

CLACKAMAS COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Study Session Worksheet

Presentation Date: October 2, 2018 **Approx Start Time:** 2:30 PM **Approx Length:** 45 Min

Presentation Title: Update on the Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Study

Department: Department of Transportation and Development

Presenters: Mike Bezner, Assistant Director – Transportation; Steve Williams, Principal Transportation Planner

Other Invitees: Karen Buehrig, Transportation Planning Manager

WHAT ACTION ARE YOU REQUESTING FROM THE BOARD?

Direction on the forum in which the Board would like to receive public input on the final report of the Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Study.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Although the Canby Ferry has been in operation for over 100 years and is an important part of the identity of the Canby area, there are a number of issues with the ferry. The ferry:

- Does not run when the river level gets above 70 feet, during inclement weather or in the dark. As a result, it only operates about 225 days per year;
- Can only carry 6 vehicles at a time and serves on average 200 vehicles per day;
- Costs motorists \$5 per vehicle one-way, but costs the county \$400,000 to \$500,000 more per year than is received in revenue;
- Is only 15 to 20 years away from the end of its useful life and replacement cost will likely be at least \$2.5 million.

During discussions of the Canby Ferry in June 2017, the Board directed DTD to study alternatives for crossing the Willamette River, including a toll bridge. Based on that direction, DTD began the Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Study in March 2018 and expects to complete the study in December. Four alternatives are being studied:

1. No crossing;
2. Continued operation of Canby Ferry, including purchase of a new ferry within 15 to 20 years;
3. A bridge constructed and maintained using public funds, with the option of continuing ferry operation;
4. A bridge constructed and maintained using revenues from tolls with the option of continuing ferry operations.

This is intended to be an initial study of these alternatives to focus on the most important issues that will determine the feasibility of each alternatives:

1. Traffic – How will traffic be affected in the area around Canby in each alternative?
2. Bridge Cost – Is it feasible to build a bridge and what would be the conceptual cost of such a bridge?

3. Tolling – Could the county fund the bridge with tolling, and what would be the costs and revenue for tolling?
4. Financial Feasibility – What is the annual cost and revenue from 2025 to 2055 for each of the alternatives?
5. Implementation Steps – If the Board decided to move forward with a bridge or toll bridge, what steps would be necessary and what issues would need to be addressed?

The study has been underway for about six months and several important steps are complete. Near the beginning of the study, an open house was held at the Canby Library to inform the community about the study and request their input. We estimate that about 250 people attended the open house. A short presentation was also made to the EDC on September 26, 2018. The draft technical memoranda addressing the traffic analysis and bridge costs have been received. The tolling and financial portion of the study is currently on-going. Following completion of those items all the technical memoranda will be compiled into a final report. A public meeting will be held in Canby in January to report on the study results and receive public comments.

Staff is seeking direction on the manner in which the Board would like to receive public input on the study. The current study is only intended to provide analysis for the Board's consideration and is not required to be adopted or approved by the Board in any fashion, and there is no requirement for a public hearing. However, the presentation of the study to the Board could be an appropriate opportunity for the Board to receive public input on the issue of Canby Ferry alternatives.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (current year and ongoing):

There are no financial implications.

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

The project aligns with the County Performance Clackamas Goals of:

- Build a Strong Infrastructure
- Ensure Safe, Healthy and Secure Communities

The project aligns with the DTD Strategic Business Plan goals for Long Range Planning of:

- Provide plan development, analysis, coordination and public engagement services to residents; businesses; local, regional and state partners, and County decision-makers so they can plan and invest based on a coordinated set of goals and policies that guide future development.

LEGAL/POLICY REQUIREMENTS:

None at this time.

PUBLIC/GOVERNMENTAL PARTICIPATION:

As described above, this project has included a very active public participation process through previous public meetings, mailers, newsletters, project website and responses to comments received. As of September 25, 2018 we have received 377 comments online and about 125 completed comment forms at the June open house. We have also received about 20 written letters of comment. In general the main concerns raised in the comments have been related to traffic impacts on the surrounding area, the financial feasibility of a bridge, and concern about right-of-way impacts. A number have also expressed support for continued operation of the Canby Ferry despite the annual subsidy that is necessary.

OPTIONS:

Provide direction to staff on the forum in which the Board would like to receive public input on the Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Study:

1. Schedule a planning session for a Wednesday in January and include the opportunity for public input.
2. Schedule this item for a Business session in January and include public input.
3. Schedule a Policy Session to receive the final report without a public input opportunity.

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended the Board hold a Planning Session in January on this item to include public input.

ATTACHMENTS:

Handout – “Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Analysis: Frequently Asked Questions, September 25, 2018”

SUBMITTED BY:

Division Director/Head Approval _____

Department Director/Head Approval _____

County Administrator Approval _____

For information on this issue or copies of attachments, please contact Stephen Williams @ 503-742-4696
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Canby Ferry Alternatives Feasibility Analysis

Frequently Asked Questions:

September 25, 2018

The Canby Ferry, operated by the County's Transportation Maintenance Division, crosses the Willamette River during daylight hours from north of Canby to east of Wilsonville. However, it has limitations:

- It is not able to run when the river level gets above 70 feet and during inclement weather;
- It can only carry six cars at a time;
- It costs motorists \$5 per vehicle for a one-way trip, and
- It costs the county more money to operate (\$400,000 to \$500,000) than it receives in revenue.

