



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: Wednesday, June 6, 2007

Purpose: Joint Project Development Team and Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Distribution: CAC Members, Project Development Team, public

From: Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Prepared by: Pat Foley, RVCOG

PDT Attendees: Jon Jordon, Dorothy Upton, Tanya Henderson, Jerry Marmon, Tracy Rico and Jason Sheadel

PDT Absent: Jeff Hunter, David Frasher and Jim Raffenburg

CAC Attendees: Irving Citron, Jay Eastwood, Alex Grossi, Suzanne Myers, Jim Rafferty, Janine Law, Randy Repp, Bart Van Syoc and Ron Wright

CAC Absent: Rowdy Bates and Deanie Manning

Project Team Attendees: Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager
Jayne Randleman, ODOT Project Leader
Dorothy Upton, ODOT TPAU
Gary Leaming, ODOT Public Information
Jason Sheadel, ODOT Roadway Design
Eryca McCartin, ODOT District Manager
Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff Consultant Project Manager
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
Pat Foley, RVCOG

Other Attendees: Representing the city's working group: Robert Bernstein, Consulting Transportation Engineer/Planner and Christopher Clemow, Group Mackenzie
14 members of the public

1. Call to order/Review Agenda

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki called the meeting to order and then reviewed the meeting agenda. Jerry Marmon announced that Debbie Timms is no longer the Highway 199 Project Leader. She is now an ODOT Right-of-Way Agent. Jayne Randleman has taken over the duties as Project Leader.

2. Meeting Objectives & Project Update

Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager

Jerry reviewed the chronology of events starting with the October 11, 2006 joint CAC/PDT meeting where the Environmental Assessment technical reports were reviewed. ODOT completed the Environmental Assessment during the months of November, December and January. The document was released for a 30 day public comment period in January 2007. A Public Hearing was held on February 8, 2007. During March 2007 ODOT responded to public comments received. In February the City of Grants Pass formed its Working Group. In April a CAC/PDT meeting was cancelled because the City of Grants Pass asked for the process to slow down in order to give them time to explore development of a new alternative.

Jerry went on to review the two alternatives that were forwarded into the EA, Alternatives A and C. Both of the alternatives call for removing the signals at the Fairgrounds Road and Redwood Avenue intersections with Hwy 199.

Outreach by ODOT this year include meeting with: 1) Josephine County, 2) Josephine County Fair Board, 3) Grants Pass staff and city council, 4) Attorney representing the ACCESS group, 5) elected officials, 6) KAJO radio program and 7) monthly updates to the CAC and PDT.

Jerry explained that the meeting objective is to understand what the Working Group is, why it was formed, how it fits into the Hwy 199 project and the group's progress to date. This meeting is a chance for the CAC and PDT to review and comment on the conceptual alternatives that have been developed by the Working Group. Rob Bernstein added that this is an opportunity for the CAC and PDT to provide input before a final decision is made. And finally, this meeting is to identify the next steps in the Hwy 199 Upgrade Project.

The Working Group is a City-sponsored process group of local citizens and agencies which includes:

- City of Grants Pass
- Josephine County
- Josephine County Fair Board
- Grants Pass/Josephine County Chamber of Commerce
- ACCESS
- ODOT as technical advisors
- General Public which includes CAC and PDT members

The Working Group was formed because the Grants Pass City Council had concerns regarding the proposed build alternatives (A & C). The City requested that there be a parallel process so that they could examine additional alternatives. The ACCESS group requested an independent review of their proposed alternative.

The goals of the Working Group are: 1) Independent development and review of possible alternatives for addressing congestion and safety on Hwy 199, 2) Additional focus on local circulation and street network integration, 3) Work with City Council to make recommendations to the existing CAC and PDT on proposed design/alternative modifications and 4) Integrate feasible recommendations into the existing NEPA process.

Jerry explained that the Hwy 199 decision-making process is still in effect where the CAC makes recommendations to the decision making PDT. He said that the City's Working Group may recommend another alternative and if they do, the alternative will be reviewed by the CAC and PDT using the established screening criteria.

Jerry reviewed a flow chart depicting how the two processes can be integrated:

- As a result of comments received during the public comment period the City's Working Group was formed and started regular meetings to work on a new alternative.
- ODOT will review and comment on alternative concepts developed by the Working Group. ODOT has to be comfortable with concept(s).
- Working Group's alternative concept(s) may be reviewed by the CAC and PDT along with Alternatives A, C and No Build.
- The standing process will stay in effect – CAC recommends preferred alternative to PDT and PDT makes decision on preferred alternative.
- Preferred alternative will become a part of the revised EA.

