



Communiqué

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December 2011

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The COG staff wishes you all a very Merry Christmas!

A modest win for Cowlitz Lewis Economic Development District

The Cowlitz-Lewis Economic Development District (CLEDD) has been awarded “Preferred Sustainability Status” by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Office of Sustainable Housing and Communities in response to the grant application staff submitted in October. The CLEDD, unfortunately, did not receive the \$1.5 million requested for the three year project but will be entitled to some benefits of the program. CWCOG staff will go through a debriefing in January of the specifics regarding the application and those benefits. Of the over 190 applications, 29 were funded and 23 were designated with the Preferred Sustainability Status.

What we do know is that economic development district jurisdictions will be able to partake in technical assistance opportunities that will assist us in advancing activity noted in the grant application. Another extra is the addition of bonus points on federal grant applications. Information regarding the use of bonus points and which federal agencies participate will be identified by each agency via the Federal Register. The use of these bonus points to boost federal grant applications will require

certification by the CLEDD as stated by HUD. “To be eligible to receive bonus points, an applicant is required to obtain a certification from the Designated Point of Contact for the designated Preferred Sustainability Status Community ... which verifies that the applicant has met the above criteria.” Information regarding the requirements will be made available on the CLEDD website as well as what it will take to be compatible with the district’s Sustainable Communities narrative. The narrative is available on the CLEDD website at http://www.cwcog.org/cledd/documents/CLEDD_First_Exhibit.pdf.

CLEDD participants include the Cowlitz and Lewis counties and the cities of Castle Rock, Centralia, Chehalis, Kalama, Kelso, Longview, Morton, Mossyrock, Napavine, Pe Ell, Toledo, Vader, Winlock, Woodland and the Cowlitz Tribe.

More information about the Preferred Sustainability Status will be presented at the CLEDD board meeting on January 25. For information about the CLEDD, visit www.cwcog.org/cledd.

Help CUBS choose a new name

Be a part of changing the look of the Community Urban Bus System or CUBS. From now until December 16, the public is encouraged to go online and help choose a new name and logo for the transit agency. Four preliminary bus designs can be viewed at www.cubs-bus.com. There is a link to a survey where you can vote on which name and design you like best or submit your own suggestion. The results of the survey will be shared with the Cowlitz Transit Authority at their December 28 board meeting.

This re-branding effort is part of the implementation of a ten-year Transit Enhancement Plan the Cowlitz Transit Authority adopted last year. Giving CUBS a new name and identity was suggested by the public, stakeholders, and focus groups during the planning

process. Re-branding the system is being done in anticipation of future improvements, including new bus stop signs along revised routes, new schedules, and the addition of new vehicles to the fleet. Other improvements CUBS has recently implemented include hiring a full-time transit manager, adding new service on Saturdays, and safety improvements.

For more information, please contact the CUBS manager, Corey Aldridge at (360) 442-5660 or Amy Asher at the COG (360) 577-3041.



Fire and Ice Scenic Loop proposals received

The FISL is an economic development and tourism specific project ... to identify opportunities for expanding tourism.

Three consultants responded to the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop (FISL) request for proposals that closed on November 21. The FISL Selection Committee is currently reviewing them. Since all proposals were over the budget estimate, the committee will be advising staff whether to reissue the RFP with changes to the scope of work or move forward and work with the chosen consultant and negotiate the work plan to fit the budget estimates.

CWCOCG staff held a stakeholders meeting on the project in October and met with the White Pass Scenic Byway Committee in November to review the application and scope of work. Information obtained from those meetings indicated a desire to concentrate on marketing the region to include developing an interactive website similar to that of the Cascade Loop.

The FISL is an economic development and tourism specific project that partners Clark, Cowlitz, Lewis and Skamania counties with the U.S. Forest Service and the Mount St. Helens National Monument to identify opportunities for expanding tourism in the region. The COG was awarded \$199,400 in federal funds to develop a Corridor Management Plan connecting the scenic byways of White Pass (US12) and Columbia Gorge-Washington/Lewis and Clark Trail (SR14).

