

Summary – Meeting #17

Community Advisory Group I-5 Willamette River Bridge Project

*December 2, 2008, 10:15 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Singer Room, Eugene Public Library (100 W. 10th Ave)*

ATTENDANCE

CAG Members

- Charlotte Behm – Representative, Springfield Neighborhood (and member, CPC for Whilamut Natural Area)
- Eric Gunderson – Former President, American Institute of Architects SWO Chapter
- Rich Hazel – Laurel Hill Valley Citizens Association
- Greg Hyde – Willamalane Parks & Recreation District
- Bob Kline – Chair, Harlow Neighbors
- Phillip Richardson – Eugene Parks and Open Space Division
- David Sonnichsen – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area
- Scott Wylie – Springfield Resident

PDT Members

- Chris Henry – City of Eugene
- Ann Sanders – ODOT, Project Lead

Handouts (available at meeting)

- Agenda
- DRAFT CAG/PDT meeting summary #16

Resource Team

- Megan Banks – Public Involvement, LCOG
- Douglas Beauchamp – Lane Arts Council
- Jamie Damon – Public Involvement Manager, JLA
- John Ferguson – Asst. Project Manager, T.Y. Lin
- Larry Fox – Project Manager, OBEC
- Larry Gescher – Slayden
- Kalin Schmoldt – Public Involvement Coordinator, JLA
- Kevin Parrish – Hamilton
- Dick Upton – ODOT Project Manager, Bridge Delivery Unit

Other Attendees

- Charles Biggs – CPC for Whilamut Natural Area (CAG Alternate)
- Michael Higson – U of O
- Bill Morganti – Citizens Advisory Committee for Metropolitan Planning Transit
- Max Rosenberg – Neighborhood resident
- Ed Schoaps – OBDP
- Dave Winship – Winship Designs

WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Jamie explained the meeting purpose: to achieve closure on the theme conversation and continue discussion of the design approach. Douglas Beauchamp will provide examples of local art installations and summarize the recent conversation of the CAG *Theme Team*.

PUBLIC COMMENT – Visitor Bill Morganti advised closer coordination between the CAG and the Citizens Advisory Committee for the Central Lane Metropolitan Planning Organization. It was noted that Rich Hazel was involved in the CAC.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Summary of meeting 15 – Jamie noted that the team is in the process of updating the project website and would be posting approved meeting materials. Jamie suggested withholding approval of the summary to allow further review.

PROJECT UPDATE

EA – Dick announced that the Environmental Assessment (EA) process officially concluded last week with FHWA signing off on a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI.) The mitigation measures agreed upon in the EA will be used to inform the rest of the project.

Budget – Dick described how each level of progress plans includes a revision of cost estimates because of increasing levels of design detail. The *Design Acceptance Package* (DAP) level was recently completed, and involves a high level look at the bridge components. As of DAP, the project is within budget including 25% contingency. Further refinements will result in decreasing the amount of allocated contingency.

Eric Gunderson asked when the next major checkpoint would be. Dick explained that the project plan levels come in periodic lurches that can be hard to estimate. The next plan upgrade should come in spring 2009.

Bob Kline asked whether a specific amount had been allocated for aesthetics. Dick said that he was reluctant to assign aesthetics any particular value that could be misinterpreted as too low or too high since the 25% contingency was still undefined and the costs of specific aesthetic treatments have yet to be determined. Dick said that he did not think that the range of aesthetic treatments would be constrained by budget as much as by the available time and process. He added that the use of an arched bridge was made possible because of the aesthetic emphasis and aesthetic considerations will be a part of the entire design.

Other news – Dick reminded the group that Congressman DeFazio's office had expressed interest in the project. Dick said he would keep the group informed of any new news.

THEME DISCUSSION

Douglas said that his presentation was intended to highlight public art in the area so as to demonstrate possible materials and styles while stimulating creative thinking. Douglas said he would also describe the thinking and the recommendation of the *Theme Team*.

