



Clark County Commission on Aging
1300 Franklin Street, 6th Floor
Vancouver, Washington

MEETING NOTES

Tuesday, August 21, 2018
4:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Members Present: Marian Anderson, Ali Caley, Chuck Green, Amy Gross, Marjorie Ledell, Temple Lentz, Linda O'Leary, Donna Roberge, Larry Smith

Members Absent: None

1. Welcome and Call to Order

Temple Lentz opened the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

The commission approved a motion to add an agenda topic regarding the manufactured housing and mobile home code update. The agenda was approved unanimously by the commission.

Approval of July 17, 2018 Meeting Minutes

The July 17, 2018 meeting minutes were approved by the commission. Marian Anderson abstained from voting.

Area Agency on Aging & Disabilities of SW Washington (AADSWA) Update

Marjorie Ledell provided an update on the most recent AADSWA meeting. The Alzheimer's walk is on September 9 @ Esther Short Park. Men's Sheds is an association that started in Australia and there are now 11 of them in the US. Men's Sheds are community spaces for men to connect, converse and create. The organization aligns well with last year's Commission on Aging recommendation regarding the high suicide rate among older men.

2. Presentation 1: Active Transportation: Walking and Biking for Older Adults

Walking and biking can contribute to healthy aging by improving mobility, access to services, and physical and mental health. Developing well-connected, attractive bike and pedestrian networks that are safe, convenient, and user-friendly for people of all ages and abilities will help people get where they need to go while also helping the environment and economy.

Dr. Jennifer Dill, Professor of Urban Studies & Planning at Portland State University and Director of the Transportation Research and Education Center, discussed the benefits of active transportation for seniors and strategies for supporting and encouraging safe active transportation for seniors.



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- Walking is the most common form of physical activity for older adults. Biking less so.
- Benefits of physical activity for older adults
 - May reduce:
 - Morbidity
 - Mortality
 - Obesity
 - Type 2 diabetes
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Osteoporosis
 - Chronic pain
 - Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
 - High cholesterol
 - High blood pressure
 - Some cancers
 - Risk of falls
 - Clinical depression
 - Depressive symptoms
 - Alzheimer's risk
 - May improve:
 - Living independently
 - Quality of life
 - Well-being
 - Physical function
 - Cognitive function
 - Source: Kerr, J., Rosenberg, D., & Frank, L. (2012). The role of the built environment in healthy aging: community design, physical activity, and health among older adults. *Journal of Planning Literature*, 27(1), 43-60

What helps?

- Centers for Disease Control recommends: 150 minutes of moderate activity (e.g. brisk walking) per week *and* muscle strengthening 2x/week. Or: 75 minutes of vigorous activity + muscle strengthening 2x/week.
- As little as 10 minutes of moderate activity counts. Walking to/from the bus stop, for instance, could be 10 minutes each way.
- Source: https://www.cdc.gov/physicalactivity/basics/older_adults/index.htm
- Many older adults do get 150 minutes/week.

What do we know about walking & bicycling among older adults?

- Walking & biking rates in the US, data from 2017 National Household Travel Survey: of the older adults that walk, about half is for transportation. Of those that bike, most is for recreation.
- Women are less likely to bike than men.
- Density can help, but is not required. Density is important if you need to get to a destination and is less important for recreational rates.
- Cycling rates are high among older adults in some countries. Cycling declines with age in the US, but not in Germany, Denmark, and the Netherlands. One reason: the infrastructure is really great for bicycling in these countries, it's safe and people feel comfortable. It's also why men and women bike at the same rates in these countries.

What can we do to support more walking & bicycling among older adults?

