



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: Sept. 7, 2005

Purpose: Fern Valley Interchange Project
Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Distribution: CAC Members, Project Development Team, public

From: Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Date Prepared: Sept. 16, 2005

CAC Attendees: Harry Page, Terry Helfrich, David Lowry, David Lewin, Bob Korfhage, Mark Gibson, Joan Haukom, Dack Doggett, Pauly Hinesly, Lee Carrau.

CAC Absent: Bill Rombach, George Cota.

Project Team Attendees: Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager
Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Manager
Gary Leaming, ODOT Project information
Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer
Peter Schuytema, ODOT Engineer
Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT
David Pyles, ODOT
Nancy Reynolds, URS Corp. Project Manager
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Other Attendees: 74 members of the public signed in (sign-in sheet in file)

1. Review of agenda and process/Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Before the meeting began, Debbie Timms addressed issues regarding Bear Lake Estates, particularly the access, because of the large crowd from the park in attendance. By a show of hands the crowd said "no" to any access at the south end of the park off of 1st Street, including pedestrian access. Timms said it was proposed because project committees thought residents would want it. She noted that the CAC is hearing the audience so the second access

likely will be dropped. There were questions as to why don't CAC members vote now, because that's why so many people are attending. David Lowry noted the expense of added access. The audience questioned why Bear Creek Estates doesn't have representation on the CAC since former CAC member Dan Sauro moved away. It was noted the Terry Helfrich was appointed to represent the city council. He had attended all previous CAC meetings and was well-prepared: it would be difficult to bring a new CAC member into the project now. However, a liaison will be named by the park to sit with the CAC and report back to the park. Responding to questions from the audience, all CAC members introduced themselves and described their background. It was announced several times during the meeting that the City Council would have a public meeting on the project the following night.

Guarino reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting.

A request for approval of the July 6, 2005, CAC Minutes was made. There were no changes. The minutes were approved as written.

2. Other Transportation Studies

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Timms noted the Regional Problem Solving project as well as ODOT's environmental assessment, and the interchange access management plan. These projects are really separate matters. Jeannell Wyntergreen explained that the proposed growth areas for the next 20 years or so (potentially including 300 acres of commercial development) are outside the current Urban Growth Boundaries, but they are not yet established and not able to be made part of the decision making process for the interchange project.

3. Open House

Gary Leaming, ODOT

Leaming said more than 100 people signed in at the Open House on Sept. 1 in City Hall. He referred to a PowerPoint, which also was handed out to CAC and the public. (Report in project file). He described process and reviewed comments received. He noted that the most support came for the CAC Table 1 alternative, and the least support for the Lewin SPUI. He also noted objection to creating a second access to Bear Lake Estates.

Lowry said it is good to get random input, but this was not scientific and much is contradictory. It is just a snapshot. Helfrich said many points have been hashed over and the project is addressing many of the concerns raised. Lewin said over time he has gained some distance from the alternatives and is now better able to judge what works best. Hinesly said people don't know the background and all of the issues going into the decisions and in some cases the lack of ability for options. Haukom welcomed the input and understands that all are not fully informed.

4. Discuss/Recommend East Side Alternatives

Peter Schuytema, Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT

Fera-Thomas referred to a PowerPoint presentation, copies were distributed to CAC members and the public. Copy is in project file.

Discussion of interchange type

Fera-Thomas reviewed features of the diamond and the Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI), note the numbers of travel lanes considered. Some intersections in the diamond alternative exceed acceptable volumes in 20 years. The SPUI meets volume standards. Based on volume projections, ODOT's Transportation Planning Analysis Unit (TPAU) recommends a SPUI type interchange.

Public comment on interchange type

Responding to a question, Brian Sheadel discussed height requirements, saying that all structures would be about the same height and is needed for clearance. Staff also explained how signals work. Also both options have same access constraints, but diamond may have more impact on adjacent properties.

CAC discussion/recommendation on interchange type

Lee Carrau asked if this project considers south Medford interchange being built; the answer was yes and construction at that interchange is to start next summer. There was discussion that the SPUI takes less space, although the structure may be more expensive. Peter Schuytema said the diamond would be eight lanes wide and that size may be as expensive as the SPUI, while the SPUI costs less for land. One way to improve diamond performance may be with more lanes, but that's not really viable because it would require a huge structure. CAC members wanted to know which design would be better for pedestrians; staff said a lot of that detail comes later, but generally a SPUI is better because each access is one or two lanes to cross vs. two three or more lanes to cross in the diamond.

