



MEETING MINUTES

Meeting Date: Thursday, February 10, 2005

Purpose: Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting

Distribution: CAC Members
Project Development Team

From: Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Prepared by: Pat Foley, RVCOG

Date Prepared: February 14, 2005

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

CAC Absent: None

Project Team Attendees: Jerry Marmon, ODOT Environmental Project Manager
Eryca McCartin, ODOT Project Manager
Jason Sheadel, ODOT Roadway
Dorothy Upton, ODOT TPAU
Mike Arneson, ODOT Roadway
Gary Leaming, ODOT Public Information
John Vial, ODOT District 8 Manager
Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff Consultant Project Manager
Vicki Guarino, RVCOG
Pat Foley, RVCOG

Other Attendees: 23 members of the public

1. Call to Order/Introductions

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG Facilitator

Vicki Guarino called the meeting to order at 6 p.m. She asked each person on the Citizen Advisory Team, Project Management Team and members of the public to introduce themselves and give a brief description of their interests and role in the project.

2. Agenda Review/Meeting Objectives

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki reviewed the meeting agenda. She explained that tonight's meeting objectives are to introduce the CAC to the project. The goal is for the CAC to:

- Gain an understanding of the project's scope
- Learn about the role of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) and others in the project
- An introduction to developing a Purpose and Need Statement

Vickie pointed out to the CAC that all materials presented tonight are included in the project binders given to each member.

3. Project Introduction: Why Are We Here?

Mike Arneson, ODOT

John Vial, ODOT

John Vial started the presentation by giving an overview of the problems associated with Highway 199.

Highway 199 has functioned adequately for many years. Recently there has been an increase in the number of accidents and fatalities. A year ago ODOT started an effort to look at how to improve the safety on the highway using the 3 E's Program (Engineering, Enforcement and Education). In order to be effective the 3 E's have to be done in conjunction with one another. ODOT has received \$10M to make improvements to the highway. The CAC is a part of the process to help determine what kinds of improvements will best address to safety and congestion within the project area.

John reviewed the volume and crash information for the project area from 1998 to 2002.

Mike Arneson explained that the 'Project Area' this group is going to be studying goes along Highway 199 from Tussey Lane to Midway Avenue and along Redwood Avenue to Hubbard Avenue and a small area where Redwood Avenue joins Highway 199. The study area extends 300' each way from center line of Highway 199 and portions of Redwood Avenue that are affected by what happens on the highway.

Mike went on to say Highway 199 has two types of users, persons that primarily use the highway for local uses and those using the highway to travel through the area (trucking, recreation/vacation and commuters). The 'Project Area' of Highway 199 is defined in the Oregon Highway Plan as an Expressway. An expressway designation is one step

below a freeway. Which means it is supposed to move a high volume of traffic at a high speed and have very few accesses and intersections.

Using a series of overhead photos, different areas along Highway 199 and problems associated with these areas, were reviewed. This area is the only 'Safety Corridor' in Southern Oregon. The study area has complex features because it goes from an urban setting to suburban then to rural.

CAC comments:

Rowdy Bates: Traffic fines are double in the Safety Corridor. It may be good idea to put up a sign letting travelers know this fact.

Bart Van Syoc: As a result of the new median installed at Willow Lane, we have an increase of traffic that comes through campus to use the only available left turn on to Highway 199.

Randy Repp: Midway was referred to as a part of the rural area. It is not that rural anymore. I think we are going to have to treat Midway as an urban area because there is a lot of development happening near there.

4. Other Transportation Projects

Eryca McCartin, ODOT

Eryca gave an overview of other key projects in Josephine County. Several projects are going on in Josephine County that are located **outside** of the Highway 199 project.

Year 2009	Highway 199 – Add an inbound passing lane in the Wonder area
Summer 2005	Highway 199 - Safety Improvement Project, Hayes Hill – Sis's Gap – Add guardrails, signs, delineators
Year 2007	Highway 199 – Add left turn lanes in both directions and widen bridge in Cave Junction at Laurel Lane
Summer 2005	Highway 199 – Four bridges south of Cave Junction completely replaced
Summer 2008	Highway 199 – Fifth bridge near O'Brien to be repaired

Grants Pass Projects

Year 2009	Highway 199 Expressway Upgrade – Construction hopefully will begin in 2009
Summer 2005	6 th and 7 th Street repaving
Summer 2006	Parkway from I-5 to South Y repaving
Year 2009	Additional resurfacing on Highways 99 and 238
Year 2005	South Y Planning Study – At this time existing conditions are being studied. This project will address north-south traffic movements and will be a long process. The potential 4 th bridge will be considered as a part of the South Y Planning Study. This project is not funded.

CAC Questions/Comments:

Deanie Manning: Is anything planned for the Riverbanks Road intersection? Response: There are no current projects scheduled in that area.

5. CAC Roles and Responsibilities

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki explained that the CAC is a part of the public involvement component of the project. Public involvement involves many different kinds of activities. The next major step is an Open House on March 3rd at the YMCA. A second open house will be held during the alternatives development process. When the environmental assessment is prepared and available for public review, there will be a public hearing.

Having a Citizen Advisory Committee helps ensure that the project considers the community's interests, issues, knowledge and its recommendations. The committee represents a cross section of this community and will serve as a 'Community Sounding Board'. The CAC's job is to make recommendations to the decision makers.

The decision makers on this project are members of the Project Development Team which includes representatives from the City of Grants Pass, Josephine County, Chamber of Commerce, State Police, trucking, citizen at large and 3 ODOT personnel. Their decisions will be based on the recommendations of the CAC.