- Walking & biking in a neighborhood: barriers/influencers for older adults
 - Walking
 - Traffic (fear of getting hit by car)
 - Destinations nearby (shops, services, parks, malls, etc.)
 - Fall hazards
 - Sidewalk quality
 - Perception of crime
 - Safe crossings
 - Sufficient crossing time (at signalized intersections)
 - Scenery
 - Places to stop and rest
 - Bicycling
 - Traffic
 - Destinations nearby (shops, services, parks, malls, etc.)
 - Safety fears (in addition to traffic)
 - Lack of a bike
 - Lack of experience/confidence biking
- Some resources
 - Small Town and Rural Multimodal Networks – lots of images in the presentation from here. Free with good examples.
 - AARP Livable Communities: <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/>
 - 8 to 80 Cities: <https://www.88ocities.org/>
 - National Association of City Transportation Officials: nacto.org – design guidebooks, how to design streets, bikeways, etc.

Key elements that are important

- Sidewalks (and sidewalk maintenance!) There are good standards to design sidewalks so they are wide enough and not too steep. Sidewalk maintenance is important to repair cracks. Sidewalks that end in the middle of a street and don't connect to anything are also a problem.
- Shared use paths & sidepaths. The focus of these is on separating walkers and bikers from motor vehicles. Shared use paths or side paths are common investments. A sidepath is the same as a multiuse path, but next to a road. Research shows older adults are more likely to walk where there are other people. If this type of infrastructure is too isolated, that could be a concern. In general, people often feel comfortable on shared use paths and sidepaths; however they are hard to build because they are expensive and there may not be access to space to build them.
- Protected Bike Lanes (aka separated bike lanes). These are on-street bike lanes. There is some separation and protection between cars and people, something vertical is used for the separation. Examples of these are popping up all over the US. This type of infrastructure can work in any type of environment: urban, suburban, etc.
- Bicycle boulevards. These are when you take an existing, low-traffic street and use traffic calming devices to reduce the speed and volume of motor vehicles. These only work when you are starting with a low level of traffic. With fewer and slower cars on the street, a person can safely bike in the middle of the street. The only reason to drive on a bike boulevard is if you live on that street, or your destination is on that street. These can really make a difference and encourage more people to ride bikes, especially women. Bike boulevards are relatively low cost compared to building a new multi-use path and could be built in any type of community as long as it's a quiet residential

street. Bike boulevards have also been shown to increase property values. They also tend to be good streets for walking.

- Connected networks – it is important that connections exist when you are trying to get somewhere. In neighborhoods with a lot of cul-de-sacs, shared use path connections is a way to connect dead end streets for walkers and cyclists.
- Safer crossings
 - Ramps at crosswalks
 - Reduce crossing distances with bulb-outs
 - Tighten curb radii (slows down cars)
 - Rectangular Rapid Flash Beacons. Tend to work well and are fairly low cost.
 - Allow longer times for pedestrian signal (assume slower walking speed, e.g. 2.5 ft./sec)
 - Provide for a “Leading Pedestrian Interval” of 3-7 seconds. This has been proven to improve safety and reduce pedestrian collisions at intersections.
- Reducing traffic speeds
 - Survivability decreases as driving speed increases.
 - A pedestrian hit by a vehicle traveling at 25 mph has an 89% chance of survival.
 - A pedestrian hit by a vehicle traveling at 35 mph has a 68% chance of survival.
 - A pedestrian hit by a vehicle traveling at 45 mph has a 35% chance of survival.
 - Reducing traffic speeds is recommended in residential areas where you hope to have a lot of people walking and bicycling.
- Scenery and facilities – landscaping, artwork, reduce graffiti, providing benches, etc.
- Electric-assist bicycles, tricycles
 - Electric-assist bicycles: you still have to pedal, but it gives you a little extra power. You can control how much assist you get. They can be helpful on hills and starting to pedal. In a PSU study on e-bikes: 28% were owned by people aged 55-64; 19% were owned by people 65+. In a project at Kaiser in Clackamas County, they made e-bikes available for loan so people could try them and several people chose to buy one after testing them out.
 - Tricycles: lots of options.
 - The City of Portland has had recumbent tricycle programs for people to try them out.
 - Honolulu, HI has a regular program as well.
- Encouragement programs
 - Skills training
 - Mentoring/Buddy programs
 - Group rides/walks
 - Bike loan/test programs
 - Walk audits or bike audits (AARP has a very nice walk audit toolkit, to ID what works, doesn't, needs improvement)
 - Open Streets events: close down streets and let everyone walk and bike in the streets. Vancouver has done this before. In Portland, it's called Sunday Parkways.

