



Highway 62 Corridor Project

Date: June 2010
From: Sue Casavan, RVCOG
Re: **PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TEAM (PDT) / CITIZEN
ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) JOINT MEETING MINUTES
for June 16, 2010**

CAC Members in Attendance: Mike Malepsy, Susan Rachor, Becky Brooks, Mike Montero, Curt Burrill, Wade Six, Don Riegger, Paige Townsend, Bill Blair

CAC Members Absent: Nanci Watkins, David Christian, Bob Plankenhorn, Mike Gardiner, Richard Moorman

PDT Members in Attendance: John Vial, Brian Dunn, Vicki Guarino, Al Densmore, Anna Henson, Chris Zelmer, Dale Lininger, Mike Quilty, Suzanne Myers

PDT Members Absent: Mark Gibson, David Elliott

Location: Jackson County Public Works Auditorium, White City, Oregon

Guests: 33 members of the public (signed-in)

Staff Present: Tim Fletcher, Art Anderson, Dick Leever, Debbie Timms, and Lisa Cortes of ODOT; Pat Foley and Sue Casavan of RVCOG

1.0 Welcome and Approval of Minutes

Pat Foley, RVCOG

Pat F. convened the meeting of the Highway 62 Corridor Project at 6:05 p.m. She asked committee members if there were any additions or corrections to the February 17, 2010 meeting minutes.

On a motion by Mike Q. and seconded by Mike Montero the committee unanimously approved the February minutes as presented.

2.0 Review Agenda / Meeting Objectives

Art Anderson, ODOT

Art A. reviewed the agenda with the committee. He said that Tim F. will be giving an update on current project details and he will be concentrating on CAC/PDT concurrence on costs, jurisdictional exchange issues, transit issues, and additional funding needed. He reminded members that the last time they met the project was \$20 million short with the ODOT cost estimate.

3.0 Project Update

Tim Fletcher, ODOT

Tim F. gave the following PowerPoint project update presentation:

Poplar/Bullock Intersection to Vilas Road

- Draft Design Acceptance Package (DAP) - 30% Design
- Value Engineering Workshop
- Final Design Acceptance Package
- Final Design Plans
- Right of Way Process

Vilas Road to Corey Road

- Draft Design Acceptance Package (DAP) - 30% Design

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

- Draft Document
- Vernal Pool Functional Assessment

Tim F. said the project had been broken into two sections: South of Vilas and the section from Vilas extending north to Corey Road. He informed members that the design has been focused on the section south of Vilas Road (1000 feet south of Vilas Road). He noted that ODOT staff had been working on the Draft Design Acceptance Package (DAP) that will take the design approximately to the 30% stage which was completed earlier this month and is currently being circulated for internal review. He added that next week there will be a value engineering workshop and from that staff hoped to identify scenarios of the project where funding could be extended to the furthest extent possible. ODOT will take comments from the DAP and the workshop and reflect that in a final report for the Final Design Acceptance Package which should be ready by the first of August. He informed the committee that a consulting firm was retained for the final design stage. He said ODOT has initiated the appraisal process for acquisition of right of way (ROW) and have identified the ROW limits for the area which will include close to thirty properties. He added that the northern section DAP will start roughly in August when ODOT transitions to final design with the consultant for the southern. He reported that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement report will be available later this year.

Mike Q. asked what the split point was for the north and south sections and Tim F. it was a 1,000 feet south of Vilas Road.

Tim F. informed members that letters requesting Right of Entry have been sent out to properties that will be part of the vernal pool functional assessment that will be developed.

John V. asked what the role of the CAC/PDT will be in the design process and Art A. replied that it was ODOT's intention to have the committee provide input early in the project and if there are any major issues that surface the committee will be called back for input.

