

**US 97 Bend North Corridor Project – Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)**  
**Meeting Minutes**  
**2/12/2009**

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**CAC Members in attendance:**

Wayne Schnur	Michel Bayard	Stew Bennett
Jeanne Newton (by phone)	Tim Larocco	Mike Lovely
Linda Perelli Wright	Dan Gilder	Neil Bryant

**ODOT & COIC Staff in attendance:**

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

**Public in attendance:**

Jeff Speder (substitute for Michel Bayard when he can not attend meetings)

**Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions**

Rex Holloway opened the meeting and introductions were made.

**Recap of Steering Team Meeting**

Rex distributed copies of the January 27 Steering Team meeting minutes. Rick Williams said that the Steering Team decided to support the CAC and ODOT recommendation to forward two alternatives into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement process, with the East Alternative designated as the agency preferred. This allows ODOT to do more work on the East Alternative. Rick allowed time for the CAC members to look through the minutes, and then asked if anyone had questions.

Jeanne Newton requested an edit on the minutes. The last paragraph on page 5, Mike Schmidt actually said "...how would \$3 to \$5 million per year..." rather than "\$3.5 million" as currently stated in the minutes. She also referenced a comment made by Dennis Luke regarding his concept of extending 3<sup>rd</sup> Street to the west of the mall within the East Alternative. She said this presents a good opportunity to put West Alternative to bed, and asked if there has been further analysis on this concept. Rick Williams said that the group should recall the Existing Alignment alternative, which took 3<sup>rd</sup> street to the west of the mall area. Commissioner Luke's comment basically proposes construction of both the Existing and the East alternatives. This is more than is needed. His proposal should be viewed as a city street option, not part of the project. Jeanne said that her concern is that Commissioner Luke has proposed a seemingly simple solution; if it doesn't make sense or if it is a local road option, can we take it off the table? Rick said that we can't say that it is officially on the table. Rex said that Gary Farnsworth is planning to meet with Dennis Luke and county staff to discuss this topic. Mike Lovely said that he thought Dennis brought up this concept because it costs less and handles traffic better.

Rick Williams asked if there were any other questions/comments on the Steering Team meeting outcomes. Jeanne Newton asked when the Steering Team will next meet. Rex said that a workshop will be proposed for April or May. Rick said that as we get into the field work, there will likely be a lull in the CAC and Steering Team meeting schedule. Check-in points will be identified, and information will be presented to the CAC. Jeanne Newton returned to the Steering Team minutes, and asked that within the section on page 8 where Gary Farnsworth discussed emergency access, that "Robal Road" be added along with the Cooley Road area.

## **Environmental Studies Completed to Date**

Rick Williams reviewed the Environmental Reports summary handout, and noted that an initial quick search review was completed in the project area. Now we are entering into the detailed study phase for the alternatives that are moving forward. The first step is to define the footprint, then detailed studies will follow. Rick said that they do not anticipate anything changing from the initial review, and that he only anticipates socioeconomic impacts such as right-of-way, noise, and business access. The detailed studies will likely not result in anything to report to this group.

Michel Bayard noted that the maps of East A, Option 4 and West E, Option 1 were posted on the wall, and asked if those alternatives/options will be all that are reviewed. Amy Pfeiffer said that they will be looking at up to three north end options for both the East A and West E.

Jeanne Newton said that the only report posted on the project web site is the business summary. She asked if other technical reports will be posted. She noted specific interest in the traffic noise study. Rick Williams said that most preliminary reports are not worth reviewing; they contain very basic information. For instance, some reports only identify background existing conditions. He said that the next set of reports will be of interest. They will show comparisons of the project effects. Amy Pfeiffer said that they can share any info, except some of the archeological review information is confidential. Mike Lovely asked why archeological is confidential. Rick replied that laws protect Native American sites. Tim Larocco asked why information on the Nels Anderson property historic status was released. Rick replied that the historic review is not confidential. In that case, the only determination that was made was if the properties are eligible for historic designation. Neil Bryant said the historic review information is not protected; it is public information.

Michel Bayard asked what follows the technical reports. Rick Williams said that the next step is to compare alternatives and options to identify avoid or mitigate impacts. Michel asked if the CAC will be involved in this process. Rick replied that the CAC will be engaged, and that there will be a public hearing. As for timeline, the technical studies will take 10-12 months from the point where the footprint is established (which is estimated to occur in April).