- **Law school entry pylons:** Featured metal lanterns fabricated by a local sculptor. The law school also integrated related artwork into the construction of the building itself, including moveable art and site-specific commissioned pieces.
- **Plaza basalt water features:** This major fountain at the U of O includes native basalt stonework that reflects the Cascade Mountains.
- **Cascading steps fountain:** A larger, more complex fountain could be used in conjunction with an interpretive area or plaza related to the bridge. The plaza also incorporates native stonework along with poured concrete, brick, and tile.
- **Carved marble benches:** Part of a housing project, includes carved relief images that allow tactile interaction. Pillar elements can be engraved to give them specific or abstract meaning and carvings can also reflect heritage designs.

- **Pathway and plaza mosaics:** Scott Wylie’s work uses tile to create a sense of flow. A compass shape on the floor of a plaza serves as a way-marker and the tile and brick are reflected elsewhere in the building in other art forms.
- **Peacehealth Riverbend hospital:** Art is included inside and outside of the new building. The plaza area includes celebratory bronze figures. While bronze sculptures may not be appropriate for the bridge, they show thematic possibilities.
- **Commemorative bronze sculpture:** Depicts a Japanese immigrant and refers to the theme “loss of home,” as part of a larger project.
- **Eugene Skinner sculpture:** Sits on a basalt column and looks towards Skinner’s butte.
- **Plaza with Ken Kesey memorial:** Kesey sits reading in a plaza with other art elements. Small touches depict the moon phases. Scott Wylie is responsible for the brick work. The brick design responds to a sense of movement and arrival at the plaza. Pillars in the plaza represent different seasons and incorporate clay, metal, sculpture, and mosaic.
- **Concrete station marker:** The renovation of the train station included a marker with cast concrete lettering. Columns present the potential for engraving and casting. Relief images can convey a sense of change in a community.
- **LTD Eugene Station:** The design of the station responded to the existing brick in downtown Eugene. The station is designed to respond to tradition while also speaking to future generations. John Rose created square dichromatic glass tiles for the tower as well as glasswork on each of the four archways. The station presented a challenge with regard to how art should speak within the context of a complex environment.
- **LTD decorative walkway railing** tries to speak to the local experience through depictions of local flora while being safe and long-lasting. The art uses aluminum and cast bronze and is also visible to people driving by.
- **Parking garage art** was the result of a \$30,000 commitment from the city. The art uses square tiles on the outside of support posts.
- **Broadway place** incorporates work from a variety of artists. The major installation includes abstract animal forms that are repeated throughout the building.
- **Law school archway** adjacent to the lantern pylons uses molded leaf forms.
- **Clock tower at Peacehealth** includes large limestone carvings at its base with iconic representations of wildlife.
- **Formed water and fish:** suggests possible concepts and treatments for the bridge fascia.
- **Springfield LTD station** incorporates a large major mosaic on two nearby walls. The artist used a simple mosaic idea to create different experiences for users. Art is also used to draw attention to the bioswale and informational display integrated into the station design.
- **Oregon Trail mural:** evokes a sense of texture and brick. While murals may not be appropriate for this project, the example depicts images that are relevant to nature and area history.
- **Emerald PUD clay mural** is applied in conjunction with other murals inside. The clay depicts relief images of people (workers, bicyclists) against the trunks of trees. The mural is balanced with the building structure and the wall surface. The art still looks good after 20 years.
- **Stewart headstone:** A cemetery grave uses partially articulated art, where part of the sculpture is carefully formed and detailed, while the other part remains raw and natural.

Douglas noted that the bridge is important in form and appearance, but so too is how it relates to the complexity of the place. The site incorporates a multitude of boundaries and converging elements, including the railroad, the canoe canal, walkways, the river, and roads.

Douglas explained how the *Theme Team* had met after the last meeting and wrestled with the concept of theme. He distributed a printed summary of the group's thoughts. They had sought to identify words, phrases and images that encompassed a sense of past, present and future for the space. The team felt that naming the bridge will be important in this regard and will provide an opportunity to present the bridge to a global audience. The team also observed that while the bridge is a central feature, the space incorporates many discrete places. The group felt that the "placeness" was most represented by the river, but also by animals, first peoples, and settlers. The natural area links the cities and the name of the area is intended to honor the Kalapuya people and their language. The group noted that the Kalapuya word "whilamut" means *where the river ripples and runs fast* and they proposed that *whilamut* be a part of the theme.

