

Transportation Access Issue Team Meeting

February 25th, 2002

Agenda

Review / Revise Desired Conditions
Presentations of Transportation Plans
Discuss Methods (Criteria)
Description of Wildlife Habitat Areas
Planning Area Boundary Expansion, So. of Prineville Reservoir
ID of Access Points and Map Work

Members Present: Bill McCaffrey, Mark DeVoney, Larry Zakrajsek, George Palmer, Sarah Thomas, Darrell Pieper, Cary Penhollow, Brian Ferry, Terry Eccles, Kate Kimball, Walt Schloer, Ray Hartwell, Bruce Hunt, Alan Unger, Terry Morton, Mollie Chaudet, and Phil Paterno.

Members Absent: Jeff Boyer, Larry Miller, Clay Penhollow, Bill Zelenka, and Chuck Schonneck.

Non-members Present: Ed Fitch, John Schaffer is a GIS contractor for Crook County who is compiling data for the Crook County Transportation Plan and the E-911 emergency response program.

The meeting of March 13th has been rescheduled to April 22, from 9-3 at the Redmond Library. Reminder: The BLM website is now accessible. Meeting notes from all of the Issue Teams will be posted.

http://www.or.blm.gov/prineville/deschutes_RMP/home.htm

A consolidated version of the Desired Conditions was presented at the meeting. A discussion followed regarding the use of certain language to express desired condition. There was concern that the phrase “minimize development” (#9 in the brainstorm list) was not included in the consolidated version. The phrase “minimize footprint” had been substituted. There was concern that it did not capture the same concept – that the “minimize development” concept indicated minimizing the numbers of roads that might be developed, where minimize footprint only related to minimizing the size of the road. There was also concern raised about using the term “minimize development” and the use of that term would limit Counties’ ability to fully develop in the way that they needed to for economic growth. The version below includes some minor changes discussed during the meeting. There was not consensus among the team members with use of the phrase “minimize development”, however, there was general agreement that minimizing “footprints” and reduce environmental impacts associated with transportation and utility corridors were acceptable. This indicated that we might need to develop more than one desired condition. Members were asked to send any specific wording on desired condition to Phil Paterno by Thursday.

Desired Condition (What we want to manage for):

Transportation and utility system corridor locations on public lands are the result of an inter-regional coordinated effort between federal, state, and local governments to support links between communities. The corridors provide routes for approved or anticipated land uses that cannot be reasonably accommodated on other lands.

New or expanded transportation and utility system corridors shall consider the intrinsic and other values of public lands. Values include but are not limited to visual resources, wildlife habitat, open space, recreation, traditional and cultural uses, and sensitive or unique resources.

Consideration is given to the needs for rights of way to provide access and utility service to private lands and routes for alternative transportation (other than auto) as commuting options. Transportation and utility corridors are functional, efficient, and safe; are consolidated or replaced wherever possible to minimize footprints and reduce environmental impacts; and are located to minimize potential conflicts with other land uses. Transportation and utility corridor management objectives are defined in terms of purpose, desired maintenance level, vegetative conditions, anticipated or allowable uses, and access.

Terry Eccles provided a slightly different version to the Desired Condition statement that is included at the end of these notes.

Presentations of Transportation Plans:

Mark DeVoney, ODOT – Region IV consists of nine counties and two tribal governments. The focus for the Region is the Redmond – Bend area. The currently funded project in Redmond is the North Hwy 97 relocation around the eastside of downtown. Long range planning for Hwy 97 includes a four phase approach and involves, 1) an expressway between Bend and Redmond, 2) frontage and backage roads, 3) a raised median, and 4) an interchange at Quarry Road. Ed Fitch expressed that the City of Redmond preferred to have 19th Street extended through public lands to Quarry Road, rather than have a backage road provide access to Yew Ave. along the west side of the railroad tracks.

A traffic study is currently being conducted that will evaluate the Yew Ave. interchange and examine alternatives to Quarry Road and Deschutes Junction. Mobility standards at the ramp intersections will be used as a measurement of failure for the Yew Ave. interchange.

The relocation of Hwy 27 to the BLM West Butte Road is also being considered. This would provide access between Prineville and Hwy 20 near Millican.

Safety issues are major concerns of ODOT. Funding priorities for are based on crash history. Another project that is funded in the planning area includes the Baker Road to Cottonwood Road Median project, designed to address the wildlife crossing issue.