Since the Ferry both limits the number of people who can cross the Willamette River and uses money that could otherwise be spent on road maintenance, the County is evaluating the long-term financial and traffic impacts of six possible future alternatives for crossing the river at the same location.

Why are you doing this study now?

Response: When the ferry reaches the end of its useful life in 15-20 years, it will need to be replaced if the county plans to continue ferry service. A new ferry would cost at least \$2 to \$3 million dollars. If the county wanted to build a bridge to maintain and enhance crossing of the Willamette River in this area, it would take 6 - 10 years to complete after a decision was made to proceed. Although the end of the current ferry is many years away, the point at which a decision must be made about any possible alternatives is soon approaching.

If the county chooses to continue to have a crossing of the Willamette River once the current ferry is no longer usable, what alternatives are there?

Response: At this time, we are looking at three alternatives, which are not necessarily exclusive:

Continue Ferry Service with New Ferry

- Serves an average of 200 vehicles/day
- Maintains connection to 100 years of history and part of the identity of Canby area
- Subsidy from road funds will be increasingly costly

Bridge

- Provides a quicker route between Canby and the Portland area than exists now, which would benefit area businesses and residents. The traffic study shows it would decrease commute time by about 20 minutes/day for the 65% of employed Canby residents who work in the Portland area.
- The total cost for a bridge (including environmental and design studies, right-of-way, construction and improvements on connecting streets) is estimated at \$50 - \$55 million.
- Without a toll, traffic across the bridge would exceed 16,000 trips/day in 2027.

Toll Bridge

- A toll bridge would provide the same benefits listed above for a bridge.
- Toll equipment could add approximately \$1 million to the cost of the bridge.
- With an average toll of between \$1.50 and \$3 per car or light truck:
 - The amount of traffic crossing the bridge would depend on the toll.
 - Toll revenue would be expected to be at least \$3 million per year, which would cover all costs including construction, bond payments, operation of the toll system, and operating and maintenance expenses.

Who would benefit from a new bridge?

Response: Traffic study results show that more than 90% of trips across a new bridge would begin or end in the immediate Canby area. Depending on destination, those trips would likely be 5 to 10 minutes faster than using I-5 or I-205 for the same trip.

Wouldn't lots of people divert off I-5 and I-205 if a new bridge were built over the Willamette River?

Response: Traffic studies show that getting off I-5 or I-205 to cross a bridge at this location would be 10 - 20 minutes slower, even when I-5 and I-205 are highly congested.

Why wouldn't a bridge over the Willamette cost more than \$50 - \$55 million? The Sellwood Bridge cost \$330 million?

Response: There are significant differences between the Sellwood Bridge project and a two-lane bridge over the Willamette River. The Sellwood Bridge project was considerably more extensive than a Clackamas County bridge would be. For example:

- The Sellwood Bridge is more than twice the size of the bridge the county is analyzing;
- The Sellwood Bridge project included construction of an expensive interchange at OR43 on the west side as well as improvements to Tacoma Street on the east side;
- The Sellwood project included construction and demolition of a temporary detour bridge and demolition of the previous Sellwood bridge, and
- The Sellwood Bridge project included major landslide stabilization.

If there were a new bridge, would it be built at the exact location of the Canby Ferry?

Response: Not necessarily. To estimate costs and impacts for this analysis, we are tentatively siting the bridge at the Canby Ferry location. If we were to move forward with a bridge, there would be much more study to find the best bridge location in the area.

Why should the Ferry make money? Roads don't make money.

Response: Roads don't "make money," but local governments receive specific funding for roads. The County pays for maintenance of its 1,400-mile road system through its share of state gas tax, state vehicle registration fees and state weight-mile taxes on heavy trucks. There is no funding for the ferry, except the fare. Most of the cost is paid for with money that could be used to repair roads. The county spends \$400,000 – \$500,000 per year to operate the ferry, above and beyond revenue received from passengers.

Doesn't the Ferry provide an emergency response route in case of a major earthquake?

Response: The Ferry would be of little to no use in case of a major earthquake. It runs on electricity, which would likely not be available if there were a quake. Also, the ferry has a very small capacity and limited benefit for emergency response. In addition, a major earthquake would be likely to impact the river channel and/or banks. If a bridge were built in same area, we would build it to meet today's seismic standards so it likely would be available to help people cross the river. (The only other Willamette River bridges in the area that are up to the latest seismic standards are the Sellwood Bridge and Tillicum Crossing.)

Has the county already decided to get rid of the Canby Ferry and build a bridge?

Response: No. The study will provide data about costs, financial feasibility and traffic impacts of six options. We will have this data to share with the public and the Board of County Commissioners in winter 2018-19.

For more information: Go to <https://www.clackamas.us/transportation/cfalternatives.html> or contact Project Manager Stephen Williams at swilliams@clackamas.us or 503-742-4696.