



July 27, 2006

TO: Fern Valley Citizen's Advisory Committee

FROM: Vicki Guarino, Rogue Valley Council of Governments

RE: Fern Valley Citizen's Advisory Committee-Project Development Team Joint Meeting
Thursday, **August 2, 2006**, 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Phoenix High School Commons
745 N. Rose St., Phoenix, Ore.

This packet contains materials for the Fern Valley Interchange CAC-PDT meeting on August 2. In addition to the tech memos, revised designs will be discussed during the meeting and new maps will be distributed. The maps couldn't be completed in time for this mailing, however they will be posted on the project web site by Monday for any committee members or public who want to look at the design changes before Wednesday night. Go to www.oregon.gov/odot/hwy/region3 and look for the Fern Valley Interchange project.

If you have questions about the maps call Debbie Timms, 774-6393.



AGENDA

Citizens Advisory Committee – Project Development Team Joint Meeting

Aug. 2, 2006

6:30-8:30 p.m.

Phoenix High School Commons

Phoenix, OR

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| 1. Introductions, Review Agenda, Approve Minutes (5 min.) | Vicki Guarino, RVCOG |
| 2. Public Comments (5 min.) | Vicki Guarino, RVCOG |
| 3. Project Update (5 min.) | Debbie Timms, ODOT |
| 4. History of Alternative Development (15 min.) | Nancy Reynolds, URS |
| 5. Follow-up: South Stage & David Lewin Option (15 min.) | Brian Sheadel,
Peter Schuytema ODOT |
| 6. Alternatives Revisions & Design Exceptions Discussion (50 min.) | Brian Sheadel, Peter Schuytema,
Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT |
| 7. Next Steps (5 min.) | Debbie Timms, ODOT |
| 8. Public Comment (10 min.) | Vicki Guarino, RVCOG |
| 9. Comfort Check (5 min.) | Vicki Guarino, RVCOG |
| 10. Agenda Build for Next CAC Meeting (5 min.) | Vicki Guarino, RVCOG |

Adjourn

For additional information about the meeting, call Vicki Guarino, at the Rogue Valley Council of Governments, Central Point, 664-6676 ext. 241.



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: June 7, 2006

Purpose: Fern Valley Interchange Project
Citizen Advisory Committee, Project Development Team Meeting

Distribution: CAC Members, Project Development Team, Public

From: Sue Casavan, RVCOG

Date Prepared: June 2006

CAC Attendees: Bob Korfhage Terry Helfrich, David Lewin, Joan Haukom, Dack Doggett, Pauly Hinesly, Lee Carrau, Harry Page, Lenny Neimark, Tani Wouters, Mark Gibson, and David Lowry

CAC Absent: No members were absent.

Project Team Attendees: Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager
Debbie Timms, ODOT Project Manager
Gary Leaming, ODOT Project information
Brian Sheadel, ODOT Senior Designer
Christina Fera Thomas, ODOT
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
Sue Casavan, RVCOG

Other Attendees: 36 members of the public signed in (sign-in sheet in file)

PDT Attendees: Jerry Marmon, Brian Sheadel, Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT;
Jim Wear, Phoenix; Dale Petrsek, Jackson County; Murray LaHue, Phoenix City Council; Nick Fortey, FHWA

1. Introductions, Review Agenda, Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Guarino began the meeting at 6:35 and asked everyone to please sign-in and if they wanted to be on the mailing list to include their zip code on the sign-in sheet. She explained that this

was a joint meeting with the CAC (Citizen's Advisory Committee) and the PDT (Project Development Team) and that it was the first meeting that the committees have come together. The committees started with introductions and reviewed the agenda for tonight's meeting. Guarino said this was an informational session and that no decisions will be made this evening. She asked committee members to review the CAC and PDT minutes for changes or corrections. David Lewin said on page 2, number 4 should be David Lewin and not David Lowry for the CAC minutes. On the PDT minutes Murray LaHue was confused as to page 6 top line of the page about Old Fern Valley Road. It was determined by staff that the sentence should read "Old Fern Valley Road would remain open to serve Petro" (not Peterbilt). Minutes were approved with corrections as stated.

2. Public Comments

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Ken Hanks: It seems to be reverting back to the old plans even though we have new plans we need to negotiate something for existing businesses that will serve the community. The elaborate plans need to be altered to serve the community. Keep also in mind that citizens are forcibly removed by law and we do not want to go there as a community. We have more adequate traffic flow currently than most big cities have. The only place the city will grow is on the east side, the west side is already fully grown to capacity. We must keep the current infrastructure and change it on the east side when the time comes. Need to keep it down to reality of what our town is and what it will become. We have an agenda to protect the city first and the plans will not be as elaborate as everyone thinks they should be for traffic flow.

Peter Buckley: I want to offer a quick comment of encouragement. I can't tell you what it means to the colleagues I speak to about how this process has been a very challenging process but everyone has responded in a way that makes our state proud. The community adjusting to the process of Phoenix has come together in a wonderful way and I am really impressed with what the Phoenix Business Association has done by sending representatives to Salem to find out exactly what the need is and what the region as a whole needs. It shows the highest quality of citizenship in my opinion. My appreciation for the process and the willingness to adapt and my encouragement in the next step to please stick together to make the interchange work, but most of all making sure the City of Phoenix gets what the City of Phoenix wants to be.

Woman in audience: The unemployment rate is now 9% and the government is trying to make it 50% by closing all businesses.

Man in audience: Can anyone here say growth is not inevitable, that is my question, growth is not inevitable, thank you.

Rosalie Lindvig: I want to read a letter in behalf of Alan and Derek DeBoer: We want to express our support for the Phoenix Business Association alternative for the new overpass project; we regret we are not able to attend this meeting. After reviewing the alternatives we believe the PBA proposal is the one that meets the ultimate goals with the least amount of negative impact and in the most effective manner.

3. Project Update

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Incorporated with other agenda items.

4. CAC Resident/Low Income Neighborhoods Appointment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Guarino explained that there was an opening on the CAC particularly with Low Income Neighborhoods. She said the members should still have Madison Taylor's application who lives in Coleman Creek Estates and would be replacing Wendy Nichols. Guarino asked if anybody had any questions for Madison. Pauly H. asked Madison T. how long she has lived in Coleman Creek Estates. Madison T. responded that it had been 8 years and Pauly H. further questioned if she had often talked to Wendy N. about this project. Madison T. said she was actually not aware of this project until January of this year, knew the project was in the works but was not familiar with the details of it. Joan H. asked why she wanted to serve on the committee. Madison T. responded that there were a lot of people who are not necessarily represented, primarily the Hispanic minorities at Coleman Creek and the residents have had difficulty getting out of the park and getting to work. Guarino told the committee that they could agree to appoint Madison T. to take Wendy's place on the CAC and that they could do so tonight.

The CAC Committee unanimously voted Madison Taylor to the CAC position representing Resident / Low Income Neighborhoods.

