

**US 97 Bend North Corridor Project – Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**3/12/08**

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**CAC Members in attendance:**

Mike Schmidt	Wayne Schnur	Dan Gilder
Michel Bayard	Stew Bennett	Kim Curley
Tim Larocco	Bill Smith	Neil Bryant

**ODOT & COIC Staff in attendance:**

Rick Williams, ODOT	Rex Holloway, ODOT	Amy Pfeiffer, ODOT
Andrew Spreadborough, COIC		

**Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions**

Rex Holloway introduced new member Dan Gilder, who is replacing Dan Hurlbert on the CAC. Introductions were made. Rex reviewed the agenda, and distributed copies of the Public Scoping Summary Report.

**Results of Public Scoping**

Rex Holloway reviewed the Public Scoping report. He said that the scoping process was the first public introduction to the environmental process. Staff shared the Purpose & Need and Goals & Objectives with attendees, and discussed the refinement plan alternatives. The report includes comments received through the scoping process, including online surveys and comments cards.

Rex reviewed the summary report in detail, including noting that approximately 135 public comments were received, and that the main themes of the comments were: Cooley Road; business impacts within the project area; information and updates; and support for the project. Over 300 comments have been received through the online survey. The largest segment of respondents use the corridor one or more times per day, with 98% using a personal vehicle. He reviewed a table that showed the rating of importance of issues related to the project area. Rex reviewed the issues that respondents felt are important considerations. Themes of these responses included: extending Bend Parkway; livability and environment; traffic congestion and flow; safety; land use; stakeholder involvement; and cost effectiveness.

Rex reviewed the responses regarding the Purpose & Need and Goals & Objectives, and noted that 44% viewed them as right on the mark, while 48% said they were pretty close. He noted the opportunities for more comments, and the comments received through the scoping meeting. The upcoming focus group meetings will provide additional comment opportunities. He said that the report includes 9 appendices, which will be posted on the project website.

**Final Purpose and Need Statement**

Rick Williams said that nothing new emerged from the scoping meeting related to the Purpose and Need. He had one-on-one conversations with a couple people who wanted to know why “access” was not in the Purpose and Need. He explained that the Purpose and Need is the statement of the problem that we are trying to solve. Access is a criterion within the Goals and Objectives, and will be a factor used to compare options. We will be shipping the Purpose and Needs, Goals and Objectives to the

Federal Highway Administration for approval. The team is working on developing metrics to measure the goals and objectives, which is not easy for all of the goals (e.g. how do you measure access?). The Purpose and Need, Goals and Objectives are being finalized, though they can be changed over the life of the project. Once the Purpose and Need, Goals and Objectives are locked down, we will be moving into the alternative evaluation process. Then we will narrow down to a couple alternatives and head into the EIS process.

Tim Larocco asked Rick to explain the concept of the highway designation of “expressway” as it relates to Highway 97. Rick said that the designation was made by the Oregon Transportation Commission. The designation has to do with highway standards, and it means ODOT favors through-traffic over local access to the facility. Most highways – including Highways 20 and 126 - are expressways. The goal for Highway 97 is to maintain the entire length of the highway in Oregon as an expressway. It is expected that within 20 years the project area of the highway will experience 61,000 ADT, which is double the current traffic. At that volume, the facility cannot have signal lights. The expressway designation is not a federal requirement; the FHWA requires consistency in the process. He said the FHWA also wants to see a solution that will last for at least 20 years.

Rick Williams asked the CAC if they were comfortable recommending approval of the Purpose Needs, Goals and Objectives to the policy board. Neil Bryant asked if any changes had been proposed. Rick said that the only requested change was to add “access” to the Purpose and Need. Neil asked if a proposed alternative met the Purpose and Need, but did not address access, if it would pass the first screen. Rick answered that it would. Neil asked if it would fail the Goals and Objectives. Rick said that the Goals and Objectives are not pass/fail; they are used to compare options. Neil asked if a project addresses congestion, traffic flow and safety, but closed access – does it pass the first screen? Amy Pfeiffer said that it would, and then the Goals and Objectives would be applied. Rick said that “access” is not a problem that we are trying to solve. Neil pointed out that access to neighborhoods could become worse through an alignment, but that the option could still pass the Purpose and Need screen. Neil stated that he wouldn’t want to see an alternative rejected because it doesn’t meet the standards imposed in Salem, if it is an alternative that meets the community’s needs.

Mike Schmidt noted that comments in the public scoping summary report said that access is a high priority. He said that he doesn’t want to see access get worse. Michel Bayard said that he is more concerned with livability. Bill Smith said that Purpose and Need, Goals and Objectives is the foundation for comparing alternatives, and is used to find the alternative that works the best. Rick likened the process to a funnel – with the first screen fairly large. Those that meet the Purpose and Need advance to the Goals and Objective screening. Neil Bryant asked when the decision will be made to apply a rural or urban standard. Rick Williams said that it is uncertain now because of uncertainties about the Urban Growth Boundary expansion process and eventual boundaries.

***Mike Schmidt moved to recommend approval of the Purpose and Need, Goals and Objectives, to the Policy Board. Kim Curley seconded the motion.***

***In favor: Mike Schmidt, Kim Curley, Bill Smith, Michel Bayard, Stew Bennett, Dan Gilder, Tim Larocco, Wayne Schnur.***

***Opposed: Neil Bryant.***

***Motion passed.***

Rex Holloway discussed the upcoming focus group meetings, noting that four have been scheduled with business and neighborhood associations. He reviewed the focus group agenda, and said that they would be covering the challenges in designing the facility, reviewing alignment maps, and seeking comments from the focus groups on what is important. A second public open house is planned for May or June.

### **Preliminary Evaluation Criteria for Purpose & Need, Goals & Objectives**

Amy Pfeiffer reviewed the Purpose and Need screening criteria, and how it will be applied. She then discussed the Purpose and Need second screen, which will define how well an alignment meets the Oregon Highway Plan standards. Mike Schmidt asked who makes the standards policy. Amy answered that there are several, including the Association of State Highway Transportation Officials (ASHTO) and the Oregon Highway Plan. Mike asked if states have discretion to set standards. Rick Williams said yes, but that they generally use ASHTO standards due to consistency, and the fact that they are data and research-based. Amy said that if an alignment passes the second screening, then it is weighed against the Goals and Objectives. Rex Holloway asked if this information should be taken to the public through the focus groups. The CAC said yes, though should be simplified in format (bulleted items, for instance).

Amy Pfeiffer said that the team is now working on how to measure goals and objectives. She distributed a draft screening criteria document that listed metrics. Mike Schmidt suggested that this be handled through handouts or posters rather than reviewed within the focus group meetings. Amy then reviewed the project vision statement. Mike said that the vision needs to be the first thing we're looking at. Amy reviewed key design and traffic elements that will be considered on the project. The CAC members agreed that this information would be more useful if presented at the focus group meetings in a more simplified/bulleted format, with less technical language. Pictures would be helpful in some cases.

Neil Bryant asked how they will deal with the project's impacts on Empire. Rick Williams said that it will need to be reviewed and addressed through the alternatives. Amy Pfeiffer said that within the alignments where US 20 and 97 are connected, modeling shows the need for six traffic lanes.

Amy Pfeiffer said that the maps on the walls were of alignments that had passed the first Purpose and Need screening. There are many others that have not yet been reviewed. Michel Bayard said it is important to have all of the alternatives reviewed. The CAC members reviewed the maps.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 6:30 p.m.