The Working Group's Progress to date:

- February 14 Kick-off meeting
- March 6 Brainstorm Alternatives
- March 30 Review Initial Alternatives
- May 4 Refine Alternatives
- May 17 Apply Evaluation Criteria
- June 1 Filter Alternatives

The next steps for the Working Group:

- June 7 Meeting #7 – Review comments/finalize set of proposed recommendations
- June City meets with ODOT to discuss proposed recommendations
- June City Council Work Session where City presents and discusses proposed recommendations
- June/July Perform technical analysis on recommended alternative (ODOT)
- June/July Meeting #8 – Further review, modification of recommendations: endorsement/adoption of recommendations

Comments/Questions:

Rob Bernstein: He said that the flow chart is missing a step. The City's Working Group's alternative is going to be formally adopted by the City Council. There will be a feedback loop between the WG, CAC, PDT and City Council to foster agreement among the entities.

Alex Grossi: Will the Working Group's alternative be modeled and go through the evaluation criteria? Jerry responded any new alternative will go through the same steps as the other alternatives.

Ron Wright: What is the timeframe? Jerry said that they hope to get a recommendation by July 15th. Rob Bernstein said that the recommendation will be coming from the City, County and Community.

Ron Wright: He wishes the City would have done this at the beginning of the process. The City and County have had representatives all along on the PDT. Jerry said that the groups are trying to develop a plan that they feel will work. Rob said that it is hard for the City's consultant. He came into the project late. The City needs to see something that works both ways. The City feels there are things that need to be done.

Bart Van Syoc: When we first started working on this project one of the goals was to save lives. Let's not forget that. If they have a better idea than ours, we need to give it a chance.

Duane Schultz: He thanked Bart for his comment. This does not have to be them versus us.

Rob Bernstein: He added that the City doesn't want to delay the safety improvements proposed in the west segment.

Tanya Henderson: She asked how much longer will the project go on – another year. Jerry responded, probably 3 or 4 months.

Tracy Rico: Does this time frame include modeling, etc. Jerry said access issues will also have to be addressed.

Rob Bernstein: He said several alternatives have been considered. They have an evaluation summary.

Jerry Marmon: ODOT wants to work out issues with the City and County regarding the signal at the fairgrounds prior to pulling the signal. The pros and cons will be considered.

Tracy Rico: Safety issues have to be addressed. They want to change from an Expressway to a Boulevard. The real safety issues are on the west end of the corridor.

Tanya Henderson: Hwy 199 has the highest rate of crashes in the state. This includes the portion that is within the Grants Pass area.

Jon Jordan: Jon said he had responded to a fatal accident in front of the YMCA in the past.

3. Grants Pass Working Group Report, Discussion

Robert Bernstein, Consulting Transportation Engineer/Planner

Jerry Marmon, ODOT

Rob Bernstein told the group that he was hired by the City of Grants Pass to develop an alternative that better meets the needs of businesses and local users of Highway 199. He then went on to review the guidelines and vision that were used to select a recommended alternative.

Basic Direction:

1. Hwy 199 has four major functions
 - Connects the SW Grants Pass area to downtown and to the Parkway
 - Provides general access into and out of the Grants Pass area
 - Provides access to businesses and Fairground
 - Serves regional through traffic
2. All four functions are important and require smooth traffic flow
3. For these reasons, the recommended Hwy 199 improvement alternative must strike a balance between maintaining smooth traffic flow and providing access to adjacent businesses and surrounding area

Technical Guidelines

1. Congestion relief and operational improvement provided primarily by addition of travel lanes (one in each direction)
2. Removal or consolidation of selected signals can provide valuable safety and operational movement if you can maintain access
3. Increasing volumes in future approach the practical capacity limits of at-grade signalized intersections, justifying consideration of grade-separations as ultimate, long-range improvements

Recommended Alternative - HYBRID

**Hwy 199 east of Dowell Road should be a Boulevard type facility with a 35 mph speed with landscaping.*

**Expressway designation should be modified or changed to be compatible with Boulevard*

1. Widen Hwy 199 to 3 lanes in each direction
- 2(a). Extend turn lanes at Ringuette
- 2(b). Signalize Ringuette/Union intersection - required for effective east-west circulation
- 3(a). Retain full signalization at Fairgrounds until Fairgrounds access circulation improvements are identified and built. The city is in the process of finding funding for a Fairgrounds circulation plan.
- 3(b). After Fairgrounds access/circulation improvements are made:
Consider elimination of several movements at the Fairgrounds intersection:
 - Elimination of left turns off Hwy 199 (both directions)
 - Elimination of SB left turns onto eastbound Hwy 199

