

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: Pam Goff
Sent: Friday, January 04, 2002 10:38 AM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: Freeway

With traffic only increasing in the Medford area why would anyone consider eliminating freeway access. The need is to be able to cross the freeway, adding more overpasses would benefit much more and moving the freeway entrance only changes where the bottlenecks will be.

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Please reconsider moving the freeway and look into more immediate need of bypassing the freeway to get from one side of town to the other.

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: John [jmorrison@vcog.org]
Sent: Friday, January 04, 2002 4:59
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: FW: rexiusvw@cdsnet.net
Greg,
Comment from web site,
John
-----Original Message-----
From: griffith@vweb.mind.net [mailto:griffith@vweb.mind.net]
Sent: Friday, January 04, 2002 1:22 PM
To: john@rv.cog.or.us
Subject: rexiusvw@cdsnet.net

keith rexius
910 valley view drive

medford
or
97504
rexiusvw@cdsnet.net

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I believe that this project is a bad idea do to the fact that it will congest the highland area it is congested enough without the addition of all the traffic coming from city center and barnet road fuel consumption will increase due to excessive driving and will cost drivers more time in the car and inconvenience all drivers leaving town or going to the freeway.this would be a great mis approation of funds. suggest a new off ramp studys at south stage. this would reroute traffic from harry and davids and all the applegate fellowship drivers and would cut traffic at barnet turnoff by @ 30%

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January 2, 2002

Greg Holthoff
Environmental Project Manager
Oregon Dept. of Transportation
1158 Chemeketa St. NE
Salem, OR 97301-2528

RE: Medford South Interchange Project

Mr. Holthoff:

Let me start off by saying I understand a solution must be found to the transportation problems dealing with the area around the South Medford Interchange, NOW. I further believe that the real needs of the transportation problem have not been explained.

I have attended four different information sessions relating to the South Medford Interchange and have yet heard what the real problems and solutions are. Let me ask the following questions.

1. What percentage of the traffic during various periods of the day and night are trying to go where and why?
 - A. For instance I know morning southbound traffic headed eastbound on Barnett Road are mainly employees in the medical center area. A major traffic problem.
 - B. I figure that most truck traffic is trying to reach Hwy 99 or Riverside Drive or the fruit packing plants in the same area.
 - C. I would figure that some of the northbound traffic is trying to also reach the medical center area, downtown, the southern Crater Lake Avenue area and the shopping centers near Barnett Road.
2. Why does removing the existing northbound on-ramp from the westbound Barnett Road make any sense? When Medford City Councilperson Mr. Strosser asked the same question twice before, the answer was only that there are no plans for any ramps at the existing interchange.
 - A. Medical center traffic in the afternoon would lessen the congestion of having to turn left at either of the alternative routes.
 - B. There is enough room to make a longer merge lane on the northbound I-5. While the location of the Ellendale Alternative Interchange makes the most sense to me, why does the off-ramp have to feed to the east?
 - A. Other than the medical center area, how much traffic is going east of the freeway? How much is headed for Crater Lake Ave.?
 - B. Northbound I-5 traffic heading eastbound on Barnett Road could be taken under consideration with improvements to the Phoenix Interchange and design to include unrestricted access to North Phoenix Road thus reducing some traffic on Barnett Road near I-5.
- 3.

Page Two
Medford South Interchange Project
January 2, 2002

- C. Eastside traffic could use Center Drive to Barnett Road without too much inconvenience.
4. If traffic studies have shown sufficient trips from the South Interchange to Crater Lake Ave. has any consideration been given to that problem?
 - A. Like creating an off-ramp near Stevens to service the southern part of Crater Lake Ave. area?

While I am sure these questions have been asked by staff and answers researched out, they have not been communicated. I really feel that a study should be made including traffic solutions to the entire area from the Phoenix Interchange to the North Medford Interchange to really understand and solve the traffic problems.

I hope to hear answers to these questions in the meeting next week.

Also, I would like to add that these are my personal thoughts and do not reflect the views of Medford's Citizens Planning Advisory Committee, of which I am the 2002 Chairperson.

Respectfully,

Gary Stine
907 Village Circle
Medford, OR 97504



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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101



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JAN 3 2002

Reply To
Attn Of: ECO-088

Mr. John Gernhauser
Federal Highway Administration
530 Center Street, NE, Suite 100
Salem, Oregon 97301

Dear Mr. Gernhauser:

The Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the South Medford Interchange Project, Interstate 5, Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation. In accordance with our responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act, we would like to submit comments.

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) proposes to relocate the South Medford Interchange on I-5 south of its current location at Barnett Road to improve safety and function. A No Action alternative and two build alternatives, Highland and Ellendale have been proposed; Highland Drive is the preferred alternative.

Of the action alternatives, we agree that the Highland alternative is preferable to the Ellendale alternative. Our main concerns regarding this project are the indirect effects from secondary development and induced travel—both locally and regionally, as well as the cumulative effects on water quality and fish species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA). We believe more information and analysis are important to adequately disclose the potential impacts of this project with respect to the above issues and to discern means to minimize these effects. Detailed comments about this and other aspects of the project are enclosed with this letter.

