

I-5: N. Ashland Interchange – Green Springs Project Aesthetics Advisory Committee (AAC)

Meeting #2 Summary

February 4, 2009
11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Attending:

AAC – Tom Giordano, Michael Dawkins, John Rinaldi, Jerome White, Jonathan Warren, Kate Jackson, Katharine Flanagan, Jennifer Longshore

Project Team – Alex Cousins, John Galbraith, Tiina Beaver, Art Anderson, Tim Fletcher, Gary Leaming

City of Ashland – Ann Seltzer, Michael Faught, Maria Harris

Welcome and Introductions

Alex Cousins welcomed everyone to the second meeting of the AAC and led a round of self introductions. New AAC members Tom Giordano (Historic Commission and architect) and Jonathan Warren (Holiday Inn Express) were also welcomed. The purpose of today's meeting is to begin the brainstorming of potential themes and aesthetic treatment options for the bridges at I-5 Exits 14 and 19.

First meeting recap & review of both bridges

Alex handed around the draft meeting summary from the first AAC meeting on January 14. There was a procedural delay in getting the summary approved in time to go out with the agenda. Alex noted that the team will strive to get the summaries out in a more timely fashion for future meetings.

Gary Leaming of ODOT briefly discussed the nature of the project for both exits:

Exit 14, Green Springs Highway over I-5

The bridge will be widened to provide one lane in each direction plus a median that will provide for left turn pockets at the ramp intersections. Standard shoulders widths will be provided on both sides of the bridge with accommodation for bikes and sidewalks will be provided for pedestrians. The ramp intersections will be signalized and lighting will be provided on the bridge. Landscaping and irrigation will be replaced in all 4 interchange quadrants. The northbound entrance ramp and southbound exit ramp will be widened to provide an additional lane for traffic.

Exit 19, South Valley View Road over I-5

The bridge will be replaced with a new bridge with one lane in each direction plus a median lane that will accommodate left turn pockets at the ramp intersections. Shoulders will be provided on both sides of the bridge. Cyclists and pedestrians will be

accommodated in the multi-use shoulder. Landscaping will be replaced in all 4 interchange quadrants. (There are no existing irrigation facilities). The northbound entrance ramp and southbound exit ramp will be widened to provide an additional lane for traffic. The ramp intersections will not be signalized and no bridge lighting will be provided.

Exit 14: A gateway to Ashland, a gateway to Oregon, or both?

Picking up on a discussion point from the first AAC meeting, Alex asked the group for their input on the idea of Exit 14 as a gateway to something broader than just the City of Ashland. Helping to define the concept of “gateway” at this location – the first I-5 exit for northbound drivers from California – may help determine themes for the bridge design.

Committee members agreed that Exit 14 is more than a gateway to Ashland. Some noted that it is also a gateway for travelers to Southwest Oregon, the state as a whole, and perhaps even the Pacific Northwest. The exit establishes a sense of arrival and the design could offer an opportunity to explore the world class attractions of the area and region. Ashland is an artistic community and this project presents a good opportunity to tie in with the region and state.

Possible themes for the bridges

The committee members then discussed possible themes for the bridge designs. They agreed that the bridges could personify things that Oregon and the area is known for, including:

- Crater Lake
- Rogue River
- Shakespeare Festival
- Fauna and flora (conifers, oaks, lizards, fish)
- Agriculture, wineries, orchards, nurseries
- Bicycle/pedestrian/sustainability as symbols

With regard to the use of color, suggestions were made to use natural, subdued shades to mimic the colors found in the area: dark red brick, green, grays – colors could be combined with natural colors in rock formations and native plants, etc.

Bridge design elements brainstorming

Alex asked the committee for their input and ideas for specific design treatments for the bridge components and landscaping. The following ideas were discussed:

- Decorative use of metal (classy, elegant)
- Cor-ten steel
- Glass
- Unique street and stop lights
- Pedestrian scale to the bridge deck

- Visual interest on pedestrian side of railing/parapet
- Planters
- Bollards
- Colored/sculptured concrete and paving
- Terracing
- Use of functional gabions
- Use of light/back-lit elements
- Art at the pedestrian level
- Opportunity to use local artists to create reliefs, murals, sculpture, etc.
- Shakespeare – whimsical art
- Cover the columns with new concrete treatment (Exit 14)



One of the committee members brought photographs of sculptural elements made of cor-ten steel that have been installed at the Walker Library as examples. Something like this would be a possibility for the bridge design. An example photograph is included here.

The committee agreed that the bridge design should be simple (minimalist), contemporary and elegant with opportunity for some design treatment reflective of the area/state. There was a stated desire to keep the design work modest and not overly complicated or too attention-grabbing. The AAC discussed putting more emphasis on the landscaping around the bridges so they are viewed in the context of attractive, natural settings. The theme for the bridges could be derived from the landscaping.

Landscaping elements brainstorming

The following landscaping ideas were discussed:

- Food Forest/Sustainability – principles of permaculture; relationships of plant materials perennials and annuals.
- Working gardens/orchards (pears, wine grapes, vegetables)
- 4 seasons interest
- Native plants that don't require a lot of irrigation (esp. at Exit 19)
- Use of decorative rock
- Vines growing on the bridge
- Use of conifers, incense cedar, oak

- Bioswale/wetland opportunities with run-off
- Landscaping changes depending on the direction of travel

Other issues

One of the AAC members asked if there could be more separation between motor vehicles and the bike/pedestrian uses on the bridge deck at Exit 14. As a cyclist, he was concerned about safety, wanting something more than just the height of a curb. Ideas were discussed, including using planters and bollards. Another suggestion was made to provide visual separation with the use of texture and color in the paving. Someone else commented that having traffic lights installed on each end of the bridge will make it safer for cyclists too. Alex noted that he believed there were some structural limitations to the width of the bridge as well as highway standards that made putting a barrier between cars and bikes impractical if not impossible.

