

**HWY from A1**

Oregon Moving, Oregon's landmark transportation package (HB 2017), enabled a jurisdictional change of ownership from the State of Oregon to Lane County, which was a decisive turning point for the project.

"Since then, we've been preparing plans, investigating and we're now confident that we can deliver the community-preferred alternative, starting construction next summer," Taylor said.

Taylor also emphasized the dangers of the highway. "I was white-knuckled driving here," she said. "The problems are pretty apparent. There are no shoulders for cycling or for any other roadway user. If your car breaks-down, you're in trouble. There's flooding. On a regular basis, it overtops the road in a 100-year storm. There are very sharp curves on what we call 'Stony Point,' an active slide and obvious poor pavement condition. And our project is going to solve all of these problems."

Taylor then revealed the county's plans for the cor-

ridor. "We're providing 11-foot travel lanes, one in each direction, and six-foot shoulders on each side," Taylor explained, which elicited a room full of applause.

Because of the widening, the county anticipates impacts to property owners, though Taylor said, "We're going to try to make it as painless as possible."

To decrease the burden on frequent Territorial travelers, the county has proposed to tackle the project in four phases over four summers.

Phase 1 will begin in 2020 at a midway section of the highway, which addresses a landslide hazard at Stony Point and realignment of the section's particularly sharp curves.

Phase 2 construction will address the northern part of the corridor at Gillespie Corners in 2021. The curves of the road here will also be "softened" and two bridges will be raised and widened.

Phase 3's 2022 construction will realign the corners of a segment between Easy Acres Drive and Hamm Road.

Phase 4 will complete construction in 2023 on the corridor's southern half between Territorial Lane

and Cottage Grove-Lorane Road, implementing improvements the latter's intersection and more softening of curves along the roadway.

Following the presentation, break-out tables staffed by experts provided information on each phase of the project to locals as concerns and input were documented.

Jim Edwards, a 50-year resident of Territorial Highway, owns several properties along the corridor including the Lorane Family Store.

"I think it's a good idea," he said of the project. "Stony Point's been a problem every year."

Edwards said people have been known to overestimate their driving skills on the roadway.

"And during the winter time, there's ice and snow on that thing, so it's just kind of a dangerous situation," he said. "And so, I hope they get that straightened out a little bit."

Local resident Ruth Miller also attested to the dangers of the highway.

"Ever since I've lived near this road, it's been scary to drive my car on," she said.

Miller runs DamselTours, a small company

which arranges affordable bicycle tours for women, but is herself reticent to take her bike on Territorial.

"On the rare occasion I brave riding my bicycle, I'm really frightened for my life and I shouldn't have to be," she said. "The road is not created for safe travel for cars."

Miller cited blind corners and the lack of shoulders as her main concerns.

"The only surprising thing to me is that it's taken so long to happen. And that there's been lives lost and people injured because the state and the county have dragged their feet so long," she said. "I'm really happy to see it's finally going to happen."

Most reactions appeared positive at the meeting, including that of Higdon's husband, Tom Jefferson.

Now a retired family physician, Jefferson recalled the devastating event which served as a catalyst for the project.

"It pretty much changed my life — completely, very sadly," he said. "But as a result of that, there was so much outpouring of support for me and for her that we were able to create a foundation."

The Jane Higdon Foundation has since raised funding for at least two dozen social, educational, bicycle and pedestrian safety programs, according to its website. Naturally, a sizeable amount was put toward the initial planning phase of the Territorial project.

"The Jane Foundation and King Estate put together \$100,000 of community support to show this was a project people were interested in," Jefferson said.

The effort had even garnered support from Oregon

State Sen. Floyd Prozanski, who was expected to attend the evening's meeting, though he was reportedly held up in Salem due to the recent Republican walkout of the legislature.

"It's bittersweet," Jefferson said. "Coming here, I had to travel over the part of the road where she was killed. It's hard. But the sweet part is, something positive is happening. ... That was the reason for putting the foundation together, was to keep her spirit alive in some way."

Overall, Jefferson was pleased with the project and the traction it has gathered.

"The plan that they have right now looks to me like the right plan," he said. "I think everybody will be happy with it in the end. At least I hope they will be."

The meeting was not the last chance for stakeholders to voice concerns or give input. Two more events will take place before construction begins next summer.

A public hearing is scheduled to take place before the Lane County Transportation Advisory Committee at the Lane County Public Works Department on July 24 from 5:45 to 7:30 p.m., then a final Board of County Commissioners meeting will be held at an unspecified date this fall to approve the plan. If approved, the project will then begin acquiring rights-of-way.

Those living along the corridor who did not receive notice of the June 20 informational meeting are encouraged to share their contact information with the county by contacting Becky Taylor at 541-682-6932.

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