We have rated the Draft EIS as EC-2, Environmental Concerns, Insufficient Information. An explanation of this rating is also enclosed. If you have questions or would like to discuss these comments further, please contact Elaine Somers of my staff at (206) 553-2966. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

Judith Leckrone Lee
Judith Leckrone Lee, Manager
Geographic Implementation Unit

Enclosures

cc: Greg Holthoff, ODOT
Yvonne Vallette, EPA 000

South Medford Interchange Project
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Detailed Comments

① **Water quality and fish habitat.** As stated on page 4-78 of the Draft EIS, development activities in the area have severely degraded Bear Creek water quality and aquatic habitat. Bear Creek is listed by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) as impaired for temperature, fecal coliform bacteria levels, flow modification and habitat modification. Stream habitat is degraded from downcutting, channelization, isolation from its floodplain, and lack of pools and large woody debris. There is sedimentation in the stream, lack of appropriate spawning gravel, and no off-channel fish rearing or resting areas along the affected reach of Bear Creek.

② In light of the degraded water quality and fish habitat conditions in Bear Creek, and the Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing of coho salmon within Bear Creek and its tributaries, we request that the Final EIS include a summary of the Biological Assessment, if available. We also ask that ODOT make every effort to incorporate the results of consultation with National Marine Fisheries Service (the Biological Opinion and the commitments by ODOT pursuant to the Biological Opinion) within the Record of Decision (ROD). At the least, the NEPA documents should indicate whether or not we can expect threatened salmonids to survive and recover given that further growth in the project area, with its associated impervious surface and polluted runoff, is planned, will be accelerated, and likely induced by the new interchange.

③ On page 3-22 of the DEIS, it is stated that total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) for several pollutants have been established for Bear Creek, including ammonia, phosphorus and biological oxygen demand (BOD). How will this project affect the loadings of these pollutants into Bear Creek and the ability of Bear Creek to meet designated uses?

④ **Cumulative effects.** In addition to the increasing project area development, on page 2-7 of the DEIS, it is indicated that there are two more interchanges in the area that are being improved: the Fern Valley interchange 3.2 miles south, and the Highway 62/I-5 interchange 2.75 miles north. With the expansion of 3 interchanges in close proximity, what system-wide effects are anticipated with respect to traffic generation, water quality and fish habitat impacts, and secondary development? The DEIS indicates that air quality conformity will be met, but it would be informative to discuss the margin of safety for meeting conformity, i.e., how close is the project area and region-wide assessment to meeting conformity?

⑤ There are also temporal aspects of the effects of these interchange improvements. In what time frame will these three interchange improvements occur and how will that timing, which will also involve the secondary effects of the actions, affect system-wide operation? Will improvements at one locale create a bottleneck somewhere else?

⑥ **Long term effectiveness of the solution.** The traffic modeling in the DEIS indicates that in year

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2030 the level of service (LOS) and volume to capacity ratio (V/C) within the project area will be the same or possibly somewhat better than the no-build alternative (p. S-11, p. 4-3). This is apparently due to the additional planned development for the area, the increased pressure for more commercial uses and plan and zone changes to allow these uses, and the auto dependent nature of the planned development (DEIS, p. S-24). We are concerned that the long-term operational integrity of the new interchange will likely not extend to or beyond this time frame. We encourage ODOT and the local land use planning authorities to examine this issue for ways to improve the projected future.

For example, we commend ODOT for being supportive of pedestrian and bicycle pathways in the area, and encourage more of the same in order to alleviate auto dependency and to promote greater longevity of this transportation solution. Public transit, shuttle services, etc. could also be incorporated to improve the circulation and movement within and outside the planning area. In addition, while ODOT is not directly responsible for land use decisions, transportation and land use planning must be done in concert to avoid costly consequences of one to the other. We urge that ODOT and the City of Medford discuss the possibility of planning for transit and pedestrian oriented development rather than auto-dependent development in the project area. Are there ways to maintain the vitality of the Medford central business district with its pedestrian oriented development, and still avoid increasing traffic congestion in the project area and elsewhere?

Community cohesion and landscape connectivity. While we appreciate the need to improve the operational efficiency of the south Medford interchange, we also ask that FHWA and ODOT be mindful of and sensitive to the barrier effect caused by this major infrastructure. Overpasses or other means for safe pedestrian movement may be necessary to mitigate impacts to community cohesion, for example, in the Highland Drive and Barnett Road areas.

Hazardous substances. The DEIS (p. 2-16) indicates that more information regarding properties containing hazardous materials would be provided at a later stage. We would like to indicate our support, whenever possible, for making use of "brownfield" sites as roadway. This is a beneficial use or redevelopment of a contaminated site. From an environmental perspective, it is preferable to use a contaminated site for infrastructure development rather than a clean site that can better serve other ecological needs. We encourage ODOT and FHWA to seek these opportunities for this project and others. Thus, in making location decisions for rights-of-way, it is more helpful to provide information regarding properties containing hazardous materials earlier, rather than later in the decision making process.

Public participation. The DEIS chapter concerning public participation describes the steps taken to elicit public involvement, and provides a brief summary of issues raised on page S-23. We recommend that the Final EIS include more information about the key issues and concerns of the public and the response of the lead agency to those concerns.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Agency Making System for Draft Environmental Impact Statement Definitions and Follow-Up Actions*

Environmental Impact of the Action

10 - - Lack of Objectives

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for revision of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

11 - - Environmental Concerns

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

12 - - Environmental Objections

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

13 - - Environmentally Unsatisfactory

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are identified in the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1 - - Adequate

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2 - - Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified information that would reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3 - - Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the reviewer has identified information that would reduce the environmental impacts of the action. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

* From EPA Manual 1540 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment, February, 1987.

