

BENTON COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SAFETY ACTION PLAN

TASK FORCE MEETING #2 SUMMARY

Meeting Date: April 24, 2025

Meeting Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Meeting Location: Benton County Public Works

Meeting Purpose: Update on project status, discuss existing condition preliminary findings on crash trends, high injury network, and emphasis areas.

Attendees: Resident from Philomath (and now City Councilor) - Rich Saalsaa
North Albany Resident - Guy Graham
Mid-Valley Bike Club - Steve Harvey
Corvallis School District - Rebecca Weeks
Benton County Community Development - Morgan Driggs
Philomath Fire and Rescue - Captain Viktor Bovbjerg

Other Attendees:

Benton County Public Works - Laurel Byer
City of Corvallis - Adam Steele
DKS Associates – John Bosket, Harshala Sardar

INTRODUCTIONS & AGENDA OVERVIEW

- All the attendees introduced themselves.
- The purpose of this meeting is to provide an update on the status of the project, discuss the findings from the analysis of recent crash data and the proposed High Injury Network, and confirm Emphasis Areas.

PROJECT STATUS UPDATE

- We are nearing completion of the first phase of the project that involves understanding the history of crashes that result in serious injuries and fatalities

and focusing on the locations and factors to address to make the biggest impact on eliminating these crashes with limited time and resources.

- This summer, we will transition into the next phase that involves developing solutions.
- This is our second of five Task Force meetings. At the next meeting, we will discuss a proposed High Priority Network, which will be a subset of the High Injury Network. Improvement project recommendations will only be developed for locations on the High Priority Network. The third Task Force meeting will likely be in early to mid-June.
- We are nearing completion of our first public outreach milestone. We conducted three in-person public open houses (Adair Village, Corvallis, and Monroe) with a total of 124 attendees. The Corvallis open house was a joint meeting with the Corvallis SS4A project.
- An online open house and comment map has been running since early April and closes this Sunday (April 27).
- We have been conducting interviews with interested parties – focused on the conflicts between people riding bikes and trucks on specific rural corridors (Bellfountain, Fern, Independence, Springhill).
- Advertising/outreach efforts have included press releases, newsletters, emails, social media, collaboration with Benton County Health, and flyers distributed through the Benton County Food Bank.
- Our joint Benton County/Corvallis website has received over 6,000 views and over 700 comments.

EXISTING CONDITIONS PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

- The group discussed findings from the analysis of crash data from 2018-2022. Since the pandemic, total crash numbers have been increasing back to pre-pandemic levels and the number and proportion of crashes that result in serious injuries and fatalities is increasing. This aligns with many community member feelings that people are driving more aggressively since the pandemic.
- The project team presented the proposed High Injury Network and described how it was selected and how it will be used. The Task Force agreed that the segments and intersections selected make sense and align with their expectations.
- It was asked if the crash analysis acknowledged involvement of commercial vehicles in crashes. It did not, but the project team can look into that to see if sufficient information is available.

- The project team described how Emphasis Areas will be used and presented some potential Emphasis Areas for consideration. A goal of this meeting is to receive support for three to five Emphasis Areas to apply to the plan.
- It was acknowledged that written comments on Emphasis Areas were submitted by Toby Bottorff and Jay Thatcher, who were unable to attend today.
- The Emphasis Areas supported by the Task Force include:
 - Roadway and Lane Departure
 - Risky Behaviors (includes factors such as Drug and Alcohol Impairment, Distracted Driving, and Speeding)
 - Intersections
 - Aging Drivers (65+ years of age)
 - Bicycles
- It was agreed that other common factors related to serious injuries and fatalities that were not selected as Emphasis Areas can still be addressed through the ones that were selected (e.g., Roadway and Lane Departure mitigations could reduce Nighttime and Motorcycle-involved crashes; some strategies aimed at addressing Risky Behaviors could help reduce Motorcycle and Work Zone-involved crashes; etc.).
- It was asked where unsafe passing would be addressed. This could be part of Risky Behaviors or Roadway and Lane Departure. The project team will look into the data to see if sufficient information is available to identify these.
- Regarding Aging Drivers, it would be worthwhile to investigate how the proportion of the population represented by 65+ year-old people compares to representation in serious injury/fatality crashes.
- The High Injury Network, Emphasis Areas, Equity Analysis, and Public Comments will be combined to identify a High Priority Network, which will be a subset of the High Injury Network. Confirmation of the High Priority Network will be the topic of our next meeting. The project team will also test the sensitivity of outcomes from the various inputs and will share that with the Task Force when making a decision. Improvement project recommendations will be developed for the High Priority Network locations, with a goal of having about 10 of them.

NEXT STEPS

- Close Online Open House/ Comment Map and compile public feedback
- Develop Draft High Priority Network

- Task Force Meeting #3 to guide selection of top priority locations for improvements (expected to be in early to mid-June)
- Identify projects on top priority locations
- Identify safety solutions like policies and programs focusing on emphasis areas identified