

February 2000

From: Pat Foley, RVCOG

Date: February 22, 2000

Attendees: CAC members present: Tim Alford; Jim Buckley; Patty Claeys; Jani Hale; Teresa Hogan; Mike Mahar; Jean Milgram; Mike Montero; Jane Podolski; Wade Six.
Members absent: Mark Bailey; John Ferris

Re: CITIZEN ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) DRAFT MEETING MINUTES for FEBRUARY 16th, 2000

Location: Rogue Federal Credit Union, 1270 Center Drive, Medford

Guests: Fifty members of the public.

Project Team Present: Frank Stevens, ODOT; David Mayfield, URS; Jim Hanks, JRH; John Morrison, RVCOG; Pat Foley, RVCOG.

1. Introduction/Approval of Minutes

John Morrison convened the meeting at 5:35 P.M. He reviewed the meeting objectives which were

- a) update on project progress,
- b) review findings on "shelved" alternatives and
- c) review and comments on design issues. John stated this meeting is a working session of the CAC and the time line for the meeting will follow the agenda. Time permitting, there will be a public comment period at the end of the meeting. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as presented.

2. Project Activity Report

Dave Mayfield reviewed recent activity. At the last CAC meeting the committee reviewed seven alternatives. Out of these alternatives the CAC recommended three alternatives to the Solution's Team. Those being Alternatives 2, 11 and 14. The Solution Team agreed with the CAC recommendations subject to future results to be included in URS technical report. The technical report is difficult as it needs to meet environmental process. If we proceed with three alternatives, instead of five alternatives, we do not need to go through a complicated screening process. This would move up the process. We will start on the EIS in March.

3. Presentation of Findings on Shelved Alternatives

Jim Hanks walked the CAC through a review of the further findings on the four "shelved" alternatives. Each CAC member received a detailed packet on the modeling results. As Hanks began the presentation, Dave Mayfield explained that the maps which showed the Garfield extension extending west of Hwy 99 were wrong. That portion is a city of Medford project. The South Medford Interchange Project alternative stays to the east of Hwy 99. Jim Hanks then verbally reviewed the high points of the finding for each of the four alternatives.

Alternative #1. East/West Barnett to Stewart: This alternative results in severely concentrated traffic at Barnett and Stewart Intersections. There would also be signal spacing issues. Adding the Garfield/Ellendale extension only resulted in a 9 percent reduction of traffic. This alternative was rejected.

Discussion: Jani Hale asked if Garfield Avenue will have the appearance of a street like Stewart Avenue for example. Mike Montero responded that he has seen the city's draft and does not feel that Garfield will look like Stewart. Garfield west of Highway 99 will be consistent with east of Highway 99.

Alternative #5 - Barnett/Stewart Couplet: Transit route from east to west splits up routes. You have to go all the way to the end and come back. This causes trouble for school buses and delivery trucks because they would have to travel all the way to the end and then come back. There would be back up problems because school buses have to stop at all rail road crossings.

Alternative #7 - Use of existing interchange. Realign Barnett/Stewart with Garfield/Highland extension: This creates a big problem at the Stewart/Riverside intersection. The increase in volume compounds the problems related to the close proximity of the railroads to Riverside at Stewart.

Alternative #8 - New interchange Stewart and Riverside intersection: Shifts problem areas to intersections further downstream. There are issues centered around the railroad and the fact that school buses have to stop at the crossing. This causes traffic to back up. Because of spacing problems this alternative has been rejected. This alternative does allow us to go over Barnett. Several members of the CAC expressed concern over South Stage Road. They questioned if any of the selected alternatives preclude an interchange being built at South Stage Road. They would not be in favor of doing that. Jim Hanks said while a South Stage Road crossing or interchange is not sufficiently beneficial to warrant keeping in this project, there's not reason it couldn't have merit in other regional transportation plans. South Stage is included in the Regional Transportation Plan. But building an interchange there could reduce the Barnett Road interchange volume about 14 percent. That is not enough to change our problem. The CAC asked what were they spacing requirements for interchanges. Frank Stevens explained that Federal guidelines requires three miles between interchanges in urban areas and this was measured from ramp to ramp. He said an exception process might get that distance reduced to one mile, but given the short distance between South Medford and Phoenix, it would be a very close call to fit in a South Stage interchange. ODOT requires other tests be met in order to give an exception, one being that exceptions must benefit the Interchange System. The state Transportation Planning Rule now prohibits new interchanges outside of UGB's.