Transportation project planning is being incorporated with other planning efforts.

Alan Unger, Mayor City of Redmond – State law requires cities to accommodate growth and the need to manage development. The City is looking at the extension of 19th Street to Quarry Road with another option of extending a route to Deschutes Junction. The City

wants to identify a bypass for Hwy 97 in the long-range transportation plans. The route would extend east around the airport. Ed Fitch described the funded N. Hwy 97 extension as a \$37 million project that could be further utilized if the Quarry Road interchange were developed into 19th Street and traffic was conveyed into this northern highway corridor. Consideration for federal highway funding is scheduled for 2004. As a prerequisite for funding, the City needs a land allocation decision for the right of way through public lands.

Steve Jorgensen, Deschutes County Transportation Planner - The State Transportation Rule was adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 1998. It contains goals and policies for all modes of transportation from trails to airports and can be found on the county website. Major transportation issues are focused in the Bend – Redmond corridor, South County area and Huntington Ranch. . Issues that relate to BLM planning include, the protection of airports, secondary access needs for rural subdivisions, and the extension of 19th Street from the Redmond city limits. Since the plan was adopted, issues relative to the fairgrounds and the south Redmond transportation system have developed. The county has a major investment in the fairgrounds and is committed to working with ODOT and other stakeholders to resolve transportation problems. In terms of the recreational aspect of the county transportation plan, Steve mentioned there is no county recreation department or program that addresses a trail network. The county relies on Forest Service and BLM for management in this area. Legacy or historic roads are recognized by the county and have been mapped by the Department of Public Works. The county has no specific plan for these roads and they are given a low management priority. Funding priorities are given to arterial and collector roads and maintaining the transportation system that exists. Although the county does not necessarily need the historic roads in the vicinity of Huntington Ranch, it does seek to provide connectivity for traffic flow through the area. The county does not want to relinquish rights to these historic roads, but may be willing to trade alignments of certain routes, through this planning process, as a way to provide connectivity to the area.

In response to a question about bringing light rail, Steve replied that we have a linear corridor along Hwy 97, but we don't have the population density, political will or funding sources. Efforts are being made to consolidate growth through such projects as Regional Problem Solving and the development of a planned community in La Pine. Funding priorities will go to maintaining the existing system based on traffic volume, such as road widening and improving intersections, i.e., Hwy 97 at Sunriver and the railroad grade crossing at Wicki-up Junction. Roads are failing faster than anticipated.

John Schaffer discussed the GIS project he is developing for Crook County. It involves a data layer for all county maintained roads and a layer showing all roads for the E-911 system that will be used by the fire department and emergency responders. Research has begun of records in the County Clerks office to document the existence of historic roads. These records will eventually provide a basis for another data layer.

Bill McCaffrey described the transportation plan for the Oregon Military Department at the BIAK Training area that has been authorized by BLM through a land use permit. This Central Oregon training area is the most important of the four training sites available

throughout the state and will play an important role in the future. Bill provided a map showing arterial and collector roads used in the area. The entire training area, comprising about 30,000 acres, is divided into smaller units that receive different levels of restricted road use. He explained that the possible extension of 19th Street would not constrain their use of the area and focused on using the area east of the canal and the proposed Huntington Ranch primary access road. The area south and west of Huntington Ranch is not feasible for OMD use. Areas that are off limits include historic roads, the NUID canal and private land. The Land Uses Issue Team will address the proposed expansion of the training site to the area north of Hwy 126 and east of the canal. Problem areas for the Military Department have been identified along Hwy 126, an area of high road density and high public use that is subjected to illegal dumping and indiscriminate shooting.

The proposed Huntington Ranch primary access road extends north from the Powell Butte highway and would cross the canal about one half mile north of the existing Bailey Bridge at Morrill Rd. The developers plan to construct a new bridge at this location. At the present time, the OMD plans to remove their Bailey bridge at the Morrill Rd. crossing and relocate it to a point farther north where it can be utilized in their transportation plan. Morrill Rd is considered an historic or Legacy County road that provides an east – west route from Deschutes Junction to the Powell Butte highway.

The frequency of military activities involves about two to three weekends per month, except for the month of December. Training in the fall usually involves a Company unit consisting of about 120-150 people. In the spring, Battalion units may use the area, consisting of about 150-600 people. One summer training exercise may consist of a Brigade that contains up to 1,500 people.

