

October 1999

From: John Morrison, Rogue Valley Council of Governments (RVCOG)

Date: October 25, 1999

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

Re: MINUTES FOR THE CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC) MEETING, OCTOBER 20, 1999

Location: Rogue Federal Credit Union, 1370 Center Drive, Medford

Guests: Carlotta Collette, Collette Communications, Inc; Greg Holtoff, Environmental Services, DOT; forty-two members of the public attended, namely, Gordon and Bea Bentson, Matt Claflin, Roseann Claflin, James and Elizabeth Patterson, Pat Oldenburg, Laurie and Bon Dysart, Kristy Dysart, Darby Morrell, Olive and Jack Stong, Rick Silva, Edgar and Karen Hee, Mary Heath, Peg and Nelson Powell, Tekla Delaney, Al Carver, Roger Viets, Leo and Veda Fries, Jon Allard, Karen Potter, David Bolen, Margaret Burns, Rob Patridge, Gene and Sandy Abell, Joe Hoppe, Tom Tangeman, Barbara Davis, Loretta Harrell, Don Thomson, Norbert Lieberg, Elaine Turcke, Terrill Walker, and Sharon Ostrander .

Consultant Team Present: Frank Stevens, Solutions Team Manager, ODOT; John Morrison, RVCOG; Kathy Helmer, RVCOG; Gary Shaff, JRH.

1.0 Call to Order

John Morrison opened the meeting at 5:40 PM. John welcomed the members of the public and explained the Public Comment Period on the agenda. CAC members and guests introduced themselves. John reviewed the meeting agenda and objectives. The objectives were to:

- A. Review and comment upon the evaluation criteria developed by the Solution Team;
- B. Review and comment on the public outreach effort.
- C. Gain an understanding of land use trends in and around the project area.

2.0 Approval of Minutes

The draft minutes of the September 15, 1999, CAC meeting were approved, as written.

3.0 Public Comment Period

John Morrison asked for comments from the public. Kristi Dysart stated that she had written the letter about Siskiyou Cemetery. She was concerned about the future of the entire area that had been dedicated as a cemetery, not only those parts that had been already developed in some way.

4.0 Report on the October 6 Solution Team Meeting

Jon Deason said he was glad he had attended the Solution Team meeting and observed this more technical group. Jon's background in mathematics had not prepared him for the meeting; he found it confusing. It was an all day meeting during which participants tried to

quantify the list of factors. It was hard to do, but very valuable. Jon said that CAC members needed to look at how the Solutions Team had weighted factors and compare that to the way they themselves would weight them. For example, the criteria that concerns meters of streets with more than a 50% increase in traffic and the one that concerns the number of displaced dwelling units. Jon asked a member of the public, Pat Oldenburg, if she would like to add her comments, since she had attended the meeting.

Pat asked why streets had to have more than 500 trips per day to apply the criteria regarding a 50% increase in traffic. A street could change a great deal, though it might not have had over 500 trips at the start. She noted that birds, fish and wetlands were all protected by the criteria, but that people and neighborhoods were not. Livability was not too well protected. She also asked if the street improvements planned by Medford were to go through the computer modeling process as a separate solution. Gary Shaff answered that already funded improvements and those that had committed funding were being modeled. Projects that the MPO had determined necessary would also be modeled. In general, those projects anticipated to be constructed over the next twenty years would undergo the modeling. Wade Six restated the question as: "If you modeled those improvements, would you still need to go through a neighborhood?"

Norbert Liebert had also attended the Solutions Team meeting and said that they spent the whole day attaching statistical values to quantitative measures. He commended the Solutions Team for tackling the long process. He said that qualitative aspects weren't included and that the CAC needed to look into what the impact on congestion would be if existing streets were brought up to standards, thus encouraging traffic passage.

