

**US 97 Bend North Corridor Project – Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)  
Meeting Minutes  
2/10/10**

---

**CAC Members in attendance:**

Mike Schmidt	Wayne Schnur	Mike Lovely
Tim Larocco	Jeff Speder	Linda Perelli Wright
Neil Bryant	Stew Bennett	Kim Curley
Michel Bayard		

**ODOT & COIC Staff in attendance:**

Rex Holloway, ODOT	Gary Farnsworth, ODOT	Andrew Spreadborough, COIC
Amy Pfeiffer, ODOT		

**Others in Attendance:** David Ditz, Juniper Ridge; Ann Marie Colucci, North Bend Consortium; Nataalka Hamilton, North Bend Consortium; Liz Dickson, Bend Associates; Suzanne Butterfield, Swalley Irrigation District; Carolyn Perry, Tumalo Community Association; Nick Arnis, City of Bend.

**Welcome, Meeting Overview and Introductions**

Mike Schmidt opened the meeting, and introductions were made.

Mike Schmidt said that he will be leaving the community, so will be resigning from the Citizen Advisory Committee. Therefore, the first order of business is the election of new CAC chair. He said that both Linda Perelli Wright and Michel Bayard have expressed interest in serving as the chair.

Linda Perelli Wright and Michel Bayard left the room; the CAC discussed the candidates. Neil Bryant moved to approve Michel Bayard as Chair, and Linda Perelli Wright as Vice Chair. Mike Lovely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mike Schmidt thanked the CAC for allowing him to chair and for CAC member volunteer efforts on this project. He stated appreciation for ODOT's commitment to involving the community. Mike turned the meeting over to Michel to chair.

Neil Bryant noted that the last meeting minutes were not attached to the email announcement for this meeting. Rex Holloway said that he will send the minutes next week.

**Update on Alternative Development**

Amy Pfeiffer said that several workshops were held last fall, with the resulting “downsized alternative” concepts brought to the CAC in November for review and discussion. Since that time ODOT has done some design work, traffic analysis, drafted detailed maps, and run a preliminary impact analysis in relation to the Goals and Objectives and Purpose and Need. Additionally, ODOT has received comments from individuals and groups. Amy reviewed downsized alternatives.

**Existing DS-1**

- Highway 97 stays where it is.
- Some intersection improvements are included.
- Creates a 6 lane segment from Empire Avenue to Cooley Road.
- Provides a right exit onto Robal road.

ODOT is not recommending that Existing DS-1 be brought forward for further review:

- Poorest traffic operation compared to other downsized alternatives on both the local system and highway.
- Does not provide an alternate corridor for north south travel.
- Requires access closure and creates traffic circulation problems.
- Provides only a single US 97 – Highway 20 direct connection.
- Does not operate well as a statewide route.
- Cost is about the same as the other DS alternatives.

Mike Schmidt said that a lot of alternative maps are currently posted on the project website which creates a lot of confusion for the public. He appreciated the level of detail, but suggested that the site layout be clarified or that previous map drafts be removed.

### **West DS-1**

- The new US 97 corridor would be developed to the west.
- A partial interchange would be placed on the north end of the project area near the cemetery; this interchange would provide a southbound off-ramp and a northbound on-ramp.
- Provides more US 20 direct connections.
- Would result in a large pavement cross section in the area where US 97 and Highway 20 would run parallel.
- Operates well on Highway 97 and US 20, with some congestion on the local system.

ODOT is not recommending that West DS-1 be brought forward for further review:

- Difficult to phase in fundable packages – would have a huge up-front cost.
- The dual corridor has a very large footprint; Highway 97 would be elevated, US 20 at grade. This creates challenges for maintenance and snow removal, as well as creating a physical transportation barrier.
- Results in congestion on the local system.

### **East DS-2**

This is a new alternative.

- Aligns US 97 along the railroad tracks.
- Connects to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street with a partial interchange.
- Differs from other East downsized alternative; provides for a direct connection from Highway 97 to 3<sup>rd</sup> Street.

ODOT is recommending the East DS-2 for further study.

### **East DS-1**

- Differs from East DS-2 in that it provides a full interchange to the north.
- Allows for opportunity for future connections to local grid system.

ODOT is recommending East DS-1 for further study.

Neil Bryant asked where on East DS-2 a driver would access 3<sup>rd</sup> Street heading north on Highway 97 if the driver missed the exit before the mall area.

Answer: Deschutes Market Road would be the next interchange.

Michel Bayard asked if Bowery Lane improvements are planned on the East DS alternatives.  
Answer: Have not designed at that level yet.