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January 5, 2002

Greg Holthoff
ODOT ,Environmental
Salem, Oregon
Dear Mr. Holthoff,

I have had a major interest in traffic planning for south Medford for over twenty years. I became a member of the Citizens Planning and Advisory Committee in 1980 and was active for numerous years supplying input to the Medford City Council in traffic issues. I was active in giving input in the Medford Area Transportation Study (MAATS) in the mid 1990's. I was active with numerous meetings of the Voorhees Transportation study of the early 1980's giving input on the best way to develop a north-south and east-west transportation plan for Medford. Since early 1999 my wife and I have attended numerous meetings of the Medford Citizens Advisory Committee as well as the South Medford Interchange Project Solution Team meetings. I have given public statements where I have been allowed including a public hearing at the Scottish Rite Temple, two City Council meetings and have written several letters to the editor published in our local paper. I have read the Executive Summary of the DEIS and studied the full DEIS on the South Medford Interchange Project. With this background, I urge you to recommend that ODOT adopt the no-build alternative at this time and move forward with a better comprehensive traffic plan to improve the traffic patterns in Medford. Better study and planning not only will allow for development of the Southeast Medford Housing plan but also for the future development of all Medford.

My objections to the present Highland build alternative and the DEIS are as follows:

- 1) Only one of the three major goal intersections off Barnett Road with the Highland build option is reduced to acceptable levels during peak periods using your modeling. The Highland /Barnett road intersection is considered acceptable only because it is based on city standards not on the more stringent ODOT standards. The other two intersections of Barnett/Riverside (Highway 99) and Stewart/Riverside (Highway 99) fail to meet acceptable traffic levels by the end of the study period 2030. This will impact the development of Southwest Medford in the future. The DEIS fails to analyze the effects of development of Southwest Medford with this model.
- 2) The DEIS does not adequately look at the socioeconomic impact of the Highland build alternative on the Bear Creek Park, the Fire Station at Highland and Siskiyou, Hoover School, Orchard Hill School and the Rogue Valley Medical Center with its recent \$90 million expansion project just announced.
- 3) Although the project terminates at Highland and Siskiyou Avenues, the effects on the surrounding neighborhoods, roads, historic areas, and population trends are not adequately studied. The design of the project was to 2030 but the population study was only to 2005 which will be outdated prior to the completion of the project.
- 4) The DEIS doesn't discuss why the numerous alternatives were eliminated from the detailed study. If the reason was because of traffic modeling, the public should be aware of this and we should be able to make sure that the correct data was used and that the modeling is adequately validated.
- 5) The need for another interchange for Medford is well recognized not only by the general public but also by members of the Citizens Advisory Committee and Solutions

Team as evidenced by many public statements and propaganda put out by ODOT. I'm concerned that the "build" Highland Alternative will compromise the ability to build another Medford Interchange that would lead to a much needed beltline system of transportation around the core of Medford.

By improving the present interchange to acceptable safety standards, Medford can still proceed with the development plans that are presently on the table. ODOT can then have a more farsighted view of Medford traffic patterns with the future of the entire city in mind. We could build an overpass at Belknap road into the South Gateway Center to relieve the traffic off Barnett Road with creative signals and striping. We could put the South Stage Interchange back on the table with connections to North Phoenix Road and a beltline to North Medford. I do not want our city government, our state government and our federal government to spend in excess of \$50 million on a short sighted project that will not meet the original goals of the project and one that will hurt Medford in the long term rather than help our city grow in an orderly manner.

Thank you for letting me express my views.

Sincerely,

Peter F. Noyes
Peter F. Noyes, M.D.
748 State Street
Medford, Oregon 97504



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- ⑤

12-1-91

Mary & Ron McKenna 206

ODOOT
South Medford Interchange

Dear Sirs:

I support the position of Sue Naumes of Medford to develop a third interchange at South Stage Rd. ①

Sincerely,

Ron McKenna
Ron McKenna
20 Eastwood Dr
Medford, OR 97504

LETTER
Editorial Medford
MAD TRIBUTE
↓

Highland folks pissed against Ellendale folks, Blaine and Cooper. This is not a highway project, it's a railroad job.

I remember all the controversy when I-5 was built about the placement of the interchanges and whether two were enough. Hey! We are 40 years later about to make the same mistake.

Now, is the time to correct, not just move, the bad decisions of the past. Adding a third South Stage interchange makes the most sense connecting traffic from the rapidly developing south and west to either East Medford or I-5 without ever going near Barnett.

This new third interchange would help ventilate new developments in east Medford while taking pressure off both Barnett and Fern Valley Interchanges. Natural growth could continue without ruining neighborhoods and destroying businesses.

Let's take a second look at a third interchange at South Stage. — Sue Naumes, Medford

Add a third interchange

On Nov. 2, I went to the south interchange hearing expecting a public hearing.

Wrong.

I was treated to punch and cookies while I feasted my eyes on an elaborate video and large-scale, very professional renderings. Slick, very slick!

My testimony was given not to the public or any officials but a court reporter in a back room.

