



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: Thursday, May 11, 2006

Purpose: Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Distribution: CAC Members, Project Development Team, public

From: Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Prepared by: Pat Foley, RVCOG

CAC Attendees: Rowdy Bates, Irving Citron, Jay Eastwood, Alex Grossi, Deanie Manning, Suzanne Myers, Jim Rafferty, Randy Repp, Bart Van Syoc and Ron Wright

CAC Absent: Janine Law

Project Team Attendees: Jason Sheadel, ODOT Roadway
Dorothy Upton, ODOT TPAU
Gary Leaming, ODOT Public Information
Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff Consultant Project Manager
Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
Pat Foley, RVCOG

Other Attendees: 22 members of the public

1. Call to Order/Review Agenda/Approve Minutes

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vickie called the meeting to order. She reviewed the agenda and asked for changes to the minutes of the joint CAC/PDT April 17, 2006 meeting. Requested change to minutes: change Jeannie to Deanie Manning. The minutes were approved with suggested change. Vickie said that the minutes would be presented to the PDT tomorrow.

2. Project Update & Discussion

Gary Leaming, ODOT

Gary brought the CAC up to date on project outreach. Another meeting is planned with the Josephine County Fair Board and the YMCA to discuss alternate access issues. Gary went on to review outreach conducted during the fall and winter. A letter was sent to stakeholders in the eastern portion of the project area describing the two proposed eastern alternatives. The letter created a lot of feedback from business owners expressing concern over the frontage road. ODOT staff met with the city and county and business owner's representative, Duane Schultz, Attorney. Letters have been received from both the city and county in which they agreed to have the Environmental Assessment (EA) move forward. If the EA shows that a frontage is needed, the frontage road construction would not happen until after the South Y study is complete.

Gary emphasized that the frontage road is still a part of this process. ODOT has not made any agreements to drop the frontage road. Angela Findley added that the frontage road is a result of the hard work that the CAC and PDT did last year in terms of developing and evaluating alternatives.

Gary said staff heard at the last joint April CAC/PDT meeting that there is an interest in revisiting some concepts that were dropped from further study.

Angela said the Project Management Team has been refining the Access Management Strategy during the last month. This strategy identifies what parcel of lands would be full or partial acquisitions. This report will be brought to the committee next month.

Discussion:

The South Y Study is proposed to begin in the year 2011. Gary said that the RVACT has recommended that this study be included in the next Capital Improvement Program. The City of Grants Pass has asked that the study be moved up on the schedule.

Even though the costs associated with the frontage road alternative will exceed the \$10M currently available, the evaluation criteria showed that this alternative is fundable and phaseable.

3. Review April 17 Meeting Comments & Responses

Gary Leaming, ODOT

** Handout to facilitate discussion: Responses to Public Comments Received April 17, 2006*

Gary reviewed each issue/comment and response.

East Section

Fourth Bridge *Response: Was evaluated and did not meet Purpose and Need. Will be further evaluated during South Y study.*

- The CAC does not want to pursue studying the fourth bridge as a part of the Highway 199 Environmental Assessment.

Discussion:

It was pointed out that Dorothy Upton's computer modeling showed that the fourth bridge actually contributed to traffic problems. Ron Wright agreed that the modeling showed that the fourth bridge did not meet the Purpose and Need of this project, but he does not remember any discussion regarding the fourth bridge being added to the South Y study. Jason Sheadel said that when the modeling was being done, the fourth bridge and South Y study were considered to be happening further into the future than they are now. Ron wants the fourth bridge to be a part of the South Y study. He does not want it to be dropped completely.

Hwy 199 Flyover *Response: Not evaluated. Up to CAC/PDT to decide if they want to consider it further.*

The CAC would like:

- Map showing how the flyover would work.
 - Connie will produce a yellow line map
 - Connie will develop a list of pros and cons

Discussion:

Different access issues were discussed.

