

## **April 1999**

**From:** John Morrison, Public Involvement Coordinator, RVCOG

**Date:** April 23, 1999

**Attendees:** Tim Alford, Mark Bailey, Jim Buckley, Patty Claeys, Jon Deason, John Ferris, Linda French, Jani Hale, Teresa Hogan, Michael Mahar, Jean Milgram, Michael Montero, Jane Podolski, and Wade Six. Members absent: Rich Fogarty.

**Re:** Minutes of April 21, 1999, meeting of the South Medford Interchange Project Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

**Location:** RVCOG Senior Services Office, 2860 State Street, Medford.

**Guests:** Frank Stevens, Solution Team Leader, ODOT; Lis Cooper, Process Improvement Consultant, ODOT; Greg Holthoff, Solution Team Member, ODOT.

**Consultant Team Present:** David Mayfield, Project Manager, URS Greiner Woodward Clyde; Gary Shaff, JRH Transportation Engineering; John Morrison and Kathy Helmer, Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG).

### **1.0 CALL TO ORDER**

John Morrison opened the meeting at 5:40 PM and reviewed the meeting agenda. He provided packets of information to attendees, including a CAC Meeting Schedule, a memorandum on the upcoming May 6 Solution Team Meeting and Bus Tour, the NEPA Scoping Meeting Report and a list of Solution Team Members.

### **2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Minutes from the previous meeting were approved as written.

### **3.0 ELECTION OF THE CAC CHAIR**

John Morrison presented information on the role of the Chair. The Chair's main responsibilities include: ensuring that all members' interests are served; coordinating with the Committee's facilitator regarding the committee work and agendas; attending all Solutions Team meetings and serving as the Committee's spokesperson on the Solutions Team. Frank Stevens announced that the Solutions Team approved non-voting membership for the CAC Chair who would attend all Solutions Team meetings.

A CAC member suggested electing both a Chair and a Vice-Chair for the CAC. This would ensure participation by a Committee official in all activities. Frank Stevens noted the importance of continuity in the process and of having the same person attend all meetings of the Solutions Team. Mike Montero noted that the Chair/Vice-Chair model has worked well for Rogue Valley Area Commission on Transportation (RVACT).

John Morrison asked how many Committee members were willing to be considered for Chair. Jon Deason and Mike Montero said they could commit to the role. Mike cautioned the Committee that his employer KOGAP is a major stakeholder in the South Medford Interchange area; his serving as Chair might be perceived a conflict of interest and that might be an issue that could impact the Committee. He asked the group to consider that.

Jon Deason suggested that his own history as County Commissioner and politician brought some baggage to his serving as Chair.

Kathy Helmer asked for an estimate of how many hours per month the role of Chair would require. David Mayfield estimated it would require four hours in addition to the commitment as a CAC member. When asked if others could commit to the role, no additional members volunteered.

A member suggested that Deason be voted the Chair and Montero the Vice-Chair. Several members of the CAC supported this idea. John Morrison asked for a vote on that slate and CAC members unanimously approved it.

#### **4.0 UPDATE ON PROJECT PROGRESS**

John Morrison presented an overview of public comments received during the March 18 NEPA Scoping Meeting. Among the issues raised were safety, congestion, connectivity and the proper assessment of the scope of the problem. Suggested solutions included improvements to the South Interchange area, construction of a third interchange area, the relocation of I-5, increasing surface connectivity, and demand management. Potential impacts raised related to the employment base in the broader interchange area, the relationship to developments of the Southeast Medford Plan, and effects on existing property owners.

#### **5.0 INTRODUCTION OF THE TRANSPORTATION PROBLEM**

David Mayfield reviewed the main points in "Summary of Transportation Problem", a document that had been sent to CAC members. He described the problem of clogged intersections where cars stack and motorists are unable to move into appropriate turning lanes in the area of the Interchange. The Origin and Destination Study showed that many area residents use I-5 to travel from north Medford to south Medford, getting on at the North Interchange and exiting at the South Interchange.

Comments and questions by CAC members:

- What are the most frequent trips, according to the Origin and Destination study? David Mayfield will identify these at the next meeting.
- How quickly has this problem come about? What is the history of it? Frank Stevens suggested that employment patterns in the area have changed and with them the traffic patterns. The construction of new homes in east Medford has also contributed. A member suggested that the development of Fred Meyer and Southgate Plaza have also been factors. Developers come up with their own circulation patterns and these sometimes don't work well.
- We are facing a future with great growth and we don't want to just fix the existing problem.
- The City, County and ODOT control and regulate circulation. We shouldn't blame the developers.
- Going south on Hwy 99, people are using Center Drive to avoid the Stewart Avenue/I-5 Interchange area.
- What's the relationship among the project, the County Commissioners, and us? How do politics affect what we do? Regarding this question, Dave Mayfield said that the Solutions Team is the decision-making group and the CAC is closely tied to that group. There is also a Technical Review Committee with many members. Greg Holthoff from ODOT will review environmental reports. David Mayfield communicates

information from the CAC to the Solutions Team and the Technical Review Committee.