The last portion of the meeting focused on reviewing and adding to the Methods/Criteria handout that had also been prepared based on the brainstorming done by the team at the previous meeting. The items had been organized *generally* along the lines of what might be anticipated future conditions, needs, or demands in the list, and existing conditions in the second, although that was not considered a hard and fast distinction (some of the criteria might be applicable to both)

Methods / Criteria

- A. Identify areas for existing, new, or modified transportation or utility corridors based on anticipated conditions and a determination of need to consider future corridors.
 - 1. Identify areas for existing, new or modified transportation or utility corridors based on anticipated conditions.
 - 2. Inventory existing roads.
 - 3. Expressway (limited access and frontage roads) requirements for Highways 20, 97, 126.
 - 4. Allow for frontage and backage roads along Hwy 97, with the
 - 5. Access and approach requirements for State, County and other roads.
 - 6. Consider potential for new development along roadways.
 - 7. Protect airport runway clear zones (Redmond, Bend, La Pine).

8. Consider the possible failure of the Yew Avenue Interchange (areas already identified for new corridors).
9. Relocation of Highway 27 to the BLM Millican-West Butte road.
10. Consider access needs for future development of private lands.
11. Consider access needs to the area south of Prineville Reservoir.

B. Identify desired transportation or utility corridor locations and uses based on:

- Reducing or avoiding conflicts between users or private landowners.
- Consider the compatibility of utility systems located in joint use corridors.
- Reduce erosion potential associated with transportation and utility projects.
- Protect sensitive and visual resources.
- Provide legal access to and through public lands for:
 - Approved land uses or administration.
 - Access to private land (as required by law, considering county ordinances).
 - Design a transportation system that will enhance recreational uses of public lands and a recreational driving experience.
 - Access needs for fire suppression.
 - Access through private lands to public lands.

A discussion followed addressing the need to mitigate the impacts associated with new transportation and utility projects by adopting a policy similar to “no net loss.” This is similar to the Deschutes County zoning ordinance that requires a no net loss of wildlife habitat as a condition for destination resorts. Mollie explained that mitigation is intended to reduce, eliminate or compensate for impacts and will be considered in the formulation of the range of alternatives.

Brian Ferry led a discussion and presented maps of Jefferson and Crook County that illustrated sensitive winter range habitat for deer, elk and antelope. He also had a map showing sage grouse lek site locations. The maps are comprehensive and were developed in the late 80’s and early 90’s to show areas that are used by the animals. Many areas such as the Upper/Lower Davis road neighborhood is being developed for rural residential purposes and eliminating the big game habitat. In the area of Powell Buttes, the number of elk appears to be increasing, although there is not much historical information. The deer population is a little lower and the antelope population is stable. The BLM Upper Deschutes Planning Area includes, four ODF&W wildlife management units, Paulina, Maury, Ochoco and Grizzly. There is extensive point data mapping describing sensitive areas, nesting and lek sites.

Libby Johnson, BPA pointed out that utility systems also present a positive impact by their presence. Examples include the attraction of wildlife to forage along areas of the right of way that have been mowed and the creation of pumice grape fern habitat along right of way areas in Klamath County. It was also mentioned how the canal system redistributes water that is utilized by wildlife, through seeps and wetlands.

The Team proposed that BLM develop alternatives based on the desired conditions and methods or criteria. During the next few weeks, the BLM interdisciplinary team will draft alternatives and integrating them with all of the Issue Teams.

Team member comments on Desired Condition.

Terry Eccles:

Transportation and utility system corridors on public lands are manageable, realistic and achievable and result in interregional coordinated efforts between Federal, State and local governments to support links between communities. New, expanded or existing transportation and utility system corridors are located to consider the intrinsic values as well as other values of public lands. Consideration is given to the needs for rights of way, to provide access and utility services to private lands and routes for alternative transportation (other than auto) as commuting are consolidated or replace wherever possible and minimize environmental impacts and are located to minimize conflicts.

Larry Zakrajsek:

Transportation and utility system corridor locations that are required across private lands to reach or service public lands should be pursued by an inter-regional coordinated effort between Federal, State and local governments to support legal access to public lands.

Acquisition of access to public lands would be initiated if:

1. A land management activity has been identified that requires access to public land.
2. All restrictions on access across private lands are stipulated.