5. David Lewin New Option

David Lewin, CAC

David Lewin explained that this option is a work in progress and that the idea is currently being run by the traffic engineers to see if it is feasible. He said basically he took a totally different approach and interestingly enough it was very close to the Phoenix Business Association option. He added that until the traffic engineers felt comfortable with it working he felt there was no point in taking up time. He wanted to thank Sandy Christianson who helped with the idea and he appreciated the help of the Phoenix Business Association for their comments.

6. Phoenix Association Alternative

Lenny Neimark and Tani Wouters, CAC

Brian Sheadel and Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT

Lenny N. presented the Phoenix Association Alternative. He began by saying that he was chosen to represent a diverse group of voices of which many do not agree and with a lot of different agendas. He said this alternative is the product of a lot of people working together that have come up with an alternative that has a lot of potential to solve issues that can do the

most good and cause the least harm. He and Tani drove to Salem to try to figure out what would work for the most people possible while providing for the growth needs of the community. He stated that this is a work in progress and has not officially gone to the Phoenix Business Association.

- West side-ramps lengthened, 6 lanes
- Two lanes of travel to the west, incorporating one left turn lane
- Two lanes going to the east, one left turn lane
- Moving to the west 2 lanes widen to 3
- Expanded bridge across Bear Creek
- Proposing new connection out the back of Coleman Creek

Highway 99 connection:

- Give and take from both sides to accommodate numbers and capacity required
- Two southbound lanes as well as 2 left turn lanes allow turn on Bolz Road
- Two northbound lanes

Harry P. asked how school buses would get in and out of Coleman Creek Estates with right turn only. Lenny N. said they could come in the back access way and circle around.

Bob K. asked if on existing Highway 99 if the widths allowed for sidewalks and bicycle lanes. Lenny N. said sidewalks allowed and bike lanes shared. Bob K. suggested that when bikes and vehicle share an access lane it should be clearly marked as a shared lane. He called it a Sharows Lane and thinks it is used in Portland and Eugene and will get more information for the committee. Pauly H. added that people on the east side that have motorized vehicles (handicap) to get over to Ray's that they would be able to use that lane over the freeway.

Terry H. asked Christina F. if there has been any discussion on the lights with the two intersections of lights being so close together and would it be a problem. Fera-Thomas responded that the two signals are coordinated but the left turns are always full, need to consider. Joan H. wanted to know if there was enough distance between the signals on Fern Valley and Luman Road to get across to Coleman Creek Estates. Lenny N. said that more options needed to be explored. Dack D. asked Sheadel what footage would be taken from Ray's parking lot. Sheadel answered it would be 12-14 feet about three-quarters of a length of a parking spot. Marmon asked Madison T. if the circulation in the proposal is functional for the Coleman Creek facility. Madison T. answered it would be if you go to 99 and turn in. Joan H. wanted to know if there was a mandatory width for sidewalks or was it flexible. Sheadel said it is a 4-5 foot bare minimum and 7 foot standard. Joan H. commented that she would like to see them as wide as possible along 99 so citizens do not feel they are walking along side the highway. Lenny N. added that it was his understanding is that there would be enough room for the 7foot standard. Jim W. said the city plans to get wider sidewalks from 8-12 feet wide.

Man from audience commented that he had a job constructing wheel chair ramps and if there was a 7 foot sidewalk on Highway 99 and ADA compliant access it would be a lot safer and people would use it a lot more and it would be a vast improvement for the citizens of Phoenix.

East Side Fern Valley:

- Moving across northbound, 2 right turn lanes to capture trucks going to Petro
- 2 through lanes

- Coming from south- one through lane and 2 dedicated right turn lanes

David Lewin asked if all truck traffic was going down the revised Pear Tree Lane or all truck traffic in both directions going down South Phoenix Road. Lenny N. responded that the bulk of truck traffic will go down the lane to the service area and continue out to Furry Road to make a left turn out to the freeway.

North Phoenix Road: Lenny N. explained they took a look at the topography and followed a path that goes through Arrowhead Ranch whose owners have agreed to easements. The existing road would become a service road. David Lowry commented that he was most affected by this plan. He said the way it loops out seems like the long way around; where you planned the road is feasible from an engineer standpoint and makes business access easier. He added that he has a 35-acre commercial block and taking this piece and breaking it into four sections with questionable access would be a waste of a resource and an expensive land proposition for ODOT. Marmon asked if there was any current discussion of land-use implications in terms of going outside the UGB and areas that would require goal exceptions. Tani W. said they did discuss that the county would have to do goal exceptions. She said there would be larger development in the Southeast Medford area and the idea is that this proposal would help to alleviate traffic congestion for future growth. Terry H. added that there had been discussion between Phoenix and Medford property owners that going along I-5 and connecting into the future South Stage would play really well for connectivity.

Peterbilt Representative comment: Ted said the main goal for them is to have room for trucks to make the corner in and out of the facility, it appears to be wide open and I would sign up for this plan.

Marmon explained that when you start talking about goal exceptions and making a case for an alignment it will be very difficult. This is an issue he wanted to bring up so the teams can be aware of it. He further added that unless the city extends the UGB to incorporate that land, we would need to stay with the existing zoning and it is important to have these conversations up front. David Lowry asked if you could have a SPUI interchange and still have all the access shown -- from the shopping center and west into Phoenix. Sheadel said the design shows a connection to the SPUI with dual left turns to the freeway.

Lenny N. handed out a matrix comparing the SPUI to the Phoenix Business Alternative. He said you would be spending twice as much money on the SPUI at the expense of business and property owners for five years worth of growth, and at an additional cost of \$45-\$50 million dollars. David Lowry asked if these are these ODOT cost numbers; Sheadel responded that \$20-\$25 million is more realistic. Lenny N. responded that cost estimates can change, and we do not have to solve every problem right now. He added that this alternative has significantly less impact with a real opportunity to connect the east side neighborhoods to the west side neighborhoods using the existing roadways.

David Lowry said the CAC and PDT followed a federally dictated procedure for determining the project purpose, goals and objectives and have spent a great deal of time on that. He added that members determined what the ratings should be for various plans and felt that this was not a result of this process; his understanding was that a lot of these things were opinions of individuals and do not reflect the product of the federally dictated process that the

committee has gone through. Tani W. congratulated the committee on what they have done in the past 18 months, and said she and Lenny have done in one month what the committees have tried to do in 18, and the they have pulled the community together. They feel that they have met the goals and the purpose and need. She said they have worked closely with ODOT and that ODOT has modeled the numbers. She said they have come up with an alternative that does not need to include a SPUI. David Lowry said his concern is choosing an alternative that will meet the future traffic requirements of Phoenix and the surrounding area. He added that there were a lot of good things about the proposed alternative that make a lot of sense. Marmon said the project needs to stay consistent, using the same criteria to evaluate every alternatives. The project owes it to the teams to go through that same evaluation process with the Phoenix Business Alternative, using the goals and objectives the teams have developed.