Jon commended the attempt to approach concepts in a scientific manner. Jim Buckley suggested that the project should review the cooperation among the different agencies to ensure communication. Frank Stevens stated that URS Greiner was the hub for all communication. Greiner brings all information to the Solutions Team for their decision-making. That includes all information from local agencies and all input from the public. The project is required to communicate with more than 80 agencies. Frank said that openness had been characterized the South Medford Interchange Project since the start. Public participation had been encouraged early in the process by newspaper articles and maps; this project had been approached differently than past projects. Some concepts would drop to the wayside after modeling. Two to three options would go forward and there would be a public comment period. Frank encouraged people to bring their input into the process now.

Mike Montero stated that from the Solution Team's perspective, everyone's participation had been and would continue to be very important. Nobody knows a neighborhood like a resident. The Solutions Team takes all those unique observations and makes an informed decision.

John Morrison commented that the public input to date had been very sophisticated, often of a technical nature. This participation had resulted in a more solid process and had intensified the sensitivity to potential impacts on neighborhoods. Jon Deason underscored the quality of citizen input and noted it had gone well beyond the typical "not in my backyard" approach.

Mike Mahar asked how citizen input was translated to the Solutions Team. He said he was concerned that input brought to the CAC should be communicated to the Solutions Team. John Morrison explained how citizen comments and alternatives ideas were express mailed to the Project Manager, Dave Mayfield, who would then direct them to the appropriate department for review and response. Citizen correspondence, be it email or letter, is also

provided in Solution Team meeting packets. Frank Stevens noted that information from the CAC and citizens was instrumental in creating project goals; aspects might not have been included without that input.

5.0 Public Outreach Report

At the last meeting, the CAC was concerned that they had not had much input from west side residents, although they had received significant input from east side residents. They had suggested ways to reach other areas of town. Participants had since received a proposed strategy for outreach to other areas. Outreach to the Portland Ave. area would be undertaken first. John noted that some people thought that further, intense outreach should be postponed until after modeling results were available. Wade Six encouraged pursuing outreach to the other neighborhoods now. Jean Milgram stated that the project needed to reach all residents, whether they own or rent. There are some apartments in that area that should be contacted. Teresa Hogan suggested that outreach mailings should cover not only the street in question (e.g., Portland), but also neighboring streets. In this way, the true neighborhood is contacted. For example, Cottage, Willamette, and Van Couver would all be impacted if Portland were to become an arterial.

A citizen asked how the project would reach the people on Garfield. People in this neighborhood, as in others, could be reached in two ways. Using a GIS-based database, the names of property owners in a particular area could be accessed. Using a "saturation" postal delivery process, all residents could be reached, whether owners or renters.

Mr. Dysart, a member of the public, suggested mailing to all residences along Springbrook as far as Coker Butte Road to the north. Jim Buckley and Mike Montero suggested that the mailings cover all the northern and southern extension areas.

Mike Montero noted that when people hear the word "arterial" they imagine Stewart Ave. There are differences between Stewart and Sunrise and there is flexibility in arterial design. It would be helpful to bring information from Public Works on the different types of street categories and their definitions. If this were in lay terms, it would help people better understand ongoing discussions.

Mr. Hee, a member of the public, said it would be good for CAC members to have copies of the Regional Transportation Plan report and review those definitions of "arterial". When the project uses the term arterial, he asked, is it referring to 87 feet or 100 feet rights of way? Wade Six said that it was difficult to get a sense of size and anticipated amount of traffic without having some numbers attached to the picture. People don't really know the effect something will have without numbers.

Gary Shaff noted that Medford's plans to extend Garfield to Hwy 99 would be constructed soon and that the South Medford Interchange Project would not deter that project from happening.

Mr. Boren, a member of the public, said that an assumption being made about the modeling process was that it was right since it was a scientific model. He did not agree with that. Another assumption was that engineers would work flawlessly. He noted that the project was about the interchange, but he didn't ever see the interchange on the maps.

Jean Milgram asked at what point the 500 trip per day criteria would be explained. This information will be forthcoming.