It was noted that the PDT won't be making decisions tomorrow, so it is not necessary to make a recommendation tonight. Some members wanted to vote; others did not. It was agreed to postpone the vote at the request of the Phoenix City Council because some CAC members wanted to wait and because no action would be taken by the PDT until October. There was discussion that there is no real decision because one option clearly is not acceptable. Staff said the choice is one option that would fail sooner than the other.

Discussion of east side connecting roads

Fera-Thomas continued the PowerPoint presentation showing the volumes on all connecting roads for each alternative. She also reported on details regarding signalization, lane configurations and queuing lengths.

Public comment on east side connecting roads

A woman who owns property Bolz Road said she never knew that this project would include her property.

CAC Discussion/Recommendation on east side connecting roads

There was discussion about the source of data, and if the CAC is comfortable with data sources. Terry Helfrich said he is looking for connectivity and the SPUI is the most flexible

to respond to future growth. David Lowry wanted to see underlying assumptions for traffic counts. Peter Schuytema explained that the information sources have to be adopted plans, and the region's transportation model which is based on those plans and official population forecasts from Portland State University. The data contained in those sources cannot be changed. The process this project has to follow requires that it comply with other approved plans. Timms wanted to know if others had doubts about the forecasting. David Lewin said it is the best forecast available

Responding to questions, Fera-Thomas said the size of the roundabout would be larger than the four-way stop. She reviewed the size of each intersection. She also gave a summary of her findings, noting which intersections would have excessively long queues.

Jerry Marmon asked each CAC member to comment on their comfort with the forecasting and the analysis they have heard.

- Hinesly said it seems the project and the CAC is doing what it set out to do and decisions are always hard.
- Haukom said the information has clarified many of her concerns.
- Helfrich said he was most concerned with economic value and future development and revenue for the city. He likes the analysis he's seen.
- Lou Montoya, the Bear Lake liaison, said at this point it is too complicated for him to comment.
- Korfhage said he is comfortable with the presentation and doesn't want to see modeling details because that is too technical and the CAC can't do anything to change it.
- Gibson said he is getting more comfortable and the interchange has to accommodate regional traffic as well as local traffic.
- Page said he is happy with the choices and the numbers his is seeing are satisfactory.
- Lewin said he is ready to move on.
- Carrau is satisfied and said it is time to move on.
- Doggett said he is happy with information received.
- Lowry said the project has three good plans, and he wants to see more details regarding access from the various alternatives. It would be helpful to know more about the modeling assumptions.

7. Public Comment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

There was discussion about the roundabout idea, and it was noted that the roundabout wouldn't work well here. Schuytema distinguished between a roundabout and traffic circle. There were some comments that traffic circles can work well.

A woman noted that she did not know about the project until recently and her land would be affected. The CAC also was asked to consider the wishes of Bear Lake residents.

Another woman said she was concerned that ODOT already has decided what will be built, and is telling people that other ideas won't work. She questioned the source of the traffic numbers, and also is concerned about retaining full access to Bear Lake Estates. She just now

heard that left turns from Luman Road may no longer be possible. Vicki Bear noted that there were more than 30 ideas and concepts that were studied and the process has reduced the number to four. The sources of the information and the modeling has been explained as the information is introduced and it is difficult to come into the project at this later stage and understand what is going on because so much already has happened. Timms said that if there is any way to avoid an impact to property it will be pursued. Lewin noted that the traffic information was just part of the analysis, and the concepts still have to be evaluated using the project goals.

Bear announced the time and day of a City Council meeting to review the project.

There was general discussion about a possible underpass to allow full access to Luman Road. Several CAC members said they were concerned about maintaining access as much as possible. It also was noted that not all properties have full access now. Other CAC members noted that access has not been determined and will be addressed later in the project.

A man said he was concerned that government agencies were not fully sharing all information, but the project team told him they have been getting all the information they need. It was noted that some plans haven't been fully adopted so that information can't be used.

6. Next Steps

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Timms announced PDT meeting at ODOT offices at 9 a.m. Thursday. She said the PDT will not be making any decisions until probably next month. She also invited everyone to learn more about the project by attending the City Council meeting at 5:30 p.m. Thursday at the city hall. She thanked the CAC and the public for attending.

It was announced that the next CAC meeting will be Oct. 5, 2005.
The meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.