Lenny N. quoted from numerous sources that there was not enough funding for a SPUI and that the committee should carefully consider this. He said there are a lot of people who are anxious to move on and he and Tani believe they have brought to the table an alternative with a great deal of potential. David Lowry said the committee has not been talking about numbers up to this point and wanted to know more about the funding. Tani W. added that she thought this has been a great process and that the Phoenix Business Association does not want to delay the project, but work together to find a workable solution.

7. Alternatives Discussion

Brian Sheadel and Christina Fera-Thomas, ODOT

No discussion at this meeting due to time restraints.

8. Next Steps

Debbie Timms, ODOT

Timms said the committee needed to take the information from the matrix handed out tonight and discuss it in more detail. Marmon said there will be two meetings that will take place before the next CAC and PDT meeting to discuss design exceptions and fatal flaws in the alternatives and see if ODOT traffic engineers are comfortable with them. He added that it is important to look at the pros and cons of all the alternatives.

David Lowry said the cost issue is significant and if a SPUI is not feasible maybe the committee should not even look at it and that ODOT could give them guidance.

Bob K. suggested that before members look at the pros and cons, they should look at the rules for the project. He said it looked like the Phoenix Business committee played by different rules and he wanted to see everything on the same playing field. He added that if this committee had the same flexibility as the business committee, the CAC would have come up with some different options. It is only fair for us to look at the alternatives with all rules on the table. Marmon said the difference was that this committee looked at alternatives that did not require exceptions to state guidelines. Bob K. said he didn't think the committee should get to the point of comparing alternatives before all the alternatives conform to the

same rules and guidelines. He said the committees were told they could not bend the rules. If the rules can be changed we need to know that so when we compare alternatives or evaluate for recommendations we need to know what is acceptable and what is not.

9. Public Comment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Murray LaHue: The decision to have joint meetings was the correct decision. I think as a decision maker it has been a great help to listen to the CAC instead of just being told what their recommendations are. I think we should continue the joint meetings. I recall conversation that decisions the CAC would make would apply to alternatives without exceptions. All Alternatives should play by the same rules, and perhaps others should be brought back. I have a lot of respect for the people on this committee and I think they have listened attentively and acted accordingly and I want to congratulate them on their efforts.

Jim Wear: For the schedule we were on at the beginning, it appears we kind of started over and are we in danger of losing any of the funding that we would have had?

Timms: No loss of funding

Lorie Sexton: Before you go forward I would like you to go back and study the diamonds a little more or it is not a legal process.

Muriel Johnson: Seems like things have shifted, one of the things I have seen in this process over the last few years is that you were honoring the residents of the East Side and trying to move the interchange a little farther away from us. Tonight I feel Phoenix is even more divided because what you have taken through the process for the last many months was not fair to us. Marmon added that the alternative of moving Fern Valley Road to the north is still on the table.

Stan Bartell: I appreciate the work you do. The parameters that we are working with now, as this goes along, will work for everyone. I think we can come up with a great plan.

Al Bordeaux: The rules can be worked around. This project will affect the community. I want to see more cooperation and see this project move forward. I know we cannot make everyone in the whole community on both sides of the highway happy. It's too bad we are on both sides of the highway and I think we need to make a bigger effort to get both sides together as a community. The best thing that could happen is to put I-5 underground.

10. Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

CAC

Terry Helfrich: When we first started meeting just a few of us were here. I like to see all the community input. I think we are making progress and we can do it right.

Bob Korfhage: Regardless of where we come from I think we are in a good place now. As we work through this together we need to remind ourselves when we disagree that we are on the same team and we are working towards the same goal.

Lenny Neimark: A big thank you to Christina and Peter for being with us on this project, Jerry, I think you need to take a look at these statements I read about the money for the SPUI's and tell us whether it is true or not and that will determine a whole lot about how we proceed.

Tani Wouters: I think the way you set it up was nice, appreciate the effort in listening and helping us to work together and I appreciate it.

David Lewin: Thank you.

Joan Haukom: I want to thank the Phoenix Business Association for all their hard work, and I would like to see our meetings stick with the agenda as far as time goes.

Mark Gibson: I want to echo what David said I think if we would have had more flexibility from the beginning we would have been in a different place about 6 months ago.

Harry Page: More work to be done, let's get all the facts and get the job done.

Dack Doggett: Appreciate all the work, we do need to look at the process. I personally was going to make a motion to drop the SPUI tonight. Timms responded that the CAC makes recommendations to the PDT and the PDT votes. The Business Association can make recommendations to the CAC.

Pauly Hinesly: I am enjoying this evening.

Madison Taylor: This has been educational and informative for me and I'm glad to see everyone working together toward a common goal. I can see the unfairness of the exceptions and I think it happened because of the vocal nature of the PBA, I think it is a good democratic process.

David Lowry: I want to thank Lenny, Tani, Christina, and Brian. Basically we are all on the same page and I think we are just gradually learning that. Newcomers are learning the things we had as constraints, I think what we would be promoting would be a lot different than what you saw had we the same opportunity to have flexibility and work one on one. We just didn't feel we had it.

Lee Carrau: I coached Murray for a week and he didn't miss a cue

PDT

Brian Sheadel: Ready to go home.

Christina Fera-Thomas: I am fine right now.

Jerry Marmon: I understand the concerns about the rules changing. I hope to have more clarity on this issue, and the exception issue next month. We are at a good spot as a team and moving forward.

Nick Fortey: I think this is a good meeting. We have to make sure all the alternatives are recorded the same for the NEPA process. Start out with what is the purpose and need of the project and that is how we develop the evaluation criteria. There is nothing that says things can't change along the way. Process is designed to encourage development of alternatives and evaluations just making sure that it is done in a consistent manner. Move these alternatives through with some type of notation system. The Phoenix Business Association needs to be very careful about easements, and cannot use the acquisition of right of way to prejudice an alternative. You have to be very careful as you move through the process that it doesn't disparage other alternatives. Impacts get weighted through the federal process. The money issue is important, but the whole process is designed to look at what is the ideal alternative, realizing that some alternatives may be really expensive. Look at what is cost beneficial; the budget issue should not drive the entire decision process. Think about what actions the agency needs to take for additional revenue if this is the alternative that moves forward.

Jim Wear: I like the idea that this group is moving forward thinking about keeping what this city has and accommodating growth. That is how we need to look at this, as a whole not as one against another.

Murray LaHue: I am pleased to be here. We are all going in the same direction. These committees serve a very good purpose and I welcome aboard the lady from Coleman Creek.

11. Agenda Build for Next CAC Meeting & Next Steps

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Agenda item not discussed due to time restraints.

12. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Next meeting – Thursday, July 6, 2006 from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

Phoenix High School Commons

Phoenix, Oregon

STATE OF OREGON

INTEROFFICE MEMO

**Department of Transportation
Transportation Development Division**

Mill Creek Office Park
555 13th Street NE Suite 2
Salem, Oregon 97301-4178
(503) 986-4110 FAX (503) 986-4174

File Code:

Date: July 24, 2006

**TO: Fern Valley Interchange CAC
Fern Valley Interchange PDT**

**FROM: Peter L. Schuytema, P.E., Senior Transportation Analyst
Transportation Planning Analysis Unit**

**SUBJECT: Technical Memorandum #3: South Stage Interchange Screening
Analysis**

This memorandum discusses the results from the screening analysis of the South Stage Interchange as it relates to the Fern Valley Interchange (FVI) Phase 2 project. This first level analysis screening is intended to determine the impact of major elements of a potential alternative.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that only future land uses in current comprehensive plans are considered for a project. With the current comprehensive plans, the South Stage Interchange primarily benefits the south Medford area and does not have a significant benefit to the Fern Valley Interchange area, and it will not meet the purpose and need for the FVI project.

Background

The updated RVCOG (Rogue Valley Council of Governments) travel demand model was used for this effort. The future 2030 Tier 1 PM peak hour volumes were used. The 2030 Tier 1 volumes assume substantial future development in the northeast quadrant of the Fern Valley Road interchange based on current comprehensive plans. Additionally, volumes can easily fluctuate 10% over a given week, so this analysis uses a 10% threshold for determining if the proposed improvements make a difference (i.e. significant). For additional background information on the use of the RVCOG model for this project, please refer to Technical Memorandum #1A, dated May 19, 2005.

Scenario Descriptions

In addition to the South Stage Interchange + Fern Valley Interchange scenario, three others from the May 19th, 2005 Technical Memorandum #1A along with their results were compared. A short description of the each scenario:

- **Baseline Diamond** - The baseline level of improvements is a diamond interchange in the existing interchange location with Fern Valley Road and the southern portion of North Phoenix Road widened to four lanes.
- **South Stage Diamond** - The South Stage Diamond scenario would extend South Stage Road east from OR 99 to North Phoenix Road and build a diamond-style interchange with I-5. The ramps at Fern Valley Road would be removed, but the Fern Valley Road overcrossing would remain to serve local traffic.
- **South Stage Overcrossing** - South Stage Road would be extended east from OR 99 crossing over I-5 to connect with North Phoenix Road.
- **South Stage Interchange + Fern Valley Interchange** – This scenario is similar to the South Stage Diamond, but the Fern Valley Interchange would remain using the Baseline Diamond level of improvements.

Scenario Results

Volume Test

The volume evaluation indicates how much new traffic is “attracted” into the study area from the surrounding area when compared to the Baseline Diamond scenario level of improvements. The volume evaluation looked at east-west routes between OR 99 and North Phoenix Road and north-south routes between South Stage and Fern Valley Roads in the study area. There were no significant changes in north-south volumes in any of the scenarios. Table 1 shows the relative east-west volume change between each of the scenarios compared to the Baseline Diamond scenario.

Table 1. East-West Volume Comparison

Scenario	Percent Difference from Baseline Diamond Scenario
Baseline Diamond	0
South Stage Diamond	2
South Stage Overcrossing	9
South Stage Intch. + Fern Valley Intch.	13

Only the South Stage Interchange + Fern Valley Interchange (SSI+FVI) scenario has east-west volumes significantly different from the Baseline Diamond scenario. The

SSI+FVI scenario only drops Fern Valley Road volumes by 10% overall through the interchange. Only about 20% of the volume using the South Stage Interchange is diverting from the Fern Valley Interchange. The rest (80%) is coming from the southern part of Medford. Local Phoenix users are still using the Fern Valley Interchange. Northern Phoenix/ Jackson County users along OR 99 are more likely to use the South Stage Interchange.

Primary use of the South Stage Interchange is facilitating the OR 99 – I-5 movement as little volume travels between I-5 and North Phoenix Road. With the future land uses assumed in the current Phoenix/Medford/Jackson County comprehensive plans, there is no significant benefit for the east side of the Fern Valley Interchange.

The 10% diversion for the SSI+FVI scenario is in contrast to the South Stage Overcrossing which was showing a potential 10-15% diversion from Fern Valley Road in Technical Memorandum #1A. When actual post-processed design hour volumes were developed, and v/c's created the overall diversion from Fern Valley Road was not significant (less than 10% change). Therefore, under the SSI+FVI scenario, the actual v/c impact will be less than the South Stage Overcrossing and will also not be significant.

The analysis also showed an increase of volumes on I-5. This is local traffic that is finding it faster to use I-5 rather than the local street network. This is important because the Federal Highway Administration requires, through the interchange modification request process, that a new interchange benefits the interstate (no adverse impact). Adding more volume to the interstate, especially what is generally local traffic, is not a benefit and therefore, the SSI+FVI scenario is unlikely to pass this test.

In addition, because the SSI+FVI scenario has volumes significantly different from the Baseline Diamond scenario, new volumes will need to be created if more detailed analysis was desired. All of the other interchange alternatives (i.e. Table 1 SPUI) use the Baseline Diamond scenario volumes as a base, but using the Baseline Diamond scenario for the SSI+FVI will result in volumes that are too low.

Capacity Test

The capacity test indicates if certain roadway segments would be likely over capacity. Like the South Stage Diamond scenario, the SSI+FVI scenario also showed the section of South Stage Road between OR 99 and I-5 to be over capacity. This indicates a need for four lanes in this section and likely on the entire extension to North Phoenix Road.

Travel Time Test

The travel time test indicates the overall network efficiency of a particular scenario. The travel times were based from downtown Phoenix going through the Fern Valley Interchange to various points north, south and east. Table 2 shows the relative differences in the travel times for the scenarios.

Table 2. Travel Time Comparison

Scenario	Percent Difference from Baseline Diamond Scenario
Baseline Diamond	0
South Stage Diamond	28
South Stage Overcrossing	-3
South Stage Intch. + Fern Valley Intch.	-5

The only scenario to have a significant difference in the travel time is the South Stage Diamond because there are not any ramps at Fern Valley Road and all traffic wishing to access I-5 must go north to South Stage or south to Talent. The SSI+FVI scenario has the lowest travel times but is not significant when compared to the Baseline Diamond or the South Stage Overcrossing.

Conclusions

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that only future land uses in current comprehensive plans are considered for a project. With the current comprehensive plans, the South Stage Interchange does not have a significant benefit to the to the Fern Valley Interchange project, and therefore will not meet the purpose and need as part of the FVI project. Additionally, under current comprehensive plans, the South Stage Interchange benefits the south Medford area (including the South Medford Interchange) rather than the Phoenix area.

The South Stage interchange also increases local traffic volumes on I-5. This will likely have adverse impacts to I-5 operations and is unlikely to meet the FHWA benefit test for new interchanges.

