US 97 Bend North Corridor Project – Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)
Meeting Minutes
4/8/2009

CAC Members in attendance:

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

ODOT & COIC Staff in attendance:

Rex Holloway, ODOT	Jon Heacock, ODOT	Rick Williams, ODOT
Andrew Spreadborough, COIC		

***Public in attendance*:**
Jeff Speder (substitute for Michel Bayard when he can not attend meetings); Joel Gisler

Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions
Rex Holloway opened the meeting and introductions were made. Mike Schmidt said that he is contributing project updates to the www.onthego-go.com website, and encouraged CAC members to check in on the site.

Results of additional work on the east A Alternative, and recommendations
Rick Williams said that there has been a change to how the alternatives are designated – up to now there was an East and West alternative with several options for termini on the north end. The project team has consulted with the Federal Highway Administration regarding the project. The FHWA recommended designating additional alternatives since each option has different termini with different impacts. There is now a West 1 alternative, East 1 (interchange to the north), East 2 (interchange in the middle), and East 3 (interchange to the south). The different alternatives are based on the interchange location.

Rick reviewed the timeline, saying that they are ready to start the detailed environmental study. He said that there will not be a lot of new information to share with the CAC. Mike Schmidt asked if the CAC can see detail on the process for the environmental analysis. Rick said that there is a gant chart under development, but ODOT is still negotiating the process and timeline with the consultant. He said that they can send out more information next month. Mike Schmidt asked if the consultant will go through each alternative in order. Rick said that it depends on the analysis; some analysis is done all at once for all alternatives. Mike Schmidt asked if a comparison between alternatives will be available when the environmental analysis is completed. Rick said that they will have technical analysis, though most analysis will not affect the project Purpose and Needs, Goals and Objectives. He said it is probable that the only impacts are socio-economic. So most of the analysis will be a wash across the alternatives, but there will be a few that vary. In terms of the geographic area that will be covered, there will be one study in the areas that are common to all alternatives.

Neil Bryant asked if an alternative doesn't provide access, what happens then. Rick said that it is not a pass/fail test. They will determine how well an alternative meets each criteria, and comparisons can then be made. Neil Bryant asked how access weighs against socio-economic impacts. Rick said that access is hard to quantify; it is not a hard science like a noise study. Future conditions are unknown. They can calculate projected changes to traffic volume, but it is hard to determine its impact on driver behavior. Neil said that they can provide traffic information for the new Highway 97 alternatives, and how it

impacts businesses if good access is not provided. He agreed that there is some conjecture, but it is something that can be documented and is a negative impact on employment and jobs. Rick Williams said that it is hard to differentiate the impact on businesses resulting in a road project from broader economic conditions. Neil said that it is as easy to determine as socio-economic impacts. Rick said that socio-economic impact is a different bar to reach; the method for evaluating socio-economic impacts is laid out very clearly in the federal requirements.

Michel Bayard said that there is a difference in business access between East 1 and East 2 because the way traffic is routed. He asked if they are viewed differently in terms of business access. Mike Schmidt said that the Steering Team heard that the project team is trying to establish the footprint on the north end, and they also received information on the interchange on the south end. The footprint is being looked at for impacts rather than advantages. Rick stressed that the interchange styles are different on each alternative, which allows them to study all the interchanges and to mix and match best options. Rick said that there is not a simple answer on access; it is a Goal and Objective that will be looked at. Joel Gisler said that we should be concerned with business relocations – if businesses are not there the access does not matter. Rick said that the project team met with emergency service providers yesterday, and that they may be able to run models on response times. He said that once we have a major alternative selected, we can work to provide access for the emergency services. This will be the same process in considering business access.

Neil Bryant asked about interchange spacing. Jon Heacock said that the interchange spacing standards are 1.9 miles in urban areas, 3 miles in rural. Within this project, we have tried to be near 1.9 miles, but the West alternative does not accomplish that. The project team is now looking at how the interchanges operate.

Mike Lovely asked if the 3rd Street intersection on the East 2 alternative is equidistant between Deschutes Market Road and Empire Avenue. Jon Heacock said that it is 2.5 to 3 miles from Deschutes Market, and about 1.9 miles to Empire. Mike Lovely said that East 2 would serve the project purposes for a longer time period than East 1. Michel Bayard said that if you want a full interchange, you need more space. Alternative 2 has that problem.

Jon said that we now know what we are studying, and that we always have the "no build" as well. If access is a fatal flaw, then they would be back to the no build option. This would be the likely outcome to a process if you cannot achieve adequate operations along with the Goals and Objectives. Michel Bayard asked if the no build could mean improving the Cooley Road intersection only. Jon said it could, as well as other measures that could improve the area.