Mike Schmidt asked about the status of the west alternative analysis.  
Answer: ODOT has not done detailed traffic or environmental analysis on any of the downsized alternatives.

Michel Bayard asked about how a driver would access the mall area and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street heading south on Highway 97.  
Answer: Demonstrated the access points on the downsized alternative maps.

Tim Larocco asked about the cost estimates for the downsized alternatives.  
Answer: Detailed cost estimates have not been prepared; initial estimates:  
East - \$170-\$200 million  
West - \$180-\$220 million  
Existing - \$120-\$160 million

Michel Bayard said that at the HUNS meeting with Bob Bryant there was discussion about designing the East DS alternatives so that it would be possible to take a u-turn in the area north of Cooley Road/south of the directional interchange, to get back to mall area. Has ODOT discussed this concept?  
Answer: It has not yet been looked at in detail, but we can during the DEIS phase. This is a very tight corridor, however.

Stew Bennett asked what happens at Empire Avenue.  
Answer: Empire Avenue is consistent on all of the downsized alternatives – no changes to the status quo. A few minor improvements would be made, but no full buildout of this intersection/area.

Wayne Schnur asked if there are plans for a signal light on 3<sup>rd</sup> Street at the Sherman Road area.  
Answer: Have not got to that level of detail.

Michel Bayard discussed the phasing of the DS-2 options, and said that phasing allows time for looking at the alignment of Highway 97 along railroad beyond the downsized alternative project area. This is the opportunity to get the alignment set for future phases; we won't have the ability to do so in the future.  
Answer: Have not worked out all of the phases yet, but understand that phasing is possible.

Mike Schmidt said that other states are looking at reducing the number of left turn movements, and have also implemented other measures to improve mobility. Where there is full movement at an intersection, there are pressures to develop in that area. We need to be aware of this; land use is critical for decision-making. We are already seeing this at Empire Avenue, and we don't want the same problems on north end.

Stew Bennett asked for an explanation of the blue line at Fort Thompson – east of Highway 97.  
Answer: This road provides local access to properties in the area; it allows emergency services, with gated access to Highway 97.

Linda Perelli Wright asked if the Cooley Road improvement would be built first; what would be the number of lanes, size of the improvement, and other design questions.

Answer: ODOT would work with City on the design, since it is a City road.

Wayne Schnur asked if improvements are planned at Deschutes Market Road, in anticipation of increased traffic from vehicles turning around if they miss the exit to the mall area.

Answer: The traffic folks will be looking at it, and there will likely be tweaks as we study the impacts.

Liz Dickson asked if improvements occurring outside of UGB have been analyzed.

Answer: We are looking at necessary land use goal exceptions. This in part is why the new East DS-2 alternative was developed – due to input received on impacts and benefits. As we get into the detailed analysis, we think we will be able to address specific impacts within these two alternatives.

Michel Bayard asked if impacts on neighborhoods and businesses will be analyzed.

Answer: Yes, and environmental justice and environmental impacts as well. We are trying to balance inputs and identify a way to address the project purpose, which is focused on the functioning of Highway 97.

Michel said that he has a concern about precluding future location of the highway alignment along the railroad farther north of the project area, if we lock in a downsized alternative now. Mike Schmidt pointed out that this project will have a 20 year life. Gary Farnsworth said the East downsized alternatives are a reasonable approach to solve the problem. The entire Highway 97 corridor is a longer term issue. ODOT will be looking at developing a median along the entire route of Highway 97 between Bend and Redmond. This will need to be built incrementally.

Tim Larocco asked if the Swalley Irrigation development near Empire Avenue will be considered on the East DS-2.

Answer: We will be trying to address utility conflicts; currently though the primary concern is road geometry. We will be looking at needed changes on Empire Avenue between Highway 97 and 3<sup>rd</sup> Street. .

Jeff Speder asked if there is an ability to develop a direct Highway 20 to Highway 97 connection on the East alternatives.

Answer: These alternatives address the project purpose and need, while not precluding this sort of improvement in the future. The Highway 20-Highway 97 direct connection is not a part of this project.

Neil Bryant asked when the mobility standards will be reviewed and modified.

Answer: As the focus shifts to the downsized alternatives, we need to look again at the mobility standards. We will need to look at how we can get close to those standards. Neil said that he doesn't think we will meet them all. He asked how the CAC will be engaged when the standards are reviewed. Gary Farnsworth said that this discussion happens at the Oregon Transportation Commission. He said that the OTC expectation is that mobility standards are discussed with stakeholders, and that we ask the degree to which stakeholders are willing to live with more congestion. The CAC (or anyone for that matter) can weigh in; the CAC will be asked to look at tradeoffs on impacts, so mobility standards could come into play. Neil suggested that the CAC has an interest in weighing in on this in the future.