Redwood Avenue/Union Flyover *Response: Was evaluated. Impacts to Union/Harbeck area were considered too great. Out of direction travel limited its utility.*

Union Slip Ramp/Frontage Road *Response: Was evaluated, improvements required to Union would have substantial right of way impacts. Light required at Ringuette/Union with possible realignment of Union further away from Hwy 199. Impacts to Union/Harbeck area were considered too great.*

The CAC recommended no further study of:

- Redwood Avenue/Union Flyover

The CAC recommended further study of:

- Union Avenue slip ramp
- Extending Union Avenue to Allen Creek
- Dedicated right-turn lane
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Discussion:

Rowdy Bates said the CAC did forward the Union Slip Ramp concept to the PDT for further study. The PDT voted to drop this concept. Rowdy said one of the reasons the

PDT dropped the concept was because of environmental issues. Angela added that PDT also did not feel this concept would solve the traffic issues on the north side of the highway.

When evaluating the slip ramp in the past, it was pointed out that the piped creek flowing under the fairground would have to be redone. Alex Grossi said he would rather endanger a dry creek than a business.

Jason Sheadel said that one negative point to this concept is that the slip ramp would shift Highway 199 traffic problems to the commercial area. He added that the Union Avenue area would have to be reevaluated for accesses. Different CAC members feel that the slip ramp would, (1 allow people going to the commercial area (namely local traffic) to get off of the highway, and (2 meets the Purpose and Need criteria for getting traffic off of the highway.

The committee discussed who will use the slip ramp and why and other routes local traffic will use to get to Highway 238.

Bart Van Syoc suggested extending Union Avenue to Allen Creek. The CAC would like to have this evaluated.

Jay Eastwood suggested a dedicated right turn lane from Fairgrounds Road to Ringuette Road. The CAC would like to have this evaluated.

Fairgrounds Signal *Response: Signal will come out under any alternative.*

Gary said that the new Concept C, which addresses access to the fairgrounds, will be discussed later in the meeting.

Discussion:

Jim Rafferty said he is opposed to taking this signal out..

Fairgrounds/BMX Track Impacts *Response: Alternatives are being developed to minimize these impacts.*

Gary said that the new Concept C will address this issue and will be discussed later in the meeting.

Comprehensive and Transportations Plans (Park/Allen Creek Road, Schutzwahl Lane to Allen Creek Road, Allen Creek Road to New Hope Road) *Response: Not evaluated. Up to CAC/PDT to decide if they want to consider it further.*

The CAC requested the following information:

- How do city's plans fit with the Highway 199 improvements?
- Work with city to meld this information.

Angela said that the City's Comprehensive and Transportations Plans are available on the internet.

Discussion:

Members of the CAC feel that road solutions under discussion are shown in the city's plan, IE Schutzwahl Lane to Allen Creek Road. The city needs to work with the CAC to meld the plans together.

Dorothy was asked if the road improvements shown in the city's plan were considered when modeling the project. Dorothy explained the improvements for roads that are classified as arterial or higher are built into the modeling network. Collector roads do not show up in the model. Angela said that we need to stay consistent with the city's plan. This project cannot knowingly force more traffic on to a collector road which would violate the city's collector road classification.

Reevaluate Park Street Connection *Response: Up to CAC/PDT. Park connection has substantial residential impacts and does not draw a significant amount of traffic.*

The CAC recommended:

- Reevaluate West Park Street Connection
→ Look at EAST CAC 1B and CAC 1A
- Compare to city plans

Discussion:

Ron Wright said the city's plan doesn't affect the south side of Highway 199 very much. The emphasis is on the north side. The city has bought easements in this area for planned roads. The CAC should have this information.

Angela asked the committee for specific road improvements, (included in the plan) that ought to be included in this project.

The committee looked at the city's map of proposed improvements. It showed Park Street connecting to a fourth bridge at Lincoln Road and Allen Creek. It was brought up that when the CAC evaluated this connection it showed residential and environmental impacts. The improvements to the road in the residential area would be extensive. When Dorothy modeled this concept, only 12% to 13% of traffic was pulled off of the highway. The threshold is 20%. The city has this listed as a residential street, not an arterial. This was the reason the PDT did not want to proceed with this concept.

