

September 1999

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

Date: September 15, 1999

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

Re: Draft minutes of the September 15, 1999 meeting of the South Medford Interchange Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC).

Location: Smullin Health Education Center, Rogue Valley Medical Center, Medford

Guests: Forty-one members of the public attended: Gordon and Bea Bentson, Elizabeth Kirk, Robert Kirk, Matt Claflin, James and Elizabeth Patterson, Bob Higgins, Bob Johnson, Pat Oldenburg, Joanne Wickman, Bon Dysart, Joan Molator, Grier Gaffney, Vincent Comerchero, Darby Morrell, J. B. Morrell, Tom Ettel, Jim Davis, Bob Karcich, Mary Boyarsky, Carolyn Ferguson, Leo Aries, Olive Stong, Lu Vobora, George Vobora, Rick Silva, Edgar Hee, Karen Hee, Jackie Johnson, Tom Oldenburg, Bob Wickman, Mary Heath, Laurie Dysart, Ben Dysart, Russell and Kristy Dysart, Peg and Nelson Powell, Mark Kunis and Clark Stevens.

Consultant Team Present: David Mayfield, URS Greiner; Frank Stevens, Solutions Team Manager, ODOT; John Morrison, RVCOG; Pat Foley, RVCOG.

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. He then reviewed the meeting agenda. The meeting objectives were:

- A. Report on Public Outreach
- B. View a video on the Single Point Interchange
- C. Update on Evaluation Criteria
- D. Report by CAC Members on Community Feedback

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

The draft minutes of the August 18, 1999 CAC meeting were approved as written.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Members of the CAC were asked to identify themselves and state where they live. Citizens present were then asked if they would like to comment. Tom Ettel expressed concern about destroying the residential livability of Ellendale.

J.B. Morrell asked where livability was mentioned in the alternatives. Vincent Comerchero asked what other options there were besides going through neighborhoods.

Bob Kirk asked who the stakeholders on the Solutions Team were and if they lived in the area. Frank Stevens explained that there are 19 Solutions Team members. By design, none of the team members are from South Medford in order to avoid conflict of interest. The Team is made up of four ODOT representatives, and citizens and representatives with an

interest in the area. Bob Kirk replied that no one had a greater stake than did those living in the area.

Rick Silva asked if Mike Montero had a conflict of interest. He asked Mike Mahar if he could build any more in the area until this had been settled. Mike Mahar responded that he was asked to be on the committee. The committee will evaluate what is brought to the table. He will vote what he feels in his heart. He expressed his sympathy for people living in affected neighborhoods.

A Groveland resident said that East Medford is what all of Medford used to be like. He likes the T-intersections. They make for a rural setting where people can walk.

A resident stated that he felt the off ramps were causing the problem at the Interchange. Darby Morrell asked if there were any funding deadlines for coming up with a solution and where the proposals had come from.

Bob Karcich asked how CAC members had been invited to participate in the process. John Morrison explained how the CAC members had been selected. It was very important that there be broad-based representation on the committee.

Nelson Powell, nuclear physicist, stated that last week there had almost been an ozone alert. He went on to describe what happens during an alert and what the affects can be to residents living in an area where there is heavy traffic.

Mary Heath announced there would be a general meeting in the Garfield neighborhood the next night at Siskiyou Chapel at 7:30 PM to discuss traffic related issues. She invited people to come.

Dave Mayfield said that RVCOG staff would be available to meet with residents in their neighborhoods to listen to their concerns and to discuss the alternatives. If they wanted to organize a meeting, they should call John Morrison.

Edgar Hee thanked John Morrison for replying to his requests for information. A representative of the Sunrise and Hillcrest area stated that whatever was done would also affect him.

4.0 REPORT ON PUBLIC OUTREACH

John Morrison reported on activities to inform and involve the public in the South Medford Interchange Project. The two articles that ran in the Mail Tribune on July 9 and 11, 1999 had been effective, judging by meeting turnout. He noted the CAC's interest in hearing the public's concerns and ideas. People may contact John by mail or email. All citizen input is emailed or mailed to Dave for analysis. Letters recently received had been included in the CAC packet.