For more information, contact Jennifer Keene at jkeene@cwccog.org or call 360-577-3041. Documents and minutes from previous meetings are available at www.cwccog.org on the Economic Development page. To view the Cascade Loop website, visit www.cascadeloop.com and click "Interactive Overview Map" under "Maps and Tours" at the top of the page.

Input needed for annual economic development plan



The CLEDD's Annual Action Plan is available for public comment until January 2, 2012.

The Cowlitz-Lewis Economic Development District's (CLEDD) Annual Action Plan is available for public comment until January 2, 2012. This is an update of the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Report provided to the federal Economic Development Administration, identifying project priorities. The CLEDD board will meet in late January to approve the plan which will then be submitted to EDA. CLEDD members applying for federal funding for projects or programs must have them included in the plan. Federal grant application forms specifically ask applicants whether the project or program is consistent with a regional plan, i.e. the CEDS. To review the draft plan, visit www.cwccog.org/cledd main page under "News."

The CLEDD Board will meet in Cowlitz County on January 25 to discuss the status of the application for federal Housing and Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Grant submitted last October. The board will also begin discussions regarding funding options for match requirements, and will receive an update on the 2011-2012 work plan. Information pertaining to prior meetings is available on the CLEDD website.

For more information, contact Jennifer Keene at jkeene@cwccog.org or 360-577-3041.

Partnership update of news/activities



Annual Dinner and Art Gala raises support, awareness

Over 300 people filled the ballroom at the Portland Art Museum for the Estuary Partnership's 12th annual dinner in November. Guests enjoyed a festive evening that included an 'art scramble' and live auction and a presentation showcasing students in our outdoor education programs. Congressman Earl Blumenauer welcomed the guests as he did at our first dinner. He announced that he would be reintroducing the Columbia River Restoration Act with Senator Merkley to continue the fight for resources to reduce contamination and clean up the river. Proceeds from the event support the education programs that bring classroom lessons, field programs, service learning and canoe experiences to students in kindergarten through twelfth grade. The generosity of attendees helps ensure more students can participate.

Stewards of the Year Receive Awards

We have named three scientists as Stewards of the Year: **Amy Borde**, Senior Research Scientist, Coastal Ecosystem Research Group, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory; **Lyndal Johnson**, Supervisory Research Zoologist, Environmental Conservation Division, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and **Jennifer Morace**, Hydrologist, Oregon Water Science Center, US Geological Survey. These scientists have been studying the Lower Columbia River and Estuary for the last seven years, working to fill critical knowledge gaps and help protect the river. Their work helped build the Ecosystem Monitoring and Action Effectiveness Programs. Their expertise was invaluable in addressing vegetation patterns, a wide variety of fish data and analyzing the effects of chemical contaminants and toxics.

(Continued on page 3)



Partnership update (continued)

(Continued from page 2)

2011-2012 School Year Well Underway

Estuary Partnership educators delivered programs this fall to 1,100 students from 14 schools in Oregon and Washington, with students receiving nearly 10,000 instruction hours. Outside the classroom, students went on field trips to explore local natural areas. Over 840 students and 165 parents helped restore wildlife habitat at *Meldrum Bar Park, Oxbow Park, Port of Kalama, and Steigerwald Lake NWR*, planting 1,450 native trees and shrubs and removing 22 truckloads of

non-native invasive plants. Over 630 youth and 100 adults paddled the big canoes along *Lake River in Ridgefield* and the *Willamette River*. Educators also led teacher training for 25 Portland State University students. Educators will be working in the *Portland/Vancouver* area and the lower river communities of *Naselle, Cathlamet, Astoria, St. Helens and Scappoose*.

For more information, contact the Partnership at 503.226.1565 x227 or www.lcrep.org.



Roads can go on a "diet" too

The CWCOG is currently developing a transportation systems plan for the Longview-Kelso urban area. An element of this effort is identifying locations where street improvements may be necessary or desirable to increase safety, improve circulation and adapt the street for multiple users. Since there are different forms of street improvements to achieve different goals, each month the COG will feature articles about specific improvements to examine their characteristics and merits. This month we introduce "road diets."