Neil Bryant said that during the study period, ODOT will need to review the Goals and Objectives. He asked about the timing; as the detailed design process moves forward, when is access spacing considered? Rick replied that access will not be a major consideration during the study period; they will only be reviewing the project layout. If adjustments are made, then those adjustments are compared to the Goals and Objectives. Neil said that timing is an issue; the CAC needs to receive and review information before making recommendations. Rick said that as we go forward, we will need to make multiple variations. These variations will need to be supplied to everyone. Neil said that it seems like the East alternative would result in two options depending on whether or not the railroad cooperates. Rick said that we won't hear from the railroad until we have a defined project; the railroad will not respond to project concepts. Once you begin to talk about grade separation at the rail line, then they will come to the table. They have an interest in closing at-grade crossings.

Tim Larocco said that the Swalley Irrigation District is putting in canal piping in the project area. Rick said that they won't connect with Swalley until later in the process. Dan Gilder suggested that impacts on the mobile home parks could be decreased by moving closer to the railroad line. Rick Williams said that he has been trying to get sewer and septic information on the mobile home parks from DEQ. He was told better to go back to the property owners for this information. Rick said that based on institutional knowledge about drain field locations, if we touch a portion of them it would result in a complete take.

ODOT would be required to find them additional land to locate their drain field. So, if the project touches the mobile home parks, it will be a complete relocation. Rick clarified that he was talking about the Juniper and Hilltop parks, but not the Four Seasons.

Rick asked if there were any other questions regarding the technical study phase. The CAC had no other questions.

### **Upcoming Work**

Amy Pfeiffer said that they are looking at Empire Avenue interchange options on the East alternative. ODOT staff met with the City and County to discuss street improvements that may be necessary. They are also looking to design emergency access into the project. She said that they are still working on north options designs, as well as how the Bend-Redmond Highway connection would work.

Rick Williams said that in the short term, staff will be working on defining the project footprint, and then launching into the technical studies. They will then compare the outcomes to the project Goals and Objectives to see where adjustments are needed. As an example, in regard to the interchange discussions at Old Bend Redmond Highway, they will need to determine what sort of frontage roads or what local road improvements would be necessary. On the West alternative, there are three interchange locations under consideration. The southern interchange location on the East alternatives needs to be a directional interchange. The northern interchange option provides opportunities for connecting to the local street network to the east. On the West alternative, the southern interchange option is not feasible. Michel Bayard asked if the northern interchange can serve as the connection to the east. Rick, replied that it could.

Jeanne Newton asked if the CAC will see more detail on the local connections. She said that this level of information is critical to understanding the impacts to the neighborhoods east of the project area. Rick Williams said that frontage roads will be immediately adjacent to the highway. He said that most of the roads she is concerned about are County and City, and are contained within their Transportation System Plan (TSP). Rick said that ODOT would not propose new road connections. Jeanne said that she understands that the City and County are working closely with ODOT to make sure road connections work. She said that the CAC would benefit from seeing that information. Rick said that ODOT has not yet received information on how local road connections would work. Rex Holloway said that the County is updating its TSP. He also said that he is hearing that the City is not publishing a Northeast Transportation study. They are collecting data for a future update of their TSP, but there will be no published report. Rick said that when their TSP public hearings take place, then the information will be released.

Wayne Schnur asked if the City was supposed to share this information with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC). Rick said that he thinks they will, but their work is conceptual at this point. Neil Bryant said that the OTC emphasis will be on Cooley Road and how to pay for the first phase. Wayne said that at a previous meeting the OTC tried to pin the City down on specifics. He asked if the CAC can encourage the OTC to ask for more information from Bend. Rick said that the initial thought was that Bend would be responsible for paying for the Cooley Road interchange. More recently, we have found that the interchange is neutral; the interchange is not a problem as long as there is an arterial connection to the east. There is no timeframe yet on when the City will build it out.

Jeanne Newton said that she heard that the City's federal stimulus funding will pay for the roundabout at 18<sup>th</sup> and some paving. Rex mentioned that the Murphy Road overcrossing project was also in the funding pipeline. Michel Bayard said that he heard that the full \$1 million that the City will receive will be

directed toward overlay projects. Mike Lovely said that the Murphy Road project is on the federal earmark list.

Amy Pfeiffer said that a workshop has been scheduled with the SIMA consultant to work through access issues on the East alternative. The focus will be on looking at where local road connections will be needed. ODOT will also be looking at how to make Empire Avenue work on the East alternative, and design options for the Old Bend Redmond Highway connection. Once the project footprint is established, a more detailed traffic analysis will be completed. Neil Bryant asked if there needs to be a solution at Empire to have a successful NEPA process. Amy replied that they need to look at that area to determine how to mitigate impacts. Rick said that any impacts will be compared to the “no-build” scenario to determine if the improvements worsen the area as compared to the no-build.