This West Park Street Connection was forwarded to the PDT recommending further evaluation. The CAC would like to see this alternative reevaluated.

West Section

Dawn Drive Frontage Road *Response: Considered. Impacts are too great where it hooks into Hubbard Lane. High cost for limited benefit.*

U-Turn Safety *Response: U-turns are considered safer than crossing 4 travel lanes of traffic moving at speeds over 60 mph. Design elements can help improve safety.*

Center Turn Lanes *Response: Considered but dismissed as not meeting safety aspect of Purpose and Need. Not as safe as median. Effectiveness degrades as average daily traffic increases.*

The CAC recommended:

- Look at acceleration/deceleration lanes at Dawn Drive and Arbor Ridge
- Combine driveways and access

The CAC asked for information:

- Has safety improved with posted speed changes and more enforcement?
- Updated safety statistics

The CAC voted on:

- Should a center lane in the West Section be reevaluated?

Vote count: 6 no, 3 yes, 1 abstained. The center lane will not be reevaluated.

Discussion:

Irv Citron said that when we started discussing the West area concepts, the first thing discussed was installing a center barrier which would stop left turns. That makes sense. The problem is, it wasn't decided what was going to be done for traffic coming off of Dawn Drive and Arbor Ridge. This problem needs to be explored more. He feels that a barrier signals higher speeds. After discussion, the CAC agreed that acceleration and deceleration roads need to be explored further. Dorothy said that driveways will need to be combined with access to a public street. Access on to Highway 199 from private driveways will not be allowed. She added that this issue is a design detail.

Staff was asked if the added traffic enforcement on Highway 199 has reduced the traffic problem. Jason replied that the added enforcement has not fixed the problem. CAC members would like updated safety statistics. This information should include frequency, type of accident and fatalities. Also, has the enforcement helped to reduce speed?

Bart Van Syoc suggested that a sign be installed at the beginning of the corridor that informs drivers how much a speeding ticket would cost.

Regarding center turn lanes, Gary Leaming said that statistics show that as traffic increases over the years, the effectiveness of center turn lanes decrease.

Jim Rafferty said that the people he has talked to want a center turn lane. They feel that it is safer to cross two lanes of traffic instead of four lanes and that U-turns are dangerous. Dorothy added, the center turn lane at this time is not bad. But it is not something that you want to keep because as the traffic volume goes up, safety drastically decreases. In 5 or 10 years the threshold will be met.

A vote was taken on whether to bring back the center lane concept. Voting results: 3 yes, 6 no and 1 undecided.

Break

4. Concept C Developments

Connie Kratovil, Parsons Brinkerhoff
Jason Sheadel, ODOT

Connie introduced the new Concept C. The staff has heard a lot of concerns regarding access to properties in the Eastern portion of the project, particularly near the fairgrounds, YMCA and the BMX track. Connie explained how this concept was developed through staff discussion. Concept C will minimize impacts to the properties in question. The footprint, including the elimination of the full bulb-out on Allen Creek Road will minimize access and right-of-way impacts. Access roads have not been worked on. To date, the staff has not found any fatal flaws. After explaining how the concept operates, she asked the CAC if they would like to have Concept C developed further.

Discussion:

Ron Wright would like to see the city's plan before going any further. He would also like to know what lands the city and county own in the area. He knows the city and county have purchased properties in the area for future transportation projects. After discussion, the CAC asked staff to develop a color coded map showing lands owned by city, county and ODOT.

Suggestions were made on changing the slip ramp from Highway 199 onto Allen Creek. It was pointed out that there is a minimum distance needed to keep cars from stacking. Different types of slip ramps are still being studied. Access and bike/pedestrian facilities were also discussed.

The CAC recommended:

- Keep Concept C on the table
The CAC would like additional information, IE
 - City Plans
 - Color coded map showing properties owned by private individuals, city, county and ODOT.
 - Bike/pedestrian connections

5. Next Steps, June Meeting Agenda

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinkerhoff

Angela reviewed the suggestions and recommendations made by the CAC. These suggestions and recommendations will be presented to the PDT tomorrow. The staff will put together requested information for the next CAC meeting.