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: VABryden@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2002 10:22 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: Medford South Interchange

As a resident of Medford since 1955 I would like to add my voice to the objections to replacing the Barnett Rd./I-5 interchange with one at either Highland or Ellendale. The price to our community is too high for questionable value and improvement. The no build option is the desirable one. Yes, we need something done—but what is being offered is not the answer. Improvements to the on and off ramps at the South Interchange would be a better way to spend funds. An eventual interchange at South Stage is a worthy plan. "Progress" for a community is not always what looks best on paper, but what is best for those who actually live there and are willing to lose or gain. I feel our community has spoken our clearly in opposition to the plans presented by ODOT. I live in west Medford, it is not my neighborhood that will be devastated, but it is my community that will be stuck with a poor decision.

Thank you,
Vicki A. Bryden
1009 S. Oakdale
Medford, OR 97501

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HOLTHOFF Greg

From: BLMJSing@aol.com
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2002 10:50 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Cc: rob@partridge.com; greg.walden@mail.house.gov; SEN Hannon
Subject: Old East Medford

Dear Mr. Holthoff,

We have been watching the information on the south I-5 interchange. My husband grew up in east Medford and when we moved here 4 years ago this was the area he wanted to live in again.

Your proposal would drastically change our lives and the life around us. Our kids attend Hoover. We are able to walk to the cemetery where we have family buried and on to Bear Creek Park. It was built as a neighborhood and not as a passage way for everyone else.

Please find another solution to this project. Do not spend tax dollars on wrecking old wonderful established neighborhoods.

Sincerely,

Leah Singler

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Greg Holthoff
Environmental Project Manager
Oregon Department of Transportation
1158 Chemeketa St., NE
Salem, Or. 97301-2528

If we fail to be students of history we are destined to repeat the mistakes of our past!

It appears that ODOT, Medford City Council, and we as citizens of Medford are about to leave our children's children the transportation mess that we were given by our forefathers. They were pressured by the financial interest of a few to abandon sound transportation principles and urban development and locate I-5 through the heart of Medford. Resulting in an infrastructure that left little opportunity to grow and change with the ever growing and changing needs of our community. This decision made some 40 years ago is the very cause of the present day transportation dilemma we are currently facing. Let's not go down the same road twice!

The current traffic problems at both the south interchange and at Highway 62 are a direct result a limited number interchanges serving a large volume of traffic. In the recent past both the north and south interchanges have undergone modifications, both of which are improvement, but traffic congestion is still a problem at both. The only solution to the growing transportation needs of the valley will come from adding more interchanges and east-west crossings of I-5. Neither of the "build alternatives" addressed in the South Medford Interchange Project EIS will meet the long term transportation needs of the valley. Moving the south interchange south will all but foreclose any option of ever constructing an addition interchange between the south interchange and the current Phoenix interchange, one of the only feasible locations left for an addition interchange. During the public process it was stated by Skip Knight of the Medford city council that moving the interchange to the south would not preclude Federal Highways from "accepting and application for a variance". "Accepting an application" and approving a variance are a longways apart. With the ever increasing traffic on I-5 and the ever increasing needs for safety margins, it is highly unlikely such a variance would be approved. This is too important of an issue to just throw fate to wind and hope a variance would be approved.

Considering: 1) the planned housing development to serve 10,000 people planned for the area east of I-5 and south of the south interchange; 2) the growth of residential housing occurring between Stewart Avenue and South Stage; 3) the residential growth of the Griffin Creek and Jacksonville areas, an interchange in the vicinity of Old Stage Road will be essential for future traffic needs. I know this was considered in the Solution Team process but a lot of changes have occurred since that time. It is imperative that we take a long view of the planning horizon and try to anticipate the needs 20 to 40 years from now and not plan only for solutions of today's problems.

I urge ODOT and the Medford city council to take another look at: 1) a new interchange at South Stage Road; 2) coupled with a crossover connecting Highland/Elendale with Garfield; and 3)

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HOLTHOFF Greg

From: THOMAS Joseph R
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2002 3:00 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg; LESLIE Berri L
Cc: LEAMING Gary W; STEVENS Frank E
Subject: FW: Citizen's Representative Office - Customer Entry

Berri, I have forwarded to the appropriate people.

-----Original Message-----
From: LESLIE Berri L
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2002 8:53 AM
To: THOMAS Joseph R
Subject: FW: Citizen's Representative Office - Customer Entry

Joe - are you the appropriate recipient?

Berri L Leslie
ODOT Citizens' Representative
(503) 986-4366
(888) ASK ODOT
Pager (503) 315-4870

-----Original Message-----
From: morhill800@aol.com [mailto:morhill800@aol.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 6:33 PM
To: LESLIE Berri L
Subject: Citizen's Representative Office - Customer Entry

You have a new entry on the 'Comment' WEB page:

NO RESPONSE NEEDED

William and Katharine Ellis
morhill800@aol.com
541/488-3971
800 Morton St Ashland OR 97520

1/9/02 06:19:11PM

We are writing in reference to the proposed I-5 interchange at Barnett using Highland Ave. Living in Ashland and travelling to Medford, we think this option would be highly unfortunate, being irresponsibly close to recreation areas used by families and children. We believe an interchange at South Stage Rd. would be a far wiser choice now and for the future. Not only would it be more desirable for those approaching from the south, but it would be ideal for people in the

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widening of both the south ramp and north ramps at the current south interchange. Such an alternative would disperse the volume of traffic at the south interchange onto two interchanges, 2) provided for two additional east-west crossings of I-5 (South Stage and Highland/Garfield), and 3) provide for additional staging area on both the north and south ramps of the current south interchange. I realize this alternative would not be in the best financial interest of a few but would provide for a much better long-term solution of the traffic needs of the southern portions of Medford.