Final thoughts and questions

- It's not rocket science (perhaps political science?). It usually takes some leadership and political will to do these things. There is typically a need for funding or a need to change

how things happen. The key is the political will and organizing. Funding is important, but there are a lot of low cost solutions.

- The benefits are great, and extend to all ages. There is growing evidence about good biking and walking infrastructure improving economic vitality of neighborhoods and regions.
- Plans and policies are important. The bike and pedestrian plan and transportation plan need to include what you want to do, in order for implementation to be possible.
- Involve the community. Today's talk is a generic list; it needs to be customized for each community by each community.
- Multimodal system is important. It's important to have options to walk one way, take transit another way, etc.
- New modes? Electric scooters, for instance, are starting to show up in cities and there is no research on them yet.

Questions and comments from COA members with speaker's responses:

Comment: How much are electric bikes? **Response:** There is a range. Walmart sells one for about \$500. And there are many more expensive models.

Comment: is the infrastructure a lot different in other countries where there is no drop off with bike riding? **Response:** Yes, they mostly have protected bike lanes in both directions of streets, or something similar to bike boulevards. By separating the travel modes, that is responsible for the difference in cycling rates.

Comment: We have been having the discussion about alternative ways to get around when seniors stop driving. Has this been discussed with programs like Biketown in Portland? Are there any Tric-towns? **Response:** Yes, there are a handful of bike-share programs that have included tricycles in them. Doesn't know how well the tric programs have turned out. Another thing to think about is having tricycles available at senior centers, parks, or other such locations. If you just want to loan out a bike for a ride where you will go out and come back to the same place, which could work instead of a full bike-share program.

Comment: there are two types of bikers: those who rely on bikes for transportation and the recreation bikers. Have you look at data on that? **Response:** there are many bikers in the US who just ride for recreation. In terms of who bikes for transportation, there is a full range. People don't only bike for transportation for economic reasons. It may be for health reasons, or it could be more reliable in terms of timing and no parking. Sometimes economics are the primary reason when someone has no other options. In places where you have nice and safe bicycling infrastructure, it's often a pleasant way to travel. A lot of it has to do with people thinking it's fun, and making them happy.

Comment: is there research that shows electric wheelchairs can be used on bike paths? **Response:** it varies state to state what other electric assist vehicles can go. An electric style wheelchair may fall into the same category as bikes in some places.

Questions and comments from the audience with speaker's responses:

Comment: has anyone designed a bike rack for the e-bikes? **Response:** not sure if a solution exists yet. I have found in surveys that a lot of times people want to put their bike on a car

because they live in a hilly area. Now you can use an e-bike to get up the hill. But the increased weight is a drawback.

Comment: hoping to see more women bike. Started biking when 67 and started as a complete newbie. Loves the groups and they're free. They describe bike rides and appropriate abilities for each ride. One of the things I really like is I found new women's bikes for \$600 or \$800 and they are the step-through style. A lot of bikes have been designed for men. The more women who ask for step-through, the more we will see. Susan B. Anthony said biking was the thing that emancipated women more than anything else. **Response:** Yes, you're right. Most bikes are sized for men. Most bike shops are staffed by a bunch of men too. It's slowly changing and there are many more step-through bikes. In Europe, step-through bikes are common.

Comment: there was a question about styles used in Europe. The utility style is used frequently in Europe. It's the same style as used in the Portland bike-share program. The utility style is available in US, but you need to ask. They are designed for stopping and going shopping. For people starting off, they would do better on a utility bicycle.

