

# Board of Commissioners Clatsop County

## WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

April 6, 2022

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**Topic:** Westport Update  
**Presented By:** Ted Mclean, Public Works Director

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**Informational  
Summary:**

In 2018, Public Works staff held a public meeting to discuss the necessary upgrades to make the roads safer and to better handle the heavy traffic coming into the community from an industrial rock barging operation. The community rejected the County's initial plans, and after hearing the community's concerns regarding safety and livability, staff devised a new plan that would accomplish their request of creating a new road outside of the residential neighborhood. On February 15<sup>th</sup>, Public Works initiated a public meeting at the Westport Community Church that was attended by approximately 40 residents, Commissioner Bangs and Assistant County Manager Monica Steele, in order to update the community on the County's plans to provide a new route outside of the residential neighborhood as per their previous request. Public Works provided the update and answered many questions from the community and noted ideas from the public to continue to investigate. As staff answers these questions they are placed on the County Website under "Westport Improvement FAQ" s. Following the meeting staff asked the community to provide additional feedback by completing a survey to gather information on how the public feels about the revised County plans. The community response can be accomplished by sending back the questionnaire cards provided at the meeting or by replying on-line on the County website.

Prior to the community meeting on February 15<sup>th</sup>, County staff met with ODOT to make sure the proposed access from Hwy. 30 would be granted should property acquisition become a reality. We were told in that meeting the access would be granted. County staff also met with ODOT Rail and P&W Railroad personnel to make sure a new crossing would be allowed if we were to close the Westport Ferry Road crossing. They acknowledged closing one to open one in this instance would work, however, it could not be utilized as a emergency or pedestrian crossing. We have contacted the railroad's civil engineer in order to know what data needs to be collected for the railroad design and have been collecting the information he'll need. Should the road go from a planning stage to design stage, the railroad's engineer will have to be hired by the County to facilitate the design.

**Access to property:** Staff is working with Attorney Cable Huston (Nikki Swift) to continue to pursue access to the properties for continued engineering investigations.

## **Attachment List**

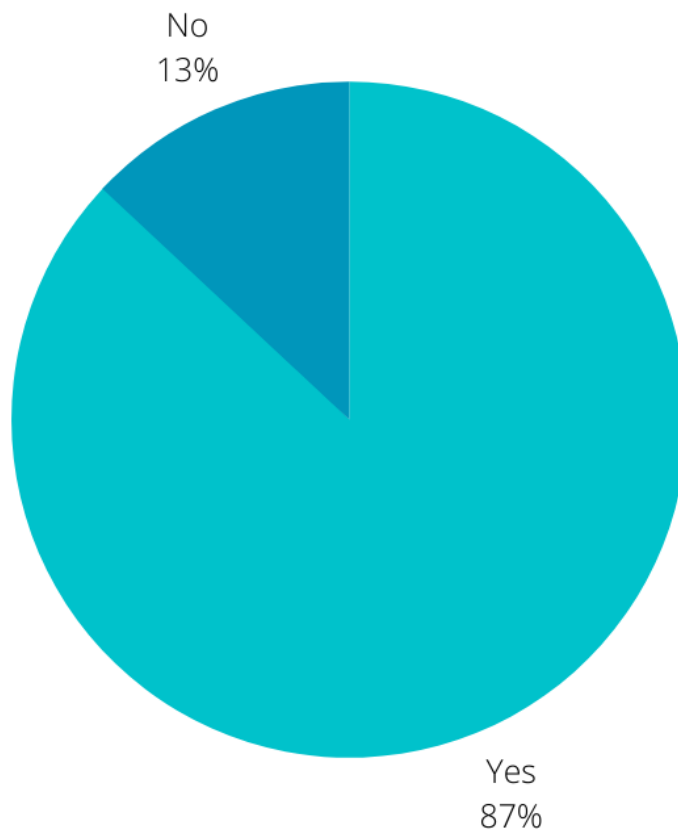
- A. Survey and Concerns
- B. FAQ's

On February 16<sup>th</sup>, Public Works launched an anonymous survey to obtain feedback from Westport residents regarding improvements to an existing road and/or building an alternate trucker route. Residents were also welcome to share greatest concerns regarding the project either way as a whole.

The survey is currently still open to obtain as much feedback as possible. It has been advertised at the public meeting, through our website, Public Works Facebook and shared by other County social media accounts.

