

APPENDIX A

# Summary of Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

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# Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

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## Open Houses

Three open houses, advertised in the *Sheridan Sun* and *Smoke Signals* local newspapers, and in newsletters mailed to area residents and business owners, were held as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Place</b>
May 18, 1998	Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community Center
November 9, 1998	Grand Ronde Elementary School
April 7, 1999	Grand Ronde Elementary School

The following pages describe the topics discussed and issues raised at each of the three open houses.

### **May 18, 1998, Open House**

#### **Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Community Center**

Thirty-three citizens attended the open house and 43 citizens mailed, phoned, or e-mailed comments.

**Issues.** Issues raised by the attending citizens included: dangerous turns at intersections of ORE 18 with Grand Ronde Road, ORE 22 at Valley Junction, Fort Hill Road, Willamina, and ORE 22 at Grand Ronde Agency; unsafe conditions east of Fort Hill; and worn road conditions and curves on ORE 22 between Valley Junction and Grand Ronde Agency. There were questions about bridge widening in the H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor and about how steering committees are formed. There were comments about the difficulties of building a frontage road behind the Grand Ronde store and information about a potential wetland and floodplain area northeast of the Valley Junction bridge.

The following issues were collected from the comment forms. Commenters responded to the question, "What are the biggest problems along the corridor?"

- Driver related issues included speeding, tailgating, drunk driving, and unsafe passing.
- Traffic volume issues included too much traffic congestion, especially on summer weekends, difficulty making left turns from connecting roads, and slow travel.
- Roadway issues included not enough lanes and lanes decreasing from 3 to 2 between Fort Hill and Wallace Bridge, causing a bottleneck and conditions for unsafe passing.
- Access issues included difficulty getting on or off ORE 18 from side roads.
- Traffic signal issues included the need to slow traffic at Grand Ronde, Valley Junction, and Fort Hill; signals may be needed.

- Enforcement issues included the lack of police presence and high speeds when enforcement is not around; on the other hand, a show of force occurs with the speed box and police visibility.
- Accident issues included too many accidents and deaths, worse since the Casino was built; the difficulty getting onto ORE 18 from ORE 22, and a notation of accidents at MP 17.5.

Responding to the question, “What are the most dangerous or congested areas?” commenters replied, in order of number of comments: Valley Junction, Fort Hill, Grand Ronde Road, Fort Hill to Wallace Bridge, and in general, locations from McMinnville to Lincoln City.

Issues raised by the Steering Committee included unpermitted new accesses, standing water and flooding on the highway, and rest stops.

**Proposed Solutions.** Citizens at the open house proposed the following solutions:

- Traffic signals at Grand Ronde and Fort Hill;
- Frontage roads using abandoned railroads as an access road or as part of a couplet or using access roads in combination with a signal at A.R. Ford Road.
- Additional lanes extended from Fort Hill beyond A.R. Ford Road or four lanes for the whole segment of highway and the addition of turn lanes between Fort Hill and the H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor.

Other general suggestions included: adding median barriers west of Fort Hill; repainting the striping; adding grooves to alert drivers approaching intersections; adding signals or slow zone at Grand Ronde and ORE 18; using rail and reducing chip trucks on the highway; and improving local accesses to connect the north and south without having to use ORE 18.

Solutions suggested from commenters using the comment form were:

- Signs – need one for the Casino turn-off
- Signals – need one at Grand Ronde or at all three intersections; signals will back up traffic; time signals to work together
- General – need more patrolling, encourage rail use, limit speed to 45 mph from Grand Ronde to Thole’s; drive with lights on

The Steering Committee suggested a light is needed at the McMinnville turn-off at the overpass. The Committee also suggested studying rail options, including an excursion train to the Casino.

### **November 9, 1998, Open House Grand Ronde Elementary School**

Nearly 100 people attended this open house. They viewed and commented on various options that the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees had developed. They commented on the positive and negative aspects of proposals for options at Andy Riggs Road, A.R. Ford Road, a by-pass of ORE 18, the Casino area, Grand Ronde Road, Fort Hill

Road, Jahn Road, Valley Junction, Wallace Bridge area, and miscellaneous subjects, as follows:

- Andy Riggs Road—commenters felt an extension and new bridge are not necessary, would impact the environment, and would cater to a certain group.
- A.R. Ford Road—residents in the areas were against an interchange at that location.
- By-pass—some commenters supported the idea of a by-pass south of the South Yamhill River that would avoid ORE 18 at Grand Ronde and between the Casino and Wallace Bridge.
- Casino area—residents were concerned about accesses, frontage roads, and out-of-direction travel.
- Grand Ronde Road—commenters expressed a variety of opinions about options. They were not in favor of a road parallel to Grand Ronde Road; wanted sidewalks and provisions for bicycles; liked the relocated 4-lane option and the couplet option and wanted to keep the interchange as far as possible from the school, churches, and library.
- Fort Hill Road—citizens preferred an overpass option and promoted access to the commercial area.
- Jahn Road—residents mentioned there are only 10 residences on the road, not high volume traffic.
- Valley Junction—commenters favored an overpass (ORE 22 over ORE 18) and thought a signal would bring traffic to a standstill.
- Wallace Bridge area—some suggested reducing the speed of the traffic coming from Salem and others said leave the area alone.
- General—Suggestions were made for painting new fog lines and the potential for carpooling. Some commenters thought the open house was helpful, others disagreed. Some felt the meetings should be held at neutral community sites and not in the tribal facilities.

The Steering and Technical Advisory Committee members gathered the public comments and addressed them as they worked on adding, subtracting, and refining various proposals and options.

