

## **I-5: N. Ashland Interchange – Green Springs, Bundle 314**

Aesthetics Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting Summary

Ashland Public Works Conference Room

51 Winburn Way

Ashland, OR

11:30 AM – 1:00 PM, January 14, 2009

*Action items are indicated in bold italics.*

1. Welcome – Art Anderson, ODOT

Art thanked everyone for participating and acknowledged that having an AAC is not ODOT's typical way of doing business. ODOT recognizes that Exit 14 is the entryway to Oregon and Ashland and that the community is interested in opportunities to provide input on aesthetics.

Alex Cousins from JLA Public Involvement, a firm specializing in community involvement and outreach, was introduced as the meeting facilitator. Alex will be available to facilitate future AAC meetings as well. John Galbraith of Galbraith and Associates, a landscape architecture firm in Medford, was also introduced. ODOT hired Galbraith and Associates to assist in the aesthetics process. John has worked on numerous similar community projects in the Ashland area.

2. Self-Introductions, Sign In Sheet

At the request of several AAC members, a chart showing the relationship of the various firms involved in the project and their relationship to ODOT is attached.

3. Aesthetics Advisory Committee's Role – Ann Seltzer, City of Ashland

The main role of the AAC is to identify the preferred aesthetic treatments. Facilitation of the committee will be provided by ODOT. At each of the meetings with ODOT and the Design Team, the AAC should be prepared to present aesthetic ideas/concepts to the Design Team and provide feedback on aesthetic treatments presented to the AAC by the Design Team. The AAC should meet in between the meetings with ODOT in order to discuss the project. The AAC should ask for clarification from the Project Design Team at any time. They can contact ODOT through Ann Seltzer.

Ann was asked whether there was consideration of including a member from the Historic Commission. Ann noted that inclusion of a commission member wasn't presented to the Council. It was suggested that Tom Giordano be included.

4. OTIA III Program Visual Performance Standards – John Lowe, Oregon Bridge Delivery Partners (OBDP)

John discussed the purpose of the OTIA (Oregon Transportation Investment Act) III program, which is repairing or replacing 365 bridges across Oregon. John provided the group with an overview of the OTIA III program. He also reviewed the program's CS<sup>3</sup> (Context Sensitive and Sustainable Solutions) Program. The CS<sup>3</sup>

Program has five main goals, one of which is to “Build projects that are sensitive to their communities and landscapes.” To accomplish this goal with the City of Ashland, more than the normal effort has and will continue to be made throughout the design process.

5. Project Introduction – Karen Tatman, Quincy Engineering Inc. (QEI)

Karen reviewed the two project sites.

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. Bikes will be accommodated in the shoulder.

Sidewalks will be provided on both sides of the bridge.

The ramp intersections will be signalized.

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.

If the northbound lane is widened toward the outside (likely), a retaining wall would be needed to avoid building outside of the existing ODOT right of way.

Vertical clearance over I-5 will be increased.

Exit 19, 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 north bound left turns. South bound left turns will be made from a shared through movement.

Shoulders will be provided on both sides of the bridge. Cyclists and pedestrians will be accommodated in the multi-use shoulder, which will be wider than a standard 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.

No sidewalks will be provided.

The ramp intersections will not be signalized and no bridge lighting will be provided.

6. Bridge Aesthetics – Jeff Olson, Quincy Engineering Inc. (QEI)

To provide common understanding of terms used when addressing aesthetic treatment of structures, Jeff provided a definition for the following structural elements:

- Superstructure
- Column
- Abutment
- Rail
- Pedestrian Fence
- Lighting

Jeff discussed the various components of a bridge and the types of aesthetic treatments that can be applied to each. He indicated that aesthetics can come in the form of shape, such as faceted rather than round columns, texture, color, and ornamental fencing and lighting.

When asked about the possible shape of the new bridge at Exit 19, Jeff indicated that the site constraints and limitations related to providing adequate vertical clearance over I-5 make an arching type structure infeasible. There are opportunities to consider the shape of the bridge columns. The AAC can offer their thoughts on types of pedestrian fence and light poles. It was asked whether the traffic signal poles at Exit 14 could be shaped and colored to match the light poles used on the bridge. That is a possibility. A short discussion began surrounding types of light poles to consider. Ann suggested the committee examine existing decorative lighting in Ashland to tie into the interchange.