4.0 Additional Funding, Cost Cutting Measures, Jurisdictional Exchange, Transit Study

Art Anderson, ODOT

Art A. said he was looking for support and/or concurrence from committee members on the following four items:

1) Additional Funding

- Alternative is short funding by about \$20 million
- CAC/PDT, local jurisdictions, local legislators, ODOT and other local stakeholders will continue to pursue additional funding for the project
 - Commitment needs to be in place by Jan 1, 2012

He asked for acknowledgement of support from all members to come up with additional funding and if funding does not become available cost cutting measures will need to be looked at.

2) Cost Cutting Measures

- If additional funding is not secured, the below cuts will be made, in priority order:
 - Reduce ROW around the Vilas Rd. over-crossing to only what is needed for this phase
 - Reduce the roadway from 4 lanes to 2 lanes
 - Eliminate the median barrier
 - Construct only a two-lane bridge at Vilas Rd.
 - Eliminate the bridge at Vilas Rd. and construct an at grade intersection
 - With limited turning movements and limited improvements on Vilas Rd.

He said as design continues the exact cost will become clearer. He acknowledged that the bidding environment was good now and as the project estimate is refined the figure may be lower than the \$20 million. He discussed in further detail the cost cutting measures.

Mike Montero asked what the contingency factor was in the budget and Art A. responded that it was 20%. Mike M. discussed the proposed interchange and asked if staff had considered an option with a smaller footprint such as the Crossing Diamond and Art A. said yes that could be an option to consider. Mike M. asked if the cost saving potential for each cost cutting measure was available and Art A. responded that he did not have the costs with him but recalled that going from 4 lanes to 2 lanes was about \$6 million, median barrier about \$2 million, two-lane bridge at Vilas probably a million, and ROW costs was the real big one - if the bridge was

eliminated it would be about \$15 million. He added that the hope was that estimates will get better in terms of bringing the number down.

Wade S. commented that if the bridge was eliminated at Vilas there could be less incentive to take the bypass, he wondered if any modeling had been done to see the traffic changes. Art A. said there was some modeling done but staff needed to go back and look at it in more detail. He noted that people thought it would take longer to go through the signals.

Susan R. thought taking the bypass from 4 lanes to 2 lanes would make no sense. Art A. added that for the whole stretch it would save \$4-5 million and as the project moves forward before any cuts are made the committees will reconvene for discussion and make the decision together.

Brian D. said he appreciated the cost cutting measures but even before ODOT decided; it seemed there would need to be re-consideration of the Cut & Cover option versus what will be done here. He added that the other problem with the signal is 55 mph with an isolated intersection creates safety concerns. He would be interested in seeing the pros and cons of the two, eliminating the Cut & Cover at the south to reduce costs, maintaining the grade separation in the long term. Art A. said they are separated into two different parts and he was not sure how it could be done effectively without a huge delay in re-design.

Mike Montero commented that he thought the jurisdictional exchange issue should be part of the analysis (not strictly a cost cutting piece) when looking at any kind of project scale issues. He felt it could exacerbate the fears of the equity side and the economic burden shifting and all stakeholders should keep this in mind when picking and choosing cost cutting measures.

3) Jurisdictional Exchanges

- Policy Action 1G.5 of the Oregon Highway Plan:
 - “As part of project development, negotiate an intergovernmental agreement with the local jurisdiction affected by a major improvement such as a bypass and transfer the ownership of the state routes that are bypassed...”
- Policy Action 1H.4 of the Oregon Highway Plan:
 - “ODOT will not require transfer of jurisdiction of a bypassed highway if the bypassed highway will continue to function as a state highway because it carries a significant number of vehicle trips that do not originate or terminate in the bypassed city or cities.”

Art A. said the jurisdictional exchange was an issue between ODOT and the city and county but he wanted to bring members up to speed on where ODOT will need to go to be able to build this project. He discussed the above policy actions. He noted that it was a challenge to identify and determine what is a ‘significant reduction’ in trips on the road. He informed the committee that his charge under the Oregon Highway Plan is to be able to get a jurisdictional agreement signed before construction begins.

Mike Q. asked if there had been any court cases that have looked at a definition of ‘significant capacity’ and Art A. said there were none that he knew of, the bypass policy is quite new and there have not been a lot of bypasses built.