Mike Lovely referred to the East Alternative map, and asked if the overpass bridge is located north of the existing developments or Juniper Ridge. Rick said that the middle interchange option location is north of Juniper Ridge and existing neighborhoods. Amy stressed that they are not planning to build out a full interchange; they just want to look at having that option in the future. Until the City roads are connected, there is no need for a full access interchange.

Rick reviewed the list of technical reports. He said that the right-of-way and noise studies will be important. He said that as the significant reports come in, then we’ll want to convene the group.

Linda Perelli Wright said that after DEIS is produced and comments received, then there is a winnowing period where the project becomes clear. She said that it sounds like most of the options will be carried through DEIS and not dropped until later. Rick said that there is not necessarily any benefit in dropping anything early. As we move forward with East as the agency preferred alternative, we will not do much design and analysis on the West alternative unless we run into problems with East. However, if the West wasn’t carried forward, then we couldn’t go back to it later if there were problems with the East.

Michel Bayard asked how the existing noise level will be used during the noise study. If you look at all options, they tend to move local traffic from Highway 97 to 3<sup>rd</sup> street. Therefore, the new traffic on Highway 97 will be less because a lot of traffic will remain on the local 3<sup>rd</sup> street. Rick replied that the study will project noise 20 years out, and will assign a noise to the new highway. He said that he didn’t know how they will look at the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street noise; he said he would look into this further. Jeff Speder asked what ODOT’s responsibility is in regard to the noise study, and if it includes 3<sup>rd</sup> Street as well as Highway 97. Rick replied that if we end up funding an improvement, then its part of the noise study.

Mike Lovely asked if the East alternative is built along the railroad line, will it generate additional noise. Since the neighborhoods were there first, how does that affect the noise impact requirements? Rick said that they will look at noise level thresholds. You experience a change in noise when traffic is starting and stopping. With the new alignment, there will be a more steady flow of traffic. When you get rid of the Cooley Road at-grade crossing, you also eliminate train whistles. There may be a reduction in noise through this project. Or, the noise level may increase for neighborhoods in close proximity to the project, but there could be a reduction in noise farther away. Dan Gilder asked about streets that could be closed should an underpass be designed. Rick discussed connection options, and said it will be the City’s decision.

Neil Bryant said that he will be interested to review the decision matrix to see how it plays into Goals and Objectives. Rick said that a lot of information comes in piecemeal, and then decisions made. He said

there will be a lengthy timeline. The immediate goal is to get the footprint, then we will revisit the matrix throughout the design process.

Mike Lovely said that he'd like to see a map of vacant properties in the project area, with property owners identified. Wayne Schnur said he had maps, and will get a copy to Mike. Neil Bryant asked Michel Bayard if the two most northern interchange options would be detrimental to the HUNS neighborhood. Michel answered yes on the West, but not on the East alignment.

Wayne Schnur talked about punching Robal Road over the Railroad and through to the Boyd Acres neighborhood. He asked if a pedestrian crossing over Highway 97 is that possible. Rick said that they would need to negotiate with the railroad, who would not allow an at-grade crossing at Robal. So the connection would need to be grade separated. Regarding the pedestrian connection, Rick said that the City has trail program. If the pedestrian crossing component came through the City, it may be possible.

Wayne Schnur said that the SIMA consultant proposed moving the railroad farther east at Cooley Road. He asked if that possible. Rick said that the railroad owns 100 feet of right-of-way – enough room for two rail lines. They are required to provide 25 feet of separation between the tracks. In a 100 foot right-of-way, there would be little wiggle room. To make a difference, we would need to take a large portion of their right-of-way. Wayne asked if new property was provided, would it become possible. Rick said that ODOT would need to improve the land, including building a rail bed. By the time all the work required to satisfy the railroad is completed, the costs are about the same as moving the highway. Rick said that he doesn't think it is an option.

Rex Holloway asked if there were any more questions. The CAC had no more questions.

### **CAC Meeting Schedule**

Rex said that there will not be a need for a CAC meeting in March, and we may not need a meeting in April or May either. To be safe, Rex asked the CAC members to keep the April and May meeting dates on their calendars: April 8, May 13.

Rex distributed an updated project timeline. He said the draft EIS will come out about a year from now. He noted that the timeline has changed, primarily due to the additional work on the West alternative. Michel Bayard asked what will be included in the draft EIS. Rick Williams said that the document will include technical detail; comparisons between the East and West alternatives and northern interchange locations; analysis; design detail; and a recommendation on which way to go. He said that there will then be a public review period of 45 days, and then a hearing. Another publication of the document will follow with additional opportunity for public comment. Finally, the EIS will be published and a Record of Decision will follow.

### **Adjourn**

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.