Alex asked each of the AAC members to identify their initial thoughts and input for the project. The significant issues were:

- ◆ Exit 14 is a gateway to Ashland and to Oregon
- ◆ Textures, shape, and coloring should represent Oregon's natural beauty
- ◆ The structure itself (shape) can be the art (such as an arched or slightly curved structure)
- ◆ Natural and cultural elements should be considered
- ◆ Aesthetic treatments (inner rail treatments and sidewalk) should encourage bicycles and pedestrians to connect both sides of the freeway
- ◆ Consider providing a "signature"

#### 7. Next Steps and Timing – Karen Tatman

In response to a question regarding where the project is in the process, Karen discussed the project schedule. QEI started the project late in 2008. Construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2010. The first step in the project design process is to develop a "Design Acceptance Package", which is a decision-making document for ODOT's approval. The Design Acceptance Package (DAP) discusses the project's purpose and need, presents the alternatives considered, and recommends which alternative should proceed to construction and the proposed footprint. The DAP also presents the anticipated project construction cost as well as a schedule for completion of the design and for construction. A draft of the DAP is due in early

April for ODOT's review with completion and approval of the DAP by late May. At DAP completion, the project is considered 30% complete within the design phase.

This meeting is the first of several meetings. The purpose of this initial meeting is to provide an overview of the project and gather some initial input from the AAC.

In order to meet the project schedule, QEI requested that the AAC provide their initial input on aesthetic treatments to the design team by February 20. This is not a firm deadline. However, it allows the design team to take AAC input and incorporate it into the bridge design.

The next meeting with the AAC and design team should be scheduled for early – mid April. At that time, the design team will present concepts to which reflect AAC input back to the AAC via exhibits prepared by John Galbraith and QEI designers. The design team can ask questions of the AAC and the AAC can provide feedback.

In May / June, ODOT will hold one or two public open houses to share information (design components, construction traffic handling, e.g.) with the broader community. At that meeting, progress on the aesthetics design will be shared as well. The community can provide feedback on any and all issues related to the project.

With final input from the AAC as well as input from the public open houses, a third meeting with the AAC will be held in July / August. At this meeting, the design team will present how the aesthetic treatments have been incorporated into the project via exhibits again prepared by John Galbraith and QEI designers.

It was determined that the AAC should meet as a group in between the meetings with ODOT and the design team. ODOT stated its desire to provide administrative and facilitation resources for the AAC meetings. Alex Cousins will be available to facilitate those meetings and that John Galbraith would be available to attend to listen and offer suggestions. The AAC determined that the best time to meet would be Wednesdays between 11:30 AM and 1:00 PM. They will meet on February 4, 2009.

***AAC to meet February 4<sup>th</sup> from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM. Alex Cousins to schedule and facilitate the meeting. Lunch will be provided.***

#### 8. Other Issues – Group

The AAC is interested in the budget for aesthetic treatments. Concern was expressed that the group may develop an approach only to find that there are insufficient funds to build it. Tim Dodson indicated that while there is an identified budget for the project as a whole, ODOT looks at the aesthetic opportunity in terms of value, whether the cost is worth the benefit. He stated that the Agency considers aesthetic elements to typically have high value, and many are also of very reasonable cost. John Lowe added that in general, those sample concepts presented at the meeting could be a reflection of the types of aesthetic treatment that would be within the OTIA III budget. Anything outside of that amount may have to be paid for by the local community. The AAC should present their vision and the project team can determine which components could be incorporated into the construction project and which may need to be constructed outside of the construction contract using separate funds.

*ODOT to bring budget information to the next meeting.*

9. Set next Meeting Date - Group

The AAC will meet on February 4.

The next AAC / ODOT / OBDP / Design Team meeting TBD pending AAC input. It will be scheduled for a Wednesday from 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM to match the AAC's availability.

OTIA III BUNDLE 314 PROJECT TEAM