Comment: I used to ride my bike to work. People have died by horse drawn carriage, in wars and in traffic accidents in America. Bicycling is not the safest thing around, with cell phone use, vaporizing, driving fast, etc. I think we should give a little caution as to how safe it is. **Response:** yeah, making it safer and reducing motor vehicle speeds is important. There is pretty good evidence though – even when you consider the risk of being hit, injured, or killed - the evidence of health benefits outweigh the potential risks, including air pollution.

3. Presentation 2: Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC)

Michael Andreotti, Vice Chair of the Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee, provided information on BPAC.

BPAC background

- Established in 2010 with Board adoption of the Clark County Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan.
- Mission statement: advising the county and participating city and state jurisdictions on matters involving bicycle and pedestrian transportation.

Key components of the 2010 plan

- Bicycle & pedestrian supportive policies
- Funding strategies
- Inventory of existing bicycle & pedestrian facilities
- Bicycle & sidewalk project lists
- Bicycle parking recommendations
- Work program for plan implementation. BPAC picks 3 or 4 items each year to focus on, to move the plan forward.

Current committee members

- Appointed by council
- 13 members representing a diversity of interests in the county.
- There is currently one vacancy. If interested, you can find out more on the Clark County website.

Major goals

- Developing a Bicycle and Pedestrian Network
- Education, Encouragement and Safety Programs
- Funding

Accomplishments to develop a bicycle and pedestrian network include: updating the Clark County and City of Vancouver bike maps, advocating for stronger transportation policies during Clark County's 2016 Comprehensive Growth Management Plan update, created a policy statement with the Clark County Department of Public Works about procedures for bicycle and pedestrian feature reviews, and hosted a policy maker's bicycle ride.

Accomplishments regarding education, encouragement and safety programs include: bike and walk school days, Bike 2 Leadership program at high schools, many bike safety events, Lights On campaign, installation of light sets and helmets at community events, providing input regarding bike and pedestrian access and safety in many public and private developments, providing application review and project recommendations, collaborating with Public Works on bike and pedestrian facilities planning, helping improve the sidewalk project ranking criteria to better meet the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, many outreach events, working with Clark College students on a bike safety quiz, provide comments to the Washington State Department of Transportation sketch initiative, and committee bike rides to maintain familiarity with and assess local trails.

Accomplishments regarding funding include: teaming with Bike Clark County to raise funds to purchase bike lights for the Lights on Campaign.

This year's BPAC work plan includes:

- Auditing the Arterial Atlas to ensure bike lanes are aligned with identified bike roads.
- Conducting an operational review to see where improvements are needed around bike lanes and parking.
- Beginning a Share the Path campaign.

Questions and comments from COA members with speaker's responses:

Comment: When I go north of Fruit Valley, I have seen signs regarding changes to bicycling in the street. **Response:** Speaker doesn't know details of that project. **Commission Member Response:** they are looking at a new bypass extension that would replace the bridge. The new one will include bike lanes and walkways so pedestrians and bikes don't have to share lanes with vehicles traveling on Fruit Valley Rd.

4. New Business, Updates and Announcements:

- The September speaker will be Gary Pagenstecher with the City of Tigard who will talk about what Tigard is doing to improve walkability as it strives to become the most walkable city in the Pacific Northwest.
- As a reminder, the 2018 Walk to End Alzheimer's is taking place on Sunday, September 9, 2018.
- Chuck Green explained that manufactured and mobile home code updates for unincorporated Clark County are being proposed to align with state law and to help make housing more affordable in the county. Chuck made a motion for the Commission on Aging chair to write a letter to the county council to support the code changes and

include commission member concerns raised in their work session discussion. The commission voted to approve the motion.

5. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:10 pm.

The Clark County Commission on Aging provides leadership and creates community engagement in addressing the needs and opportunities of aging.