4) Transit Study

- ODOT will fund, and RVTD will help lead, a transit corridor study to be completed by Summer 2011
- Results from this study will be folded into final design with CAC/PDT concurrence
 - Transit sub-team to include several CAC/PDT members
- All parties will work to secure funding for the non-highway eligible elements of the plan
 - Highway funding eligible elements will be prioritized by the team for project inclusion based on available dollars

Art A. informed members that the plan was to have a transit corridor study in place by the summer of 2011 that will look at everything from Eagle Point to downtown Medford Front Street. He added that most transit projects have their own money and are not eligible for gas tax dollars and the hope is that the study might point toward transit-eligible projects that could be completed with this project and try to secure funding for the additional pieces at a later date. He said that staff will be asking several members of this group to serve on a citizen's advisory group as part of the ODOT/RVTD planning team. He noted that this was an important piece as it is not known when the region will see additional funding of this magnitude and anything that can be picked up in terms of traffic reduction through other modes of transportation will be important to try to reduce the traffic on Hwy 62.

5.0 Public Comment

Pat Foley, RVCOG

Clark Stevens: He asked if for the cost cutting measures that eliminating the median barrier could be raised to a higher priority versus reducing the lanes from 4 to 2. He wondered if the priority was set in stone or just a recommendation to the committee at the moment for their agreement. He noted that there were a couple comments made that preserving the 4 lanes through the corridor is a higher priority versus the median barrier or even two lanes over Vilas Road.

Dave Gilmour, Jackson County Commissioner: He said from county perspective there were a couple concerns. One was losing the Coker Butte connection with the airport. He noted that the county is concerned about losing the ability to re-open before it turns out at the airport and causes problems down the line and they don't want to lose that option. The other concern is the jurisdictional exchange. He said the county is highly concerned about taking over a large section of Hwy 62 if there will not be much reduction in traffic, especially truck traffic and he felt that would certainly be possible if there was not a full exchange at Vilas Road. He said north going trucks will be going down Vilas by way of Hwy 62 into Central Point to be able to go north on I-5 and that would not reduce truck traffic on Hwy 62 at all. He commented that just the maintenance on that section would be enormous and the county has limited funds to be able to do that long term.

6.0 CAC / PDT Concurrence

Art Anderson, ODOT

Art A. said the committee was not voting on anything tonight and he wanted to make sure there was concurrence of all things discussed this evening. He wanted to make sure there were no major misunderstandings with where ODOT is trying to head.

John V. said that in Art A.'s presentation when he touched on the transit side he made the comment that it will likely be a long time before we see funding of this amount and he thought this should lend more credence to the fact that the project needed to be built right this time. He was very concerned about going from 4 lanes to 2 lanes and thought a facility would be built that would not get the intended use. He expressed his concern about the cost cutting measures in general, and said this needed to be a facility that functions well for many years. Art A. said ODOT will bring the team together before any cost cutting measures are done. He asked John V. if he preferred to swap the priority of the roadway of 4 lanes to 2 with the median barrier. John V. said it was difficult to agree with that statement because the committee was shown no costs, but in general 2 lanes concerned him a lot.

Susan R. asked who put the priorities together and Art A. said ODOT staff had put them together.

Curt B. asked that when a third party designer was brought into the project in August if they would know at the time if it was possible that the cost cutting measures would even have to be looked at. Art A. said that ODOT will refine the cost estimate all the way up to final design and usually at 35% staff will get a pretty good feel and in this case the design at 35% will be handed off to a consultant firm. Curt B. asked if it was typical to see their cost estimates go up or as refinement continued the numbers may come down. Art A. replied that typically costs go up but with this project he thought numbers might come down slightly. He was concerned about jumping to conclusions when the south side design is finished, there are two separate designs the north and the south. He emphasized that staff may not be able to get a feel for the total cost reduction until design is further along on the north end.

Mike Q. commented that the region may get lucky with the 20% contingency built in; several major projects in Central Point have come in significantly below engineering estimates. Art A. said he hoped that cost estimates were not so far removed from the bidding environment that by the time it gets there it goes in another direction.