What is a road diet? A road diet is converting a road from four lanes to three with a center turn lane (examples below). Engineers and planners have found that in high-turn environments, three-lane roads can carry as many motor vehicles as a four-lane road, with greater safety and efficiency for all modes of transportation.

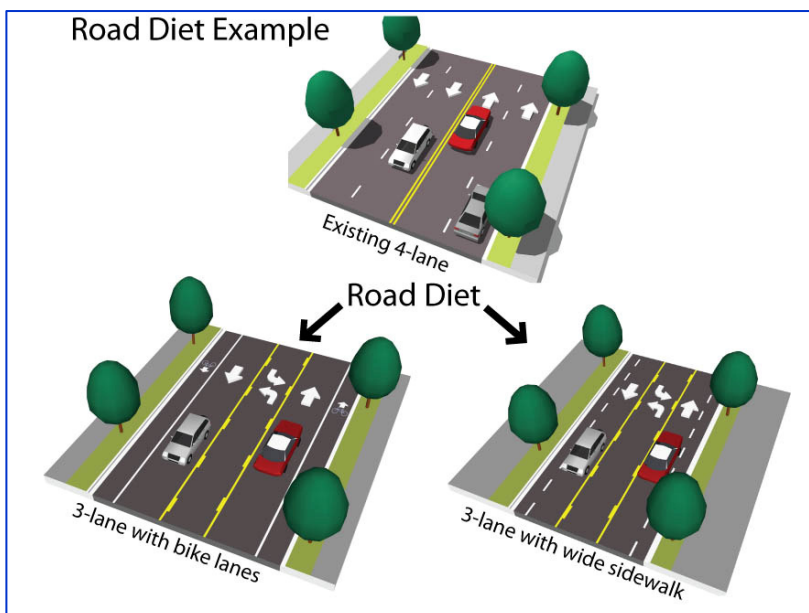
How can a road with fewer lanes carry the same amount of traffic?

When a car stops in a moving traffic lane to turn left, it causes many types of problems. Congestion, blind spots, unsafe lane changes, and discrepancies in vehicle speeds are some of the most common. In a three-lane system, there is always one lane for driving in each direction and one lane for turning; there is no mixing up the two, making driving safer and more predictable, with fewer crashes and frustrations. For these reasons, a three-lane road can handle the same amount of traffic as a four-lane road, and in some cases, it can handle more traffic.

Another part of the congestion equation is the intersection. The intersection often determines the level of congestion on a road. It is important to note that intersections will continue to have the same amount of lanes as they do today.

How does a road diet make driving safer? As noted, road diets provide a center turn lane so that left turns are simpler. A driver crosses only one lane of traffic at a time resulting in fewer chances for collisions. With an undivided four-lane road, a driver must find a gap in two lanes of traffic at once to make a left turn. An argument against the safety factor is that traffic is diverted to other streets, which results in fewer crashes. This has been found to be a false assumption. In reality, studies have proven that road diets maintain, and even enhance, traffic flow while reducing crashes up to 90%.

How does a road diet make walking safer? For a pedestrian, there are three lanes of traffic to cross, not four. There are fewer blind spots as there is only one lane moving in each direction, thus reducing sight blockage by cars. Also, vehicle speeds in a three-lane system are lower. (This does not mean that it will take longer to get through downtown; it means that there will be less speeding up and slowing down, establishing a more consistent pace.)



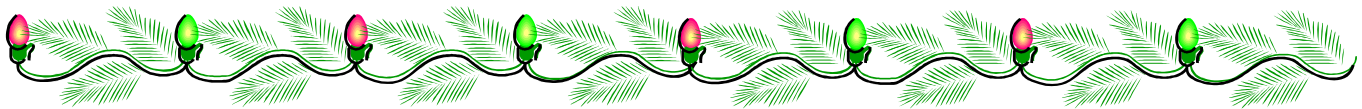
How does a road diet make biking safer? Adding bike lanes is a component of a road diet. With the addition of bike lanes, there will be less bike traffic on the sidewalks,

which is already illegal, but still common, and can make sidewalks less safe for pedestrians. On auto-oriented streets, a cyclist is at risk of being 'doored' by someone getting out of a parked car, or being 'mirrored' by a motor vehicle passing by within a foot or two.