If there are any questions or comments, please contact me at 503-986-4110.

cc: Christina Fera-Thomas, Transportation Planning Analysis Unit
Dorothy Upton, Transportation Planning Analysis Unit
Debbie Timms, Region 3
Jerry Marmon, Region 3
Nancy Reynolds, URS
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
File

Review of the Alternative Development Process

- A lot of people have put in a lot of effort over the last 2 years working to develop acceptable alternatives for the Fern Valley Interchange project.
- Occasionally it's important to review how the process works.
- Alternative development on major highway projects is a complicated process. It can be frustrating, time-consuming, controversial, and confusing. And this is normal.
- We start with the intent to meet engineering standards as much as possible.
- We identify environmental constraints, regulatory restrictions, and local interests (e.g., goals and objectives).
- Keeping these things in mind, we develop alternative concepts. Some work, some don't, some appear to work—then don't, some appear to not work—then do. Some are thrown out right away because they have fatal flaws.
- We add more design detail and traffic analysis to the concepts—change some, improve some, drop some, and add some. Then we start developing more ideas for alternatives. And the cycle continues.
- Sometimes we think we have alternatives that meet engineering standards, minimize environmental impacts, and are acceptable to the public and affected jurisdictions. But then we learn that the alternatives aren't acceptable for one or more unforeseen reasons.
- The more information we gain throughout the process, the more we refine the alternatives. Our intent is to develop alternatives that can meet the project's purpose and need, goals and objectives, local concerns, and regulatory requirements. We probably won't meet all of these—but we'll eventually meet many of them.
- On the Fern Valley Interchange project, controversy arose regarding several key issues: Breckinridge neighborhood, Bear Lake Estates, and the Phoenix Business Association.
- The reality is that all of the alternatives that are being considered at this point will be adjusted or dropped throughout the course of the project. Even when we've decided which alternatives to include in the environmental document, additional changes can be anticipated.
- It is highly likely that more controversy will occur and that more design, traffic or environmental details will surface—resulting in more changes to alternatives.
- The important thing is to work together in the process to try to address all of the concerns and issues that we can. With each design concept, we will try to find ways to improve it based on design concerns, safety, public input, environmental impacts, and the ability to handle traffic and future growth.
- We've been adapting throughout the process—and we're not done adapting. This is normal for alternative development on a large transportation project.

STATE OF OREGON

INTEROFFICE MEMO

**Department of Transportation
Transportation Development Division**

Mill Creek Office Park
555 13th Street NE Suite 2
Salem, Oregon 97301-4178
(503) 986-4110 FAX (503) 986-4174

File Code:

Date: July 24, 2006

**TO: Fern Valley Interchange CAC
Fern Valley Interchange PDT**

**FROM: Peter L. Schuytema, P.E., Senior Transportation Analyst
Transportation Planning Analysis Unit**

SUBJECT: PBA & TPAU Diamond Alternative Revision Timeline Notes

It is the normal process to have ODOT regional and headquarters (Salem) Roadway and Traffic engineers review alternative designs to make sure what is proposed could actually be approved by ODOT and eventually FHWA. This process is even more important for those alternatives that require design exceptions. The following provides a timeline summary of problems identified with the PBA and TPAU diamond alternatives, and possible solutions to correct these problems.

1. Both the PBA and TPAU diamond alternatives originally had back-to-back dual left turn lanes on the I-5 overpass structure to accommodate the future traffic volumes.
2. We were told by the Roadway Section that even though these alternatives had enough room to store left-turning vehicles, there was not enough physical room to allow for vehicles to decelerate into the turn bays—i.e., enough room to develop taper sections for the dual turn lanes.
3. To keep the I-5 structure width at six lanes total, the left-turn lanes were changed to single side-by-side left-turn lanes that go almost the whole length between the ramp terminal intersections—this would provide more queuing length. The following summarizes discussions regarding this configuration:
 - A 6-lane diamond is likely affordable within the budget available.
 - Design volume-to-capacity (v/c) ratio standards would not be met because of using single left-turn lanes.
 - The single left-turn lanes cannot handle all of the left-turning vehicles.

- The ramp terminal intersections would have to be moved at least 300 feet further apart to accommodate the left-turn vehicle demand in a single lane.
 - This design is inflexible, and cannot support new growth beyond what was forecasted in the local comprehensive plan.
 - A 6-lane diamond is projected to last only 10 years. However, because Phoenix's comprehensive plan can only accommodate about 10 more years of growth (according to the City) and because this interchange would not be open before 2010, there would be about 15 years of growth that this interchange could not accommodate. (Under NEPA, traffic analysis focuses on 20-year future projections.)
 - It is highly likely that a 6-lane diamond configuration will not even last 10 years judging from the fast growth occurring in the area.
4. Another six-lane variant would be to keep the dual back-to-back turn lanes, but shorten them to fit the room available as a 1st phase. The following summarizes discussions regarding this configuration:
- The shortened turn lanes would not be able to handle the full demand so; the design v/c standards would be effectively not met once the left turn queues started backing into the adjacent ramp terminal intersection.
 - Because of queuing concerns, the turn lanes are projected to function for less than 10 years before the through lanes start being blocked.
 - This design is inflexible to new growth beyond what was forecasted. If growth comes faster than predicted, the back-to-back turn lanes may spill back into the through lanes or into the ramp terminal intersections sooner than predicted.
5. To allow for a solution that lasts through the 20-year horizon, the structure was expanded to 8 lanes to accommodate side-by-side left-turn lanes that go the entire length between ramp terminal intersections. The following summarizes discussions regarding this configuration:
- An 8-lane diamond may approach the cost of a SPUI.
 - Traffic operations would be poorer than a SPUI; however 20-year design v/c standards would still be met.
 - The single intersection configuration of a SPUI is more efficient than a pair of wider standard intersections.
 - The SPUI handles the same traffic in a 6-lane cross-section versus 8 lanes in this configuration.
 - Extra width would be required east and west of the interchange to allow room to develop from two to four lanes in each direction; this would have greater right of way impacts.
 - An 8-lane diamond could be phased, but lacks flexibility to accommodate accelerated or unanticipated growth. Also, there is a large amount of throwaway (previous construction work that is totally replaced versus

- incorporating into another phase) on the structure and on the approaches to the structure.
- The total size of the structure and other improvements would likely be out of context (scale) for the area.
6. Also, a true “tight diamond” alternative where the ramp terminals are pushed as close as possible together, which would theoretically allow for improved operation, was briefly looked at. Unfortunately, the terminals could not be brought close enough together because of the skew to I-5 and the traffic signal timing could not be adjusted in such a manner to allow for proper operation, so this idea was dropped. Tight diamonds are best used for highly urban, congested, right-of-way restricted areas where no other options exist which fit the context of the interchange area.
7. At this point, there was the potential of having a lack of viable alternatives for this project, because ones that met standards are not within current funding levels, while ones that met current funding levels would not last even the minimum amount of time to make them economically worth building.
8. In order to keep the process moving forward, a 6-lane diamond with a loop ramp in the SE quadrant was proposed. The loop would eliminate the left on to I-5 at the northbound ramp terminal. This would also allow for a dual left-turn lane for the southbound terminal. The following summarizes discussions regarding this configuration:
- The addition of the loop ramp allows the northbound ramp terminal to meet 20-yr design v/c standards.
 - The addition of the dual left-turn lanes for the southbound terminal accommodates the left-turn demand and meets the 20-year design v/c standards.
 - The loop ramp allows for the flexibility of future growth for the diamond-style interchange and can also be phased in at a later date as long as the northbound ramp terminal is in the proper location.
 - Future growth that is beyond the consideration of this project can be accommodated (but not as much as a SPUI will allow).
 - To accommodate the ramp in the SE quadrant, the gas station and the Pear Tree Lane connection will need to be removed. The Pear Tree Lane connection has a low volume, so cars using this will have to use South Phoenix Road or Furry Lane to access the Petro site.