The group also observed that while a central feature of the bridge is the conveyance of vehicles north and south, it also conveys people underneath by a variety of modes, including pathways, a road, railroad, the river, and the canoe canal. The group felt that this movement across or through and transit by conveyance implied a sense of passage and the group recommended *passage* as the second part of the theme.

After deliberation, the *Theme Team* unanimously recommended *Whilamut Passage* as the name of the bridge and theme of the project. Jamie reminded group that the *Theme Team* included David Sonnichsen, Scott Wylie, Douglas Beauchamp, Bob Kline, and Charlotte Behm.

Bob Kline noted that the next step will be to define the areas where artistic work is possible. Bob said he was interested in exploring features above the bridge deck. Bob distributed a drawing that used above deck elements to replicate the shape of the below deck structure and makes the bridge consistent with the new cable-stayed bike/ped bridge. He noted Charlotte's suggestion of including a transverse arch that included salmon forms.

Scott Wylie noted discussion of how to address the sub areas of the bridge and define the realms beyond the bridge itself. Scott advocated leaving options open for future proposals that can involve the arts community.

Charlotte Behm noted Scott Wylie's suggestion of placing art between the bridges that moves with the direction of traffic flow. The group had also discussed the concept of evoking curiosity and not simply being obvious. Using *Whilamut* evokes curiosity about the structure and is appropriate because the river does *ripple and run fast* in that area.

David Sonnichsen said that he was surprised at the unanimity from the group. The group also discussed the parkland and how it came to be named the Whilamut Natural Area. The process of naming the park also resulted in the installation of the Talking Stones. David noted that the Kalapuya people have only 140 words remaining in their language and it would be fitting to grant recognition through a name that incorporates the word Whilamut.

Greg Hyde said that he liked the recommendation.

Rich Hazel said that he appreciated that the theme recognizes long term processes instead of merely transitory things. He noted discussion of the millrace, but felt that *Whilamut* speaks to a broader timeframe.

Ann Sanders said that she liked the concept but had some reservations. She noted that it may not be obvious to the general public what the word Whilamut means. She also noted that the group doesn't have the authority to select a bridge name. Jamie suggested that the proposed sense of theme could evolve into a name, though that would be a later step. Douglas said that the name was proposed in order to begin discussion and debate on the subject.

Eric Gunderson said he was excited by the words and he called for broader discussion by the group to figure out how to apply the theme to design elements such as railings and soundwalls.

Larry noted the need to consult with the Kalapuya tribe before adopting their words and symbols. Jamie noted that there had been comments to the same effect during the EA. Charlotte Behm said that the group should be committed to pursuing the theme before approaching the Siletz or Grand Ronde. Bob Kline noted that the discussion did consider the need to work with the tribes. David Sonnichsen noted that the naming of the Natural Area involved working with Kalapuya people.

Jamie asked whether the group was comfortable with suggesting *Whilamut Passage* as a theme to the PDT. The CAG said it was. Jamie noted that Charlotte would be at the meeting to represent the group's concerns. Jamie suggested noting the theme in the next newsletter. Charlotte advised contacting the tribes before moving forward with the theme. Douglas and Charlotte offered to help connect the team with the appropriate Kalapuya representatives.

Ann Sanders asked whether any of the concrete cast images from Douglas' presentation were available for duplication. Douglas said that the forms generally are available and that the artists (who retain ownership) would be happy to talk about using them.

Chris Henry raised the question of whether there is a backup plan if there is no approval from the Kalapuya. He asked whether "*Willamette*" *Passage* would be an appropriate substitution. Scott Wylie said that they did not address a backup plan. He noted that "*Willamette*" generally refers to the entire Willamette River while "*Whilamut*" speaks to the animation of the river at the specific location of the bridge. Scott stressed the importance of keeping the location-specific nature of the river in mind while planning and making the place. He said that the theme should also convey a sense of curiosity and meaning. Charlotte agreed that a backup theme would be a good idea.