So, that leaves us with one last question: Where could a road diet be used in your community?

November board meeting highlights

- ★ Amended the 2011-2014 Regional Transportation Improvement Program to add \$836,065 in federal funds for Kelso’s Yew Street Reconstruction Project and purchase a hybrid bus for the Cowlitz Transit Authority/City of Longview;
 - ★ Reviewed the third quarter financial report for the COG;
 - ★ Reviewed the 2012 Preliminary Budget/Work Program;
 - ★ Heard and discussed staff reports on recent grants for the Cowlitz Transit Authority/Community Urban Bus Service;
 - status of a grant application to the federal Housing and Urban Development agency; status of the Fire and Ice Scenic Loop request for proposals process; and activity for the SR432/433 NEPA/SEPA highway and rail system improvements project;
 - ★ Were informed via a PowerPoint presentation by Matt Hermen, Associate Transportation Planner, of the “Great Streets” project, an element of the urban area’s transportation systems plan.
- For more information, contact the COG office.



January 2012 Calendar

Jan 5 & 19	4:00 pm	CC Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee	CC Historical Museum, Kelso
Jan 13	7:30 am	Cowlitz Regional Information Forum	John Searing Auditorium, PUD
Jan 18	1:30 pm	Cowlitz Housing First Coalition	CAP Altrusa Room, Longview
Jan 23	3:30 pm	Cowlitz Substance Abuse Coalition/Cowlitz Meth Action Team	Kelso Presbyterian Church
Jan 25	11:30 am	CLEDD Board Meeting	TBD
Jan 25	1:30 pm	Housing Advisory Committee	CAP Altrusa Room, Longview
Jan 26	12:00 pm	COG Board Meeting	CC Admin Building, GMR
Jan 26	3:30 pm	Cowlitz Area TAC / RPACT	CC Conference Room B

COG Meeting Schedule for 2012

Board meets Thursdays at 12:00 noon

January 26	CC General Mtg Rm		July 26	CC General Mtg Rm
February 23	CC General Mtg Rm		August 23	CC General Mtg Rm
March 22	Annual Meeting		September 27	Cathlamet
April 26	CC General Mtg Rm		October 25	CC General Mtg Rm
May 24	Cathlamet		November 15	CC General Mtg Rm
June 28	CC General Mtg Rm		December 13	CC General Mtg Rm

Regional Information Forums

Cowlitz County
 Fridays @ 7:30 am
John Searing Auditorium, Cowlitz PUD
 January 13 July 13
 March 2 September 21
 May 18 November 2

Wahkiakum County
 Tuesdays @ 8:00 am
Commissioners’ Hearing Room
 February 7 August 14
 April 10 October 9
 June 12 December 11 (Legislative)

TITLE VI and ADA Notice to the Public
 COG ensures full compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the American Disabilities Act of 1990 by prohibiting discrimination against any person on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex or disabilities in the provision of benefits and services resulting from its federally assisted programs and activities. For more information, or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, call program coordinator at (360) 577-3041.

Lower Columbia River crossing takes major step forward


Reprinted with permission from the Columbia River Crossing Project. Governors announce Record of Decision received from federal partners; Technical and public process validated and authorization granted to move forward with construction planning.



Federal transportation agencies today gave formal approval for the Columbia River Crossing project plan which allows final design and construction planning to proceed. On December 7, 2011, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration signed a record of decision for the CRC. Signature on this document finalizes the environmental review process and formally identifies the federal agencies' selected alternative for the CRC – a replacement Interstate 5 bridge with light rail. [Read the governors' full press release.](#)

The US Department of Transportation also issued its own press release about the CRC record of decision. Read it [here](#).

Additional information, including links to the record of decision, is available on the [CRC website](#).

Merry  *Christmas* *from the COG staff*