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I live in Old East Medford and feel that any of these alternatives will impact my neighborhood but that is the price we all have to pay for growth. I refuse to enter into the neighborhood debates and would rather take a broader prospective of the issues and support an alternative that best serves the long term needs of growth within the community. I urge ODOT and the Medford City Counsel to take a long term regional view of the issues and make the decisions accordingly, not base your decisions on the short term financial interest of a few.

Thank You

Lance Nimmo

Lance Nimmo
20 Glen Oak Ct.
Medford, Or. 97504

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extensive, proposed, new housing developments along and near N. Phoenix Rd. Our second choice would be along Ellendale, but the Rogue Valley Manor's influence probably precludes that option. We hope that ODOT's decision has not been finalized and that you will reconsider before making a most unfortunate choice.

Sincerely,
William and Katharine Ellis

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: Paula H. Patchett [twog8grands@juno.com]
Sent: Thursday, January 10, 2002 11:53 AM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: S.Medford Interchange a bandaid approach

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As a resident on east Barnett, I am angry about how the millions of tax dollars are being allocated to the South Medford interchange when it is only a bandaid approach.

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If it's going to take 10 to 15 years to get to the bigger project of the S. Stage interchange and the N. Phoenix & Foothills alternative route through the Valley, then why not use the money to start there and leave the S. Medford interchange alone or just fix the south bound off-ramp for now.

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Is it possible that no one is looking at the whole picture but just the one area that is a problem? Of course that is what ODOT does and I understand. But they should be working with City and County to avoid any more bandaid approaches which mess up neighborhoods and waste monies.

It's up to our representatives to call a halt and get to work on the larger projects that will help correct the smaller problems of the Rogue Valley.

Thank you. Paula Patchett, 541-772-7906
3085 E. Barnett Road
Medford OR 97504-8301

Also sent to Rob Patridge, Greg Walden, Lemm Hammon, & Medford City Council

HOLTHOFF Greg

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cost to ride could be minimal (like Boston) Keep the lighttrail above ground and keep the costs down.

Plan AHEAD...don't wait until it's way too late!!!

Thank you for taking the time to read this.....IF you did!!!

Sincerely, Laura Braucht

From: LAURABEE324@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2002 12:38 AM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: SOUTH MEDFORD INTERCHANGE

Hello...
I would like to voice my opinion.....one that I haven't seen yet.

I have observed a major problem in Medford which does cause Exit 27 and Exit 30 to have excessive auto usage. There isn't any way for vehicles to gain access to Central Medford or the Down Town area without using either of those EXITS. Causing DANGEROUS BACK UP ONTO THE FREEWAY.

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I propose:
1. Add an EXIT & ENTRANCE NORTH BOUND off I-5.....coming out at Biddle Road and Stevens Street. The streets and signal lights are already in place. The Freeway levels out right there with plenty of room to exit or enter the freeway without danger of being hit while slowing down to exit or speeding up to get onto the FREEWAY. The cost would be minimal because NO bridges would need to be built. The time frame could be fairly rapid because of all the other parts already in place. Many vehicles would utilize THIS Exit, as it is Centrally located to aid EastSide drivers in their East Side travels to Downtown or Central Eastside Medford. Jackson Street is just a short drive South....for the Downtown drivers. McAndrews Blvd. is just another short drive North for the Mall or Providence Hospital Emergency needs.

My other suggestion:

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Add another FREEWAY I-5 ON RAMP from (East) McAndrews Blvd. heading SOUTHBOUNDonto the freeway.....just across from the Mall, just past the new Toyota Dealership. This area ALREADY HAS the land needed for the acceleration lane, to gain access to the Freeway. This area is already low, level and seems ready for an ON RAMP. It must have been planned for an ON RAMP here at one time. By adding an ON RAMP here, it would make it so much easier to get back onto the FREEWAY after shopping at the MALL or visiting Downtown. AGAIN, vehicles would NOT need to zig zag their way around the terrible EXIT 30 or go all the way zig zag around East Medford to get back to EXIT 27. Thus, less cars at both EXITS!!!!

MY other major comment is:

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EASTSIDE MEDFORD NEEDS A MAIN ARTERY STREET THAT TRAVELS NORTH-SOUTH. Biddle would have worked out fine, but someone decided to STOP IT AT HAWTHORNE PARK!!! Crater Lake Ave. would be fine....but someone decided it should STOP AT MAIN STREET!!!! DUMB!!!! Why not utilize that great major North-South street called Crater Ave. and continue it UP AND OVER via an aerial ramp and bridge along the Existing backyards and connect it to ALBA LANE, right by BARNETT ROAD???? Or, take it to 10th Street and access the Freeway shortly there after when it levels out again by the Baseball fields!!! At Alba Lane, the signal lights are already in place!!! or instead of removing the homes on Ellendale..GO OVER THE HOMES ALONG THE ROUTE FROM CRATER LAKE AVE. AND make this a decent major road artery throughout all of Eastside Medford. This would ABSOLUTELY keep most vehicles from ZIG ZAGGING AROUND the residential streets of East Medford to get from Northside to Southside. People have to NOW use Sunrise...to Barnetburg to Highland to Barnet. So inefficient!!!! Or they have to drive Crater Lake Ave. to Main, turn East, drive to Williamette...turn South...onto Siskiyou (or 10th St) then, drive EAST to Highland, then South to Barnett, then, West to the FREEWAY!!! How AWFUL it is to drive down those pretty Eastside residential side streets just to get to the other side of town..... How awful that those small, narrow zig zagging streets have to be used as a major thoroughfare on the EASTSIDE!! WHO DESIGNED THIS TOWN ANYWAY???????