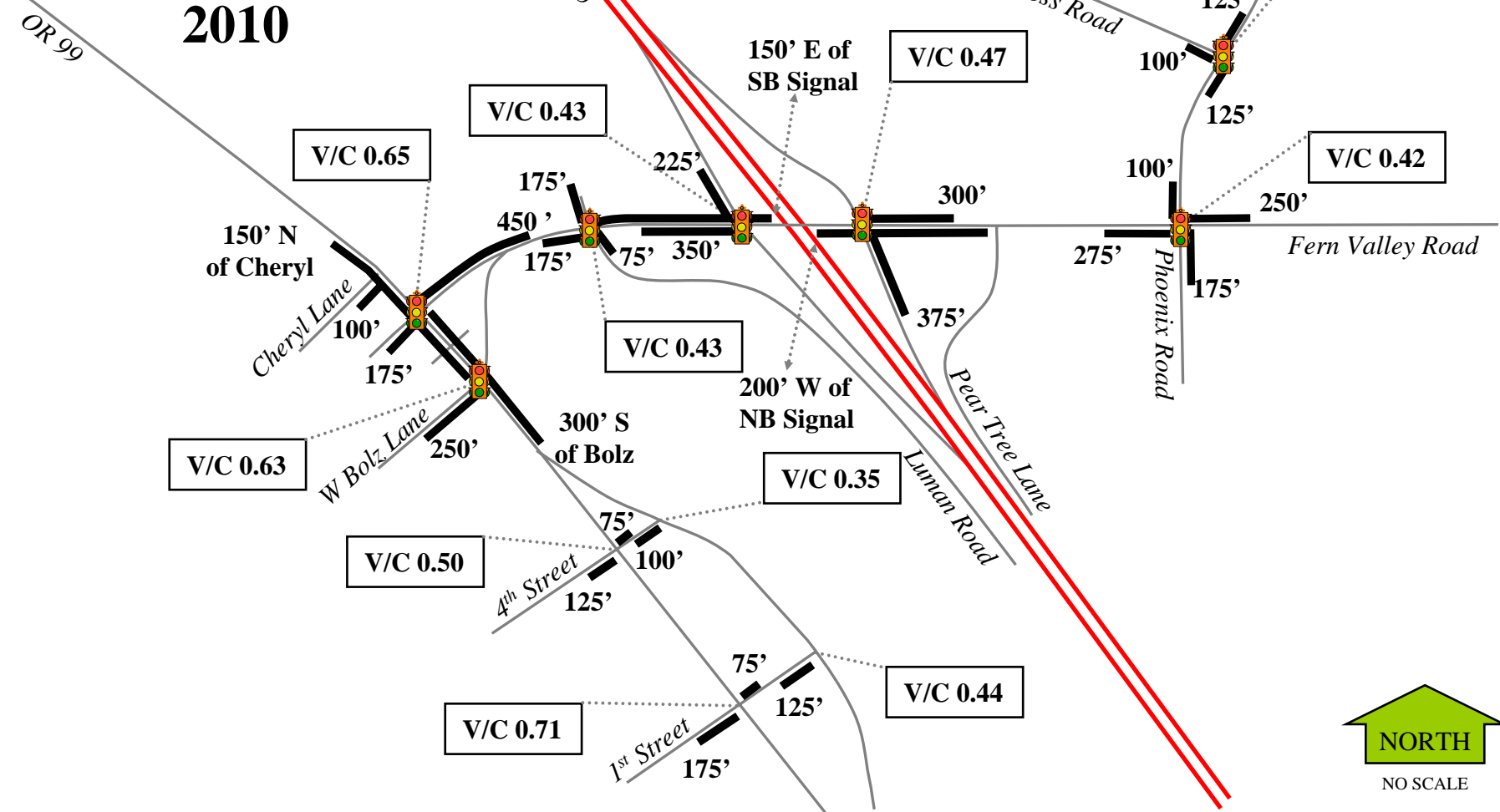
If there are any questions or comments, please contact me at 503-986-4110.

cc: Christina Fera-Thomas, Transportation Planning Analysis Unit
Dorothy Upton, Transportation Planning Analysis Unit
Debbie Timms, Region 3
Jerry Marmon, Region 3
Brian Sheadel, Region 3
Nancy Reynolds, URS
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
File

