

W.S.D.

Memorandum Date: October 16, 2007
Meeting Date: October 31, 2007

TO: Board of County Commissioners
DEPARTMENT: Public Works
PRESENTED BY: Ollie Snowden, Director and
Sonny Chickering, ODOT Region 2, Area 5 Manager
AGENDA ITEM TITLE: ODOT Highway 126W Projects Update

I. MOTION

Information only.

II. AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

After introductory remarks from Public Works Director Ollie Snowden, ODOT's new Area 5 Manager, Sonny Chickering, will update the Board on the status of ODOT projects in the Highway 126 West corridor. Attachment A from Mr. Chickering provides:

- a status report;
- a current conditions report about two highway segments between Florence and Mapleton where an ODOT preservation project will soon be under way;
- an historical overview of former projects to the east on Hwy 126 West;
- information about community input; and
- a map showing projects in the highway corridor.

III. BACKGROUND/IMPLICATIONS OF ACTION

A. Board Action and Other History

The Board has actively advocated for ODOT funding to support preservation, safety and modernization projects on Highway 126 West. Board Order 00-9-6-10 identified a westbound passing lane at Peterson Tunnel as the Lane County's top rural priority for the 2002-2005 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). ODOT subsequently funded the project in its 2004-2007 STIP, and it continued to be listed as funded project in the 2006-2009 STIP and the draft 2008-2011 STIP.

Board Order 04-3-10-27 approved a Letter of Support for preservation work along Highway 126 West between Florence and Mapleton. ODOT has programmed two preservation projects on Hwy 126 -- one west of Mapleton from MP 7.1 to MP

13.58 and one east of Mapleton from MP 14.55 to MP 26.48.

Board Order 06-4-26-10 endorsed Region 2 modernization priorities for the 2008-2011 STIP that included an additional \$500,000 for an environmental study associated with improvement of 126 between Noti and Poterif Creek. This environmental study already had \$500,000 allocated from a previous STIP. The draft 08-11 STIP includes \$1.45 million for development work for this modernization project.

B. Policy Issues

No action is requested at this time, so there are no policy implications that must be considered.

C. Board Goals

No action is requested at this time, so there are no Board Goal implications that must be considered.

D. Financial and/or Resource Considerations

No action is requested so there are no county financial or resource considerations.

E. Analysis

Development work has continued on the passing lane and the preservation projects, as well as an OTIA III bridge project on 126. Because of difficulties with the Peterson Tunnel site, ODOT determined that construction of a passing lane just west of Walton, from Walker Creek to Chickahominy Creek, better fit the project budget. Tom Stichfield advised the Board of this change in an e-mail memo on November 8, 2005.

At its September meeting, however, the OTC cancelled the passing lane project, with the intention to use the passing lane money on the preservation projects, which are projected to come in over the programmed funding. It appears that the Board of Commissioners received no formal notification from ODOT of the proposed cancellation prior to the OTC's action, or any formal request for comments. This seemed inconsistent with past priority setting procedures. ODOT Region staff has agreed, and will work to improve information flow in the future.

In addition to the OTC funding reallocation, I understand that Walton residents have been concerned about safety and traffic speed in the area. With all this going on, it seemed appropriate for Sonny to give the Board an update on all the ODOT activities on 126. His written report is included as Attachment A.

f. Alternatives/Options

Not applicable.

V. TIMING/IMPLEMENTATION

No alternative actions are requested.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

Staff is making no recommendation on the informational report.

VII. FOLLOW-UP

Sonny's appointment as Area 5 Manager is an excellent opportunity to strengthen communication between ODOT and the Board on transportation planning, programming and funding issues. I encourage the Board to offer Sonny the opportunity to provide regular reports to you, perhaps on a quarterly basis like CVALCO or the Extension Service.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

A. ODOT Region 2, Area 5 Manager's report on Status of OR126 Projects



Oregon
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Status of OR126 projects

The Oregon Department of Transportation has decided to cancel a project that would have built a passing lane on OR126 West between Noti and Mapleton, from milepoint 31.57 to milepoint 32.37. Canceling the Walker Creek-Chickahominy Creek project will allow the agency to shift those funds to an 18.4-mile pavement preservation project on OR126 W that has been deemed critical. The Oregon Transportation Commission approved this amendment to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Plan at its September 2007 meeting.

ODOT does not take this action lightly. There are currently two pavement preservation projects scheduled for this section of the Florence-Eugene Highway. Combined, these projects are under-funded by about \$4 million due to inflation and drastic materials cost escalation. The projects are the OR126: Horseshoe Creek-Mapleton (MP 7.1-13.58), and the OR126: Siuslaw River Bridge-Siuslaw River (MP 14.55-26.48).