#### **April 7, 1999, Open House Grand Ronde Elementary School**

This was a joint open house with the Regional Problem Solving Committee. Seventy-two citizens attended and 24 completed a survey about land use and the three possible interchange proposals for Grand Ronde, Valley Junction and Fort Hill. Attendees reviewed the proposals developed by the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees. These proposals reflected citizen's comments from the previous open houses and other communications.

An item of major interest was the proposal for an access road between Fort Hill and the Wallace Bridge area. Residents expressed support for such a road.

Attendees expressed concern about loss of private approach roads to ORE 18.

## **Public Hearing**

ODOT held a public hearing on November 7, 2002 at the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde Governance Center. The purpose of the public hearing was to present the project Build and No Build alternatives, as well as the interchange proposal to replace the ORE 18/Fort Hill Road intersection, answer questions from the public, and provide project information to those requesting it. Persons attending the public hearing were invited to provide written comments and/or oral testimony. Approximately 100 people attended the hearing to discuss the project and provide oral and/or written testimony.

## **Focus Group Meetings**

**September 16, 1998**

**Arts Guild, Methodist Church**

Approximately 12 people attended this informal meeting. Attendees suggested new alternatives and expressed concern about loss of business property at the Grand Ronde intersection.

**September 20, 1998**

**Arts Guild, Methodist Church; evening meeting at Thole's Business**

Ten citizens attended the afternoon meeting at the Methodist Church. They were concerned about alternatives that might increase traffic along Grand Ronde Road and might adversely impact businesses or historic sites or sites that might be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The evening meeting was held at George and Kathy Thole's business. Attendees expressed dissatisfaction with any alternative that removed direct private approach roads to ORE 18 that would cause removal of structures. They made suggestions for right-turn lanes on Grand Ronde Road that may help improve the local situation.

**May 22, 2000**

**Coyote Joe's Café, Willamina**

Approximately 20 citizens who live within the project area, especially neighbors near or on Fort Hill and South Yamhill River Roads, invited two ODOT staff to meet with them to explain the status of the project and discuss the proposals for the Fort Hill intersection and other items. The citizens expressed their opposition to the project unless an interchange with an overpass connecting Fort Hill Road to South Yamhill River Road was part of the plan. They also wanted the access road between Fort Hill and Wallace Bridge to be built before or at the same time as the Fort Hill intersection project. Safety was a main issue. Crossing ORE 18 was considered dangerous. Along with safety, time was an issue for those with elderly or disabled family members who could need emergency medical attention.

For more information about public involvement, including meeting notes, letters and recorded comments, see the *H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor to Steel Bridge Road Corridor Refinement Plan, Appendix B*.

## Steering Committee Meetings

The Steering Committee met 15 times between May 1999 and October 2000.

The Steering Committee meetings focused on developing, reviewing and refining solutions and options. Citizens often attended the Steering Committee meetings and participated in the discussions. The committee members reviewed information presented to them by the Technical Advisory Committee and others who provided them with information such as traffic volume statistics and projections and highway standards. At the fifth Steering Committee meeting the members reviewed a summary of the local resident's and the Technical Advisory Committee meetings. They updated and discussed new options and alternatives, based on citizen and technical input. By the sixth meeting some options were dismissed from further consideration. At the eighth meeting members discussed the advantages and disadvantages of a by-pass.

At further meetings Steering Committee members discussed phasing of the projects comprising the individual construction phases, reviewed a draft of the *H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor to Steel Bridge Road Corridor Refinement Plan*, looked at a new Valley Junction interchange option, and discussed re-routing Fort Hill Road east of the Fort Hill Lumber Company mill. They discussed the alignment of the access road between Fort Hill and Wallace Bridge. The alignment is aimed at reducing environmental impacts to wetlands. They also reviewed the impacts of access management rules for ORE 18 once it became an expressway. Expressways call for specific access standards for distances between interchanges and other access points that may not be met for some of the projects and would likely require major deviations.

At the fourteenth meeting the members agreed upon an at-grade realignment of the Fort Hill intersection and encouraged building the access road between Fort Hill and Wallace Bridge concurrent with the intersection work and the addition of another east bound lane east of Fort Hill. The Casino/Valley Junction interchange was agreed upon based on its technical and engineering benefits, although property access was a concern. An access road that extends South Street in Bunnsville toward the west was agreed to. During the fifteenth meeting the members reviewed the draft for the *H.B. Van Duzer Forest Corridor – Steel Bridge Road Corridor Refinement Plan*.

## Public Information

Two newsletters were developed for the project. In addition, a project Web site hosted by ODOT was developed. Below is a summary of each.

## **Newsletter No. 1**

The first project newsletter was published in August 2002. It described the Build and No Build alternatives, provided advance notice of the upcoming publication of the EA, defined the status of the Refinement Plan, and provided a project schedule.

## **Newsletter No. 2**

The second project newsletter was published in October 2002. It provided an update on project status, notified the public of the November 2002 public hearing to discuss the EA, and provided direction on requesting a copy of the EA.

## **Project Web Site**

ODOT developed and hosted a Web site providing information and schedule on the project. The EA and Refinement Plan were made available for downloading by the public from the Web site.

## **Agency Coordination**

The following agencies were consulted during the development of this project:

### **The Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde (CTGR)**

#### **Federal**

- NOAA Fisheries
- U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

#### **State**

- Oregon Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD)
- Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW)
- Oregon Department of Parks and Recreation (ODPR)
- Oregon Department of State Lands (DSL)
- Oregon Natural Heritage Program (ONHP)
- State Historic Preservation Office (Oregon SHPO)

#### **County**

- Polk County
- Yamhill County

#### **Other Agencies and Businesses**

- Grand Ronde Community Water Association
- Grand Ronde Sanitary District
- Sprint
- Qwest Communications International, Inc.