- Elimination of movements across Hwy 199
 - Retain signalization for northbound left turns onto westbound Hwy 199
4. Reconfigure/reconstruct the Redwood Ave/Hwy 199-Allen Creek Rd triplex
 - Place Allen Creek Road on a structure over Hwy 199
 - Retain/improve Redwood Ave/Hwy 199 at-grade signalized intersection
 - Reconfigure the lanes on the WB Hwy 199 approach to the Redwood intersection directly from two of the westbound Hwy 199 lanes
 - Retain Redwood Ave in its existing right-of-way
 - Relocate proposed alignment of 4th Bridge
 5. Extend Stutzwohl Rd west to connect to Dowell Rd and construct a new connection between Stutzwhol, Hwy 199 and Redwood Ave near McDonald Ln
 6. Long-range elements to be developed/constructed when need is justified

Rob's presentation included the following concept maps:

→*Preferred Alt. Corridor View*

→*Map – Tussey to Henderson Ln*

→*Map – Ringuette to Fairgrounds Rd*

→*Map – Hwy 199/Redwood Av intersection*

→*Map - Allen Creek Rd at Hwy 199/Redwood Av*

→*Map – Flyover at Redwood Av/Hwy 199*

→*Aerial view with example of grade separated structure*

Questions/Comments:

Randy Repp: He asked where the money was coming from and is the City going to pay a part for all of their ideas. Jerry responded saying a distinction between elements has to be made. Rob went on to say there is no distinction. This is a long range plan. In order for the City to buy off, it needs to be a whole package. Jerry said this will be sorted out. Tonight's meeting purpose is to focus on the concept.

Tracy Rico: She asked who makes the final decision. Rob said the City Council is going to vote on an alternative and then make their recommendation/preference. Duane Schultz added that the City is also looking at the fourth bridge and the South Y.

Jon Jordan: The City needs to look at moving the fourth bridge's proposed location. We need to provide guidance to the South Y group.

Dorothy Upton: This is a discussion for the City and its consultant to have in order to determine what the City recommends for the Hwy 199 project verses other projects that need to occur across the larger Grants Pass area.

Ron Wright: We studied having the fourth bridge during this project. It did not meet the purpose and need of this project.

Alex Grossi: We have congestion and safety issues. We have to take out signals. The congestion and safety issues cannot be addressed just by lowering speeds and adding signals. Rob responded that we are trying to get an alternative that everyone can agree on. This is a community driven process.

Concerns and questions were raised by the CAC and PDT on the following elements of the Working Group Proposal:

- Regarding the Allen Creek overpass
 - Queuing distance
 - Access into the Albertson's business area: cutting off the access to the service station.
- Regarding the signal at Fairgrounds Road
 - Need for one phase of the signal to allow left turns from northbound Fairgrounds Road onto westbound Hwy 199

Break – 10 minutes

4. Grants Pass Working Group Report, Discussion (continued)

Robert Bernstein, Consulting Transportation Engineer/Planner
Jerry Marmon, ODOT

Rob was asked questions on the proposed signal configuration at the Fairgrounds. Rob explained that the signal would stay as is until a circulation plan was developed at the Fairgrounds. After that the current signal would be removed. A new signal would be installed to allow for a northbound left turn off of Fairgrounds Road to westbound Hwy 199. This would allow for city connectivity. There would also be a right turn lane on Fairgrounds Road to allow for eastbound Hwy 199 access.

Jim Rafferty: He would like to see an exit near the YMCA for emergency use. He suggested that the signals at the fairgrounds and Redwood Ave. be synchronized.

Bart Van Syoc: He wanted to know how far out the four lanes on Redwood Avenue went. Answer: Four lanes up to the Allen Creek over-crossing.

Rob Bernstein: He said one component of the Working Group's alternative is that none of the properties on the north side are impacted by right of way acquisition.

Tracy Rico: She is concerned with trucks coming into and out of the Albertson Shopping Center.

Suzanne Myers: Suzanne asked about the 10 to 12% grade on the over-crossing ramps. How would the ramp on the north side fit. Rob replied that Redwood Ave would have to be built up in this area.

Ron Wright: He said this alternative does not seem to fit the City's Master Plan. Namely, their plan to extend West Park to join up to Allen Creek.

Janine Law: She asked what will happen if the CAC and PDT do not agree with the Working Group's Plan. Jerry responded that the Working Group has to work this out. Rob added that this is the first time this group has seen this plan. The Working Group will consider what has been said.