I am SURE my ideas are much less money than the \$15 Million dollars allocated for the South Medford Interchange.

④

Go ahead, add that South interchange....
BUT, ADD THE NEW EXITS OFF I-5, ALSO...AS SOON AS POSSIBLE TO GET THE TRAFFIC OFF BARNETT!!! I am positive my ideas would certainly help the Central part of Medford, and at a very low cost!!!! and, ADD THE NORTH - SOUTH MAIN ARTERY, TOO, SO WE CAN STOP USING THE RESIDENTIAL STREETS TO GET AROUND THE EASTSIDE. Put this town into the Twenty-First Century!! THINK WHAT YOU ARE DOING BEFORE YOU REALLY MESS UP THIS TOWN!!!

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Also....a planned light-rail system NOW should be allowed for future development downtown. Get people into the trains to go East-WEST or North-South. Ashland to Central Point, using some of the existing railroad tracks. By having the "commuter trains" (like Boston) more people would leave their cars at home and take the train into work or school!!! The

214

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: Bstalent@cs.com
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2002 1:58 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
letters@mailtribune.com
Cc: S. Medford Interchange
Subject:

No matter where you locate it, for safety please design the signalized intersections at right angles instead of the obtuse angles shown. Being perpendicular to cross traffic is the only way to safely proceed after the light changes.

Bill West
333 Mt View No 45
Talent, OR

①

215

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: John [jmorrison@vcog.org]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 9:15
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: FW: sissyboot@cybernetisp.net
Comment from web
-----Original Message-----
From: griffith@vweb.mind.net [mailto:griffith@vweb.mind.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 08, 2002 5:31 PM
To: john@rv.cog.or.us
Subject: sissyboot@cybernetisp.net

Nina & John T day
2673 n keene way

medford
oregon
97504
sissyboot@cybernetisp.net
Submit Query

we own property on Alta on that side of town , I see no reason we can not keep Barnett rd. and add a mother on all so we need some different Engineers . to look at it , we seen what was done to Hwy a1-5 and 217 up north why can not we have a good on and off like that . our x-mayorI believe has a lot to do with why this route was chosen Thank you Nina day

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216

Jan 9, 2002

851 Highland Dr., #31
Medford, OR 97504

Greg Holthoff
ODOT Environmental project Manager
1158 Chemekeeta St. N.E.
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Mr. Holthoff

In regard to the new proposed South Medford Interchange I am not in support of either the Ellendale or the Highland Alternative. I am not in full support of the NC-Build Alternative either. I am for the right build. I think if ODOT is to fix the current interchange and traffic problems in the surrounding area it has to include the intersections of Barnett/Hwy 99 (one of the top 10 percent of an Oregon Department of Transportation region's intersections qualifying for special safety mitigation), Stewart/Hwy 99 and Barnett/Highland.

ODOT claims that they are resolving the traffic problem on the Barnett Interchange, since they will be removing the on and off ramps and moving the interchange south. This will result in separating the local traffic from the freeway traffic. Of course they can say they cured the problem of the interchange itself by eliminating the off ramps across from Alba Dr. and Stewart coupled with eliminating the on ramps. This reduces the volume of traffic on Barnett at that location.

The present interchanged on and off ramps could be lengthen and widen giving more capacity. To give the motorist another east-west passage a flyover could be installed from Barnett across Hwy. 99, across the railroad tracks and onto Stewart Street with a Hwy. 99 off ramp. A Highland to Garfield flyover could also be installed.

I think that Medford needs a South Stage Interchange now, not in 20 years from now. South Stage Road was not considered in the detail study according to Jim Hale, from the engineering firm who did the study, because it only eliminated the traffic on Barnett by 14.7%. The reason it got that score is because of the Urban Growth boundaries and the surrounding area is largely undeveloped. The modeling did not take into consideration that if you build it they will come. Look at the new Central Point interchange. It is falling only 9 years. One may say that the Urban Growth Boundaries only change every 20 years. It has been the history of this area that the Urban Growth Boundaries are sent back in 10 years since they have already reached the 20 year projection. The draft said that Medford's population would be 63,000 in the year 2005. It is already over 63,000. Most of the pear orchards in this area have already been removed. It is cheaper now to do acquisitions in that area and it is the perfect time to lay out the ground work for an infrastructure. Having a South Stage Road intersection running to the North Phoenix Road is essential! South Stage should have a spur road to the Rogue Valley Manor, a connection to Rogue Valley Medical Center and a through street on Golf View. This would give an avenue to the Rogue Valley Manor, Rogue Valley Medical Center, Orchard Hill School (which is a Phoenix School District coming from our neighbors to the South), the retirement centers, small business professional, medical facilities, St. Mary's High School and the 5,000 new residence which includes a new school in the Phoenix School District.