6-Lane Diamond

Back to Back Dual Turn Bays

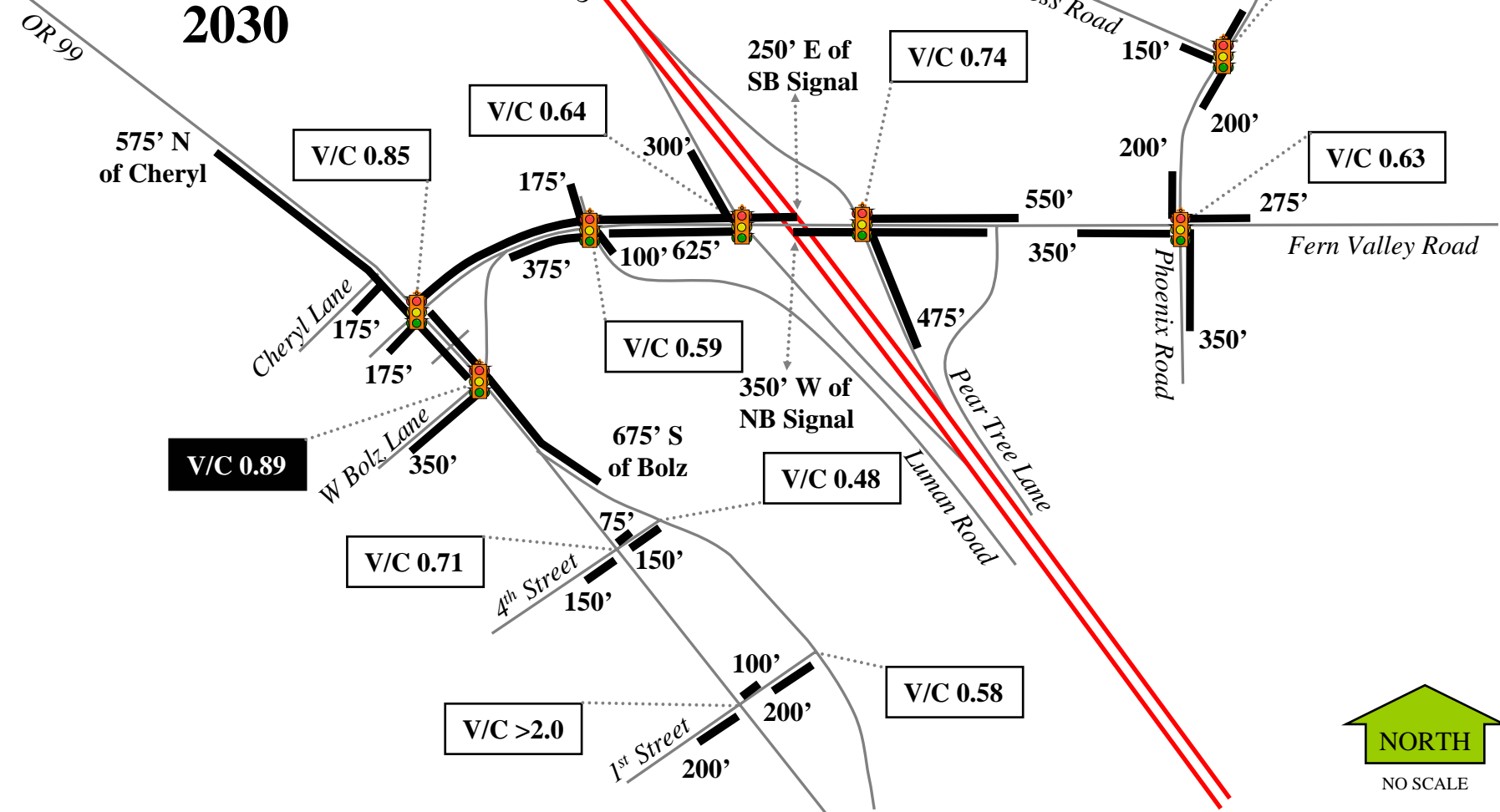
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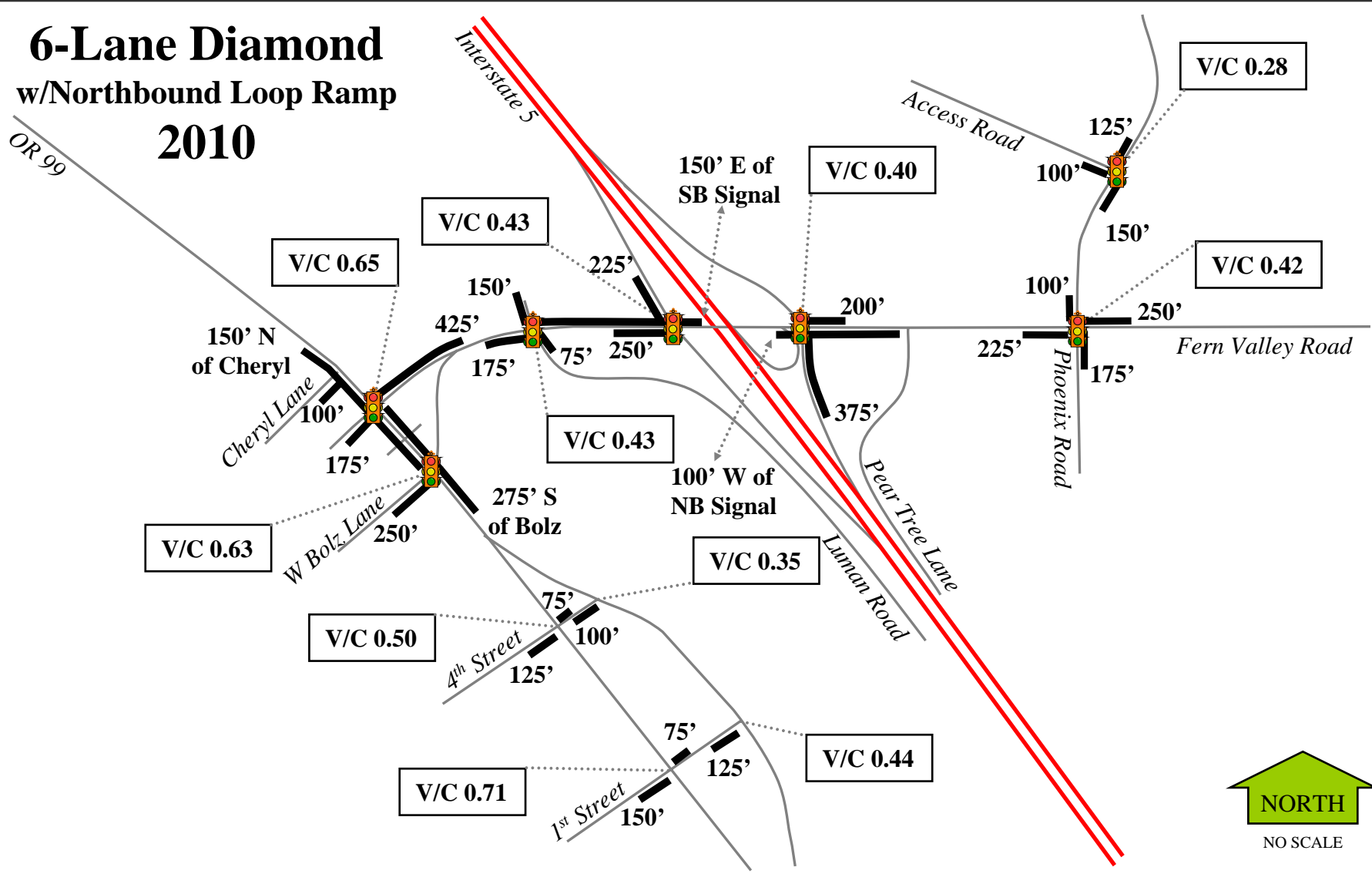
6-Lane Diamond

