

Big plans for Clackamas County roads

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By BEN WEST

Clackamas County Commissioner, Position 5 —

Clackamas County has been busy making our transportation system safer, smoother, and easier to use. From fixing intersections to planning for the future, here's what's happening and why it matters.

The county recently started the process of updating its 20-year Transportation System Plan (TSP). Think of it as a strategy for investing in roads, bike paths, and transit through 2045. The last time we looked at it was in 2013, and the way that people live, work, and play in Clackamas County has changed dramatically since then. We build the TSP on tons of community input— using workshops, surveys, and online tools—so the priorities reflect what people want: safer streets, better bike and pedestrian options, and improved freight routes. The public advisory committee will be meeting throughout 2026 to offer input, and you can follow along at <https://www.clackamas.us/transportation/tsp-update>.

Alongside the 20-year plan, the county develops a 5-year plan to implement projects based on available funding. While we look for opportunities to replace aging infrastructure like the Bull Run Bridge, we also continue to invest in basic maintenance. You'll be seeing crews this summer in the Highway 26 corridor completing chip sealing to maintain 26 miles of county roads in the Brightwood area, and we'll be adding sidewalks to Welches Road from Highway 26 to Birdie Lane.

The Sunrise Gateway Corridor

One of the biggest projects on the horizon is the Sunrise Gateway Corridor. This isn't just a road upgrade—it's a major investment in safety and connectivity for the growing communities in east Clackamas County. With \$12.5 million in funding secured, the county is moving forward with environmental reviews and design work. The goal? Reduce congestion, improve freight movement, and make it easier for people to get where they need to go without sitting in traffic all day. This project will eventually connect key east-west routes and support future housing and job growth in the eastern areas of the county.

Technology is playing a role too. The county is modernizing nearly 200 traffic signals and rolling out an Intelligent Transportation System to help traffic move more efficiently. That means fewer delays and better traffic flow for everyone.

Concerns about Hwy 26 safety

I hear your concerns about safety on Highway 26, especially in Welches and Rhododendron. There aren't enough safe pedestrian crossings and drivers regularly speed through the area. While the Oregon Department of Transportation ultimately decides how this corridor is maintained, the county will continue to advocate for meaningful improvements, including well-marked pedestrian crossings, enhanced enforcement from our public safety partners, and roadways that serve more than just cars.

Bottom line: Clackamas County is investing heavily in safer roads, better bike and pedestrian options, and smarter traffic systems. These improvements aren't just about getting from point A to point B—they're about making travel easier, safer, and more sustainable for everyone. ■

Ben West has been a Clackamas County Commissioner since 2023 and was formerly a Wilsonville city councilor.