Postponing the preservation projects would result in continued pavement deterioration and increased long-term costs. The preservation of a section of pavement is a matter of cost vs. return. Pavements deteriorate with time and traffic volume. In the first few years of its design life, the pavement will decline at a relatively slow rate. However, at a given age, the rate of deterioration begins to accelerate very dramatically. As the rate of deterioration increases, the cost of repair increases exponentially. The goal is to affect rehabilitation at that point in the life of a pavement section when the rate of deterioration "breaks over" from Fair and begins its rapid acceleration to Poor. Waiting until the surface rates Poor to repair the pavement will result in major cost increases.

ODOT believes that the Siuslaw River Bridge - Siuslaw River project and the Horseshoe - Mapleton project have reached the point where any further delay will result in dramatically increased costs. In the current economic climate, with severely limited funding that is not expected to increase anytime soon, such delays could pose significant economic impacts to the freight and recreation sectors.

By combining these two preservation initiatives into a single project, ODOT can better control costs through a single large bid let and also realize efficiencies in project development, construction management, materials and mobilization costs, and traffic control.

Current Conditions

OR126: Horseshoe Cr-Mapleton, MP 7.1-13.58

This 6.5-mile section of pavement is rapidly deteriorating and there are areas where the subgrade is failing. This failure has caused numerous dips resulting in a high-speed rollercoaster effect that presents safety concerns. This preservation project will reconstruct

subgrade and repave this section of the highway. It will also address safety improvements, including substandard guardrail and sections of damaged retaining wall. The project also calls for the construction of a truck weigh scale to replace one removed at North Fork Siuslaw Bridge.

Project funding is challenged due to inflation in materials and other cost escalation.

OR126: Siuslaw River Bridge-Siuslaw River, MP 14.55-26.48

The pavement in this 11.9-mile section is deteriorating, and moving from Fair condition to a rating of Poor. There are numerous safety issues, including substandard or damaged guardrail as well as bridge rail in need of replacement. The project will pave and address those safety issues.

This project was originally programmed for construction by ODOT in 2006, but was then made part of an Oregon Bridge Delivery Partnership (OBDP) bundle. The OBDP project bundle is scheduled for completion in 2012. ODOT's serious concerns that the pavement condition is rapidly deteriorating and would be rated Poor by 2012 prompted the transfer of the pavement repair portion of the bundle back in-house to ODOT's Lane County office.

The project is facing significant funding challenges due largely to sharp increases in materials costs (original scoping estimates are several years older than is typical) and additional cost due to delays in pavement preservation. Substantial guardrail costs, (nearly \$1.5 million) as guardrail was originally expected to be replaced in a separate contract.

Combined project approach

As mentioned above, combining the projects will allow ODOT to better control costs through a range of efficiency measures. With an estimated \$4 million shortfall, the agency is looking at several internal sources for the necessary funds.

This includes \$500,000 to \$1 million in special funds set aside for guardrail improvements, \$125,000 in Quick Fix Safety funds, \$1.7 million from the Walker-Chickahominy project, and potentially, \$1.3 million from the cancellation of the Walterville Bridge replacement project.

History of the OR126: Walker Creek-Chickahominy Creek project

ODOT originally planned to build a passing lane further west in what was called the Peterson Tunnel-Turner Creek project. The passing lane was to be constructed between MP 20.44 and 21.32. While developing the project, it became clear the soil in this area was highly unstable and the requisite slope stabilization work would cause the project to exceed the funding allotted to the project.

ODOT staff found three other locations along the highway that could accommodate a passing lane. These locations were presented to then-Lane County Commissioner Anna Morrison in 2006. The OR126: Walker Creek-Chickahominy Creek project was selected as the preferred location.

ODOT staff then sought approval to amend the STIP, replacing the OR126: Peterson Tunnel-Turner Creek project with the OR126: Walker Creek-Chickahominy Creek project. Commissioner Morrison and Lane County Public Works staff supported this change.

Local community sentiment

During several public meetings with the community of Walton (located adjacent to the proposed passing lane site in the OR126: Walker Creek-Chickahominy Creek project), citizens expressed strong opposition to the construction of a passing lane in this location. Residents indicated that existing passing lanes located approximately 5 miles on either side of the project site were functioning adequately.

Walton residents believe that the project would encourage speeding through their community, and would degrade traffic safety for homeowners within the project limits. Further support for cancelling the project was provided during discussions with Lane County Commissioner Bill Fleenor, who expressed a preference that the funds be applied to improving the roadway elsewhere within this corridor.

OR126: Florence-Eugene Highway (#062)