Wade S. said that his concern related to all three of these things: the cost estimates, the jurisdictional exchange, and trimming the scope of this project. He added that they are all inter-related and as ODOT discusses a jurisdictional exchange with the city and county there may be concerns that there may not be a significant reduction in traffic to begin with and it is a tremendous amount of cost for the city and county to maintain the pieces they will take back. He felt if the scope was reduced there could be even more pushback on what is 'significant reduction' and without better cost numbers ODOT will be trying to deal with three different things without a firm answer on any of them. He felt getting better cost estimates would help in negotiating the jurisdictional exchange.

Mike Montero commented that he thought the notion of reducing the facility from 4 lanes to 2 lanes from a freight perspective should be a last alternative. He added that on the jurisdictional exchange it isn't just a definition of what 'substantial reduction' is, even if all parties agreed on what that number meant, it is not known what it is going to do. He believes the highway plan policies provide the department with sufficient flexibility that should an agreement on some

number happen, there will be flexibility for doing a look back so at some date in the future there could be an analysis of what it actually did and all parties would come back to the table to review it. He thought this a reasonable accommodation that could be made and should be made. He inquired that when the department asks if there is consensus or willingness to look for additional funds if it is contemplated that this will be done by putting projects already funded at risk. Art A. answered that the only projects possibly considered would be the modernization program projects but large funding amounts are needed which could amount to 5-6 projects in the program and he would not want to recommend that. He said one of the discussions he wanted to have was about the upcoming reauthorization bill and how to get the region marketed. Mike M. asked how that could be reconciled with ODOT's policy with regard to earmarks and Art A. responded that it would be necessary to go back to the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC) and say that the region wanted to change priorities and try to change it.

Don R. said it did not make any sense to him to build a 4 lane highway and then reduce it to 2 lanes at a bridge, especially when talking about a limited access, higher speed highway. Art A. acknowledged that none of the cost cutting items made any sense; it is a place to start if costs needed to be cut.

John V. asked if a design build contract was considered where the bid could get locked in and get the design going quickly to take advantage of the current bid environment. Art A. responded that bid is two and a half years away and he thought the complexity of the project has kept staff from moving in that direction. John V. commented that according to the policies he felt unsure if ODOT would be obligated to do an exchange and Art A. said he did know that the OTC is expecting a jurisdictional exchange.

Al D. said that he appreciated the tone, direction, emphasis and concerns in the presentation. He explained that he sees this as an evolutionary tale in the next year, year and a half. He encouraged staff that if cost estimates are affected significantly or more revenue or adjustment of scope is needed that members will be contacted. He agreed with earlier comments on 4 lanes versus 2 lanes. He thought the cast of characters suggested earlier be assembled much sooner than later and think of involving them to create more of a sense of buy in. Art A. explained that in some regard he had already started that discussion with ODOT and the legislative liaisons. He thought the same kind of dialogue from anyone that interacts with our legislators both state and federal will be important.

Mike Malepsy asked where the ROW purchasing and design of Corey Road were at and Art A. responded that staff had started at the south end and have not got to the design at Corey Road. He said that staff is trying to minimize the amount of ROW needed for the project. Debbie T. said they have five properties down, all properties are in process now and the plan is then to just move north.

Tim F. explained that ODOT owns very little ROW and with the design build referred to by John V., a contractor is hired and a designer team immediately goes to work building it but without having the ROW secured not much would be able to be accomplished. Dale L. added that he had experience with design build and this is not the type of project that lends itself to the process.

Art A. informed the committee that the plan is to go out for bid in June of 2012 for the southern half and ODOT would want to bid the northern half as soon as possible thereafter.

7.0 Next Steps

Art Anderson, ODOT

Art A. said next steps have been discussed throughout the meeting but the focus will be on finishing the design and keeping discussion going about the jurisdictional exchange with the City of Medford and Jackson County.

8.0 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

DRAFT