DESIGN APPROACH

Jamie reminded the group that the last meeting had begun to address design areas that the public could still influence and when those decisions need to be made. Though originally slated for discussion today, decisions regarding the spandrel columns and pier bases will be moved to the next meeting at the end of January when Jiri Strasky can attend.

Larry reminded the group of the list of project elements that are open to stakeholder input. The group had requested that the design elements be identified on a map, with sense of when decisions need to be made. Larry showed a map depicting the *immediate*, *early*, and *later* decisions along with photographs of each area. Larry described the design areas:

- **Soundwall (northeast):** Presents possibilities for art and incorporation of the bridge theme. The experience of drivers passing quickly should be considered.
- **Canoe Canal underpass:** The final configuration is still open and the three park entities will work to develop a sense of what the cross section will look like. This will be followed by a conversation about what materials to use and how to create artistic opportunities. It will not be possible to remove the concrete lining entirely, though it will be possible to cut walls down and create more vertical space. The trail will be realigned closer to the water and stepped slopes will help define the opening. The goal will be to make the space unattractive to transients and safe for users while mitigating the tunnel effect. Permit decisions regarding the space are needed soon.

Scott Wylie asked whether it would be possible to retain remnants of the old canal as part of an artistic ruin. Larry said that it could be done.

- **Temporary and permanent path realignments (north bank):** A temporary realignment of the path will be necessary for safety reasons at Canoe Canal. The permanent alignment will be more or less straight and there will be more opportunities to discuss the path appearance.
- **Eastgate Woodlands:** Some of the paved paths will be removed and re-vegetated and the abandoned path will be repaved, possibly incorporating a bicycle roundabout with landscape and design features. The path work raises the question of how to make the area safe while also preserving the natural darkness of the area.

Douglas Beauchamp asked about temporary interventions. Larry said that temporary signage will be needed and could present art opportunities. He noted that some paths may need to be closed if permits aren't available in time.

- **Temporary paths around the contractor staging area:** The contractor will be staged over the old landfill and the temporary path will circumvent the area to the west in order to connect with the Canoe Canal path. The path routes are largely decided. While out of direction for users of the Knickerbocker Bridge, the temporary path will be safer and will reduce the amount of flagging time. Permit issues may arise because the path provides a temporary connection within the floodway. A roundabout is one conceptual solution for the path intersection near the Frog Pond. Charlotte Behm said that the CPC had not been present when the use of a roundabout was proposed. Larry said that the concept was still being discussed.

Rich Hazel asked about the effect on Pre's Trail. Larry said that the temporary path will also be rerouted along with the bike path to the west of the staging area.

David Sonnichsen asked about the path connections with the staging access road. Larry explained that the intent is to use flaggers during work hours when the access road is in use and keep the road open during non-work hours. Charlotte Behm noted that the paths had been closed frequently during construction of the temporary bridge and she asked for clarification on the detour route from the Knickerbocker Bridge. Larry explained that though flaggers may delay path users who cross the access road, access will not be completely cut off. Greg Hyde cautioned against imposing unreasonable delays for path users. Kevin Parrish noted that signs and alternate routes would be posted. Larry said that they would likely adopt standards to keep potential delays to a reasonable length.

Eric Gunderson asked about the treatment of fill slopes. Larry said that the slopes would be vegetated under direction from ODOT maintenance which will require low maintenance plantings because of the steep slope. Jamie noted that landscape discussions will be held later in the process just as the art and architecture discussions are occurring now.

Greg Hyde noted that the riverside path on the north bank was not being addressed. Larry agreed that the path at that location was another design area to consider.

- **Slope treatments** also present possible design opportunities, as do the visible design of the bridge anchorages in the slope.
- **Gateway features** are an area of great interest from the committees and the public. The gateway elements will help denote the bridge and a sense of place. Scott Wylie encouraged thinking about the gateway as a series of objects instead of just solitary features. Larry acknowledged that a gateway can be more than just pylons.
- **Bridge rail:** ODOT has made a commitment to use an open rail on the bridge despite maintenance concerns. ODOT currently has only one crash-tested type of open rail for this type of facility though the team will try to identify other viable rail options.

