

Bethany Boulevard (NW Bronson Road to NW West Union Road)



Design 101 Workshop Summary August 5, 2010

Washington County in cooperation with Citizen Participation Organization (CPO) 7, held a design workshop for the Bethany Boulevard project on Thursday, August 5 from 5:00 to 7:30 p.m. at Portland Community College, Rock Creek: Building 7, Room 121. To inform the public of the event, Washington County sent announcements to the CPO 7 monthly newsletter, the Cedar Mill News, the Oak Hills Oracle, and the Oregonian (for inclusion in Saturday's community section). The announcement was provided to Project Focus Group members and they were encouraged to share the information with their neighbors and their homeowner's association. A posting was also made on the home page of the project web site.

The purpose of the workshop was to inform and educate interested parties on the design process related generally to all roadway improvements completed by Washington County, and in particular issues as they relate to the upcoming Bethany Boulevard project. This follows the Traffic 101 workshop held on June 25 that presented the traffic analysis aspects of roadway design. These workshops are being held in response to the amount of interest expressed by residents in the vicinity of the Bethany Boulevard project, but also to generally educate the public in the roadway design process.

Topics discussed were design terminology and concepts, roadway design standards, design tools, and specific conditions along Bethany Boulevard. Six members of the project team were available to answer questions and facilitate small group discussions. Approximately 65 people attended the workshop.

At the beginning of the workshop, attendees were asked what they hoped to learn this evening. Following are the questions that were asked:

- What is the rationale for five lanes versus three lanes?
- What is the background and justification for the project?
- How does the County coordinate and schedule the project?
- How will this project transition into the Highway 26 overpass?
- Can three lanes satisfy roadway safety and other needs?

- How will Bethany transition north of West Union Road?
- How are environmental concerns considered?
- What is the appeal process for the design?
- What is the schedule for construction?
- How is livability evaluated for a 5 lane road?
- What will be the speed limit of the road?
- How is the project developed?
- What is the budget and who pays?
- Where was the County's last five lane project thru an established neighborhood?
- What other roads will serve the North Bethany development?
- What are the criteria for effects on livability?
- What are the qualifications of the Board and how can citizens influence their decisions?
- Will utilities be undergrounded (if aboveground, where do they go)?
- What about sound walls?
- Will the Highway 26 overpass be widened?

The design engineers for the project then gave a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation is available on the project website, as is the agenda for the meeting. The following topics were presented:

- Roadway Design Standards
- Roadway Horizontal Design Tools
- Roadway Profile Design
- Utility, storm drainage and water quality system design
- Existing right of way
- Existing and forecast traffic (review from the June 25 workshop)

The attendees asked questions throughout the presentation, and the presenters responded. Following is a summary of the questions and answers:

Scope of project:

Many members of the audience expressed concern about the Bethany Boulevard project being proposed as a five lane project. It was explained that this project has been planned to be a five lane improvement starting with the 1988 Transportation System Plan, and further endorsed in the 2002 plan update. The traffic analysis, presented in the Traffic 101 workshop, reached the conclusion that growth in the area will result in needing a 5 lane improvement within the next 5 to 10 years.

Funding of project:

There were also questions regarding the source of the funding and whether the 5 lane improvement is was the best use of these funds. It was explained that the funding is the County tax based MSTIP program, which has funded over \$250 million of street improvements. This project has

been listed for improvement for a number of years. There was a county wide process to develop the final project list which included review meetings with all local agencies and the general public.

Improvements needed on US 26:

There were many questions related to what was planned at the US 26 and Bethany Blvd. interchange. It was explained that the County is very interested in resolving this problem and is working proactively with ODOT. The County has hired another consultant to investigate possible solutions, but the improvements to the interchange have not been funded, nor is it in the County's control. The improvements must be made in conjunction with ODOT since it is their facility.

Traffic speeds and growth on Bethany Blvd.:

There were a number of questions related to the anticipated growth of traffic on Bethany Blvd. People had attended meetings related to the North Bethany development, which presented adding a Street A to handle traffic, and they said they were told that much of the traffic would travel west and not on Bethany Blvd. The response was that traffic projections used for the Bethany Blvd project are based on the Metro model, modified to reflect the existing traffic count information obtained for this project. Consequently, the projections reflect future development of North Bethany and the variety of choices provided for ingress and egress. There were also questions about the average traffic speeds on Bethany Blvd. The tube count information indicates the average traffic speed is 32 mph, but people questioned this. It was pointed out that this is an average. During some parts of the day traffic is very slow due to congestion, and other times of day the traffic moves more quickly.