John Morrison attended a meeting on Monday night with citizens in Ward 4. Questions had been raised that needed answers. John commented that most people in attendance at the present meeting were residents of Ellendale and Groveland Avenue. Hearing their responses to the alternatives was important, as was hearing from citizens residing in other areas. Wade Six asked if the adopted goals have been ranked. Dave responded that they had not been ranked.

John asked if the CAC members had any questions. The input from the last CAC meeting went to the Solutions Team. The Solutions Team has expressed gratitude for the CAC's advice.

Dave Mayfield asked why nobody was at the meeting from Portland Avenue or the Biddle Extension. Teresa Hogan suggested that they were not as aware. It is a poorer neighborhood with a lot of rentals. She said that even though they are not participating, we should extend ideas from other neighborhoods.

Dave asked for ideas for informing them about the project. Teresa Hogan suggested contacting churches in the area. Tenants and landlords may not be as concerned as resident homeowners. She said that that area needed to be protected because decent low-income housing is needed. John Morrison suggested that the ecumenical council could be approached for names in the area. Jean Milgram asked about RVCOG's contact in West Medford and suggested that we talk to Kathy Helmer about working with Gigi Michaels, the Coordinator of the West Medford Coalition.

John Morrison said that he would be making a presentation to the Rotary Club on October 29.

Patty Claeys suggested doing a data search on owners of record and managing agents in the other areas and sending them copies of the mapped alternative concepts. It is important to get the attention of the property owners. Patty Claeys suggested holding the next meeting at that end of town.

Tim Alford said that wherever you held meetings, some feelings would be the same everywhere. The question is how is it going to affect those who live there. He recommended bus passes. Tim said that there were no real easy solutions to the S. Medford Interchange congestion. S. Stage Road area is not a populated area. It would make a big loop that would direct traffic away from the Interchange. He said that he could relate to the pollution issue; he moved off McAndrews because of the pollution.

Jon Deason said that the CAC's responsibility was to represent all people and that the project needs to let people know what is happening. The key is publicity.

Jean Milgram also suggested more outreach to the community. They should be told why the project is discussing the alternatives that go through their neighborhoods. She wasn't sure that people knew the problem. John Morrison said that at the next meeting there would be a discussion of where we want to go.

Wade Six asked how many people among the audience felt there was a problem at the Interchange and only one person raised his hand. Another commented that the problem was the overpass.

Mike Mahar said that ODOT had indicated that the Interchange was at capacity. Even if Medford never built another house, Central Point to the north and Ashland to the south would. People would drive from these areas and exit at the south interchange. The two largest employers are nearby, namely Harry and David and the Rogue Valley Medical Center.

Patty Claeys said that even if Medford never built another house, they would build commercial and industrial sites that would create traffic.

Mike Mahar said that he was in favor of extending Biddle Road through Hawthorne Park. He asked if Hawthorne Park was sacred. It would make for a scenic ride. He would personally lean toward detouring around any neighborhood. He suggested that the community could build more parks.

Jean Milgram asked about taking parkland and if it could be overcome by providing other parks. Dave Mayfield answered that parks are federally funded. Section 4F states you will not take park property unless you can prove that there are no feasible alternatives. Public parks and historic houses come under Section 4F. Section 4F states that you have to replace parks if federal funds are used. These laws are very stringent. It is a matter of whether you have addressed all of the alternatives. Jean Milgram reinforced the idea of impacting parks, not neighborhoods. Dave Mayfield said that such a recommendation could be made because a neighborhood would be so severely impacted.

Frank Stevens said that the process was wide open so that the alternatives could be shown. Even if \$1 of federal money were applied, the rule would apply. However, it could be done with private funds. Mike Mahar asked if a portion could be funded with private funds and federal funds used on another portion.