6. Public Comment

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki asked if members of the public had comments.

Kurt Ramme: Kurt works for Grants Pass Rural Transport. He is concerned about the Dawn Drive area. The barrier would cause a delay in response time. The barrier causes a lot of out of direction travel. He would like to see a center turn lane. He is concerned about driver's abilities. He suggests required driver's tests.

- Elaine Booth: Elaine is a member of the Josephine County Fair Board. She would like more information on the designation of Highway 199. Also, she wanted to know if the designation can be changed so that the speeds can be lowered. Jason explained that Highway 199 is designated as an expressway. Dorothy went to explain that since Highway 199 is the major road to the coast she does not think that the OTC would want to change the designation.
- Art Peary: Art feels that a U-turn at Hubbard Lane is unsafe. He would like to see a signal at this intersection. Regarding Concept C, he asked “What kind of access will Redwood Nursery have and what will happen to the current Redwood Avenue?” It was pointed out that Redwood Nursery does have good access in Concept C. Redwood Avenue may be used as a storm drain area or turned back. Art asked what land would be used if there is a center turn lane. Jason said the land will be taken from the middle of the area.
- Dick Sackett: Dick does not understand why the city is not represented on the CAC. He attended a city meeting last night where they brainstormed on transportation issues. He is disappointed that the city is not giving input to the CAC. He reviewed meeting information that was published in the Daily Courier. Regarding signals, Dick feels that a signal is needed at Willow Lane before one is installed at Hubbard Lane.
- Paul Dean: Paul would like to see driver information signs. His wife would like to have a CALTRANS engineer figure out the problems.
- Shaun Hall: Shaun asked for the CAC 2 concept to be put up on the screen. He heard that a problem is the left turn off of northbound Allen Creek. He feels that a traffic light would work. Shaun went on to read thoughts he had written down. The content referenced the signal at Ringuette and how it has created congestion. He suggested that the light at Ringuette be taken out to allow traffic to flow from downtown out to the Redwood District unimpeded. He suggested left turns off of the highway at Ringuette and the fair grounds. He would like to see this idea modeled.
- Leonard Wilson: Leonard recently wrote an article to the Daily Courier about speed on Redwood Avenue. He feels you can have all kinds of signs and laws, but if there isn't enforcement, none of it makes a difference.
- Cherrie Andersen: Cherrie asked why the signals on Highway 199 are not synchronized. Jason said that the divider would make it easier to synchronize because there would be less input into the sequence.

7. CAC Comfort Check

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki said this is the time for each CAC member to let the project team know how they are feeling with the way things are going.

- Bart Van Syoc: We have been working under the preconceived notion that the light at Ringuette needs to stay and that the other two signals need to be removed. We have never considered this. I like Concept C. It is a fresh view.
- Deanie Manning: Deanie feels that we need more input from the city. She thinks we are spinning our wheels without knowing what they are doing. It will be a waste of time and money unless we can coordinate with the city.
- Ron Wright: Ron has asked for city information before. As the only person here who is losing his home, I am here to find a solution. I am not crying about losing my building and property. We need to find the right solution.
- Alex Grossi: Alex had to leave the meeting early.
- Jim Rafferty: Jim feels that we have to talk to the county and city. He likes the idea of a color coded map. It would be a good idea if we had a color coded map. He agrees that a barrier would impede emergency response time. He does not like the idea of a barrier.
- Rowdy Bates: I'm okay.
- Jay Eastwood: A lot has been put back on the table. We need to see a cost analysis for the different alternatives.
- Suzanne Myers: Suzanne does not have a problem with the project going slow. She feels it is a good thing to take our time and get as much community input as possible.
- Randy Repp: Randy appreciates public comments because it brings fresh ideas to the table. He would like to see as little impact as possible.
- Irv Citron: Irv had two comments, (1 he would like to see acceleration/deceleration lanes at Arbor Ridge and Dawn Drive, and (2 the name of the center lane should be 'safety zone' rather than suicide lane.

8. Wrap Up/Adjourn

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for June 8, 2006 from 6:00 to 8:30 p.m.