CAC member's responsibilities are:

- Attend monthly meetings
- Assist in identification of project and community issues
- Discuss project activities with your constituencies, neighbors, and report back to CAC
- Provide input on project Purpose and Need Statement and Goals and Objectives
- Discuss and evaluate potential solutions
- Make project recommendations to the Project Development Team

CAC questions and comments

When does the PDT meet and is the public invited? Response: The PDT meets the day after all CAC meetings here at the college from 9 to 11 a.m. and the public is invited to attend.

6. Introduction to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff

The National Environmental Policy Act is a federal law enacted in 1969 which is the basic national charter for environmental process for evaluating impacts to the environment. NEPA also has a public involvement component.

This project is receiving federal funding; therefore, all federal actions must look at the environment and disclose how the environment is being impacted by the action that is being proposed.

The steps in the NEPA process are:

- Define purpose and need
 - a. The purpose and need focuses on the transportation element.
- Define goals and objectives
 - a. The goals and objectives are not usually transportation issues
- Look at various alternatives to solve problem
- Include public in decision making process (CAC, Open House, Public Hearing, public comments, etc.)
- Evaluate impacts
- Determine preferred alternative

Angela reviewed the NEPA flow chart that was provided to each CAC member.

Project Purpose and Need

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Angela gave an introduction to the purpose and need statement. This statement serves as the foundation for the project. This statement should focus on positive outcomes. Examples from other projects were discussed. The ‘need’ for the project should reflect what needs to be done to address the safety issues in the project area.

In each CAC binder a Purpose and Need worksheet is included. Members were asked to describe what they feel are the needs within the project area. These worksheets are to be returned to Vicki Guarino by March 3rd.

John Vial was asked to explain what the preferred alternative is. There is no preferred alternative yet; that is an activity that the CAC and PDT will be involved in over the next several months. A range of alternatives will be developed and by applying the purpose and need as well as the goals and objectives as evaluation criteria, the CAC and PDT will narrow down the range of alternatives to be studied in the environmental assessment (EA). After the EA is prepared and reviewed by the public, then a preferred alternative will be selected. The selection of preferred alternatives is at least a year away. The problems have to be identified first.

7. Next Steps

Angela Findley, Parsons Brinckerhoff

Angela reviewed the project schedule for the next six months. This schedule is included in the projects binders provided to each CAC member.

It was asked if the CAC members could have a contact list of other members serving on the CAC. Each member expressed how and for what information they want to receive.

8. CAC Comments & Questions and Public Comments

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

Vicki asked the CAC and members of the public if they had comments or questions.

Ron Wright: Can the UGB, as shown on maps, be redone to show exactly where it is located? Response: Yes.

Del Robertson: How will public comments be accepted at the Open House? Response: There will be feed back forms, verbal comments will be taken or you can contact Vicki Guarino at a later date.

Is a part of Highway 199 designated as an Expressway and is it the only Safety Corridor in Southern Oregon? Response: Yes on both issues.

Holger Sommer: Basically, what is the proposed lifetime of the project? Is it 20 years? The problem we have on this highway is actually too much development in Redwood area. There is an access problem. The City had proposed a moratorium. The whole problem is projection. If you just put band aids on the problems with \$10M it is not going to work. You need at least \$50M to put a two lane fast highway in the center with business roads, just like they have done with Highway 62. I don't see how you can do it. The City has to consider the traffic problems created by development.

How much of the \$10M has already been spent on the study? What amount is for design and construction? Response: There is \$5M for construction, \$4M for right of way and \$1M for planning. This will not solve all the safety issues. But, if you look at the whole problem and try and develop a solution this will be documented and as money becomes available we implement the entire plan.

Shirley Rhodes: In the last year a road has been built that allows access to Redwood Highway. Why is development and new accesses along Redwood Highway being allowed when there are so many accidents? Response: Law requires that we allow access to the state highway to properties that do not have an alternative access. If access is denied then ODOT has to purchase the property.

I have never seen lighted speed signs on Redwood Highway. Response: They were used on the highway last summer. The problem is there is only one sign in southern Oregon.

Roy Rhodes: We are 50 years behind. In California we have a lot of freeways. We don't have anybody coming off of a highway.

Jeff Kagay: Recently the speed limit has been reduced. Can we expect to see the speed limit being reduced more during this process? Response: This

cannot be predicted for certain, but it is unlikely that it will be reduced further.

Bart Van Syoc: Is there a goal to bring the speeds back up to quickly move the traffic?
Response: When you are looking at your purpose and need, the purpose of an expressway is to move a lot of traffic.

The sign designs have changed quite a bit over they years, are there more prototypes in the works that are being tried in other areas?

Response: Technology is always looking at new and better traffic devices. New devices are approved all of the time. There is also a process to use new test devices in an area.

Suzanne Myers: Is the highway designation “Expressway” periodically reevaluated?
Response: Expressway designations are currently under evaluation.

Rowdy Bates: If the expressway designation were to go away, would that affect this project? Response: No it will not.

Public: What is the boundary of the expressway and what is the next step down from an expressway designation? Response: The current boundary of the expressway starts at the south Y interchange and goes to the Applegate River. The Parkway is not designated as an expressway but is proposed to become one in the current review. There are four different designated levels below expressway.

Sharon Weston: Are expressways normally in urban areas? Response: Yes

9. **Wrap Up/Adjourn**

Vicki Guarino, RVCOG

The Project Development Team meets tomorrow morning.

The Open House is on March 3rd, YMCA conference room, 1000 Redwood Avenue, 5 to 7 p.m.

The next CAC meeting is on March 10th.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.