

Council Business Meeting

November 2, 2021

Agenda Item	Transportation System Plan Update and the Vision Zero Program	
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SUMMARY

Before the Council is presentation providing background information on the proposed Transportation System Plan update and the Vision Zero program.

POLICIES, PLANS & GOALS SUPPORTED

Council Goals:

Essential Services

- Streets*

Value Services

- Multi-Modal Transportation
- All-Age Friendly Community
- Downtown Parking

* From the Transportation Commission and Public Works viewpoint, Streets means “complete” streets including sidewalk, parkrow, curb, gutter and pavement sections.

Climate Energy Action Plan:

- Coordinate with neighboring local governments to promote use of transit, carpooling, and car-sharing.
- Work with RVTD to implement climate-friendly transit
- Establish policies to support development near transit hubs without displacing disadvantaged populations
- Evaluate feasibility of expanded local transit options.
- Implement bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly actions in the Transportation System Plan and Downtown Parking Management Plan
- Explore opportunities to convert to shared streets where appropriate to provide multimodal connectivity.
- Implement a local fuel-related tax

Current Transportation System Plan:

- Create a green template for other communities in the state and nation to follow
- Make safety a priority for all modes
- Maintain small-town character, support economic prosperity and accommodate future growth.
- Create a system-wide balance for serving and facilitating pedestrian, bicycle, rail, air, transit, and vehicular traffic in terms of mobility and access within and through the City of Ashland.

Department Goals:

- Maintain existing infrastructure to meet regulatory requirements and minimize life-cycle costs
- Deliver timely life cycle capital improvement projects

- Maintain and improve infrastructure that enhances the economic vitality of the community
- Evaluate all city infrastructure regarding planning management and financial resources

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION

The Council has previously approved contractual work to perform master plan updates for the City’s enterprise system.

BACKGROUND AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The Transportation System Plan update and Vision Zero Program items were removed from the August 18, 2021 agenda at the request of staff. The request to remove the two items was done for multiple reasons with the first being the need to postpone start of the project due to COVID. Public input and participation for the TSP update is inherently important to the process and a successful outcome for the project. With current pandemic related restrictions and the need to protect public safety, the start of the project needed to be delayed to better align to a future point where public meetings can be facilitated in person again.

The postponement has also provided the opportunity for staff to clarify certain items associated with the TSP update and the Vision Zero program for the Council and public in a presentation.

Transportation System Plan:

Over the past two decades, Public Works has recommended to Council that major master plans be updated on a 7-10 years basis to account for changes associated with each enterprise system (Water, Wastewater, Streets, & Storm). Major changes can include updates to policies (local, state, federal), regulatory requirements, technology enhancements, and land use changes. The last TSP was completed in October of 2012 and amended into the City Comprehensive Plan by Council approval in March of 2013.

Transportation networks and associated technologies are rapidly changing, and appropriate transportation system planning associated with adjacent land uses is important. Public Works and the Transportation Commission are recommending moving forward with a TSP update as numerous changes/improvements have occurred since the last plan was adopted including adoptions of the Climate Energy Action Plan (CEAP), approval of the transportation network company ordinance, completion of the Transit Feasibility Study, statewide changes in transportation funding with the passing of HB 2017, the community focus on providing an all ages all abilities complete network, Transit Triangle overlay and cottage housing ordinance (parking). There will also be a future Federal infrastructure money available for prioritized and community supported projects.

The scope of work for the TSP update follows the requirements of the Oregon transportation planning rule along with providing a robust public input process in order to final TSP document that best fits the needs of the City of Ashland.

The major tasks items for the TSP update include

1. Develop Public Engagement Plan
2. Goals and Objectives
3. Existing Conditions
4. Future Conditions
5. Solutions Development and Evaluation
6. Funding Program
7. Final Documentation
8. Plan Adoption

Public Works coordinated with the Transportation Commission on development and review of the formal scope of services for the TSP update. The Transportation Commission discussed the scope at the May, June and July meetings. They made a formal recommendation for the Council to approve the scope of services at the July meeting, reference meeting minute links in attachment section.

Transportation System Enhancements:

Since 2012 numerous projects and studies have been completed or are in various stages of progress.

Projects Completed:

1. North Main Corridor Improvements
 - a. The North Main Street corridor was restriped from a four-lane configuration to a three-lane configuration with a median lane. Numerous years of traffic engineering were completed to analysis the configuration change and the analysis have supported maintaining it as a three-lane configuration.
2. Hersey Street and Wimer Street realignment
 - a. The intersection was realigned as a safety improvement to reduce angle crashes.
3. Downtown Parking Plan
 - a. The plan started originally as a downtown parking and multimodal circulation plan but was reduced to just a parking plan.
4. Rogue Bike Share (no longer operational)
 - a. The Rogue Valley Council of Governments spearheaded a bike share program that was supported by RVTD, ODOT, Ashland, SOU, Asante with funding to support the program. Due to the pandemic operations of the program ceased.
5. Hersey Street Rehabilitation
 - a. The roadway was completely rehabilitated between North Mountain and North Main, including pedestrian safety improvements ADA ramp improvements.
6. Hersey Street rail crossing improvements
 - a. The rail crossing location at Hersey Street and Laurel Avenue was improved to today's safety standards as part of the Hersey St. project.
7. Walker Ave. Sidewalk (safe route to school)
 - a. Sidewalk was installed on the west side of Walker Avenue creating a continuous link from Ashland Street to East Main Street.
8. Hersey St. Sidewalk infill
 - a. Sidewalk was installed in the north side of Hersey Street creating a continuous link and saving numerous street trees.
9. Independent Way Roadway
 - a. Complete roadway improvements connecting Tolman Creek Road to Washington Street.
10. East Main Super Sharrow Improvements
 - a. Added super sharrows to East Main where there is no bike facility connecting North Main Street to Siskiyou Boulevard
11. Plaza Sidewalk enhancement
 - a. A new sidewalk was installed along the north side of the Plaza island, including ADA improvements.
12. Nevada Street Bridge discussion
 - a. Public Works, the Transportation Commission and City Council spent months discussing the bridge connection project defined in the TSP. It was ultimately postponed, to be re-evaluated in a TSP update.
13. Grandview Guardrail discussion and shared road implementation phase 1
14. Food and Beverage Tax reallocation to street maintenance
15. Transit Feasibility Study
 - a. RVTD Demand Response Microtransit project operating within Ashland

- b. 10x route-high speed/capacity transit
- 16. Orange Avenue Bicycle Boulevard
 - a. Orange Avenue was converted to a local residential street bicycle boulevard.
- 17. Safe Routes to School Grants
 - a. Staff applied for multiple safe routes to school grants to improve sidewalk pedestrian connectivity.
 - i. Grant applications were unsuccessful
- 18. All Roads Safety Transportation Grants (ARTS)
 - a. Staff applied for multiple ARTS grants for safety improvements, specifically for pedestrian enhancements on Ashland Street (Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon Crossings).
- 19. Created a Neighborhood Traffic Calming Program
- 20. Made formal recommendation on the use of Clean Fuel Credits
- 21. North Mountain Avenue Emergency Interstate Access

Projects in the works (2021-2023 Biennium):

- 1. Ashland Street Rehabilitation
 - a. Currently in design engineering, construction expected to begin in 2022.
- 2. Mountain Avenue Rehabilitation
 - a. Currently in scope/fee negotiations for the design phase.
- 3. North Main Crosswalks
 - a. The City is coordinating with ODOT to install marked crosswalks on North Main Street as part of their ADA ramp improvement project.
- 4. Clay Street Improvement
 - a. Improve middle Clay Street to a City standard utilizing grant monies received by Jackson County
- 5. Various bicycle and pedestrian improvements per the Capital Improvement Plan

Projects Paused:

- 1. Revitalize Downtown Ashland Plan (COVID)
- 2. Transportation System Plan Update (COVID)

Vision Zero:

In addition to Public Works and the Transportation Commission working towards updating the TSP, additional initiatives have been considered by the Transportation Commission to enhance safety for all users of the transportation network. These initiatives were considered to be important in meeting the mission of the Transportation Commission along with various goals/policies already established by other Commissions and the Council.

The City of Ashland Transportation Commission Mission:

“Ashland has a vision - to retain our small-town character even while we grow. To achieve this vision, we must proactively plan for a transportation system that is integrated into the community and enhances Ashland’s livability, character and natural environment. The focus must be on people being able to move easily through the City in all modes of travel. Modal equity then is more than just a phase. It is a planning concept that does not necessarily imply equal financial commitment or equal percentage use of each mode, but rather ensures that we will have the opportunity to conveniently and safely use the transportation mode of our choice, and allow us to move toward a less auto-dependent community.”

Initiatives considered/created over the past two years that support the Commission’s mission include development of a neighborhood traffic calming program, 20 Is Plenty and Vision Zero. The Transportation Commission has had numerous discussions regarding a “20 Is Plenty” initiative and the Vision Zero program

during the past year. This included working with the Climate Policy Commission as they have mutual goals of improving safety while reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The transportation sector