6.0 Overview of Medford Land Use Trends

Jim Eisenhard gave an overview of Medford land use trends, speaking to general growth trends, the Southeast Plan, and growth management tools. He noted that the city has recently authorized a modeling study of projects that enhance local street connectivity; it will determine their impact on traffic. These projects will be in the city's Transportation System Plan (TSP).

Jim explained that 70% of the city's growth is due to in-migration. Medford is the regional commercial center for 6-7 counties in northern California and southern Oregon. The city has a 2-3% annual increase in population. A significant trend is the increase in older population groups, especially the 65 and older group. Medford's projected population in 2010 is 71,110; in 2020, the projected population is 80,000 people. Jim noted that there is a considerable amount of developable land in the city.

The Southeast Plan, an area of 1,000 acres, represents a neo-traditional development pattern. It emphasizes principles of mixed use, public space, and natural site features. If the plan had not been made, that area could have supported 10,000 dwelling units, rather than the 7,000 dwelling units that have been planned.

Regarding Medford's growth management tools, Jim noted that all facilities, including water, sanitary, and roads, must be adequate to serve new proposed developments. Many intersections are currently inadequate, so zone changes have not been allowed in certain areas. Problems at the South Medford Interchange have blocked zone changes related to development of the Southeast Plan. It is hoped that the South Medford Interchange Project will alleviate that problem.

A citizen voiced his concerns over 7,000 dwelling units putting more traffic onto Barnett and Jim said that the plan is for residents to work in the core of the Plan area. Wade Six asked about density as a factor in decreasing vehicle miles traveled and Jim replied that effective transit requires a density of 7-8 dwelling units (du) per acre and Medford currently has a density of 5.3 d.u. Mike Montero noted that Medford provides so many regional destinations that it winds up having the traffic and pollution problems.

Bear Creek and KOGAP have partnered to create routing that takes 50,000 truck miles off city streets.

A citizen noted that she found it offensive that established neighborhoods had to accommodate growth in the Southeast Plan. She asked why N. Phoenix Road couldn't be used for people to go to Costco, rather than being routed through her neighborhood. She said that Medford doesn't know what it has; Bend has kept its charm. Jim responded that the city is looking at local street improvements for better connectivity because the city values its neighborhoods. At the same time, it is state law that the city accommodate growth.

One citizen suggested that the N. Phoenix, Foothills Rd., Coker Butte Rd. route seemed obvious as a north-south connection.

Another citizen said he had reviewed the evaluation measures and didn't see anything related to safety. Places that are planned as neighborhoods make dangerous streets when widened. The difficulty is due to crossing the new width of the street. How do you get your kids across the street?

Jim explained that Medford's street system is organized hierarchically with arterial streets at the top, collectors, and then residential streets. The neo-traditional plan has a grid street plan with all streets having the same value; it requires many fewer streets. If you can improve some two lane streets, that is more compatible with children than one five-lane arterial street. A citizen said that from 5 AM to 8 AM, Groveland St. is abuzz with children. Another citizen mentioned that he delivers mail off Stewart and that street has safety issues. It didn't make sense to him to connect two business areas through a residential area.

Mr. Powell, a member of the public, asked if the project was working with the county to coordinate. Frank Stevens answered that the county and ODOT share resources on a routine basis for the sake of efficiency. The South Medford Interchange Project has made for even more cooperation.

Jim Eisenhard repeated that the city was not interested in putting 5 lane highways through residential neighborhoods; it is looking at 2-lane streets for answers to its traffic problems. Mr. Boren, a member of the public, noted that Jim's statement made it seem incongruent for consultants to come and propose solutions that were not connected to local desires. John Morrison said that the alternative concepts had not been brought to the area by URS Greiner; they had been developed at by Solution Team and CAC members during a daylong meeting.

7.0 Adjournment

Given the length of discussions at the meeting, summary comments were not solicited from CAC members. John Morrison adjourned the meeting at 7:45 PM. John expressed gratitude to the Rogue Federal Credit Union for accommodating the CAC's need for meeting space. The next meeting will be held on November 17, 1999.