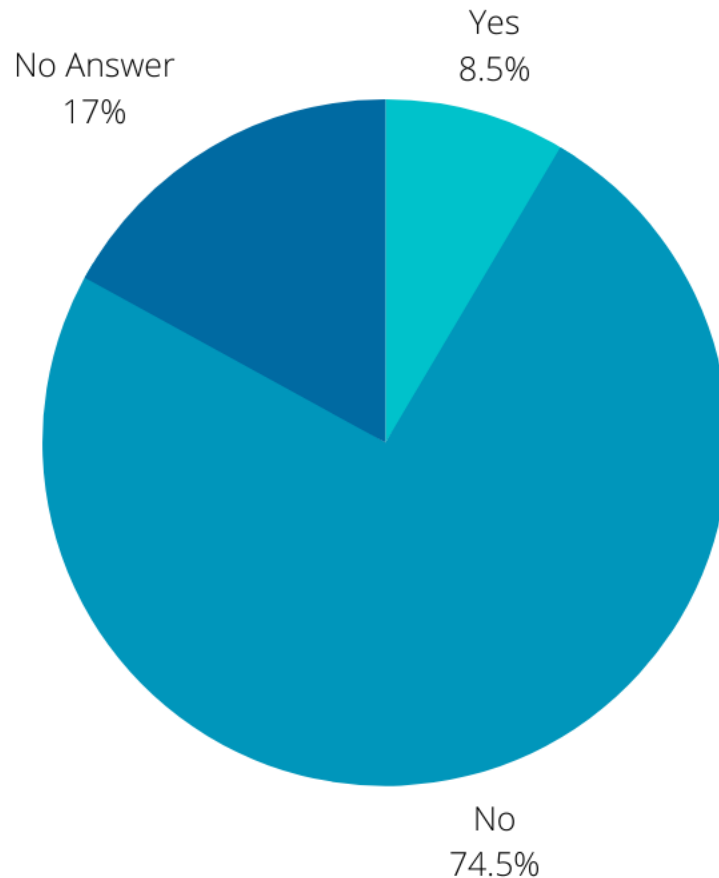
Below are the 46 gathered responses of the survey:

## DO YOU SUPPORT THE NEW ROAD?



Of the Westport community, a total of 40 residents replied yes, while 6 residents reported no.

## DO YOU SUPPORT IMPROVEMENTS OF THE EXISTING ROADS RATHER THAN A NEW ROAD?



Of the Westport community, a total of 35 residents replied no, while 4 residents reported yes. Eight residents did not provide an answer.

### Greatest Concerns

1. There will be an extensive pile up of traffic if the truck traffic is diverted to OLD MILL TOWN ROAD at the mini-mart. The traffic to the new boat launch will be slowed, the residents will be delayed, the people walking to the boat launch will have safety issues, additional cost to upgrade the sewer line will be raising our bills. We want a new road.
2. This will cause undue traffic to the most populated part of Westport.

3. Please look into closing the access to Driscoll's road across the rail and leaving the current Ferry Road rail crossing open. The current bridge is condemned at Driscoll's. ODOT is in charge of all bridges and rail crossings.
4. That it will take too long.
5. Moving truck and ferry traffic off narrow neighborhood roads. Community livability.
6. Blocking Ferry Landing Rd and taking property from a landowner who obviously doesn't want to sell it. I believe there is a better solution for access further west, at least potentially.
7. Stay out of Westport. Find your own road with the mill. Thank you.
8. Fire Department
9. Traffic on a small street.
10. Is the dollar cost better than improvements to W. Ferry Rd. and Old Mill Town
11. Too much traffic/trucks on Old Mill Town Rd. Kids play on this road. Safety Concerns.
12. Leave Old Mill Town Rd. Alone
13. There should be a crosswalk light at the intersection by store.
14. None
15. Safety issues, problems with our septic tanks due to construction and mainly the increased traffic.
16. Heavy traffic on Old Mill Town Rd.
17. The safety of our kids, pedestrians walking/ biking down old mill town Rd and ferry Rd. Also, concerned about the weight of the trucks, compromising our roads and our water lines, sewer lines.
18. I'm very concerned about the traffic we are bringing in homelessness, druggies, and to be honest who know who else. We should not have to lose part of our property due to having this road put in. If we lose any part of our property I would definitely demand that we get paid for it. He bought our property it should not be taken from us in any way or form. We have an old milk barn that is historical if we definitely better get paid for what we will ask for it not what you choose to pay yes.
19. Safety of children on old mill town road and maintaining the integrity of our sewer system and water lines. Also, the industrialization of a small rural town that has charm and personality is of great concern to me personally.
20. Taking someone's property without considering other options.
21. The length of time necessary to completely project.
22. The new road is a great idea.
23. It not being completed.
24. Teevin brothers should build a private entry to their property and donate the rest of their property on the highway side to the <https://www.columbiariverkeeper.org/> so they can improve that site for salmon habitat.
25. Community safety and livability.
26. Safety. Safety. Safety. The closing of Westport Ferry Rd. Troy Douma will no longer have any privacy.
27. None what so ever. All those trucks sometimes 2 every 5 minutes will now be off the Westport Ferry Rd which is good.