- The new trend towards mixed use has a good effect on traffic. Like the Southeast Medford Plan. Proper planning is the key.

## **6.0 REPORT ON SOLUTION TEAM GOALS**

David Mayfield reviewed the Solution Team's revised Goals with the Committee. He had taken the CAC's recommendations to the Solutions Team. He explained the actions the Solution Team had taken. Some of the recommendations had been incorporated into their draft goals and others had not been. The Solution Team held that some of the CAC recommendations were assumed under broader goals or would be addressed as the Evaluation Criteria were established for the goals.

CAC member comments/questions:

- I'm concerned about their leaving out a goal specific to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Everyday language might work better in the goals than more technical terms that are vague.
- Some of my values [about pedestrian and bicycles] were denied. (Frank Stevens explained that improving facilities for pedestrians and bicycles is a Federal design requirement.)
- What protections are there in the regulations for pedestrians and cyclists? David Mayfield responded that any new construction requires facilities for pedestrians and cyclists. He asked the group if they would like to review the MIS (Major Investment Study) requirements and multi-modal design requirements, which encompass pedestrians, transit and bicycles. The group would like that topic on the June meeting agenda.
- The wording in the goal "Minimize negative impacts to farmland" should be checked.
- What about my concerns about adjacent park properties? David suggested that the Solutions Team assumed it was included under the goal regarding minimizing impacts to natural resources and the environment.

## **7.0 LAND USE AS PART OF THE TRANSPORTATION SOLUTION**

Gary Shaff distributed his "Memorandum on Land Use Strategies for the South Medford Interchange Project". He shared information from the report, which focused on the opportunities in land use planning for solving some aspects of the problem and on Transit Oriented Development (TOD).

Comments by members:

- What do the circles in the TOD map represent? Gary said that these are nodes with mixed land uses that are bus/transit/people friendly. Mixed-use zoning is encouraged, allowing for residential and commercial in the same area. Such activity centers encourage use of transit.
- What is this memo? Is it a proposal? Gary answered that the region is considering the TOD approach and that overlaps with the South Medford Interchange problem area.
- In the chart on p.10 of the memo, what does "concentration of high demand traffic generators" mean? Gary responded that the phrase refers to areas like Southgate Mall where a group of retail businesses create traffic.
- How important will public transit be in all of this? Isn't that further into the future? Gary answered that public transit during peak hours could serve to decrease

congestion. Frank Stevens suggested that part of the solution could be an improved transit system.

## **8.0 MEETING CRITIQUE**

John Morrison asked each person to share his/her thoughts on the meeting process and content.

Member comments were:

- I would like a more direct answer to the political concerns. How will city councils be involved in this? I would like to know the federal regulations that affect what we can and can't do.
- You should send all the information to be discussed in our packets ahead of time. TOD may be further down the road than the South Medford Interchange.
- Should we keep TOD as another agenda item?
- How does it all come together, with the politics?
- We need items ahead of time. Mixed use could solve some of the social problems I deal with at work.
- The Southeast Medford Plan is a TOD approach. There's a lot of information here. It will be clearer in time.
- The process is great, but I want all the materials ahead of time.
- I'm starting to realize that this isn't just the South Interchange area that we're talking about, but well beyond, with land use in the city, etc. I liked the Solutions Team's goals.
- What's important is the inclusion of so many agencies and interests. The care going into this. We need to get word out that it is inclusive.
- The process is good. You need to continue "taking us to school". We need to know the rules and regulations that guide what's possible and not. We need a basic description of Medford's recent land use decisions. Those vacant areas on Gary's map would normally go into subdivisions.
- I'm part cynic, part idealist. Decisions are often made based on the pocketbook and self-interest. I want information on how the South Medford Interchange blends with the larger picture. What are the 20-year projections for growth?
- We're being heard. I want a more global picture. With Central Point, Phoenix, and Medford. How do they interact?
- I can't imagine Phoenix and Medford not coming together within 20 years.
- We want to be proactive in this project. We have goals but the Goals have not been weighted. There will be choices to make. Some will be left aside.
- Let's be here on time and start on time. And let's have the materials before the meeting. We need the whole context of the Interchange project—the Southeast Plan and growth projections.
- How will we take this information to the community? Members should talk with Jon Deason or John Morrison and they can arrange speakers for groups that want to learn about the project.

## **9.0 SUMMARY**

David Mayfield reviewed the salient points made during the meeting critique, noting that CAC members want information on the broader context of the Interchange Project. He encouraged members to participate in the May 6 bus tour of sites in the study area that may present opportunities for solving aspects of the Interchange problem. Next meeting is scheduled for May 19, 5:30-7:30 PM, in the RVCOG Senior Services Conference Room.