow downtown so that it is pedestrian friendly
- Connecting all modes
- Following throughout on the downtown development Three-Phase plan to create an intermodal hub at 5th and Bypass with access to bikes, pedestrian, moorages, public transit combined with visitors center
- Redesigning and rebuilding intersections at either end of Southway Bridge
- Redesigning traffic flow and lights on Highway 12 coming into Lewiston to relieve congestion at bottom of 21st
- Restricting access on 21st/Thain Road to improve safety, perhaps by the use of a partition in the middle of the road
- Providing increased service and hours for Valley Transit

- Using a bus design that has an increased visual appeal to the broader public
- Stop the practice of raising interstate bridge between Clarkston and Lewiston; it is a significant expense, infrequently used, and that money could be better utilized in other ways in the Valley
- Shut down Highway 12 East to Kamiah to all but local truck traffic
- Provide for better, clearer signage
- Provide for better bypass through Highway 12 E or North – go North and East on I28
- Dredge river so we can get barges upriver
- Minimize number of rail crossings
- Secure Lewiston rail yard
- On highway 12, provide for a reader board or some type of system to notify folks when conditions are bad, especially at Myrtle Beach area when we know it is going to be icy
- Three ports operate with one board for enhanced coordination
- Provide for a four-leave clover system, four recirculating loops, particularly at 21st Street and Thain, Clarkston Heights
- Controlling light at 128 and highway 12 instead of corner of Bypass and Bridge
- Enforce pedestrian laws (at locations where there are crosswalks cars should stop accordingly to law or be ticketed), provide pedestrian overpasses on 4-6 lane roads where high pedestrian traffic occurs (i.e., where 21st Street/Thain must be crossed to access schools and shopping areas); provide sidewalks where none exists but pedestrian traffic is necessary so that pedestrians do not have to compete with cars on roads

Desired Outcomes: What an effective transportation plan would provide for (often the resolved side of the issues to address)

- Maintain north-south and east-west artery with four lanes; alternative transportation available throughout the valley featuring bikes, walking paths, shuttle busing system.
- Efficient planning of traffic flow, easy to go back and forth on one way streets.
- Enhance major arteries; one-way traffic flow with diagonal parking downtown; slow traffic downtown and make pedestrian friendly; pursue transportation hub at 5th and Dike Bypass for access to transit, moorages, trolley, walking, biking, Asotin County connection.
- Well posted and publicized transit route (routes and schedule posted in kiosks, benches, newspaper, real estate agents, telephone books, churches, aquatic center) to integrate

transit into valley and serve retirement community, tourists, cruise ships, reduce traffic congestion, support airlines.

- Could have model system here – ability to get emergency response out in a timely manner so plan for improving emergency response in rural areas; bike/pedestrian complement; sensible mapping/numbers; plan for congestion, safety, pavement.
- Coordination of all entities as one so we have the benefit of learning from shared issues, solutions, resources.
- Good road system to bring major players; closer to a freeway system and a secure and viable river system which is our I-5 corridor; increased jet traffic to connect with the rest of the world,, coordinated valley.
- Connectivity – path for bikes and pedestrians, transit, automobiles, strike a balance between manufacturing needs and recreation/retirement needs.
- More accessible for all people and all modes – continued development of public transit system, connected to a regional transportation network, enhancements to Southway Bridge, viable air service; continue to maintain Bryden/Fleshman, more cohesiveness, one community.
- Quad-city (Clarkston, Lewiston, Moscow, Pullman) transportation system with outreach to Orofino and Lapwai; ability to walk 3-5 blocks to get a bus; efficient, integrated system,
- Safe 95 without dangerous curves.
- Viable air transport with flight school, equestrian paths, mass transit system available to neighborhoods, north-south route, trolley car in city, maintain and repair of roads, connectivity with pathways through neighborhoods, areas and to levee.
- Viable barge system.
- A connected, accessible, and safe transportation and recreational bicycle system, including bike paths and bike lanes.

Communications and Public Involvement: Information and Involvement

In an effort to ensure the public involvement process was as effective as it could be, stakeholders were asked to identify how they would like to get information and specifically asked their opinion of a Speakers Bureau concept. They were also asked to describe what they considered to be a successful public involvement process, and if they would be interested in participating in project team debriefings following public meetings to engage in a collaborative discussion about public meeting results.

Regarding suggestions for *distributing information*, stakeholders identified:

- Electronic mail,
- Newspaper advertisements (Lewiston Tribune and Ta'c Tito'oqan),

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- Sending a newsletter/flyer (1-2 sided page only in color/summary style) direct and/or in the mailings of other local organizations or a utility statement,
- Web page and web page links from other web sites,
- Speakers Bureau,
- Newspaper,
- Post signs throughout the community,
- Post signs on the back of Valley Transit buses,
- Broadcast media, focusing specifically on KLEW and radio PSAs,
- Direct mail,
- Direct phone calls to stakeholders to generate participation at public meetings,
- Conduct a meeting in Lapwai to try to generate more Tribal participation,
- Regular mentions and discussions at City Council and County Commissioner meetings.

The *Speakers Bureau concept* was well received by all stakeholders. Several made specific suggestions, to include:

- Having a power point presentation prepared that is updated regularly to present to groups;
- Not having a power point—but having a handout that is a single double-sided page in color that provides pertinent information so that speakers can take a few minutes and speak informally and the group can move along on its own agenda;
- Not expecting to solicit any feedback in those forums as it is considered unrealistic; and
- Taking care to provide for an opportunity for feedback in the Speakers Bureau forum.

A number of stakeholders emphasized the need to involve the Lewiston Tribune and KLEW specifically in the information-sharing process.

Regarding Stakeholders perspectives of a *successful public involvement process*, they described one that included:

- Public forums, where we collectively set out goals and parameters, share and collect ideas on proposals, and identify advantages and disadvantages.
- Meetings where we sit down one-on-one, work together and share ideas. We need input from different minds; be open to everyone, connect with other organizations, coordinate, and pull together as a community as much as possible.

- Get as much input as possible, need the feedback – at a good public meeting, you want to get a good two-way dialogue going.
- Roundtable discussions where we all sit at the table together.
- Public involvement is only meaningful if you can get people out and involved; all communities need to come together and be involved in this process.
- Develop as much informed consent as possible. To do so probably means having process and cost inefficiencies, but you need to go the extra mile and involve the community as much as possible.
- Get everyone at the table.
- Do recruitment for public involvement at meetings; call people directly; get media coverage.
- Public involvement is successful now; we're working in spite of differences on business side and environmental side.
- Conduct public meetings as planning occurs. Specifically invite public and elected officials. Our process involved inviting 100 people via telephone to a round table discussion which was open to everyone who wants to come. Make sure someone from the project is at the table to take input and questions.

Even with the preponderance of stakeholders who suggested getting people together at the table to sit down and share ideas and work collaboratively on issues, there was little optimism that public meetings would generate much participation.

All stakeholders interviewed were asked if they would be willing to sit with the project team, MPO and the MPO's Technical Advisory Committee following each public meeting to participate in a *debriefing process*, specifically to offer a broader base of input and suggestions relative to what is heard. All stakeholders indicated they would be willing to participate.