Back to Back Dual Turn Bays

2030



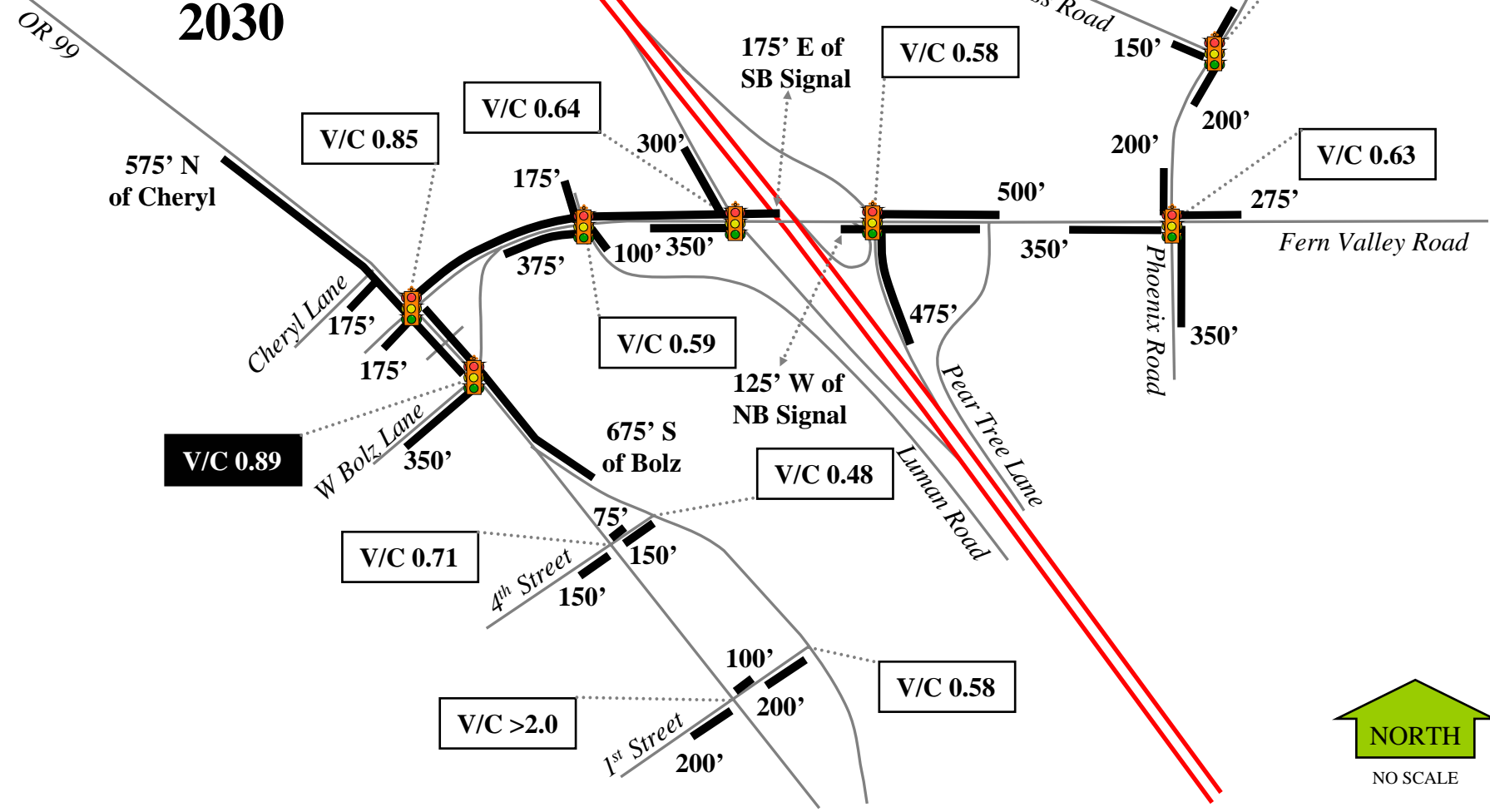
6-Lane Diamond w/Northbound Loop Ramp 2010



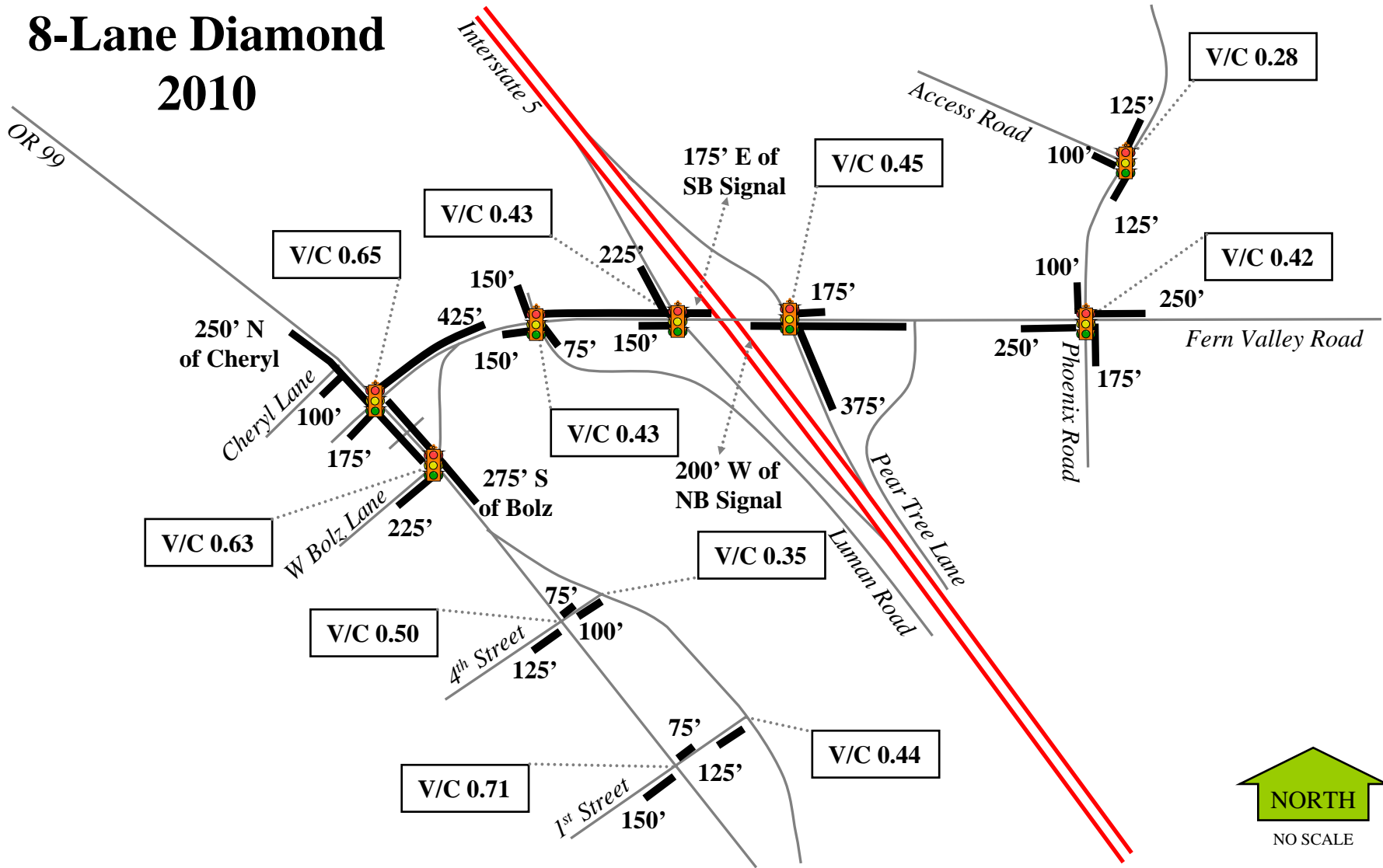
6-Lane Diamond

w/Northbound NB Loop Ramp

2030



8-Lane Diamond 2010



8-Lane Diamond 2030