4. Review and Discussion of Issues Associated with the Design of the Retained Alternatives.

Dave Mayfield then led the CAC through a discussion of the issues surrounding those alternatives which have been recommended for further study.

Mayfield pointed out that alternatives #2 and #11 are similar in concept. One uses a Highland/Garfield connector and the other connects Garfield to Ellendale. Mayfield noted that an added feature could be to realign Center Drive between I-5 and Highway 99 with a right-in/out facility. This would allow for potential development of commercial property south of Stewart Avenue.

Alternative #2 Ellendale/Garfield Extension - Eliminate ramps at old interchange: One problem is access to the Manor. Ellendale is not wide enough and there are two short streets that come into Ellendale. A suggested option is to access via Halsey Street and realign to continue westbound to connect with Garfield. Another option is for the Manor to modify their plan. There is an access problem for the existing trailer park and apartments on Highland. CAC member Jim Buckley proposed an option that would have traffic calming measures using choker islands, speed bumps and narrowing of roadways on Ellendale before reaching Barnett Road that would allow left or right turn at Barnett.

Jean Milgram asked "What if we do not choose to endorse Alternative #2? Jim Hanks replied that you pass that information on to the Solutions Team.

Alternative #11 Highland/Garfield Extension - Eliminate ramps at old interchange: This alternative does not have the problem of access to the Manor. Overpass area may be affected when environmental analysis comes in. In a week or two we will have a better idea of impacts. A structure owned by the Manor located to the west of Highland Drive has an access problem. Access needs to be provided or will have to purchase property. The intersection at Highland and Barnett would remain essentially the same with the possibility of adding a center turn lane. Barnett may be widened and measures taken for access control. It was suggested that Highland should be left as a traffic street without calming devices.

Alternative #14 One-way couplet Alba/Barnett: Mayfield said the Solution Team expressed a number of concerns with this alternative. It holds the potential to require the purchase of the businesses east of the freeway due to access problems. The close proximity of signals at Alba and Highland may cause queuing along Barnett. Wade Six brought up the idea of having a road run parallel to the freeway. Dave Mayfield replied the city may be able to accomplish this as they would not run into 4-f issue. Federal funding does not allow impacting a park unless you can prove that you have taken all steps to minimize the impacts.

Following the review and discussion, CAC members were asked to choose the alternative they preferred.

Tim Alford - He would eliminate Alternative #14. Prefers Alternatives #2 or #11.

Wade Six - Alternative #14 most interesting. Fewer environmental impacts.

Jean Milgram - Would like to eliminate Alternative #2 because of impacts on the Manor. Prefers Alternative #11.

Teresa Hogan - Prefers Alternative #11. Alternative #14 needs refinement.

Mike Montero - Alternative #11 has not met wetland mitigation. Need to minimize social justice impact. Components of Alternative #14 should be forwarded to Solutions Team.

Jane Podolski - Alternative #11 concerns her because of the affect of traffic on Highland. Prefers Alternatives #2 or #14.

Patty Claeys - Likes Alternative #14 with the potential to develop South Stage Interchange in the future. Prefers Alternative #11 over Alternative #2.

Mike Mahar - All alternatives need to be refined. Alternative #11 would have less impact on the Manor. Considers Alternative #14 interesting.

Jim Buckley - Does not like Alternative #2. Alternative #11 would be good if you install a drop at the T-intersection at Highland and Barnett Road to allow for right lane merge land onto Barnett.

Jani Hale - Alternative #14 interesting. Center Street extension opens commercial property for development. Alternative #11 is a concern because of access to apartments on Highland.

Because of time constraints there was no Public comment period was held. The public was invited to submit written comment to be attached to the minutes.

A letter written by CAC member Jane Podolski to the CAC expressing some of her concerns regarding the CAC process was distributed to committee members for review and comment at the next CAC meeting.

6. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM. The next CAC meeting will be on March 15, 2000.