Action item – Get back to the group with a definitive answer about what is possible to separate uses on the bridge

The group also spent some time discussing lighting on and around the bridge and how lighting could be integrated into the design. The thought was that lighting should complement and not detract from the bridge. For this reason, some AAC members felt that the use of historic streetlight styles should not be used with a modern bridge design. There was also some discussion about ensuring the light posts and traffic light poles complemented each other as well as the bridge itself. Someone asked about possible ODOT standards for night sky pollution.

Action item - Bring samples of stoplight standards and light posts for next meeting. Answer question about light pollution standards.

Field Trip idea

Alex asked the committee whether a site visit to both exits would be useful. Several AAC members had commented that it was difficult to imagine how the design concepts could be applied just by looking at photographs and drawings. Everyone agreed that a field trip would be helpful and Alex agreed to work with Gary Leaming on the logistics. The AAC could meet at Exit 19 first, then carpool down to Exit 14 and then conclude their meeting at the Windsor Inn.

Next Steps

Next Meeting: AAC members to meet at the Welcome Center at Exit 19, on Wednesday, February 11 at 11:30 a.m. This meeting will conclude at 1:30 p.m. instead of 1:00 p.m.

Items needed: plan view, aerial view and cross-section diagram. Preliminary concept drawings.

Adjourn



12/26/2008

CANYONVILLE

NORTH

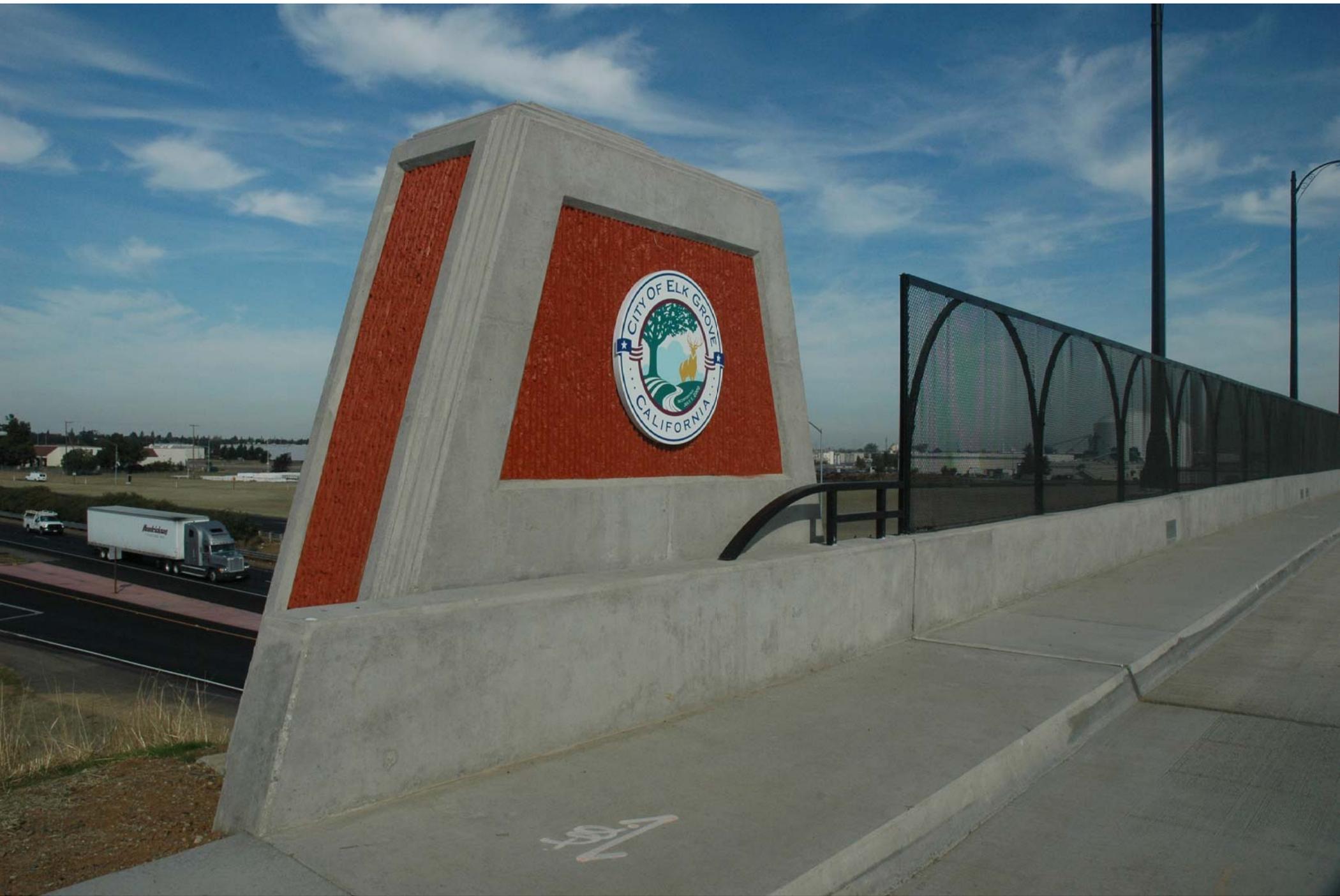
INTERSTATE
5



11/19/2008



11/19/2008





2007