## Attachment B: FAQ's

### **If the Westport Ferry Road is closed, will emergency response or pedestrian traffic be allowed to still use the crossing?**

We asked the railroad this same question hoping to at least be able to maintain emergency access. Their response was no due to past experiences. The railroad requires the road hard surface within their right-of-way be removed. Once removed, even occasional traffic creates a mudhole. The rail safety board has fined others in the past for not maintaining these emergency crossings, so they are no longer allowed.

### **Would it be possible to get a crosswalk between Old Mill Town Road and local gas station/store?**

We will check with ODOT to see if that is feasible.

### **Will this new road raise my taxes?**

The County will not be bonding this project, it will be built using existing County Road District funds that are collected at a permanent levy rate of 1.0175/\$1,000 of assessed values, as well as any State or Federal funds that may be received.

### **Why do we need a new road?**

The existing road being used for heavy hauling to the Teevin Bros., barging operation was not designed to carry the number of anticipated heavy loads. The County cannot safely reconstruct Westport Ferry Road to continue to accommodate truck traffic safely due to right-of-way constraints and the proximity of Plympton Creek. In order to reconstruct Westport Ferry Road and have a measure of safety, the road would end up being a one-way road with a curb on the west side of the road and a sidewalk on the east side. This would then require traffic from the ferry landing/Teevins barging operations to use Old Mill Town to access Hwy. 30.

Old Mill Town would have to be reconstructed and realigned to allow for truck traffic. Reconstructing Old Mill Town would also require significant alteration of the Hwy. 30 intersection as well as reconstructing sewer and water lines. Any alteration of either Westport Ferry Road or Old Mill Town Road requires improvement of the associated rail crossing(s).

In December of 2018, the County held a community meeting at the union hall on Old Mill Town Road. In that meeting the County proposed two options; 1) Reconstruct Westport Ferry Road with two 12-foot wide lanes, or 2) Reconstruct Old Mill Town Road with two 12-foot wide lanes and a 6-foot multiuse path. The sentiment at the meeting was neither option was what the community wanted. The community wanted a new

road constructed to remove the heavy truck traffic out of the residential community for safety and livability. The County believes it has found a potential way to do so and is currently engaged with the two property owners attempting to acquire the property to fulfill the community's request.

**It looks like the County is proposing building a new road for Teevin Bros. Why don't they build their own road they have all the materials and property?**

The proposed new road would be a County road for all to use. Teevin Bros., is under no obligation to construct a new road to access their barging operations as they pay road taxes just like all other users of our road system.

**Can we move the proposed new road to the west?**

All the property to the west of the Douma property are wetlands. Wetland mitigation on a large a scale as would be required to move the road west of the Douma property is too costly and mitigation sites are not available in our area.

**Why must the County close the Westport Ferry Road crossing to emergency and pedestrian access if they build the proposed new road?**

The railroad, Genesee & Wyoming has a policy that for every new crossing that is opened two must be closed. Since there are only two in the community, they are requiring one be closed so that there is a secondary road into the community.

**Why not close the rail crossing to the west of the Taylorville intersection and leave the Westport Ferry Road open?**

The rail crossing mentioned is a private crossing and the County has no authority to close it. Furthermore, since the railroads policy is to close two crossings for every new one, they could require that to be closed as well as the proposed closure of the Westport Ferry Road crossing.

**What would the width of the new road be?**

The existing plan calls for two 12-foot wide traffic lanes and one 6-foot wide multiuse path.

**Are there plans to do any additional work to either Westport Ferry Road or Old Mill Town Road if the new road is constructed?**

At this time the plan would be to block off Westport Ferry Road at the railroad right-of-way which would result in a dead-end road, thus reducing traffic and putting off any

additional work for several years other than any intersection work at the highway that may be required by ODOT.

Old Mill Town Road is planned to be constructed in similar fashion to the proposed new road, but will not need to have all the infrastructure replaced as the heavy traffic would utilize the new road.