Liz Dickson asked if the Oregon Trucking Association is being consulted on this process.

Answer: The trucking association is certainly an important stakeholder, but we talk to a lot of groups.

Mike Schmidt asked if trucking companies consider congestion levels when planning routes. Stew Bennett replied that it is considered, and trucks typically attempt to avoid congestion. Wayne pointed out the per-minute cost for operating a truck, and that congestion levels impact the cost of trucking.

### **Upcoming Steering Team Meeting – February 24**

Gary Farnsworth said that the ODOT staff recommendation to the Steering Team will be to forward the East DS-1 and East DS-2 alternatives. He said that the CAC chair and/or vice chair will have the opportunity for input at the Steering Team meeting. He said that a lot of attendees are anticipated, and that review materials will be posted in advance of the meeting. Michel Bayard asked what the expected outcome will be. Gary replied that they will be looking for consensus from the Steering Team on how to move forward on the environmental process.

Neil Bryant asked if an analysis of the alternatives will be available online, along with the maps. Gary said that a staff recommendation that contains that analysis will be included in the Steering Team meeting materials. He said that if CAC members have specific questions, they should direct them to Rex Holloway. Neil asked that the materials be sent by email when they become available.

Tim Larocco asked how long the Draft Environmental Impact Statement process will take. Gary Farnsworth said that the timeline depends upon the number of alternatives being analyzed. The goal would be a range of 6 months to a year from now. Michel Bayard asked if ODOT is required to look at more than one alternative. Amy Pfeiffer said that a reasonable range of alternatives must be studied, but we are not required to look at more than one. Tim Larocco asked if the technical analysis documents are available, specifically on the environmental work. Amy replied that documents are available for the work that has been completed; she said to let her know if there is something that CAC members are looking for.

Mike Schmidt asked if ODOT staff will be recommending the East DS alternatives, should the CAC form an opinion on this. Neil Bryant said that another meeting may be necessary, particularly since review is needed on the new DS-2 alternative. Gary said that he will recommend to Steering Team that there be sufficient time for CAC comments.

Michel Bayard asked for the CAC members to discuss any concerns they have regarding the proposed ODOT recommendation to the Steering Team. Jeff Speder said that he has concern on East DS-2 if northbound Highway 97 drivers miss the mall area exit, then they will need to travel all the way to the Deschutes Market Road interchange to turn around. He suggested identifying a way to accommodate an off ramp before traveling that far north. Mike Schmidt pointed out that drivers would likely make that mistake only once. Mike Lovely suggested that the issue could be addressed in part through signage. Tim Larocco said that similar access confusion is still an issue in the Nels Anderson road area; truckers still get lost in that area. Wayne Schnur agreed that there is a concern about the distance for truckers may have to travel due to a loss of access to the mall area. He said that he is not seeing access roads that adequately address this problem.

Liz Dickson said that she is concerned about development occurring beyond cemetery, as well as plans south of Cooley Road. She said that improvements from Cooley Road to the cemetery make some sense. She is concerned about the number of trips that will be taken out of direction if a U-turn is not accommodated. Neil Bryant agreed that this could affect retail access, and make customers upset. He said that we need to provide something that allows people to come back sooner than the Butler Market interchange. He encouraged presenters to point out to the Steering Team that the CAC just received the East DS-2 alternative concept.

Linda Perelli Wright said that most look to the City to be a partner on this, and expect that they have sensible growth management plans. A lot of this project will depend upon how the City accommodates growth.

Gary Farnsworth asked for the CAC to think of this as an ongoing process. Once we have a plan regarding an alternative, we'll know how to address and manage growth, land use, and other issues over time. He said that we do not need to have this all done within five years; we need to understand how to plan over time. The focusing on a single corridor makes it easier to work through impacts. He said that he is confident that we can work out the incremental steps once we have the corridor identified. He said that he has not heard today that folks are arguing in support of continued study of the West and Existing corridors.

Mike Schmidt said that he supports the staff recommendation to focus on the East DS-2 and East DS-1 alternatives. He suggested that ODOT move forward with these alternatives, with the CAC caveats noted.

### **Critique and adjourn**

Neil Bryant said that he would like to re-convene prior to the Steering Team meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup>.

The next standing meeting date of the CAC is March 10.