

I. INTRODUCTION

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Wheeler received a State of Oregon grant to prepare a Transportation System Plan (TSP). The TSP results in a plan to satisfy the community's transportation needs and desires for the next 20 years. The objective of this project was to develop a Transportation System Plan and implementing ordinances that serve Wheeler's transportation/growth management needs and meet the requirements of the state Transportation Planning Rule (TPR).

The City of Wheeler references transportation policies throughout its' comprehensive plan, zoning ordinance, and various other city ordinances. Current references to transportation planning fail to address Wheeler's obligation to meet state mandates such as developing a TSP and implementing ordinances to comply with the TPR.

The Wheeler TSP addresses ways to improve the transportation system to support anticipated growth in Wheeler and associated traffic volumes in a way that will support the functioning of Highway 101 as a Statewide Highway. The TSP plans for a transportation system that includes all modes of travel (i.e. rail, pedestrian, bicycle, auto, marine, and public transportation), serves the entire urban area, and is well coordinated with the state, regional, and county transportation network. Specific objectives include:

- planning local street connections and extensions to provide for local circulation and access off of Highway 101;
- developing local street standards that comply with the TPR;
- identifying appropriate improvements along Highway 101 to support planned land uses and the long-term functionality of Highway 101;
- planning for pedestrian circulation improvements, particularly in and near downtown, to reduce the need for short car trips on Highway 101 and improve pedestrian safety; and
- evaluating designation of the downtown area as a "special transportation area" or STA to provide access to community activities, businesses and residences and to accommodate pedestrian movement along and across Highway 101.

PLANNING AREA

The planning area for the TSP includes land within the Wheeler city limits and urban growth boundary (UGB). Approximate boundaries of this area:

West: Nehalem Bay

North: Highway 101 near Milepost 47, where Zimmerman Creek crosses under Highway 101

South: Highway 101 at Mileport 48.66

East: Approximately 1,500 feet east of Highway 101 along the forested hillside

PLANNING PROCESS

A well-conceived plan is the result of a planning process that follows a series of sequential tasks. For the Wheeler TSP, the planning process consisted of the following primary tasks:

1. Establish an Advisory Committee (AC) and Implement a Public Involvement Program
2. Review Existing Plans, Policies, Standards, and Laws
3. Inventory Existing Transportation System
4. Identify Existing Deficiencies and Estimate Future Transportation Needs
5. Develop and Evaluate Transportation Alternatives
6. Complete Draft Transportation System Plan and Initiate Adoption

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

Public involvement is an important component of the planning process. It provides useful technical and community input which assists in determining community needs and desires while establishing a program for future planning. Public involvement provides opportunities for community leaders and citizenry to become knowledgeable and involved in the future development of the city, leading to broad-based community review that aids in the acceptance of the plan in later stages of the planning process. Building consensus and giving ownership of the plan to the public is critical to implementation. For the Wheeler TSP, public involvement mechanisms included:

- Workshops throughout the planning process with the Advisory Committee (AC) which includes representatives from the Wheeler City Council, Wheeler Planning Commission, Wheeler Planning Staff, Wheeler Public Works, Nehalem Bay Wastewater Agency, Port of Tillamook Bay Railroad, Wheeler citizenry, Oregon Department of Transportation, Oregon Department of Land Conservation & Development, CTS Engineering, and TriLand Design Group, Inc;
- Two Community Open Houses where the community is invited to 1) provide input on transportation-related issues in Wheeler and, 2) review and comment on the alternative and recommended transportation system plans and recommendations;
- A presentation at a joint public hearing with the City Council and Planning Commission.