John Morrison summarized the discussion, saying that all neighborhoods needed to understand the potential impacts. He said that a list of property owners would be obtained.

5.0 VIDEO ON SINGLE POINT URBAN INTERCHANGE

Dave Mayfield introduced the video presentation on the concept of a single point urban interchange (SPUI). Dave noted that examples of the single point interchange could be seen in Alternatives I, II and VIII. Following the presentation, there were no questions.

6.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA UPDATE

At the last meeting, neighborhood impacts were discussed. The CAC wanted to see more emphasis put on this criterion. The group also needs to evaluate impacts besides displacement. Evaluation criteria C and D were added to Social Goal #6 "Minimize disproportionate impacts." Criterion C estimates the number of right-of-way takes where the distance between the residence and the traveled way is reduced by 20% or more. Criterion D rates traffic impacts to neighborhoods based on a map showing percent change in traffic on links defined by RVCOG model. Traffic impact would be different on each block. A question was raised regarding the TOD (Transit Oriented Development) approach. If this approach were taken, what would the effect be? The impact would be less. Those questions should be asked first.

Regarding Goal #15, "Minimize impacts to natural resources and the environment (including Bear Creek Greenway)", evaluation criteria D, E and F had been added. Dave mentioned that criterion D was based on valid measures by a noise expert. Regarding planning goals 10, 11, 12 and 13, Dave asked people to give him their questions and ideas. He noted that Goal #10 could take pages to explain.

Dave stated that the Solutions Team had adopted all the goals and that the next step was to rank the evaluation criteria. After that, the analysis would be done. They would be moving forward with traffic modeling. The modeling information should be in hand by December. At that point, the group would know how the different alternatives could solve the transportation problems.

Frank Stevens noted that there is another major environmental impact study going on about Hwy 62. That project stretches 6 miles, from White City to the "Big Y". The project will combine solutions from the two projects for compatibility.

7.0 SUMMARY COMMENTS

Jon Deason said that he liked the way the meeting was going and he was looking forward to the December traffic study. He was pleased that people were coming to the meetings. Patty Claeys said that she had appreciated all of the comments from the public. The more information the CAC got from all areas, the better the decisions it could make. Dave Mayfield said he felt that the group had covered it today. He appreciated the comments and ideas brought to the meeting.

Frank Stevens said that he appreciated people coming and showing an interest and expressing their concerns. He lives on Sunrise. He said that the public's valuable recommendations could make the project a community solution.

Jean Milgram said that she was hoping that the project could achieve better transportation with as little impact as possible on neighborhoods. She stressed that alternative transportation like the bus system and bike paths were important.

Mike Mahar said that our community was going to grow and that he hoped it would do so in a smart way. He said that existing neighborhoods were important. The CAC is an advisory committee and it needs to turn over all rocks. The more that the public knows and understands the process, the better off we all will be.

Wade Six said that he wished more of the committee had been there. AAA is trying to defeat the gas tax bill. People should dig deeper into what they are saying. The committee has no power to vote, it can advise. It needs to gather information from the public and the CAC should meet on the west side of town. Until the model comes out, the alternatives would be theory and conjecture.

Tim Alford thanked everyone for taking the time to come to give their opinions. Those opinions will give the project a better decision. He expressed his appreciation for their taking the time to get involved now and not waiting until after the decisions are made. He said that the CAC was fortunate to have Mike Mahar on the committee and that Mike was very concerned about traffic and quality of life. When he builds something he considers what the impacts are and how people are going to get to work.

Teresa Hogan thanked all the people for coming out and participating . She said that the CAC needed more ideas on how to get information to populated centers. Those ideas should be emailed to John Morrison.

Frank Stevens stated that this public participation process was new to ODOT. The CAC is a broad based group of people and all are community representatives. In some other projects, decisions have been made behind closed doors and then told to the public. Decisions need to be made on the ground by local people. There is no perfect solution to the problem and all the options must be weighed.

8.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:50 PM. The next meeting will be held on October 20, 1999. Location to be determined.