Scott Wyle asked whether it would be possible to calibrate the vertical elements of the railing with the vertical elements of the rest of the bridge structure. Larry said that ODOT does allow some flexibility within its standard. He said that the rail will need to transition to solid rail over the railroad tracks noted and that the barrier could also incorporate aesthetic treatments. Ann Sanders asked about the decision to use open rail. Jamie noted that both the CAG and the public have consistently expressed a desire to see the river and avoid the look of jersey barriers. Ann said that she was reconsidering the merits of open rail in lieu of Jiri's design presentation.

- **Bridge security** is an issue. As a high use area, there is always the possibility of people climbing on the arches. It may be possible to create an effective barrier that includes artistic elements.
- **South end of bridge:** Current concepts recognize bike path access from Springfield and Eugene though access from the Laurel Hill Neighborhood has not been addressed. Rich Hazel noted that the existing informal access would be disconnected if the slough is restored. Larry offered to discuss the issue further. Larry said that the channel would be naturalized and steppe pools would be used to connect the river as far as the railroad. The site also presents opportunities for a millrace interpretive site as well as environmental restoration signage. Space could be reserved for future art if a more extensive selection process is desired after the bridge is completed.
- **Spandrel columns and approach span piers:** The CAG will make a recommendation based on possible shapes to the PDT in January.
- **Retaining wall (north end adjacent to park):** The wall could be eliminated.
- **Sound walls and retaining walls (south end):** The walls will be 16 feet high and visible to freeway users and to the neighborhood. While the freeway side of the walls will be viewed at higher speeds, the neighborhood side of the walls presents a significant design opportunity. Rich Hazel noted that the walls would be about 25 feet high as viewed from the neighborhood. Scott Wylie suggested that the notion of *entering and exiting* should color the notion of the freeway walls while creating a sense of *passage*. Larry said that the necessary timeline for the walls depends on the treatment. If features are part of the form, then decisions need to be made sooner.

- **Retaining wall (far south end):** The wall is less visible than others and may not need treatment.

Larry showed a spreadsheet that tries to explain what stakeholder and decision-maker input is needed for which design elements. Jamie offered to distribute the matrix for comments. The matrix should help to identify who needs to provide what expertise. For example, the challenges of a gateway are more integrated with structure and pose an architectural challenge that will be addressed by Eric in an architectural charette. Similarly, walls will present arts opportunities and will be led by Douglas in an artist's charette.

Larry noted that range of costs for each element would be identified over time. The costs will help provide definition and direction for the landscape designers, architects, and artists. Cost estimates will also help set priorities. At this time, the matrix is intended to generate discussion.

Eric requested a copy of the design elements aerial. Jamie offered to distribute copies through email.

NEXT STEPS

- **PDT (12/5/08)** – The PDT agenda will mirror the CAG agenda. CAG members are welcome to attend.
- **Newsletter (week of 1/5/09)** – The newsletter will be sent after the holidays and will bring the public up-to-date with the happenings with the EA, present new design images, and elaborate on upcoming design decisions.
- **Update website (early January 2009)** – Jyll Smith and Kalin Schmoltdt will work to update the site for the design phase. Megan Banks will be maintaining the site.
- **CAG (1/28/09)** – The later meeting date will allow Jiri Strasky to attend and give the team time to develop the content for the artist and architecture charettes. The meeting will also be used to decide on spandrel column and pier shapes.
- **PDT (1/30/09)**
- **Public open houses (week of 2/9/09)** – The open houses will provide the public an opportunity to see the designs up close and provide input to feed the charettes in mid February.
- **Artist and architecture charettes (mid February 2009)** – Charettes will be longer meetings with a creative emphasis. The charette attendees will work with drawings and produce options to address design challenges.
- **CAG (3/5/09)**
- **PDT (3/6/09)**
- **Newsletter (mid March 2009)**
- **Public open houses (early April 2009)**

The steps above will be repeated for the “later” decisions.

Jamie offered to connect with the Grand Ronde and Siletz tribe and provide a draft of the newsletter to the CAG and PDT for review.

CLOSE