Jon Heacock reviewed the alternative maps that were posted on the wall:

West 1 – Jon said that they looked at access in the Robal Road area, and are trying to determine if additional ramp lanes provide better access. In the Nels Anderson area they are trying to create frontage roads for access into the Empire area. These options were included in the traffic study; we don't yet know how well this will operate. More access could degrade highway function. Jon noted that there are two other north end options for the West alternative. The map displays the option with the most impacts for study purposes. This is done not to bias the alternative, but to ensure the largest footprint is covered. Tim Larocco asked with the 60 mph design standard discussed earlier, will the West alternative be criticized for not meeting the goals due to being designed slower. Jon said that they have discussed dropping speeds on the West alternative so that you can provide more access. But with the design standards that would be included, the result may be excess congestion on the West alternative, but it would be designed

to operate at a higher speed. Tim asked if interstate freight providers favor the West alternative due to mobility; he asked if ODOT is receiving more pressure for serving the interstate traffic due to federal standards. Jon said that ODOT's standards are not beyond the federal requirements, and that they will move trucks through.

East 1 – Jon said that the project team looked at if there is a way to relieve traffic on Highway 97 and 3rd Street in the Empire area, while providing access into the mall area. They looked at adding a ramp at Robal Road or Nels Anderson Road. The result was moving the bottlekneck from Empire to 3rd Street, and it impacted a lot of property. Because of traffic impacts, they determined that it was not the right thing to do. This alternative provides a ramp option to drop off traffic heading north at Robal Road, which provides an opportunity to get to the west side of Robal Road. This ramp would likely reduce traffic on the Robal - 3rd Street intersection. Traffic will not be able to access the ramp from Highway 20 heading toward the north, though. Mike Lovely pointed out that Highway 20 traffic can proceed north to Robal or Cooley.

East 2 - Jon said that this alternative uses the existing Sisters Loop Ramp (SLR) as a local city street to provide relief on 3rd street. This may encourage more drivers to use 3rd Street, and may help left turns at Robal Road. There would be a frontage road along Highway 20 on the south side of the Cascade Village mall.

East 3 – This alternative has no Robal Road ramp or SLR usage. It provides space for a bridge where the SLR ramp is located, reducing the need to expand the footprint. It adds 20-25 feet of footprint providing the Robal Road access via SLR or via direct Highway 20 offramp.

Jon Heacock noted that they are getting to the point where more data and traffic analysis will be available within a defined footprint.

Mike Schmidt asked whether there will be left and right turns allowed at Robal Road on both ramp designs. Jon said the designs are not far enough along. Mike Lovely observed that OB Riley may become a route for accessing mall area via Robal Road. Tim Larocco asked if there is any reason why the ramp at Empire Avenue on the west side of the parkway couldn't go over the railroad tracks. Jon Heacock said that space is a challenge; this would impact the canal and businesses. Rick Williams said that anything going over the railroad must provide 22 feet of clearance over top of rail. Joel Gisler said that it appears that ODOT is looking at adding access for people who already have access, and not looking at areas without access. Jon said that they are trying to address all concerns about access, and want to model the alternative with the access included.

Linda Perelli Wright said that the alternatives are showing a single point interchange at Empire, and asked if the project team will be looking at other interchange designs. Jon said that they will not be looking at others because this design works best for spacing and capacity. Interchange options were looked at earlier, and the SPUI was determined to be the best design option.

Wayne Schnur asked if in the area north of Empire is there enough room to extend bridges to provide access to the Nels Anderson Road. Jon Heacock said that it is possible, but they are not studying this option. He said that it would not make a traffic impact, though it could be looked at if mitigation is needed.

Mike Schmidt said that in areas with "right in - right out" only access, trucks ignore the posted rules and turn left. If a median doesn't make it impossible, they will do it. Jon said that right in - right out designs

are more acceptable for people to use. Jon said that in future meetings they will show more about how connections will be made to the local system,

Michel Bayard said that it would be nice to see what operational improvements could be made on the no build alternative. Rick Williams said that they carry the no build for comparison only. If we get through this process and reach the decision point and decide not to build, then you look at measures to improve the current alignment. Neil Bryant pointed out that we also could reach a no build outcome if there are no funds available for the project.

Neil Bryant asked if the Robal Road ramp improvements would eliminate the need for property developers to contribute to improvements at Robal or Cooley. Jon said that the growth projections have been considered in the traffic modeling and traffic analysis. This would not likely eliminate the need for contribution for any additional trips in this area.

Wayne Schnur asked why a traffic light at Highway 20 and Cooley would be considered. Jon replied that spacing standards will not allow for an interchange, and the modeling is not showing the need. A signal works for 20 year planning horizon for project growth.

May 19 Public Open House

Rex Holloway said that the May 19 open house meeting will be informational primarily. He said the open house is scheduled for 5:30 to 7:00 PM at Sky View Middle School.

Rex said that the next CAC meeting is scheduled for May 13. We will run through the presentation and get feedback as we prepare for the May 19 open house. He said that we will also talk about access management.

Tim Larocco asked when the Steering Team meeting minutes will be posted. Rex said that the public session minutes are posted on the project web site, but not the work session meeting minutes. Rex said to let him know if you want work session minutes.

Jeanne Newton said that on the alternative maps the word “mountain” is spelled incorrectly.

Adjourn

Meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m.