The Highland Alternative directs traffic through one of Medford's neighborhoods. I do not believe it is the policy of the Oregon Transportation Commission to fracture neighborhoods. It would turn Bear Creek Park into a rest stop. As far as the impact to the neighborhood in the draft I cannot believe how incomplete the study is.

I ask that ODOT keep an open mind. It can be a win-win situation for all of us if we work together.

Something to think about. A word or warning from the Enron case that applies here. This is what Bill Mann from Motley Fool had to say in his address to the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs, December 17, 2001: Mr. Mann stated that, "in order for investors to effectively engage themselves, they need education about how the financial system

works, access to information, and opportunities for open dialogue. This is a financial investment, but it has much deeper and broader investment than just money. The Solution Team and the citizens of the Rogue Valley need a complete study with all the information given them and feel secure in an open dialogue to freely express themselves.

Listen to your citizens who are financing this project, please. Thank you very kindly for the extension that you have given us. This shows that you are willing to meet us at the table and I do applaud you for that.

Sincerely,

Della Jennings

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HOLTHOFF Greg

From: Mary Chokmeister [cchokmeister@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 12:44 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: Medford freeway interchange

Dear Sir:

I am writing to add my comments to the proposal to relocate the Barnett Road interchange. I agree that the South Stage Rd. or "Beltline" proposals are NOT good. Both are in areas which would not alleviate traffic problems in the mid-Medford and Eastside areas where it is heaviest. Also, these proposals would adversely affect the rural/agricultural areas they run through, possibly precluding the orchard and budding wine industry from expanding or even existing in our area. What a shame. I am for the proposed Highland Drive interchange. What I do wonder is why change the existing Barnett Road interchange at the same time? Why not have TWO interchanges with freeway access instead of spending all the money to build a new one at Highland with freeway access and rip out the freeway access on the current Barnett Rd. interchange, making it just East-West accessible? Seems to me having two would be better. I would also like to express an opinion that the NEXT interchange in Medford should be somewhere between Barnett Rd. and McAndrews Rd. McAndrews is currently just as bad, traffic-wise, as Barnett. Again, I believe that locating an interchange at South Stage Road or in a "Beltline" situation, just because farm land doesn't yell as loud as neighborhoods, would be a big mistake and not help the growing gridlock in mid-Medford.

Thank you.
J. Alderman

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: PHCPaul@aol.com
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 12:52 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg; LEAMING Gary W; rob@patridge.com; jeff.Graham@fhwaddt.gov; greg.walden@mail.house.gov; Julie_Rubenstein@wyden.senate.gov; Oregon@gsmith.senate.gov; SEN Hannon

Subject: I-5 South interchange fiasco.

We would like to add our names to the list of people opposed to ODOT's plans for the South interchange. They admit their plans are "not people friendly." Additionally most of the planning was done behind closed door and did not include the public. Not until the plans were finalized did they request any comments or input from the people of Medford. They also had several errors in the publication. What ODOT is doing is taking care of their responsibility of congestion on the freeway and increasing traffic on the streets of Medford which will necessitate more improvements to counteract the increased pressure for which the City of Medford will have to foot the bill. We would favor a by-pass around the city even if takes longer to accomplish. If Crater Lake Ave. were to connect with I-5, it would provide a more direct route to the freeway and downtown. At present and with the ODOT plan, it will be a roundabout route to the freeway. Access to Bear Creek Park will be limited and create safety hazards. More than likely it will be a rest stop for freeway traffic instead of what it was intended for. When the freeway was proposed about 35 years ago, the city counsel were influenced by the downtown merchants, in spite of a few leveler heads that were against it. The level headed ones also wanted a third off ramp when it would have been easier and less expensive. Now, the Counsel members, for the most part are in agreement with the State and are willing to compound the problem. It is not a long-range solution to satisfy future housing and growth in South East Medford. The least that should happen is for the City Counsel to review the plan and maybe hold an election to see how many are in favor and how many are against it. To spend \$50 million and not solve the problem is a gross misappropriation of public funds

Paul R. and Hilda J. Potts
1417 Siskiyou Bl.
Medford, 97504

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: JoAnne Wilcox [j.a.wilcox@juno.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 1:19 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: South Medford Interchange proposal

Although the presentations at ODOT's South Medford Interchange public meeting were helpful, we came away with a heightened awareness that the "human factor" and the realities of future growth have not been considered carefully enough.

Before allocating 50 billion dollars for a solution that seems temporary and probably outdated by the time it will be built, we ask that ODOT, Medford, other entities, and Jackson County come together and PLAN for valley-wide transportation.

Some things to consider are: What will happen when four lanes of I-5 are outmoded? Where will the Interstate traffic go? Should city street systems be in place and determine future development? Or, should development determine the street systems? What would be the results of a freeway exit into the heart of Old East Medford? What about factoring in a light rail system extending from Ashland to Eagle Point? Where could the Applegate traffic presently going through Jacksonville go? How could cars move around Central Point?

ODOT admits that both Medford interchanges were ill conceived and badly planned. A "quick-fix" is in the works at the North Interchange. Instead of taking the time to do something right, the same approach is being proposed for the South Medford Interchange. ODOT could modify the present South Medford I-5 exit and await a cohesive area transportation plan.