Ron Wright: He asked what properties are being taken. He commented that several properties owners are on the Working Group. Ron said that there are design details that have yet to be worked out.

Alex Grossi: He stated that the alternative being presented doesn't touch those properties.

Jay Eastwood: He feels that the overpass (11 to 12%) at Allen Creek creates a steep grade on the north side. It was stated that 6% grade is the maximum allowed on the interstate.

Bart Van Syoc: He asked if below grade crossing had been considered.

Rob Bernstein: Another option studied by the Working Group includes blocking off Allen Creek to the north of Hwy 199. The new connection at Schutzwahl is on hold during this project, it may be considered in the future. Rob went on to show an example of how a grade separated over/under-crossing could look.

Eryca McCartin: Eryca said that when the Ringuette signal was installed, ODOT and the City were in agreement that the signal at Fairground Road would be taken out when an alternate access to the fairgrounds was developed.

5. Next Steps

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff Consultant Project Manager

Angela said that the current phase of the project is focused on ODOT coordinating with the City's Working Group. The Working Group is still in process of refining their alternative and additional technical analysis, such as refined design, traffic analysis, access study, and environmental analysis will need to be conducted on that alternative. The next steps are: 1) Receive recommendation from Grants Pass City Council, 2) If City's recommended alternative is feasible, ODOT will hold a public open house on all alternatives, 3) Reconvene CAC and PDT in July/August 2007 to vote on Preferred Alternative and 4) Prepare Revised EA. ODOT will continue to send email updates to the CAC and PDT as progress is made by the City's Working Group.

6. Public Comments

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki asked if members of the public had comments.

Dick Sackett: He said that the new concepts are better. Dick feels that there is a current problem at the Ringuette signal: When turning right (Ringuette from Park Street) only two cars can get through the signal. A right turn lane is needed. The timing of signals is bad. There is a bottleneck for southbound traffic on Ringuette turning onto westbound Hwy 199. The Hwy 199 signals at Ringuette Street and Fairgrounds Road are not timed well. Dick would like to see a signal put in at Willow Lane. This should be done before one is installed at Hubbard.

7. CAC & PDT Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki asked the CAC and PDT members to let the Project Team know how they feel about the project.

Ron Wright: Ron is good. He wishes that Rob had been here earlier. He is concerned that the city's Master Plan is not matching up with their present proposal.

Jim Rafferty: Jim wants to see more information on the 'boulevard concept'. He feels that this concept is better than having an I-5 running through the area.

Bart Van Syoc: Bart is adjusting.

Dorothy Upton: She understands the frustration of having another concept that is not up to the same level as the other alternatives studied. It will be a long summer bringing this concept up to detail.

Tracy Rico: Tracy doesn't see how this concept can be solidified in the next few months. She is afraid it is going to get worse before it gets better.

Jon Jordan: He feels communication and new ideas are good. Jon hopes that they work to make the highway safer.

Irv Citron: When the group was first formed the purpose was for safety and to save lives. He hopes the new people involved don't forget this. He feels that the CAC and PDT were given restrictions and if the Working Group was given the same restrictions, then the Working Group wouldn't be coming up with these dream ideas and wasting our time.

Jayne Randleman: Jayne said ODOT appreciates the CAC and PDT.

Jerry Marmon: Jerry also expressed his appreciation for the committee member's time and flexibility. He said we have a new opportunity. We will get this mapped out to see if it has merit.

Jason Sheadel: Jason is glad that Rob was at this meeting to hear the concerns of the CAC and PDT.

Eryca McCartin: Eryca is concerned about the safety aspects in the project area. Grants Pass has the highest crash rate per capita in the state. She thanked the group for continuing to stress the safety factor.

Tanya Henderson: Tanya suggested that all parties (CAC, PDT, ODOT project team and the Grants Pass Working Group) have a large meeting where all participants can be heard and explain their reasons for actions proposed.

The meeting was deemed a good idea and will be pursued further.

Jay Eastwood: He feels it is important for the group to stand up and be heard. As a group we need to present our side. Others need to know the technical details that have been discussed.

Suzanne Myers: Suzanne feels this group needs to hear from the Working Group. She likes some of the ideas that she heard tonight. There is a lot of right-of-way expense in the two alternatives selected.

Randy Repp: Randy is okay. He hopes the County doesn't come up with another plans. He wants the project to keep moving forward.

Alex Grossi: He thinks that once they come up with a plan and studies are done, then we should get everybody together for a work session.

Janine Law: Janine is fine.

8. Adjourn