Other general questions asked during the meeting:

Q: How will livability of the neighborhood be assessed in the planning process?

- The designers will consider the existing land uses and natural resources as they prepare the roadway design, working to minimize impacts as much as possible. In addition there is a county planning process used to evaluate project impacts. A small portion of the project in the City of Beaverton and will be subject to their land use application process. These processes will include public review and approval.

Q: Will sound walls be considered to lessen impacts?

- Yes, there will be a study completed to determine noise levels and evaluate sound walls.

Q: What is the standard and cost for undergrounding utilities on the project?

- County MSTIP funding restrictions do not allow use of the funds for undergrounding utilities. It was explained that the county has an agreement with the utilities that the utilities will pay for relocations on county roadways. It costs approximately \$1 Million per mile to underground utilities. Private utilities are not required to underground either.

Q: Will the posted speed change?

- The County does not intend to change the posted speed limit. The process of going to the statewide speed board to request changes was generally described. In addition, the design team intends to obtain a design exception to allow a 35MPH design speed (as opposed to 45 mph which would be standard for this type of arterial. This lower design speed will help to minimize impacts to adjacent properties.

Q: What is the existing right-of-way width on Bethany Blvd.?

The existing row of ROW varies from as wide as 94' at one location, to as narrow as 70' at others. Generally, the existing right-of-way is wider on the west side than the east, based on when the right-of-way was dedicated. This information is shown on the project website.

After the presentation the group broke into three smaller groups to discuss possible solutions for the Bronson Road Intersection, Oak Hills Drive Intersection and West Union Road intersections with Bethany Blvd. Each group was given a base map and design templates showing standard widths for 3-lane, 4-lane, and 5-lane roadways at the same scale as the base maps. At the end of the workshop the facilitator of each group summarized for the rest of the attendees the discussions they had and any recommendations they were making. Following is a summary of those conversations and suggestions:

Bronson Road Intersection Area:

- The design from the Hwy. 26 interchange to the north was discussed. Improvements are needed to add turn lanes at the off ramp.
- It was agreed that a five lane improvement was needed between the Bethany off ramp area north to the Bronson Road intersection. This is consistent with the findings developed by the consultant Washington County has selected for to develop conceptual interchange design alternatives.
- The right turn from Bronson Road eastbound to southbound should be modified to eliminate the large radius turn.
- North of Bronson Road, NW Bethany Blvd. should taper down to a 3 lane section using the design taper rates to add and drop lanes.

Oak Hills Intersection Area

The consensus of this group was to only look at a 3 lane road configuration. They did not want to look at a 4 or 5 lane roadway. The specific improvements they want to see include the following:

- Install a traffic signal at Oak Hills with sidewalks and crosswalks
- Add landscaping on both sides where feasible as long as it doesn't require buying right-of-way
- Shift and align the 3 lane roadway to fit within the existing right-of-way
- Install sound walls
- Use the excess funds from constructing a 3 lane facility instead of the 5 to apply toward the interchange improvements at Hwy. 26/Bethany Blvd.

West Union Intersection Area

- Increase storage length for northbound Bethany Blvd left turns at West Union. Look at double left turn lanes.
- Look at revising the profile at Ridgetop Lane, as there is an existing "hump" that impedes sight distance

- Prefer separated sidewalk, even if the planting area is narrow. Someone mentioned the section on 205th south of Cornell Road where there is grass, lights, power poles all in a skinny planter strip. Could something like that be incorporated to keep the separated sidewalk?
- Continue landscaping theme from north of West Union into this project – street trees / boulevard feel.
- A preference for three lanes in this section.

Staff then went back to the list of questions posed at the beginning of the workshop and provided answers at the meeting.

Attendees were asked to complete an evaluation form. The County compiled the results and will use them in working with CPO 7 to prepare for the next workshop (focused on Design).

Displays and Handouts

The following exhibits were on display at the meeting:

- Existing Cross Section (2 lane)
- Typical cross section (5 lane)
- Plan showing the project area and existing right of way
- Plan showing the topographic survey information, including house and tree locations.
- Aerial for attendees to place dots showing where they live.

Handouts:

- Meeting Agenda
- Evaluation forms
- Design Terminology
- 11"x17" plans of the project area
- Transparencies with the 3, 4 and 5 lane sections to use in design exercise.