Can't we stop more ill conceived plans from becoming realities? Please--ODOT, City of Medford, and Jackson County--start working together on an area wide traffic plan!

Sincerely,
Robert and Joanne Wilcox
2569 Old Stege Road/Central Point, OR 97502

copies: Medford Mail Tribune
Mayor Berryman & Medford City Council
Jackson County Commissioners Holt, Kupillas, Walker
U.S. Congress Repr. Greg Walden
State Repr. Jason Atkinson
State Senator Lenn Hannon

HOLTHOFF Greg

From: George tipton [gdtip@yahoo.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 3:45 PM
To: HOLTHOFF Greg
Subject: South Medford Interchange Relocation

To: Greg Holthoff
RE: South Medford Interchange Relocation

ODOT has cited safety and traffic congestion as reasons for relocation of the South Medford Interchange. How are these reasons compatible with placing an interchange thoroughfare adjacent to a school, school playground and residential connectors? As in this case of the so called "Garfield Extension". Why is it safer to use two lane connectors than four lane arterials as in the case of Stewart vs Garfield? The Monte Grove editorial in the 1/9/02 Mail Tribune states the Stage Road interchange is not out but a future consideration. If the current ODOT favorite proposal is allowed to be completed to satisfy minimum traffic standards so that proposed development may proceed doesn't this further complicate traffic problems without the infrastructure being in place first? Doesn't the encouragement of surface traffic also accelerate the time in which the original blunder of the freeway viaduct through or over Medford must be addressed? Perhaps a reevaluation of the long term transportation needs of South Medford might be the best course of action at this time.

Thank you for your consideration on this.

Sincerely,
George Tipton
1720 Dove Lane
Medford, OR 97501
(541) 888-5899

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HOLTHOFF Greg

From: John Doty [jd4@aig.nj]
Sent: Wednesday, January 09, 2002 12:02 PM
To: greg.holtoff@odot.state.or.us
Subject: South Medford Interchange Comments

Hello -

I am writing as an interested citizen of in the general effected area.

I reside on the south end of Eastwood Drive, a block from Highland Ave, near Bear Creek Park. I use the South Interchange at least once a day.

There are many factors I believe are worth weighing, and I am not at all convinced that the current plan actually solves problems, but rather shifts them several hundred yards south.

Item 1: east/west traffic near the SouthGate shopping facilities, currently using Barnett Road, exclusively. This situation WOULD be helped somewhat with the interchange shift, as freeway-bound traffic would end up further south AS it got to I-5. I worry that the Highland/Barnett intersection and the stretch of 99 between Belknap and Barnett would not be significantly altered, except perhaps to become a tad MORE hectic as the same number of vehicles are going MORE places through the same stretches of road. As an example, now all East Medford, Barnett freeway-bound traffic comes through the Highland Barnett intersection using both thru lanes, then peels off at the on-ramps. With the new plan, all this traffic will be in the turn lane at Highland.

Item 2: The project in relation to school service. As it stands, the existing interchange actually is used by four separate education providers: Medford 549-c, Phoenix/Talent 4, St. Mary's (Private HS), CrossRoads (Private HS). I know that District 4's school board resolved to not support the proposed change, though their reasoning isn't as strong as the two private institutions. I'll explain. Medford's daily use of the interchange is I believe exclusive to crossing the freeway. That would not be impacted. Phoenix uses it to provide daily bus service from it's southeast Medford sections to the Middle School in Talent and the High School in Phoenix, as well as bring some students in to Orchard Hill Elem. For P/T, they are all involved in activity further south, so setting the interchange further south won't significantly impact time and distances. St. Mary's serves students from all over the valley and that includes students from as far north as Rogue River. The added distance south to the new intersection, then north back to Barnett will amount to several additional bus miles a day. For CrossRoads, a private alternative school serving over 200 students from Central Point, Rogue River, Phoenix/Talent and Ashland Schools, coming from Belknap to the campus (on Earhart just off Riverside) rather than from Barnett will add just under .75 miles and approximately 2 minutes. CrossRoads transports students via van, making approximately 20 service runs per day (incoming and outgoing) to north-bound residents. The result being 60 additional miles and 160 additional minutes of service per week. For Drivers averaging in excess of 180 miles/day, this will be a significant addition.

Item 3 - Hospital Access. As it stands, RVMC (Asante) is reasonably

accessible from the freeway compared to Providence. Moving the intersection as proposed would add to the distance from the freeway to RVMC for medical transports coming from the north.

Item 4 - Freeway Access compared to Size of City
Talent, Phoenix, Rogue River = 1
Medford, Ashland, Grants Pass, Central Point and -ehem- Gold Hill = 2

Honestly, Medford needs 3 and maybe 3.5 intersections (South Stage would be 'shared' with Phoenix). The engineering would be a tad tough, but I would almost encourage looking at devising a ramp on/off the viaduct, thus having access at (from North to South) Crater Lake Ave, 10th/Siskiyou OR 8th/Main, Highland/Garfield, (South Stage).

I am pondering the execution of an access near the 10th/Cottage/Siskiyou intersection and just haven't figured out how brutal a project that would be. It would hose a really rundown manufactured home cluster, but that could use a facelift, anyway.

I really do like dreaming though new layouts for this type of thing, so will probably chime in again sometime.

John Doty
516 Eastwood Drive
Medford, OR

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