

City of Veneta - Talking Points
for
Joint Legislative Committee on
Transportation Preservation and Modernization
Public Hearing
Wednesday, July 20th from 5:00 – 7:00 p.m.
U of O Prince Lucien Campbell Hall, Rm 180
1415 Kincaid Street, Eugene

The Joint Legislative Committee is charged with identifying transportation priorities and developing a transportation package for the 2017 legislative session. The testimony they receive will be used to develop a comprehensive legislative package addressing state-wide transportation issues, identifying high priority projects and determining new source of revenue to fund projects.

We are asking Highway 126 stakeholders to provide testimony during the scheduled hearing. In the last 15 years the City has continuously sought for improvements especially in the section of highway between Randy Pape' Beltline in Eugene and Territorial Highway in Veneta. A timeline reflecting the City's activities is attached.

The most recent efforts resulted in the completion of the ***Highway 126: Fern Ridge Corridor Plan. (Plan)***. The Plan evaluated and identified a range of alternatives to enhance the safety and function of Highway 126 between the urban growth boundaries of Veneta and Eugene. In developing the Plan, the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) involved the general public, highway users, local city and county representatives, state and federal regulatory agencies, and other interested stakeholders in developing this plan.

The Lane County Board of Commissioners adopted the Highway 126: Fern Ridge Corridor Plan on February 12, 2013. Residents, elected officials, and City of Veneta staff testified in full support of the Plan. The Plan was adopted by the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) in the spring of 2013. The Plan includes both spot improvements for safety and function that can be enacted in the short-term as well as long-term improvements.

The long-term improvements identified were the construction of four-lane road surface with a separated multi-use path. In 2014 the City of Veneta sought funding for the environmental review and design of the multi-use path. The scoping for that project is to begin in the fall of 2016. In concert with that project, the City is constantly seeking funding to start the environmental review process (NEPA) that is needed before additional design can proceed with buildout of a four lane project.

We are asking stakeholders to provide testimony to highlight needed improvements within the Corridor Plan but to also specifically request funding to complete the NEPA review.

Talking Points

1. The corridor has an above average crash rate compared to other similar highways. Unfortunately when crashes do happen, the narrow causeway makes it extremely difficult for public safety vehicles to access accident sites.
2. Because of crashes and congestion, local businesses or potential new businesses view the corridor as unreliable for freight movement.
3. The higher than normal crash rate and congestion are also concerns for businesses recruiting employees as well as for area residents that commute into the Eugene – Springfield area.
4. The corridor is a critical link for regional and interstate connectivity both north and south along Hwy 101 and I-5. This connectivity will be crucially important if a large seismic event was to strike the coast.
5. If rural areas outside of metro areas are to prosper economically they need adequate transportation infrastructure to move goods and services.
6. Veneta's population is projected to double in the next 20 years leading to more congestion, crashes, and fatalities.
7. Encourage committee members to not leave rural Oregon out when developing projects for the 2017 transportation package.

Key contact information:

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TIMELINE

Highway 126 Completed Plans, Funding Requests and Proposed Improvements

- 2001 ODOT completes Highway 126 West Corridor Study.
- 12/2005 Veneta City Council Goal Setting Session – Reiterated funding for Highway 126 West improvements as one of the City’s highest economic development priorities.
- 7/2005 Veneta passes a Resolution in support of Freight Route Designation for Highway 126 West.
- 6/2007 FHA Grant – Integrated Transportation and Resource Planning to Develop Ecosystem Based Infrastructure Projects.
- 9/2007 City of Veneta proposes a three-cent gas tax with one cent dedicated to Highway 126 West improvements.
- 3/2008 Highway 126 West Safety Analysis Report completed identifying the need for the completion of a Corridor Plan or a Transportation Refinement Plan.
- 4/2008 Lane County Board of Commissioners (Lane County BOC) identifies Highway 126 West as it’s 5th highest priority for the 2010-2015 State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP).
- 8/2008 During the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) Earmark Process – Lane County BOC identifies Highway 126 West as 5th highest project.
- 8/2008 Representative Holvey requested funding for a Hwy 126 Next-Steps Analysis with the intent of using the information for proposing legislation to fund the identified Scope of Work.
- 12/2008 Senator Prozanski and Representative Holvey propose completion of an Alternatives Analysis for the Highway 126 West Corridor.
- 2/2009 Federal Appropriation Request submitted for Highway 126 West project.
- 4/2009 Lane County BOC unanimously endorses Highway 126 West project for funding under the next Federal Transportation Bill.
- 3/2010 Lane County BOC identifies Highway 126 as it highest transportation priority during the 2010 United Front lobbying trip to Washington D.C.
- 5/2010 Congressman DeFazio requests Highway 126 project funding to complete Alternative Analysis (Corridor Study).
- 5/2011 ODOT signs a contract with DKS Consultants (DKS) to complete the Highway 126 Corridor Plan.

- 6/2011 DKS begins organizing and conducting focus groups, technical committee and Town Hall meetings to complete the Fern Ridge Corridor Plan.
- 11/2012 Veneta staff submits an application to the 2015-18 STIP funding cycle for design and engineering for the southern alignment multi-use path.
- 11/2012 ODOT staff submits an application to the 2015-18 STIP funding cycle for Highway 126 West spot improvements.
- 4/2013 OTC adopts the Fern Ridge Corridor Plan.
- 8/2013 Lane ACT approves a 2015-18 funding request of \$140,000 for design and engineering for the southern alignment of the multi-use path.
- 8/2013 Lane ACT approves a 2015-18 funding request of \$2.7 million for Highway 126 West spot improvements.
- 9/2013 Region 2 Super ACT approves 2015-18 funding of \$140K for multi-use path \$2.7 million for Highway 126 West spot improvements. Design and engineering for the multi-use path project is scheduled to begin in 2016. Hwy 126 West spot improvements are scheduled to begin in 2016. Both projects are forwarded as part of ODOT's Region 2 request of approval by the OTC.
- 9/2013 LACT, on the request of OTC and legislators, completed a draft project list for the 2017-20 STIP. In that draft STIP \$10 million was identified to complete the next phase of spot improvements for Hwy 126 West and the construction of the multi-use path. In addition, \$5 million was identified to complete NEPA (design and environmental review) for the full build-out of Hwy 126 West as identified in the Fern Ridge Corridor Plan.
- 11/2013 OTC adopts 2015-18 STIP as presented by the five Super Regional ACTs.
- 11/2013 ODOT begins an outreach process to complete the scoping for each of the projects approved for funding in the 2015-18 STIP.
- 8/2014 City of Veneta signs ODOT Letter of Understanding and confirmation of match for the multi-use path. That project and the Hwy 126 West spot improvements are scheduled to begin in Fiscal Year 2016.
- 3/2015 Lane County Commissioner Jay Bozievich begins the first of several Highway 126 West Safety Task Force meetings.
- 2015 Lane County includes proposed Highway 126 improvements in the 2015 United Front effort.
- 2016 Lane County includes proposed Highway 126 West improvements in the 2016 United Front effort.