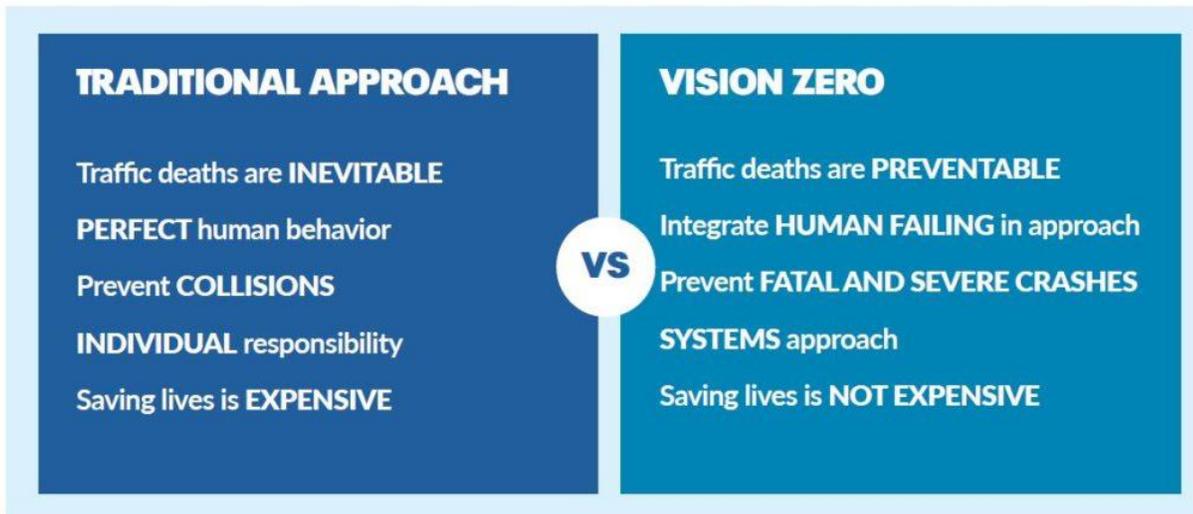
During these discussions it was determined by consensus of the Commission to move forward with a recommendation for Vision Zero as an initiative to foster changes to the transportation system as the Vision Zero program provides a foundation for safety and equity. The Transportation Commission and Public Works view the Vision Zero program as a philosophy and approach to follow and expects it will help the Commission and Public Works make better recommendations on transportation system priorities to the City Council for consideration.

“Vision Zero is a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all”.

The Commission moved forward and developed a Vision Zero Resolution for Council consideration. The resolution was built using one adopted by the City of Eugene Council. The resolution itself is straightforward with a focus on the health and safety of the residents, that loss of life or serious injury is not acceptable, and communities of concern face a disproportionate risk of injury within the transportation system. For the Transportation Commission and Public Works, the Vision Zero program is a philosophy for providing a safe and equitable transportation system. The intent of the program isn't to create more projects, but develop, recommend and prioritize the “right projects”.

The one action item of the resolution is to establish a Vision Zero Action Plan. The Transportation Commission is expecting to take the lead in developing the action plan along with navigating the TSP update process. The Commission's intent is to engage various stakeholders through development of the action plan including the City's Planning, Climate Policy and Climate Outreach Commissions and community input. Once the draft action plan is developed the Transportation Commission and staff will schedule presentation update before Council for discussion.

A New Vision for Safety



Vision Zero starts with the ethical belief that everyone has the right to move safely in their communities, and that system designers and policy makers share the responsibility to ensure safe systems for travel.

Vision Zero is a significant departure from the status quo in two major ways:

1. Vision Zero recognizes that people will sometimes make mistakes, so the road system and related policies should be designed to ensure those inevitable mistakes do not result in severe injuries or fatalities. This means that system designers and policymakers are expected to improve the roadway environment, policies (such as speed management), and other related systems to lessen the severity of crashes.
2. Vision Zero is a multidisciplinary approach, bringing together diverse and necessary stakeholders to address this complex problem. In the past, meaningful, cross-disciplinary collaboration among local traffic planners and engineers, policymakers, and public health professionals has not been the norm. Vision Zero acknowledges that many factors contribute to safe mobility -- including roadway design, speeds, behaviors, technology, and policies -- and sets clear goals to achieve the shared goal of zero fatalities and severe injuries

FISCAL IMPACTS

Transportation System maintenance, capital and planning projects utilize restricted funds that cannot be used for other items within the City's budget. Street Fund Revenues come from the state gas tax, system development charges, street user fees and grants.

The TSP Update was budgeted for in the 2019-2021 Biennial Budget and approved by the City Council. The TSP update was first scheduled for approval by the Council at the April 7, 2020 Business Meeting, but the item was removed from the agenda due to the COVID19 Pandemic creating the need to pause the project. The TSP Update was then budgeted for in the 2021-2023 Biennial Budget and approved by the City Council.

After the item was postponed the City Manager Pro-Tem reached out to the Oregon Department of Transportation to discuss potential state funding mechanisms for the project. ODOT informed the City Manager there is potential for full funding of the project using State Planning and Research Funds (SPR). ODOT has moved Ashland up on the priority list for SPR funds and they expect the project could be fully funded in 2022. ODOT would handle the contractual agreements with the consultant firm already selected through the formal Qualifications Based Solicitation and the City of Ashland would manage the project.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action is required of Council at this time requiring a staff recommendation.

ACTIONS, OPTIONS & POTENTIAL MOTIONS

No action is required.

REFERENCES & ATTACHMENTS

Attachment #1: Transportation Commission Minutes July 15, 2021 ([Minutes](#))

Attachment #2: Transportation Commission Minutes June 24, 2021 ([Minutes](#))

Attachment #3: Transportation Commission Minutes May 20, 2021 ([Minutes](#))

Attachment #4: Vision Zero Draft Resolution

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Reviewed as to form:

Katrina L. Brown, Interim City Attorney